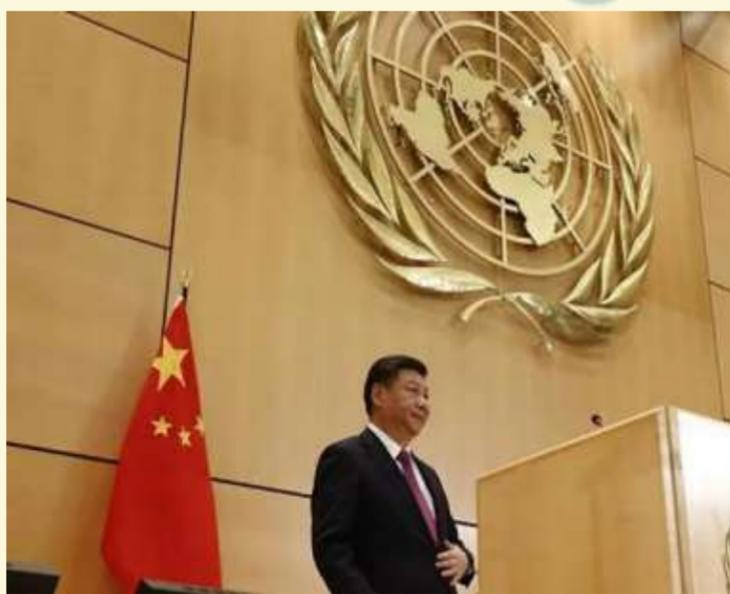


Lisbon: A new penny will be distributed throughout Portugal from Wednesday that depicts the legendary hero Ulysses, designed by artist Gonçalo Viana. With a face value of €5, the coin is only valid in Portugal, and will be distributed to the public through credit institutions, the **(Page-8)**

Islamabad: Chairperson of the Pakistan Caucus in US Congress, Congresswoman Jackson L. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, has passed away at the age of 74 after a battle with cancer. "Today, with incredible sorrow for our loss yet deep apprecia **(Page-9)**

China urges US to stop deceiving the world with lies

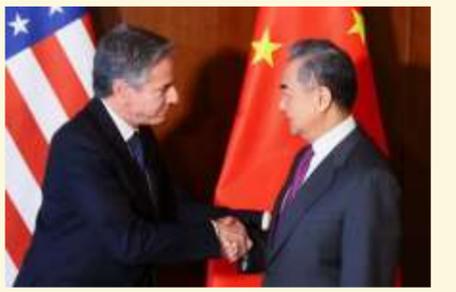


Global Times Beijing: The US should immediately correct its wrongdoings, stop deceiving the world with lies, cease slandering and smearing other countries, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said this week comment-

US should also provide an explanation for the serious harm caused to developing countries by its "deceptive" strategies. From former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo publicly admitting that the US lied, cheated, and stole, to the recent disclosure of the Pentagon's disinformation campaign against Chinese vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the latest doctrine released by the US military titled "Deception," who is spreading false information globally? Who is conducting cognitive warfare against specific countries? Who is engaging in cyberattacks and information warfare on an international scale, Lin asked. The US is accustomed to pursuing its own interests in the name of the so-called international morality, spreading false information through deceptive propaganda, and using public opinion and cognitive warfare to suppress other countries, the spokes-



person said. He noted that the international community has seen through these tactics and remained vigilant against them. The era when the US could continue to lead the international community by deception is long gone, Lin stressed.



In a first, Canada's armed forces get female chief



Covert Report Ottawa: Breaking the glass ceiling, General Jennie Carignan this week took charge as Canada's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), becoming the first woman to lead the country's armed forces. Carignan, a military engineer by training, has led troops in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Syria during her 35 years in the Canadian Army. Speaking at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, she said: "I feel ready, poised and supported to take on this manifold challenge." "Conflict in Ukraine and the Middle East, heightened tensions elsewhere around the world, climate change, increased demands on our personnel at home and abroad, and threats to our democratic values and institutions are but a few of the complex challenges we need to adapt to and counter," Carignan said. Carignan takes over from General Wayne Eyre, who served as the top military commander since 2021, at a time when Canada is aiming to increase defence spending and modernise its armed forces. Last week, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his government's intention to reach NATO's defence-spending target of 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2032.

Canada's defence spending is expected to be 1.39% of GDP in the 2024-25 fiscal year, according to government projections. The armed forces are struggling to meet recruitment goals and have been slow to replace outdated equipment. Last November, the head of the navy said the service was in "a critical state" and might not be able to carry out its basic duties in 2024. "We're facing many internal challenges such as recruitment and retention," Carignan said. "We know the challenges we face and what we need to do to address them." PM Trudeau, who called Carignan "a role model for all Canadians and for the world", has pursued policies designed to boost gender equality since taking office in 2015. In 2018, he appointed Brenda Lucki as the first female head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The last two governors-general, Canada's official representative of the British monarchy, have been women. Trudeau named them both. It is to be noted that the honour of being the first female army chief belongs to a Slovenian general who became the head of the country's army in 2018.

Interfaith harmony crucial for peace: Governor Faisal Kundi



Liaquat Ali Peshawar: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi this week emphasized the urgent need for interfaith harmony, calling it pivotal for fostering peace. He said this during his visit to Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh, Jogian Shah. He was accompanied by provincial president Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former minority wing leader and ex-MPA Kishwar Kumar, Nasib Chand and regional president Misbahuddin. Governor Faisal Kundi received a warm reception from Sikh community leaders including Peshawar's religious head Singh Sahib Sajjan, Dr Sahib Ji, Baba Mahender Singh, Baba Ameer Singh, and Magan Singh. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Faisal Kundi said that minority are the backbone of our country. He said that targeting the Sikh community in Peshawar is terrible and we condemned it. Governor Faisal Kundi said: "Peshawar has witnessed sacrifices and sorrows. It tells the tale of martyrdoms, including martyred Qamar Abbas, Bashir Bilour, and Safwat Ghayur, journalists, and others from all walks of life. "While acknowledging past efforts for peace during the united government, Governor Kundi expressed concern over current challenges, stating, "We will not be silent spectators but active contributors to restoring peace. Today, I bring a message and mission of peace restoration." Regarding community issues, Governor Kundi assured, "Efforts are underway to resolve issues based on priority. I will meet with the Minister for Religious Affairs and will work diligently to address concerns." He commended the security forces, especially the police, for their dedication and ensuring a peaceful Muharram. In a symbolic gesture, senior members of the Sikh community draped Governor Kundi and PPP leadership with shawls, signifying respect and solidarity.

IT exports to rise with Huawei's annual professional training to 300,000 Pakistani students: Shehbaz Sharif

News Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said this week that Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) exports will rise with Huawei's annual professional training to 300,000 Pakistani students. Talking to a four-member delegation led by Ethan Sun, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Huawei Pakistan, the prime minister stressed that collaboration with Huawei was essential for providing advanced IT training in various fields, especially for young people. The PM emphasized that the government values its sustainable partnership with Huawei in Pakistan's digital economy. The government will prioritize including both women and the youth of Balochistan in this training program. The PM said that promoting the digital economy requires building a strong foundation of talented professionals within the country. He maintained that the recent visit to Huawei's headquarters in China was

highly beneficial. The PM emphasized that digitizing government institutions was crucial for implementing a modern, automated, and efficient governance system. The delegation briefed the prime minister regarding the progress of ongoing projects under the cooperation agreement between Pakistan and Huawei for the Digital Pakistan Program. The prime minister was informed that a new Massive Open Online Courses system for IT training has been developed and will be launched with the support of provincial governments. The delegation suggested backing the development of a national data center in line with Pakistan's national cloud strategy. This initiative will improve cloud services and lead to considerable cost reductions. Huawei was interested in collaborating with the Pakistani government to transform Islamabad into a smart city. As part of the Islamabad Smart City project, various ser-



ices such as traffic management, health care, education, and parking will be accessible through a digital platform. Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Prime Minister's Coordinator Rana Ihsaan Afzal, and other senior officials were also present in the meeting.

Pakistani envoy emphasizes pivotal role of media in fostering Pakistan-China friendship

News Islamabad: A delegation of journalists from Balochistan province of Pakistan, accompanied by representatives from the China International Communications Group (CICG), visited Ambassador Khalil Hashmi at Pakistan Embassy Beijing this week. Welcoming the delegation, Ambassador Hashmi emphasized the pivotal role of media in fostering friendship between Pakistan and China. He underlined the significance of Pakistan-China ties and encouraged both Pakistani and Chinese media to actively highlight success stories of the enduring relationship. The Ambassador also highlighted the central position of Balochistan in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and underscored the im-

portance attached by Pakistan and China to the development of Balochistan. The journalists from various parts of Baluchistan shared experiences from their visit to China and expressed their keen interest in covering the diverse dimensions of the Pakistan-China relationship. Representatives from CICG provided insights into the media landscape in China and discussed potential areas for collaboration with Pakistani media. Ambassador Hashmi underscored the need for continued engagement and cooperation between Pakistani and Chinese media. He expressed optimism about the future of media collaboration and its role in bringing the people of Pakistan and China even more closer together.



CPEC: Upgradation of ML-1 to be executed in phases

Covert Report Islamabad: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal this week announced that the upgradation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s Main Line-1 (ML-1) railway project will be executed in phases. Chairing a meeting concerning on CPEC, he maintained that both Pakistan and China had agreed to expedite the commencement of the ML-1 project. Ahsan Iqbal directed the Ministry of Railways to finalize all documentation and necessary preparations to initiate the project promptly. He also mentioned that both countries have decided to hold an early meeting of the Joint Financing Committee to determine the project's timeline and completion stages. The Minister emphasized the importance of demonstrating commitment to the successful execution of projects included in the second phase of CPEC. In the recent 13th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting, held online with Beijing and Islamabad officials, there was a strong focus on enhancing security for Chinese workers in Pakistan. The JCC meeting addressed joint energy and infrastructure

development projects under CPEC, including the ML-1 railway project. Regarding the ML-1 project, Iqbal confirmed that significant progress has been made. The revised project feasibility study, valued at US \$ 6.76 billion, has been approved for implementation in two phases. The project is now ready for the bidding process among eligible Chinese companies, which Iqbal urged to commence immediately due to the deteriorating condition of the existing railway tracks. Ahsan Iqbal also provided an update on the completed CPEC projects. Since its inception in 2013, CPEC has made substantial progress, particularly in the energy sector, with 16 completed projects generating a total capacity of 8,020 megawatts, alongside two coal mines and a 660 kV high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line. The 884 MW Suki Kinari hydropower project, valued at \$1.707 billion, is still under construction and expected to be commissioned by November 2024. Three additional power projects, including the Azad Pattan (700 MW), Kohala (1124 MW), and a coal-based project in Gwadar (2124.7 MW), are at an advanced stage, representing a total investment of US \$ 4.157 billion.



Ambassador Marilina Armellini praises Pakistan's measures to combat human trafficking



meeting between Pakistan's Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, and Ambassador Marilina Armellini. Following the meeting, Minister Naqvi directed the relevant authorities to expedite the finalization of the agreement.

Ambassador Armellini praised Pakistan's measures to combat human trafficking and assured Minister Naqvi of Italy's full cooperation. The meeting also included discussions on granting Milan and Islamabad the status of sister cities, enhancing bilateral relations, and addressing other pertinent issues.

Italy remains a principal entry point for migrants attempting to reach Europe by sea, with many aspiring to travel onward to wealthier northern European nations. However, this journey involves navigating the world's most perilous migration route. In February, 59 people, including children, perished when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants crashed against rocks on Italy's southern coast. The Pakistani Foreign Office confirmed the deaths of two Pakistanis in the incident. The vessel had departed from Turkey with migrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and several other countries, and it crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria. A senior official from the Pakistani embassy in Italy met with 16 Pakistani survivors of the ill-fated vessel, while four individuals remained missing. Interior Minister Naqvi informed Ambassador



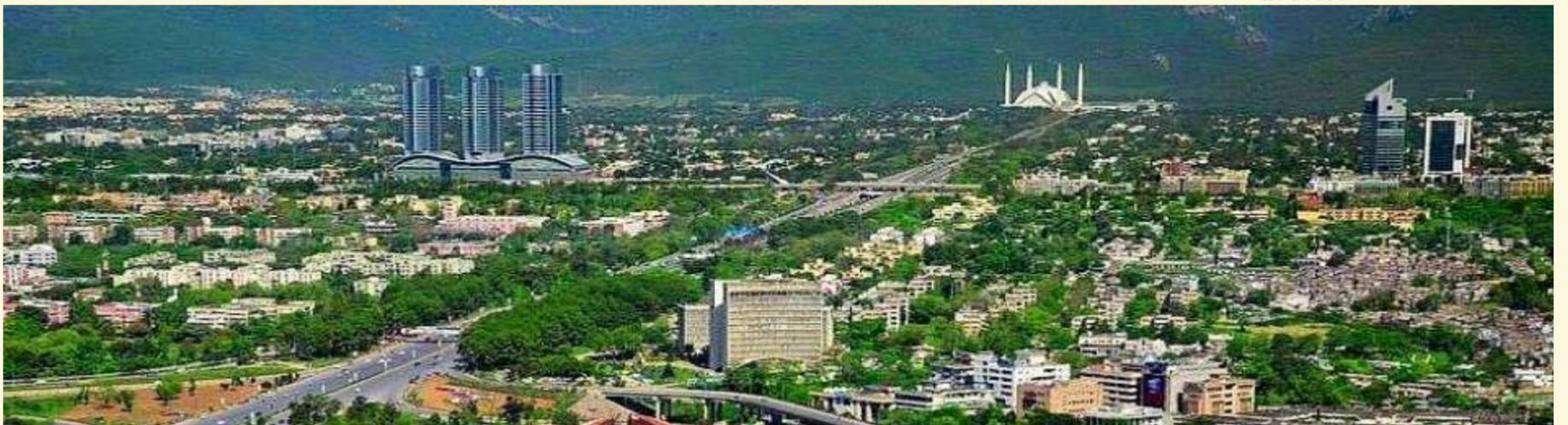
Celina Ali

Islamabad: Italy's Ambassador to Pakistan Marilina Armellini has praised Pakistan's measures to combat human trafficking. Pakistan and Italy recently reached an agreement to finalize a formal deal aimed at jointly combating human trafficking and illegal migration. This significant development occurred during a



Armellini of an ongoing comprehensive crackdown against human traffickers, highlighting the government's adoption of a "zero-tolerance policy."

He stressed that individuals involved in human trafficking would face not only imprisonment but also financial penalties. "Only skilled manpower from Pakistan will be sent to Italy through legal channels," he added.



US extreme political elites' plot to crush China's economy is wishful thinking

Hu Xijin

Former US permanent representative to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison recently said that the best leverage to deter China is to make its economy collapse. She expressed hope that none of the major economies in the world will invest in China, do business in China, or create jobs in China, so that China's economy will collapse. Her comments clearly reflect a certain mindset held by some US political elites toward China, which aligns with the strategic direction the US is currently pursuing.

Washington wants to crush Beijing's economy, while China seeks to promote long-term growth and development. This economic battleground will be a key aspect of the rivalry between China and the US.

The importance of the economy to China is highlighted from a new perspective by the words of Hutchison, who is severely hostile toward China. As a former ambassador to NATO, she should have been most adept at thinking about containing China from a military perspective. However, this former ambassador lacks such confidence. She believes that China will have "more military, bigger navies, more weapons, more missiles," as well as "nuclear [weapons] and space stations," which the US cannot stop. In her opinion, China's potential to surpass the US in economic power poses a more realistic threat to Washington. Once China's economy surpasses that of the US, the US may find itself in a passive strategic position. Therefore, she envisions a scenario where major economies cease investing in or conducting business with China, leading to the collapse of China's economy.

From Hutchison's words, we can infer the true threat facing China, its source, the planned methods and the gradual pace at which it approaches us. China has always emphasized the equal importance of development and security, which are closely intertwined in the country. However, some political elites in Washington now seek to directly hinder China's economic progress, fundamentally undermining the driving force of China's national rejuvenation, and attempting to remove what they see as the US' strategic "major problem" by pushing China toward chaos through stagnation. This poses a new challenge for China.

However, the extreme political elites in the US forget one crucial point: A large country like China has an intrinsic motivation for economic development that is always decisive. We were not, and will not be, subordinate to US policies. It is wishful thinking for them to believe they can make us prosper or decline at their will.

The true driving force of China's economic development is the people's constant pursuit of a better life and the commitment of the Communist Party of China (CPC) as the ruling party to a people-centered approach. This commitment continually fulfills the people's aspirations and drives the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China is a great civilization with a long history, filled with glorious memories and the ambition to restore that glory. The CPC wholeheartedly serves the people and the country, making China indestructible as an economic entity.



Let us remember the malicious expressions of this former US ambassador to NATO. She has not considered what kind of disaster collapsing China's economy would mean for the human rights of all the Chinese people - her eyes only see geopolitics. Our task is to ensure that the plots of the extreme political elites she represents completely fail.

So, what should we do? It is simple. Not only should we remember her venomous words, but we should also go against them. Since she wants the world's major economies to stop investing in and trading with China, we should do the opposite by continuously expanding China's opening-up, attracting more investment and further growing foreign trade. In recent years, the Chinese government has consistently introduced new policies favorable to foreign investment. After the pandemic, China has also continuously implemented visa-free policies

for citizens of an increasing number of countries. These measures are steadily releasing power. More importantly, it is important to recognize that the economy plays a crucial role in both the development and security of a country. Nowadays, countries around the world place economic security at the top of their national security agenda, whether it is the US, Europe, or major developing countries; none are exceptions. For China, the economy is also a key resource for achieving domestic stability and conducting external competition. As a major country, China must not have any shortcomings, especially in the economy. It is crucial that the well-being of China's economy primarily depends on ourselves. In other words, the fate of the Chinese nation is firmly in our own hands.

The writer is a Chinese media professional



Von der Leyen's Taiwan remarks have set a bad precedent

Global Times

On Thursday, the European Parliament convened a plenary session in Strasbourg, France, during which Ursula von der Leyen was re-elected as president of the European Commission. However, rather than the reelection of von der Leyen, the focus of international public opinion in recent days has been on her declaration before the European Parliament vote that if re-elected, she will seek "to deter China from unilaterally changing the status quo by military means, particularly over Taiwan." Currently, with von der Leyen officially re-

elected, whether her provocative statement will become reality remains to be seen. It must be pointed out that von der Leyen's absurd remarks regarding China's internal affairs constitute blatant interference, which not only damages the credibility of the EU in international affairs, but also has a negative impact on China-EU relations, as well as the peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and even the world.

As the president of the European Commission, von der Leyen's absurd China-related remarks expose her poor personal political character. She has repeatedly stated to the Chinese side that the EU has no intention to change

its long-standing one-China policy, recognizes the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and hopes that the Taiwan Straits will maintain peace and stability. However, it was during her term that Europe continued to retreat on this position, taking provocative actions such as including content related to Taiwan in the joint communication on the Indo-Pacific in 2021 and issuing European Parliament's reports in February claiming that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan island are not subordinate to each other. Von der Leyen's latest comments are a dangerous continuation of her and the

EU's dangerous behavior, setting a very bad precedent.

On the other hand, von der Leyen's absurd remarks on China are seriously inconsistent with her identity and responsibilities. In recent years, there have been continuous debates within the EU on its policy toward China. As the president of the European Commission, von der Leyen should be more cautious, rational, and responsible, playing a role in integrating different viewpoints and uniting the EU members, rather than making provocative remarks. Her identity as the president of the European Commission is not to seek attention or incite confrontation, and the Commission's responsibility is definitely not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

Von der Leyen's performance in her previous term has received different evaluations from the outside world, but one widely recognized point is that she is often labeled as "pro-American" and a "China hawk." The "de-risking" approach toward China led by her has sparked great controversy and opposition within the EU, particularly evident in the process of imposing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. A few days ago, sources with knowledge revealed that in a non-binding vote among the 27 EU member states on the merits of EU tariffs on imports of China-built electric vehicles, four voted

and so on. On top of that, thorny issues such as EU internal divisions, immigration problems, how the first term's European Green Deal, which was met with high expectations, will continue, how to coordinate relations among EU institutions as well as between EU institutions and member states, are all waiting for von der Leyen to address. A member of European Parliament likened von der Leyen's list of promises to "a European Christmas tree." With the addition of the Taiwan question, it is actually like feeding the EU a poisoned apple.

The EU is an important international organization, and its understanding of and policymaking toward China have a crucial impact on the development of China-EU relations, and even on global prosperity and stability. China and the EU do not have fundamental conflicts of interest; cooperation outweighs competition, and consensus outweighs differences. From this perspective, as China and the EU prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations next year, it's hoped that EU institutions and officials, including von der Leyen, will establish a correct understanding of China, formulate proactive policies toward China, and work hand in hand with China to make greater contributions to maintaining global peace and security.

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High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri announces establishment of Urdu language school in Canberra

Covert Report
Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week announced establishment of an Urdu language school in Canberra. "Great news for Pakistani Diaspora in Canberra. For the first time URDU language school has

been established & incorporated in ACT. This will not only help Pakistani families here but will also add to ACT's multiculturalism. Thanks Tanveer Khan Saheb for all your efforts," the envoy posted on X. Around 103,120 Pakistani-born people are living in Australia, more than twice the number ten years ago.

This makes the Pakistani-born population the seventeenth largest migrant community in Australia, equivalent to 1.3 per cent of Australia's overseas-born population and 0.4 per cent of Australia's total population.



Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed wins Pakistanis hearts in France

Celina Ali
Islamabad: Pakistani Ambassador to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmed has won Pakistanis' hearts in France with his helpful nature. The envoy, who has been appointed as the Additional Permanent Representative to the United Nations, had been available for all possible assistance to the large Pakistani population living in France all his ongoing term. A survey by Covert revealed that Pakistanis from all fields of life, living in France, had a positive view about Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed. A career diplomat, Asim Iftikhar Ahmed was previously Additional Secretary for UN and Diplomatic Economy and

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before this, he had served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Having joined Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1993, he has held various positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in Pakistan Missions abroad: As Director General (UN) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he oversaw UN related work at Pakistan's Missions in New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna and Nairobi, besides the work of the UN system in Pakistan. His experience in New York included responsibilities for political, peace and security and

reform issues, acting as the focal point for the Security Council, reform of the Security Council, political issues in the General Assembly, Special Political and Decolonization (4th) Committee, conflict prevention, peace-keeping and peace-building issues. Asim Iftikhar Ahmed was member of Pakistan delegation to the Security Council in 2003-2004 and again in 2012-2013 when he also served as the Political Coordinator of the Pakistan Team. He represented Pakistan in the Mission of the Security Council to West Africa (June-July 2003), Mission of the Security Council Sanctions Committee concerning Somalia (November 2003), Extraordinary Meeting of the Security Council held in Nairobi, Kenya on Sudan and



Somalia (November 2004), and the Security Council Mission to the Great Lakes Region in October 2013. He has been member of Pakistan delegation to the UN Peacebuilding Commission. He has represented Pakistan at the UN Human Rights Council, and the review of Pakistan's reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Committee Against Torture (CAT). He has the distinction of representing Pakistan at the UN General Assembly's Annual Sessions from 2003-2008 & 2011-2016. Asim Iftikhar Ahmed has represented Pakistan in major conferences including the OIC Summit in Dakar (March 2008) and the African Union Summits in Abuja (January 2005), Addis Ababa (January 2007), Accra (July 2007), Addis Ababa (January 2008), Sharm-el-Sheikh (July 2008), Sirte (July 2009), and Malabo (July 2011), NAM Ministerial Meeting (Algiers, May 2014), the 60th Anniversary of the

Asian-African (Bandung) Conference in April 2015, Paris Climate Change Conference (COP-21, November-December 2015), OIC Foreign Ministers Meeting (Abidjan, July 2017), the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meetings. He is a graduate of the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore (1991, B.Sc. Electrical Engineering, Gold Medal), and the University of the Punjab, Lahore (1988, Bachelor of Arts, Gold Medal). He attended the 21st Common Training Programme, Civil Services Academy, Lahore (November 1993-June 1994, awarded Best Sportsman), and the 14th Specialized Training Programme, Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad (July 1994- January 1995, awarded Best Probationer). He attended 13th Senior Management Course at National Management College, Lahore from March-August 2013 and 109th National Management Course from August-December 2018.

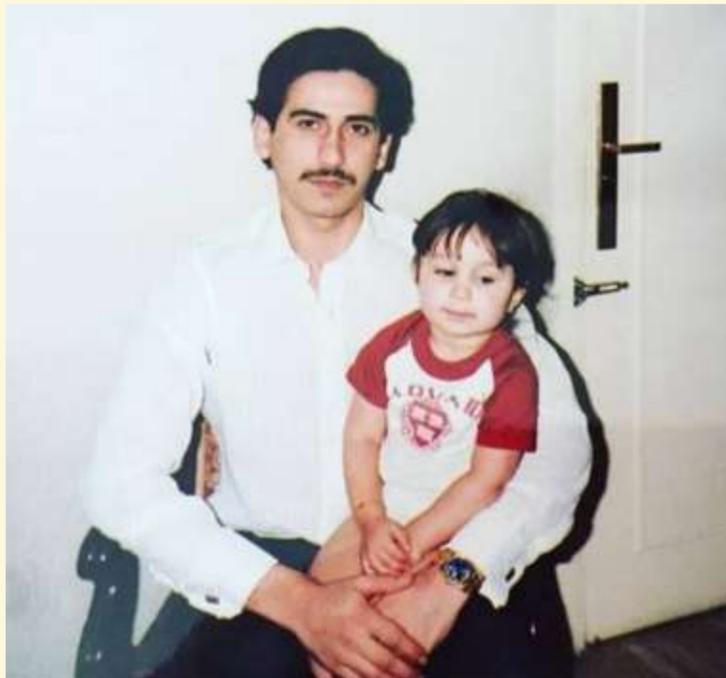
Kazakhstan SCO chairmanship promoted Shanghai Spirit: Speakers

Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Centre for SCO Studies, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, the Riphah Institute of Public Policy (RIPP), in collaboration with the Embassy of Kazakhstan this week hosted a roundtable on 'Post Astana Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit 2024: Achievements and way forward.' The roundtable provided an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the SCO Summit 2024 hosted by Kazakhstan in Astana and discussed the future trajectory of the organisation under the new chairmanship of the People's Republic of

China. The speakers shared valuable insights into the achievements and strategic direction of the SCO. Dr Farhat Asif, president Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, highlighted the significance of the event and shared about various initiatives by IPDS on SCO. Dr Farhat Asif also shared that Pakistan, as the chair of the Council of Heads of Government will host the meeting in Islamabad in October. The next chairmanship of SCO is now with the People's Republic of China for 2024-25.



Uncovering the mystery Shahnawaz Bhutto's murder



Late Senator Rehman Malik
(This article was written in November 23, 2021)

It was mid-afternoon while I was sitting in my office as Director FIA/Immigration and Anti-Smuggling, Islamabad and I received a call from Major General Naseerullah Khan Babar (Retired), the then Minister for Interior, who asked me to visit his residence at 06:00 pm. Upon reaching there, I was told that Prime Minister Mohrtarma Benazir Bhutto wanted to see me in connection with some important case.

I met the Prime Minister at her office in the presence of Maj Gen Babar (R) when she asked me to investigate the mystery of the death of her brother Shahnawaz, who died in Cannes in France because the French authorities, when requested, hardly shared any details of his death. We are still unaware of the facts of the case.

She emotionally recalled the final moments, when Shahnawaz Bhutto was with his wife in the early evening on the day before he was found dead. They had a long chat after coming from a picnic on the seaside. She further narrated that Shahnawaz was happily preparing barbeque on the beach in the afternoon and the whole family enjoyed being together after a very long time. He looked very happy and in his usual smiling way said goodbye with the promise to come in the morning to me as we had decided to go for a walk the next morning. She could not reconcile with the proposition that such a jolly and brave young man like him could commit suicide to finish himself.

She asked me to get her the details as she wanted to know the facts and the cause of his death and accordingly, she asked me to proceed immediately to Cannes.

On my way to Cannes, I preferred to travel through Marseilles—the last city of residence of Shahnawaz Bhutto. I wanted to meet my sources for further information relating to the murder of Shahnawaz Bhutto, who was in the same area about 11 years ago. He indeed was very helpful in this matter. Along with my team members, I reached Nice in the night where I met the then Investigating Officer Inspector Declott, who was at that time posted in Nice. He narrated the details of the investigation and the circumstances under which the wife of Shahnawaz Bhutto, Ms. Rehana Shahnawaz, one of the daughters of Mr Fasihuddin, a senior officer of Afghan Foreign Office, was released and later flew out of France in a hurry and she was fully facilitated by the local authorities despite knowing fully well that she was the prime suspect in this high-profile murder case. Her elder sister Fauzia was married to Murtaza Bhutto, the elder brother of Shahnawaz Bhutto. After knowing about the alleged involvement of her sister in Shahnawaz's murder, Murtaza Bhutto divorced his wife Fauzia.

It was a very complicated case as apparently, the French authorities had closed this matter after her departure to the US whereas three deputed magistrates on this case at different times were unable to proceed in this matter—the magistrates in French judicial system are highly educated and are public servants though those maintain a high degree of impartiality and independence from political or any other influence—were transferred on their request. Their transfer requests made the matter more mysterious for me and I grabbed this as a lead for the investigation to get to the facts and secrets which forced these judicial magistrates to opt for transfer rather than being part of the trial. This lead provided us with enough information to work in the right direction and led us to the facts which unfolded more aspects of the case when we examined the available police record and visited the crime scene. The crime scene was his small apartment in Cannes, a resort town on the French Riviera, which is famed for its international film festival.

The apartment was on the hill with a beautiful scene of the sea on the front. It was surprising to see that he was living in a very simple small flat with his wife and daughter, Sassi Bhutto. He used to love his daughter a lot. Shahnawaz Bhutto entered his flat on July 17, 1985 happily but was found dead in that flat on the very next day, where his wife Rehana was also present at the time of death. She, while not calling for any emergency service to save his life, also informed the family of his death on the next day. It was another lead to suspect her, besides being an eye-witness, as privy to the murder of her husband. Undoubtedly, Shahnawaz Bhutto died under mysterious circumstances and the Benazir Bhutto family believed that he was murdered. No one was brought to trial for murder, but Shahnawaz's wife Rehana was considered as a prime suspect by the French authorities who remained in their custody for some time with substantive leads against her. She was allowed to leave for the US while she was still under trial/investigation against the wish of the investigators. I was told in guarded words that the French authorities were left with no choice except to allow her to leave the country on the request of the US authorities.

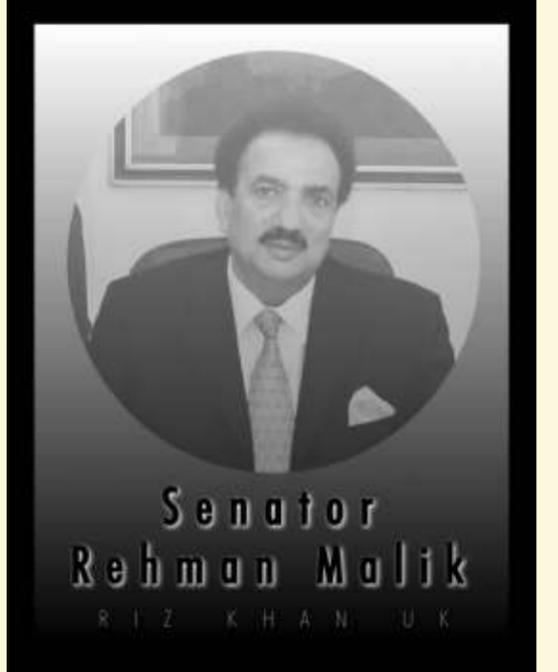
We all know that the French law is governed under a fool-proof criminal justice system and how could a suspect leave for the USA during the trial? According to our confirmation, this case was still pending on trial hence Mohrtarma Benazir Bhutto was right to conclude that it was a mysterious murder where there was no trial.

The then French Investigating Officer was fully in agreement with my conclusion of suspicion of murder with the wife as the prime suspect, and he was also not fully convinced on the grounds on why she was allowed to leave the country as the prime suspect. Moreover, the French police charged her only for not helping her dying husband and wanted to proceed further as to why she did this criminal act but the investigation could not proceed further as she got away with the aid of the powerful. It is believed that she allowed her husband to die as she knew that the poison would act fast and he subsequently would be declared dead as a result of a fatal heart attack as per the proven symptoms of this lethal poison. The police demonstrated the poison by giving it to a cat and it died with the same symptoms as reported in the medical reports. We then discovered that the investigation conducted by the French police had recovered an empty vial of poison, which was, according to experts of toxicology, only produced in Israel and the US in very low quantities, not more than 1 kilogram by these two countries, although it was not elaborated in the investigation report but explained verbally. However, our inquiries revealed that it was only used to eliminate important targets. It is believed that both the brothers managed to get this from Syria during their stay. Another official, when taken into confidence, explained that both the brothers Murtaza Bhutto and Shahnawaz used to keep vials of poison, for their own use in case of capture by Pakistani authorities, which they had obtained from Syria. It was their mutual decision that they would never allow themselves to be arrested by Zia's secret agents. It was a big lead for us to follow. It was also confirmed by the police that the vials were kept in a briefcase in a small bottle and only his wife Rehana knew about it. It was on the police record that Shahnawaz Bhutto had asked for her help, but she chose to let him die and did not call for any emergency services. The police officer further informed us that there were intelligence reports of Rehana repeatedly meeting a CIA agent in Cannes and we managed to get pictorial evidence, which is now in the case file of FIA.

Beyond this, what we found was shocking; that a war poison vial was mixed secretly in a drink in the kitchen and it was mixed before serving it to Shahnawaz Bhutto as the empty bottle of the drink was found in the kitchen whereas the empty vial was found in the kitchen dustbin. It was quite surprising that the poison produced in Israel eventually landed in the hands of its arch-rival, the then Syrian President Hafiz Al-Assad. No one associated with the investigation could answer the question as to how the Syrian authorities could get hold of that poison but there were some indications that it was passed on via Lebanon to Syria. After returning

from France, I contacted Col Riaz, who gave me multiple clues including the background of the two sisters and how they were planted on both the brothers. He further narrated that their father spent a major period of time as an officer of Afghan Foreign Service in the US and was on the payroll of the CIA.

According to Raja Anwar, an author, journalist and former advisor in the ZA Bhutto regime (1971-77), the AI Zulfiqar Organization (AZO) was formed by Bhutto's sons, Murtaza and Shahnawaz, in 1979. Anwar joined the outfit in 1980. In his 1997 book on the AZO, Anwar wrote that being young, the two brothers decided to instigate a revolutionary movement against Gen Zia's dictatorship, which had sent their father to the gallows in 1979 through a controversial trial. The execution of Capt. Tariq Rahim by hijackers, considering him to be the son of Gen. Rehimmuddin Khan, forced the Zia-ul-Haq regime to accept the demands of the hijackers, releasing dozens of Pakistan People's Party and other leftist political prisoners languishing in Pakistani jails. This was the time when Benazir Bhutto was also imprisoned in Karachi and she straightaway condemned this hijacking from jail. I could see why she condemned it as she never endorsed AZO and always opposed it and she could foresee it as a conspiracy designed to undermine PPP. She as a true leader had rightly predicted it. An inside investigation later revealed that Mr Tipu was used for the execution of this engineered hijacking plan without the knowledge of both Bhutto brothers.

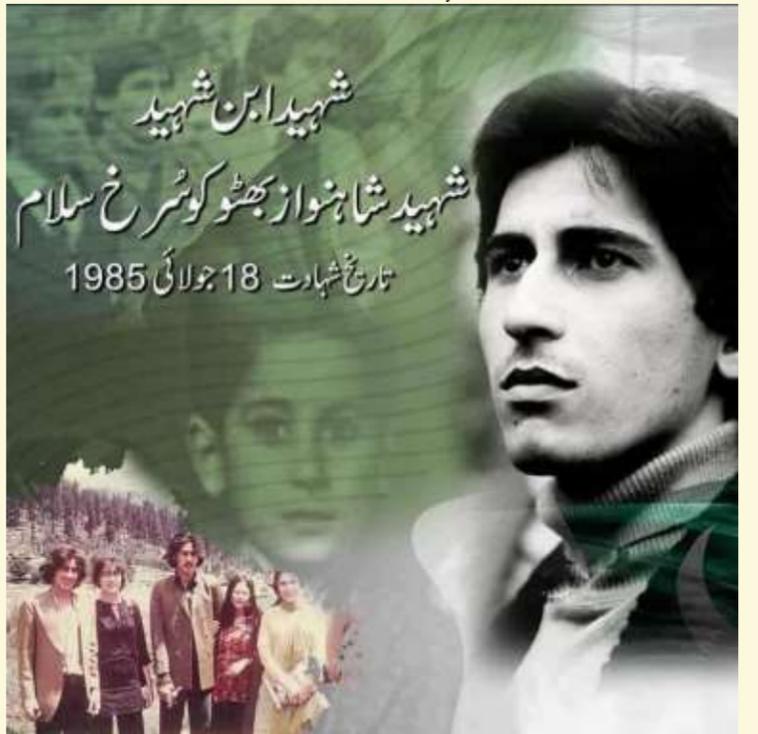


weeping during my briefing and it was a very painful sight indeed. PM Benazir Bhutto endorsed the report and appreciated the investigation at depth by unearthing the facts.



I prepared a detailed and lengthy investigation report which was personally handed over to the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto with Begum Bhutto present alongside the then Interior Minister. Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto kept

The writer was former Interior Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Chairman of Think Tank "Global Eye". He authored four books.



Greece's first helicopter airline takes off, with flights to the islands for less than \$300



Newswire

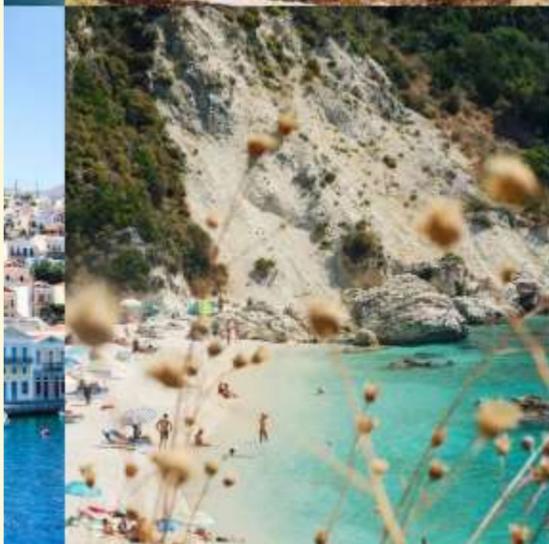
Athens: Island-hopping in Greece this summer just got a little easier. Hoper, the first helicopter airline in Greece offering scheduled flights, is now selling tickets to 11 destinations, including harder-to-reach spots such as Antiparos, Folegandros, Ios, Kea, Patmos, Sifnos and Spetses. All connect to either Athens, Santorini or Mykonos, which serve as the carrier's hubs. Fares start at €160 (\$234) for a one-way ticket, but often climb due to demand. On the airline's website, a

travelers have always had the option of booking helicopters via private charters. Hoper's flights, by contrast, are scheduled – not operated on demand – so they are far less expensive. A private charter from Athens to Mykonos can cost €2,775 for a single seat in high season. For a family of four flying with Hoper, it is roughly €1,490 at similarly peak-demand times – much better value. The country's tourism minister, Ms Olga Kefalogianni, describes the service as a “unique step” for Greek tourism. But a ferry might still be a more convenient



flight in August from Athens to the beautifully rugged island of Tinos costs around €380 for a 42-minute helicopter journey. A ferry journey from Athens can take about four hours and costs around €35. With few islands benefiting from international airport access, ferries are practically a requisite for exploring the country's most scenic summer spots. Most passengers embark via Athens' main port, Piraeus. The main benefit to this alternative is the reduced transit time – the fastest ferry to Santorini from Athens takes more than four hours, versus one hour by chopper – mixing those days of a vacation itinerary that are spent solely on getting from one point to another. “We turn hours into minutes,” Mr Demetris Memos, chief executive of Hoper, said in a press statement. “Travellers earn up to a full day of vacation.” Some luxury hotels such as the newly opened One&Only Kea Island do offer helicopter transfers for their guests at an additional cost, and time-strapped

option on some occasions. Hoper is going to Mykonos from Athens only three times a week in August, for example, and there are generally four daily ferries in high season from Athens. Hoper's flights depart from Koropi, a 10-minute drive from Athens International Airport, which is more conveniently situated than the farther ferry port, some 50 minutes from the airport. The fleet consists of five Robinson R44 and R66 helicopters, each with three or four passenger seats and cockpits with panoramic windows to take in the blue waters of the Mediterranean below. The helicopter airline service to the islands comes as Greece is experiencing a huge boom in tourism. 2023 was a record-setting year, according to Greek officials, with nearly 33 million visitors. That record could be beaten in 2024. Tourism accounts for 18 per cent of the nation's gross domestic product.



Portugal celebrates mythical beasts and heroes with Ulysses coin



Newsire
Lisbon: A new penny will be distributed throughout Portugal from Wednesday that depicts the legendary hero Ulysses, designed by artist Gonçalo Viana. With a face value of €5, the coin is only valid in Portugal, and will be distributed to the public through credit institutions, the Banco de Portugal's cash offices and the shops of the National Printing House. The country is paying homage to the fictional figure Ulysses because of his links to Portugal's capital Lisbon. The mythical hero, who also goes by

the Greek name Odysseus, is best known for his starring role in Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic poem composed around the 7th or 8th century BC. The character also pops up in the *Iliad* – and a number of other poems and plays. Many now associate the name Ulysses with the novel of the same name by Irish writer James Joyce, a modernist work inspired by the classics. Historians have found no real evidence that Ulysses, a fabled king of Ithaca, actually existed. Even so, some storytellers have suggested that the city of Lisbon was founded by the hero, who stopped there when travelling home

from the Trojan war. On the front side of the new coin, we can see Ulysses tied to a ship's mast. The image depicts a scene from the *Odyssey*, where the hero asks his sailing crew to tie him up. He wishes to listen to the bewitching songs of sirens, without being lured to the water by their voices. The mer creatures in question, meanwhile, can be seen on the outer circle of the coin. Seven sirens are featured with bird-like bodies, their wings and claws extended. They are reaching out towards the Greek hero, who is also placed next to the Portuguese coat of



arms. On the back side of the coin, we can see Ulysses armed with a bow and arrow. The hero is surrounded by a serpent forming seven curves with its body, a nod to the seven hills of Lisbon. Although this episode is not featured in Homer's epic, folklore suggests that Ulysses was loved by the Queen of Ophiussa, the land that is now Lisbon. When Ulysses sought to leave the kingdom, it is said that her arms turned into serpents as she chased out to sea after him. These serpents, so the story goes, became Lisbon's hills.



Japan expands continental shelf eastward for rare metals research



metal that is used for electric vehicle batteries. The enlargement of the continental shelf, a part of a continent submerged in a relatively shallow part of the sea, was first proposed in an ocean policy the Japanese government adopted in 2014. To have its continental shelf recognized beyond its exclusive economic zone, Japan needed the approval of an institution established under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea on the continuity of the seabed topography and agreement from relevant countries, which in this case was solely the United States. Following consultations with Washington, Japan set the area for expansion in December 2023.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on June 27 that the expansion "contravenes the stipulations of U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea and universal practice." Rare earth minerals are crucial for high-tech products such as batteries and semiconductors. China, a major producer of them, has apparently been seeking to dominate industries where it already holds a large market share and to boost its economic

clout in growing sectors that rely on such materials, experts said. Due to economic security concerns, Japan has been strengthening efforts to secure supplies of the resources. Under the U.N. law, a coastal state can claim control of the seabed beyond the traditional 200-nautical-mile limit for its exclusive economic use if it can prove the ocean floor is connected to its continental shelf.

Covert Report

Tokyo: Japan this week extended its designation of its continental shelf to the eastern part of islands some 1,000 kilometers south of Tokyo, enabling the resource-poor country to start research on extracting maritime natural resources such as rare metals from the region. A revised Cabinet order took effect designating a significant portion of the Ogasawara Plateau sea area as part of its continental shelf, an area of around 120,000 square kilometers. Its move to enlarge the shelf has triggered opposition from China. "The expanded continental shelf represents around half of the area of Japan's Honshu main island," said Yoshifumi Matsumura, minister for ocean policy, on June 25 when the Cabinet approved the expansion. "We will be able to exercise our sovereign rights to explore the continental shelf and develop natural resources," he said. The government said it has confirmed the

existence of a cobalt-rich crust, including rare metals, in the region. Cobalt is a



Chairperson of Pakistan Caucus in US Congress Sheila Jackson dies of Cancer



Celina Ali

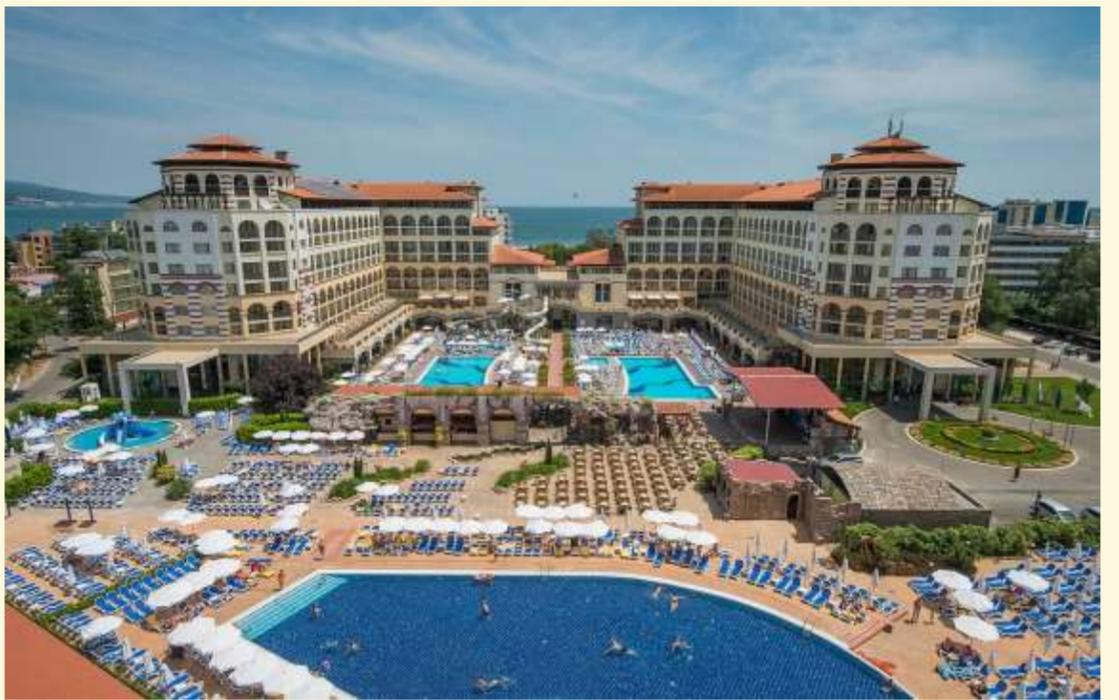
Islamabad: Chairperson of the Pakistan Caucus in US Congress, Congresswoman Jackson L. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, has passed away at the age of 74 after a battle with cancer. "Today, with incredible sorrow for our loss yet deep appreciation for the life she shared with us, we announce the passing of US Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of the 18th Congressional District of Texas," her family said. "A national, local, and global humanitarian, she was admitted worldwide for her courageous fights for criminal justice, racial justice, and human rights, with a special emphasis on children and women and women," the statement maintained. Jackson Lee had announced in June that she had been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing medical treatment. She served in the House since 1995 and leaves a legacy of pushing for legislation linked to civil rights. The Texas Democrat had introduced law for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which Biden signed in 2022. She had also worked with successive Pakistani governments and prominent leaders, serving as a bridge between Islamabad and Washington. Who was Jackson Lee? She was born in Queens, New York. A graduate of Yale University and the University



of Virginia Law School, she also worked as a lawyer in private practice and as a staff counsel for the House Select Committee on Assassinations. She also served in Houston's government as a member of the City Council and municipal judge before being elected to

Congress, where she sat on the Judiciary, Homeland Security and Budget committees. Jackson Lee is survived by her husband, two children and two grandchildren.

Bulgaria resort tops list of Europe's best value family summer holiday



Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan H.E. irena gancheva

Covert Report Bulgaria's Sunny Beach has narrowly beaten Turkey's Marmaris in a study assessing Europe's best value family summer holiday resort. Post Office Travel Money, which conducted the research, urged people booking

family breaks to do "holiday homework" to avoid "busting the budget while abroad". The report took into account the cost of common tourist expenses in 16 popular destinations. Sunny Beach was found to have the best value overall, with prices such as £1.38 for a cup of coffee, £9.67 for a bottle of suncream, £4.37 for insect repellent, and £59.38 for a three-course family meal including wine and soft drinks. Marmaris was in second place, followed by Portugal's Algarve region. The most expensive destination analysed was Ibiza, Spain, where prices were more than double those in Sunny Beach. Laura Plunkett, head of travel money at Post Office, said: "Even though sterling is stronger now than last July, price inflation across Europe means that families need to allow for increases in meals, drinks and other tourist costs in their spending budget. "Doing some holiday homework before leaving home could help to reduce the chances of busting the budget while abroad."



Finance Minister, High Commissioner Jane Marriot co-chair Steering Committee for UK-funded REMIT programme



Celina Ali

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the first steering committee of the FCDO-funded Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade (REMIT) programme this week. British High Commissioner, Jane Marriot co-chaired the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr. Jehanzeb Khan and senior



government officials. Reviewing the work done by the programme in the areas of revenue mobilisation, investment climate, macroeconomic governance and

trade, with cross-cutting themes of gender and climate change, the Minister appreciated the overall progress to date and also emphasized the need for government stakeholders to be more proactive in taking up implementation.

He added that the government intends to take up short, medium and long-term initiatives to ensure the economic revival of Pakistan. He emphasized that the government's focus on inclusive economic growth can be complemented by the support of develop-

ment partners with a focus on performance and implementation.

The Minister also appreciated the technical assistance provided, stressed on consolidation of interventions and on speeding up on government implementation for impact. Jane Marriot, thanked the minister for his interest in the programme interventions and commitment to reform that will take Pakistan forward. She assured of FCDO's full support to the government on high priority areas.



Romina Khurshid lauds UK support for Pakistan's climate action

Celina Ali

Islamabad: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina,

Khurshid Alam this week lauded the UK's support for Pakistan's climate action as the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and government of United Kingdom have agreed to enhance

collaboration to address climate change and environmental issues in Pakistan. The agreement was reached during a meeting between Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change,



Romina Khurshid Alam, and a British High Commission delegation met her led by Development Director, Jo Moir. She said this collaboration marks a significant step forward in the fight against climate change, and both countries are committed to working together to address this global challenge. Khurshid Alam stressed the importance of bridging civil society, academia, and corporate sectors in both nations to tackle the pressing issues of climate change and environmental degradation. She highlighted the urgent need for tangible

actions to mitigate global warming impacts, preemptively address flood risks, and support vulnerable farming communities. The Coordinator noted that shifting weather patterns have significantly impacted agricultural productivity threatening food security and livelihoods with the country facing billions of dollars in economic losses from climate-related disasters in the past. The UK delegation presented a report to the Coordinator aimed at bolstering Pakistan's climate resilience, and both sides agreed to work together to implement sustainable agricultural practices and mitigate future impacts.

“Each day comes bearing its gifts. Untie the ribbon.”
- Ann Ruth Schabacker

“Say something positive, and you’ll see something positive.”
Jim Thompson

Italy's Meloni says she can work with EU head von der Leyen



News wire

Rome: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said this week she would still be able to work with Ursula von der Leyen despite her Brothers of Italy party having voted against a second term for the German as head of the European Commission. Members of the European Parliament backed von der Leyen's bid for another five-year term at the helm of the European Union's powerful executive body. "We have cooperated until now and we will continue to do so in the future," Meloni said of her relationship with von der Leyen. "We are people who have responsibilities and we understand their importance," Meloni said in an interview with Italian daily Corriere della Sera. Meloni, who has led a right-wing Italian government since 2022, said she supported von der Leyen's comments in her address to the European Parliament on the need to control immigration but the Italian leader added that Europe overall needed less regulation and to find ways to boost its economic competitiveness. She also stressed Italy's importance as the third-largest economy in the EU and a founding member of the bloc, adding that it had the most stable government of all major EU nations. "Everyone recognises the weight and role of Italy," she said. The Italian prime minister also said she would be able to work with whoever was elected U.S. president in November. "For me what counts is the strength of the alliance with the United



The Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Marilina Armellini



States," she said. "To think that an alliance between two G7 nations would change with a change of government is stupid and childish."

France recalls contaminated Olympic water bottles



Covert Report

Parsi: French authorities have recalled Olympics-branded water bottles for children containing excessive levels of endocrine disruptor Bisphenol A. The reusable bottles made by the Vilac company have "levels of Bisphenol A not in line with regulations" on products designed for contact with foods, government website Rappel Conso (Consumer Recall) said. The white-coloured flasks with beige, blue or red tops are branded with the Olympic rings, the Paris 2024 mascot or the Olympic flame. People who have bought them should return them to the place of purchase, authorities said.



The bottles were sold in France from late August last year until the beginning of June. Bisphenol A, once widely used in making food containers, has been banned in France since 2015. Labelled an endocrine disruptor by France's food safety agency Anses, it is believed to be linked to health problems including breast cancer and infertility.