

Islamabad: Portugal offers a stunning blend of rich history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture, making it one of the popular tourist destinations. A huge number of visitors travel to the European country to explore historic sites like the Tower of Belém and Sintra's fairytale palaces in Portugal

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August 18 - 24, 2024

Islamabad: The British High Commission has been amongst the earliest organisations to provide relief interventions, following devastating floods in Chitral. Between

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China files WTO suit against EU over tariffs on Chinese EVs



Liu Yang and Chi Jingyi

Beijing: China this week initiated dispute settlement proceedings against the EU's provisional anti-subsidy measures against Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) at the WTO to safeguard the interests of its EV industry's development and global green transition cooperation, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said. Experts said that the move suggests that China has legitimately resorted to the multilateral mechanism to address the China-EU dispute over provisional tariffs on



China-made electric cars. Mediation through the WTO could lead to some new changes in discussion mechanisms within the bloc, they noted. Industry insiders also urged the EU to face up to healthy competition with China in the EV sector and ramp up green cooperation, in order to maintain the stable development of bilateral economic and trade ties as well as jointly address climate change.

According to the MOFCOM official website, the ministry noted that the findings in the EU's preliminary ruling lack factual and legal basis, seriously violate WTO rules, and jeopardize the overall situation of global cooperation in addressing climate change. We urge the EU to immediately rectify its wrong practices and jointly safeguard China-EU economic and trade cooperation and the stability of the EV industry and supply chains, said the ministry. "The MOFCOM's move is a legitimate response by China to the EU's investigation and subsequent decision to impose provisional tariffs on Chinese EVs against WTO rules. It also shows that China uses the multilateral platform to resolve bilateral trade disputes, which will help keep the bilateral economic and trade relations on track," Jian Junbo, deputy director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies, told the Global Times on Friday. Jian noted that China is taking diversified approaches to addressing the issue, in order to avoid bringing things to an impasse.

"The MOFCOM's action may have some impact on the EU's consideration on whether to impose the proposed tariff rates in November. Taking the issue to the multilateral platform for mediation may stimulate different ideas among different EU member states, which may lead to new mechanisms for discussion within the bloc," Jian said. Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA), said that the EU's unreasonable tariff measures against China's EVs are mainly aimed at curbing the development of Chinese electric carmakers in the EU, so as to protect its backward industry, which has subjected Chinese EV enterprises to unfair treatment.



Photo: WTO/ Cuika Foto



"Mediation through the WTO indicates China's desire to resolve the dispute started by the EU through talks and minimize its harm to car companies in both countries, as the cooperation between Chinese and European carmakers has become inextricably intertwined," Zhang Xiang, secretary general of the International Intelligent Vehicle Engineering Association, told the Global Times on Friday. China's move comes after a Financial Times report on Monday said that Valdis Dombrovskis, the European commissioner for trade, said EU member states are likely to support the imposition of proposed tariffs on Chinese EVs in November. Experts noted that Dombrovskis' remarks also sent a signal that the EU is encountering some difficulties in pressuring certain members to formulate a united supporting stance on additional tariffs on Chinese EVs, as the interests of some member countries, such as major auto producer Germany, and Hungary, which is a major recipient of Chinese investment including from BYD, apparently stand in contrast to EU tariff hikes.

The EU is coming under increasing pressure from the US government and has rolled out policies to curb the development of China's new-energy vehicle industry. However, the EU should know that scrapping the provisional tariffs is of great benefit to China-Europe trade cooperation, Zhang noted. "The entry of Chinese EVs into the European market can help further accelerate the electrification process of the auto industry in Europe and make its industrial layout more optimized. At least Chinese EVs give European consumers more choice," said Cui. "The EU should see that trade protectionism does not help competition in Europe's auto industry, and win-win cooperation is the right way to go," Jian noted. He Yongqian, a spokesperson from MOFCOM, said in July that the ministry hopes the EU will face the fact that the competitive advantages of Chinese EVs do not come from subsidies, that China-EU industrial cooperation in

the auto sector is beneficial for shared development, and that the EU's industry opposes trade protectionist measures. "We hope the EU will make reasonable, objective decisions that are truly based on facts and rules," He noted. Despite rising protectionist pressure from some Western countries, China's NEV sector saw a good performance in its sales and exports in July. Retail sales of NEVs rose 36.9 percent year-on-year to 878,000 units in July, according to statistics released by the CPCA on Thursday. China's domestic sales of new-energy passenger cars surpassed those of gasoline-powered cars for the first time that month, showcasing the resilient growth momentum of the NEV industry and strongly refuting allegations of so-called overcapacity. In July, China's NEV exports reached 92,000 units, up 1.3 percent year-on-year. Tesla exported 27,890 China-made NEVs in the same month, a significant increase from the June figure of 11,746, which highlighted the strength of China's NEV supply chain and its role in enhancing the global competitiveness of foreign brands.

Denmark's Maersk to invest \$2bn in Pakistan's ports over 2 years



Celina Ali

Islamabad: In a major upcoming economic development for Pakistan, Denmark's Maersk Shipping Line will invest \$2 billion over the next two years in the infrastructure of ports, terminals, dredging, transshipment, and road construction. This announcement was made this week by the Federal Minister for Naval Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh while briefing journalists in Karachi.

He said that the federal cabinet has approved the government-to-government Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Denmark and Pakistan. As a result, the Minister of Ports and Shipping will visit Denmark to sign the agreement between the two countries. As per the details, the MoU will be between Maersk, the world's largest shipping line, and Karachi Port Trust (KPT).

Bilawal Bhutto committed to safeguarding rights of minorities

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari this week reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights and fostering the development and empowerment of minorities in Pakistan. He emphasized that the PPP will never compromise on these core principles. The PPP Chairman on the occasion of National Minorities Day, underscored his party's long-standing dedication to championing minority rights. He highlighted that the consensus Constitution of 1973, a testament to the political vision of Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, guarantees equal rights, religious freedoms, and protections for all citizens of Pakistan. "My mother, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, envisioned a Pakistan where people of all faiths could coexist in harmony and with dignity," he added. Bilawal Bhutto also noted that the observance of National Minorities Day was instituted by President Asif Ali Zardari during his first tenure, with the aim of recognizing the vital role of minorities in the nation's fabric and promoting tolerance and harmony in society. "Our nation's diversity is our greatest strength, and it is our collective duty to ensure that every citizen, irrespective of their faith or background, enjoys equal rights and



opportunities," he added. He urged all Pakistanis to unite in the fight against discrimination and intolerance. "As we observe National Minorities Day, let us renew our pledge to build a Pakistan that truly embodies the principles of justice, equality, and tolerance. Together, we can create a nation where every individual, regardless of religion or ethnicity, has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to our country's prosperity," he concluded.

Seminar held on President Xi Jinping's broader vision for creating a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind



NewsWire

Islamabad: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) this week hosted an in-depth seminar focusing on the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), a cornerstone of President Xi Jinping's broader vision for creating a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind. This seminar brought together prominent experts from both Pakistan and China who underscored the importance of the GCI in promoting global peace, fostering cooperation, and encouraging mutual respect and dialogue among diverse civilizations. Sohai Mahmood, the Director General of ISSI, highlighted President Xi's three transformative initiatives—the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI), and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI)—as a comprehensive and alternative approach to global governance and human advancement. Grounded in Chinese wisdom and principles of peaceful coexistence, the GCI, launched by President Xi in March 2023, centers on respecting diversity, fostering mutual learning, encouraging innovation, and promoting people-to-people exchanges. Mahmood emphasized that these initiatives are designed to create lasting peace, stability, and development globally, with Pakistan being among the earliest nations to express its support. Mahmood further stressed the critical role of cultural integration and social cohesion in global progress, citing a metaphor from President Xi Jinping: "A single flower does not make spring, while one hundred flowers in full bloom bring spring to the garden."

Masood Khalid, the keynote speaker and former Pakistani Ambassador to China, offered a comprehensive overview of China's integrated approach to global governance through the GDI, GSI, and GCI. He illustrated how these initiatives provide strategic direction for constructing a global community with a shared future, embracing necessary changes, and addressing the various challenges that humanity faces today. Khalid also recognized Pakistan's unwavering support for China's initiatives, noting the strong and mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries. Ms. Xiang Yang, Director of the China Study Centre at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), provided practical insights into the implementation of GCI principles. She highlighted the collaborative efforts between China and Pakistan, particularly in cultural exchange and innovation, and referenced initiatives like the establishment of Zhenghe College at NUST, symbolizing the historical and ongoing cultural interactions between the two nations. Dr. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Director of the China Study Centre at COMSATS University, explored the GCI's significance from the perspectives of China, Pakistan, and the broader region. He stressed the importance of Pakistan aligning with the global narrative of peaceful development and leveraging the GCI to strengthen its ties with China. Dr. Awan advocated for greater cultural diplomacy, media collaborations, and educational exchanges to enhance the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China. Dr. Yasir Masood, a Senior Research Fellow at China

Global Television Network (CGTN), discussed the GCI as an extension of China's vision for a harmonious and multipolar world order. He emphasized the initiative's role in fostering mutual respect and learning among civilizations, moving beyond the zero-sum strategies of the past. Yang Nuo, Minister Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, commended the Institute of Strategic Studies for organizing the seminar on the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI). He underscored the significance of Xi Jinping's initiatives, including the GCI, Global Security Initiative (GSI), and Global Development Initiative (GDI), especially in the face of global challenges such as economic instability and cultural conflicts. Yang highlighted China's dedication to promoting cultural exchanges, enhancing harmony, and collaborating with Pakistan on cultural heritage conservation. He emphasized that civilizational exchanges are vital for global harmony and noted that the Chinese Embassy is actively working to develop a China-Pakistan community that could serve as a model for both the region and the world. Earlier, during his opening remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the China-Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI, described the GCI as a call for creating a more inclusive and interconnected global community. He outlined its four key principles: respect for diverse civilizations, shared human values, innovation, and people-to-people exchanges. Dr. Shabbir underscored that the GCI seeks to create a global environment where modernization is a collective goal, with respect and support for each country's unique development path.

Huawei launches "Train the Trainer" major training initiative for 300,000 students in Pakistan

NewsWire

Islamabad: Huawei this week marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards digital excellence with the Huawei Train The Trainer (TTT) Certificate Distribution Ceremony. Under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Huawei has designed an extensive training program to empower 300,000 students across the nation. This initiative is a crucial part of Pakistan's broader digital transformation efforts, aiming to elevate ICT education and skills nationwide. The TTT program, a collaborative endeavor between Huawei and various ICT academies across Pakistan, is designed to address the growing need for advanced ICT skills. By focusing on training trainers who will then educate students, the program creates a multiplier effect that significantly enhances the quality of ICT education. This approach ensures that trainers are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills in ICT technologies, which they will pass on to students, thus directly impacting the next generation of IT professionals. The program's structure is meticulously designed to ensure that trainers are well-prepared to deliver high-quality education. This initiative aligns perfectly with the government's vision of improving ICT education and fostering digital skills among students. By providing comprehensive training to trainers, Huawei and its partners are helping to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements, thus better preparing students for the challenges of the modern digital landscape. The collaboration with Huawei plays a critical role in strengthening this initiative. Huawei's involvement extends beyond merely providing training; it reflects a deep commitment to Pakistan's digital future. By bringing together its expertise and resources, Huawei is

significantly contributing to the development of a skilled workforce that will support various sectors within Pakistan and beyond. This partnership highlights Huawei's role as a leading player in advancing Pakistan's digital transformation. In his welcome address Ahmed Bilal Masood, Deputy CEO and Director Subsidiary Board of Huawei Pakistan congratulated the trainers and students and emphasized the collaborative effort that made the TTT and Seeds for the Future (SFTF) programs possible contributors to the economic growth of Pakistan. He remarked, "Investing in IT and youth is the right direction. We are honored that the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif has chosen Huawei to be a part of this initiative. This is one of our top priorities, and we are continuing to invest our efforts, resources to ensure its success. We will ensure that the digital transformation requires a trained workforce in Pakistan. We have to develop a workforce that will provide services not just within Pakistan but also internationally." Secretary of IT and Telecom, Aisha Humera Chaudhary, emphasized the importance of this initiative during the ceremony. She stated, "The Ministry of Information Technology is committed to supporting this initiative through several strategic measures. We will assist Huawei in provisioning students for this training and will have a committee in place to monitor operations and ensure the quality of the training imparted." Her comments reflect the Ministry's role in facilitating and overseeing the success of this transformative program. She further highlighted the broader impact of the program. She congratulated the students and trainers, saying, "This is the beginning of a significant celebration, and that celebration is the economic growth of Pakistan. While working with us, Huawei will make Pakistan another leader in the world." The TTT program is expected to have far-reaching effects. By training 300,000 individuals, the program



aims to create a substantial and skilled workforce ready to contribute to various sectors. Additionally, the establishment of an HR database for employment will streamline the connection between skilled professionals and job opportunities. This initiative is designed to improve employment rates and drive economic growth by fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce. The successful execution of these initiatives will play a

crucial role in shaping Pakistan's technological landscape. The collaboration between Huawei and various stakeholders underscores the importance of public-private partnerships in achieving transformative goals. Together, we are paving the way for a brighter, more connected future, equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in an increasingly digital world.

In conclusion, the ceremony marks a significant step in Pakistan's digital transformation journey. It celebrates the dedication and hard work of all those involved in the TTT program and highlights ongoing efforts to build a skilled, future-ready workforce. The continued success of these initiatives will have a profound impact on Pakistan's technological landscape and drive the nation's economic growth.

Chinese CG presents Rs 4 million to Punjab Governor for Attock development



Gwadar Pro

Lahore: Chinese Consul General Zhao Shirin this week presented a cheque for 4 million rupees to Governor of Punjab, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan for development projects in the Attock district. This contribution, previously announced during a meeting at the Governor House in Lahore, was warmly appreciated by Governor Khan, who expressed his gratitude for this gesture of goodwill during his visit to the Chinese Consulate here. Governor Khan announced that the funds would be utilized to establish a dispensary in Attock, aimed at providing healthcare services to the underprivileged residents of the area. On this occasion, Governor Khan underscored the enduring and unwavering

friendship between Pakistan and China, emphasizing their strong bond of love and trust. Governor Khan reaffirmed his commitment to fostering and strengthening the China-Pakistan friendship. In their meeting, both officials expressed a mutual determination to further enhance cooperation and deepen the bonds between their nations. Governor Khan assured Chinese investors that the Governor House would provide every possible support to facilitate their investments in Punjab. In his comments, the Chinese Consul General highlighted the profound connection between Pakistan and China, referring to the nations as "iron brothers." Earlier, Zhao Shirin warmly received the Punjab Governor.



Italy: Southern towns dazzle with these spectacular light displays in summer



Their shapes were varied - from arches to rosettes to portals - and they managed to reproduce entire architectural structures that served as theatrical backdrops for popular dances, religious parades and local fairs.

There are castellated entrance gates, arched tunnels, rose windows and domes decorated in multicoloured lights so the surfaces almost look like stained glass.

In the 20th century, the oil lamps were replaced by electricity and incandescent light bulbs.

Over time, the artisan techniques have changed. Now, structures up to 40 metres high are made with marine plywood (used to make boats) to be more weather-resistant.

With sustainability in mind, low-consumption LED lights are used which are attached to recycled materials like metal wires and twisted into intricate forms.

Some towns limit the hours the structures are illuminated, especially during nighttime, to reduce light pollution. But the effect is no less grandiose and has



The Italian Ambassador to Pakistan (L.E. Martina Aronfin)

even attracted fashion brands. Both Dior and Dolce & Gabbana have used them as backdrops to present their collections in Puglia.

Newsire

Rome: The southern Italian town of Scorrano was recently transformed into a kaleidoscopic light display. To celebrate the patron saint Santa Domenica, giant architectural structures studded with lightbulbs known as luminarie are erected. There are castellated entrance gates, arched tunnels, rose windows and domes decorated in multicoloured lights so the surfaces almost look like stained glass. Across southern Italy, in the regions of

Molise, Puglia, Calabria, Campania, Basilicata and Sicilia, these dazzling constructions appear for saints day festivals and Christmas celebrations. Earlier this year, Italy's UNESCO committee announced its decision to propose the temporary light displays as intangible heritage, under the name 'Parazoni and traditional light displays of Southern Italy'. The art of luminarie began as far back as the 17th century with decorations erected for village festivals and celebrations. The word derives from the phrase 'lumen

in aria' meaning lights suspended in the air. Initially, these were oil lamps or candles wrapped in coloured paper strung up on ropes. Soon, local artisans began to create bigger structures from poles and arches. In the 20th century, the oil lamps were replaced by electricity and incandescent light bulbs. Later, they began to draw inspiration from the sketches of the great masters of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque to create 'parazoni' or 'parature', which were carved in wood and hung with oil lamps.



Dr Tsung-Dao Lee's vision on China's science future still relevant

Ding Gang

Dr Tsung-Dao Lee, a Chinese-American physicist and Nobel laureate, passed away in San Francisco on August 4 at the age of 97.

Dr Lee held many titles, including Chinese-American physicist, foreign member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and honorary professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

However, what makes him most fondly remembered by the global Chinese community is his joint Nobel Prize in Physics win in 1957 with Chen-Ning Yang, marking the first appearance of Chinese names on the Nobel Prize list.

In 1991, I had the opportunity to interview Dr Lee in Stockholm and asked him about China's scientific and technological development. Revisiting my notes from that interview, I am once again struck by his insight.

Over the past 40 years, China has developed from a poor country into the world's second-largest economy, making significant strides in high technology. This transformation underscores the intrinsic logic of China's rise.

However, more than 40 years ago, not many people believed in the potential of China's scientific research development, but Dr Lee was one of the few who did.

What is the future of China's scientific development? Can it withstand the strategic pressure from Washington? How can it break through under such pressure? Dr Lee answered these questions over three decades ago.

In the winter of 1991, Dr Lee was invited to Sweden to attend the 90th anniversary of the Nobel Prize. During his meeting with then Chinese ambassador to Sweden, Tang Longbin, I interviewed him with Wu Ping, a reporter from the Xinhua News Agency.

Reflecting on that interview, his straightforward assertion impressed me the most: China's scientific development should follow a path suited to its national conditions. He believed this path included strong government support, clear goals, concentrated use of limited resources, and bold adoption of advanced global technologies.

He viewed this as a shortcut for China to excel in science and technology. He compared it to the country's strategic emphasis on sports, such as table tennis, for overall success - from small victories to significant achievements. Rather than spreading resources thin across various projects, he argued for a focused and prioritized approach, which he deemed crucial for succeeding in international competitions.

According to Dr Lee, a critical method for China's technological advancement was to focus its limited financial resources on nurturing talented elite labor.

Looking back over the past 40 years, China's scientific and technological development has largely followed the path Dr Lee described. Furthermore, the future course of China's technological development will likely stay on the same trajectory.

Washington can see the strength of China's technological progress. This is why the focus of the US strategy toward China is to contain China's development in high-end technology.

China's scientific and technological development is not aimed at surpassing or defeating the US. However, as the only global hegemony, the US sees China as a strategic rival, and possibly an enemy. Therefore, the big game around high technology will continue for quite a long time.

Washington's worry and fear indicate that China has made the right choice: selecting a scientific and technological development path that aligns

with Chinese realities.

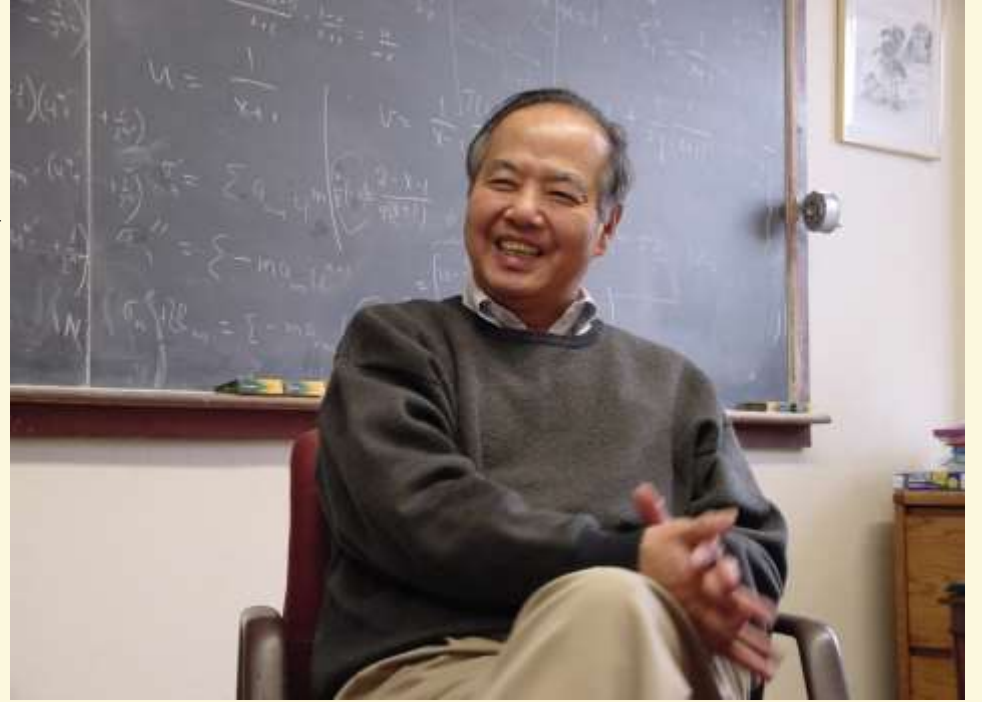
In that interview, Dr Lee emphasized repeatedly that global scientific competition would become increasingly intense.

Despite the immense competitive pressure facing China's technological development, he saw great potential in China.

It is precisely because Dr Li saw this potential, especially the potential of talent, that he made significant contributions to unleashing such potential.

Since 1972, he often returned to China to give lectures and suggestions. After the reform and opening-up, he spared no effort in promoting the advancement of China's scientific education. He made unparalleled contributions to the strategic layout of China's science education, frontier exploration of high-energy physics, training of high-level talents and international exchanges and cooperation.

Dr Lee also specifically mentioned that some young Chinese have an inferiority complex that needs to be changed. "China has already taken the lead in certain fields. Chinese people are



brilliant. There are talented Chinese people worldwide; the domestic talent pool is rich. In the face of international competition, Chinese people should enhance their self-esteem and self-reliance and move forward steadily and gradually. I believe China can achieve victory." Dr Lee's words still ring in my ears.

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

Why BRICS becomes increasingly appealing to developing countries

Zhu Tianxiang

Countries showing interest in BRICS membership have seen a significant increase over the years. Malaysia and Thailand are the latest countries in Southeast Asia to express interest in joining the group. The number of African and Latin American countries seeking to join BRICS is continuously increasing, and there is also a gradual spread of applicants from various regions in Asia. It can be said that BRICS countries as typical representatives of the Global South and BRICS cooperation as a new practice of South-South cooperation have

obtained a wide consensus among an increasing number of developing countries.

BRICS has received positive attention mainly due to having shown real development success over the past nearly two decades. The unfairness and irrationality of the existing international system and international order have continuously harmed developing countries. These two factors combined have driven more emerging markets and developing countries toward closer alignment with BRICS.

Although financial and economic cooperation is just one of the pillars of BRICS cooperation, it is the primary

dimension that attracts most countries to the group.

Against the backdrop of long-term sluggish global economic recovery, the earliest five BRICS members contribute over 50 percent to global economic growth. Now, with five new members, BRICS not only sees a better average growth rate, but also more potential in terms of resource endowment, market capacity and development scale.

Furthermore, BRICS has pioneered the establishment of the New Development Bank, mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in multiple member countries. This has given other coun-

tries ample confidence to apply for membership. At the same time, BRICS insists on the peaceful resolution of international disputes, effectively safeguarding global and regional security. It also promotes cultural exchanges to enhance mutual understanding among people and pushes for the coexistence and mutual learning among different civilizations. Furthermore, it provides BRICS wisdom and BRICS solutions for other countries to handle international relations effectively. As the BRICS spirit indicates, openness and inclusiveness grant each member more dignity, while strengthened collaboration and consensus result in greater gains for everyone.

If BRICS countries' strivings for prosperity serve as a "pulling force" attracting other emerging markets and developing countries, then the obduracy of a few developed countries is the "push force" urging the Global South to gradually align with BRICS. Faced with the international political and economic order constructed and dominated by the developed country bloc, especially certain hegemonic powers, developing nations have

consistently demanded reforms that more accurately reflect the shifting balance of power within the international system and better represent their voices and interests. The Global South is increasingly aware that they must have a reliable leader to maximize and safeguard their legitimate rights and interests during the long and arduous process of North-South dialogue. This role has historically fallen to BRICS. The multipolar process advocated by BRICS and its commitment to multilateralism stand in stark contrast to the hegemonism, power politics and unilateral sanctions pursued by certain developed nations. More importantly, the existing "rich man's club" resembles

a closed circle, where even if some countries manage to secure a "ticket" to the periphery of the discussion, they are still unable to achieve truly equal dialogue and share the benefit with the members of this exclusive grouping.

In contrast, BRICS has consistently kept its doors open, responding sincerely to the expectations of all parties. It promotes the accession of eligible members to the group through pragmatic actions and prepares to address the urgent need for an expanding circle of friends by establishing the partner country model.

In conclusion, the appeal of BRICS remains steadfastly poised to exhibit significant international impact in the new era of "greater BRICS cooperation." Of course, to maintain and further enhance this attractiveness, the group must continually deepen institutional mechanisms, elevate cooperation efficiency and adeptly manage the sensitive and complex relationships with other emerging markets and developing countries, as well as developed nations.

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Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed hosts Hero Arshad Nadeem

Covert Report

Paris: Pakistan's golden boy, Arshad Nadeem, who recently clinched the gold medal at the Paris Olympics 2024, was greeted with overwhelming warmth and national pride amid drumbeat upon his arrival at the Pakistan Em-

bassy in Paris. The streets surrounding the embassy echoed with chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Arshad Nadeem Zindabad," as members of the Pakistani community from all walks of life gathered in full force to celebrate their champion.

Arshad, who made history by becoming the first Pakistani athlete to win an Olympic gold medal in track and field, was welcomed by Pakistan's Ambassador to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmed along with a diverse crowd within the diaspora. The visitors congratulated Arshad Nadeem and took lots of selfies with him.



During a news conference held at the embassy, Arshad expressed his deep gratitude for the love and support he received, both in Pakistan and abroad. He highlighted the role of his parents' prayers and the unwavering support of the Pakistani nation in his journey to the Olympic podium. However, Arshad also used the opportunity to address a pressing issue: the lack of facilities and patronage for athletes in Pakistan. "Despite the immense talent in our country, many potential stars are unable to shine due to the lack of proper grounds and support," Arshad said. He urged the government to provide better facilities for athletes, emphasizing that

with the right support, Pakistan could produce more world-class sportsmen and women.

He recounted the challenges he faced during his preparation, particularly the training sessions in the heat of Pakistan. "Behind this success is our hard work," Arshad noted, sharing that even after his impressive performance in the second round of the Olympic javelin throw event, he did not allow himself to relax. "When I made the throw in the second round, I was hopeful the gold medal will be ours. Despite a good throw, I did not relax," he recalled. Arshad's message to aspiring athletes was clear: "Whenever you enter the field, don't think of yourself as weak." He reminded everyone that Olympics was the biggest sporting event in the world, adding that as soon as goes back to Pakistan, he will tell everyone to promote sports. "The prime minister called and congratulated me on the gold medal," he added.

Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir observed across Australia

Covert Report

Canberra: Youm-e-Istehsal was observed this week across Australia, with multiple events organized across major cities, including Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. Car rallies featuring pictures that expressed support for Kashmiris and their quest for justice and self-determination also gained a lot of public attention. To commemorate the day, the High Commission for Pakistan in Canberra organised a webinar titled "Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir: 77 Years of Occupation and Oppression". The event featured several distinguished panel-

ists who provided insightful remarks on the situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The keynote speakers included Honorable Senator David Shoebridge, Honorable Senator Lee Rhiannon, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, and Professor Samina Yasmeen. Honorable Senator David Shoebridge, Senator for New South Wales, condemned India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019. He provided a comprehensive overview of the humanitarian situation in IIOJK before and after this date. Senator Shoebridge criticized the Indian attempts to bring about a demographic change in IIOJK that contravenes UNSC resolu-

tions, the 4th Geneva Convention, and international law. He highlighted that India was trying to convert the Kashmiri people into a minority in their own land by confiscating their property and distributing it to the Indian citizens. He urged Australia to play its role in achieving a fair and just resolution of the IIOJK dispute. The Honorable Senator Lee Rhiannon, former Senator for New South Wales, remarked on the legal and human rights dimensions of the IIOJK dispute. She stated that India's polarizing policies would have long-term implications not only for IIOJK but also for India itself.



Senator Rhiannon urged the international community to call upon India to stop its oppression of the Kashmiri people. Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Attorney at Law and Consultant on Human Rights & International Law, described the Indian illegal actions of 5 August as a conspiracy to further deprive the people of IIOJK of their right to self-determination and to perpetuate India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that the people of IIOJK were resilient and would never surrender. Professor Samina Yasmeen from the University of Western Australia highlighted the broader implications of the IIOJK dispute. She warned that India's actions



would have long-lasting repercussions not only for the region but for the international community as well. She called for a united global effort to address the crisis in IIOJK. High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, in his remarks, thanked all the speakers for their valuable contributions. He highlighted the historic role played by Australia in the IIOJK dispute, noting that Australia was a founding member of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and that Sir Owen Dixon, the 6th Chief Justice of Australia, was the first UN

mediator between India and Pakistan. He reminded the international community of its obligations to seek just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UNSC resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The High Commissioner also briefed the audience on the ongoing humanitarian crisis in IIOJK. He reiterated that Pakistan would continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with its Kashmiri brothers and sisters until the resolution of the IIOJK dispute.

Amna Baloch to be appointed foreign secretary, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch Ambassador to France



Celina Ali Islamabad: Pakistan's new Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch will assume office next month, replacing the retiring Dr Syrus Sajjad Qazi. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has approved Baloch's appointment, based on the recommendation of

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. Qazi is expected to be appointed as an ambassador in an important country after his retirement. Additionally, the government has approved several other changes to Pakistan's diplomatic corps. Ambassador Muhammad Saleem has been appointed High Commissioner to Canada, while Mumtaz Zahra Baloch will serve as Ambassador to France, replacing Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, who has been designated as Pakistan's Additional Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Other appointments include Janbaz Khan as Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam, Syed Faisal Niaz Tirmizi as Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union, and Malik Muhammad Farooq as High Commissioner to South Africa. Baloch is a Grade 22 officer of the Foreign Service of Pakistan and currently serving as the country's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg. She has a distinguished career, including serving as Consul General in Chengdu, China, and Minister Counsellor in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Umar Rehman Malik lauds Sindh govt's strides in health sector

Abdullah Jan

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week lauded the Sindh government's strides in the health sector. "The PPP government's strides in the health sector have been trailblazing.



HEALTH DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF SINDH



added that the treatment facilities included latest robotic operating theatre and dialysis. Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho said it was the top priority of the Sindh government to ensure pro-

first link of the series. She said the BIUT was a gift from the Sindh government to the patients of kidney and related diseases living in Shaheed Benazirabad district and its ad-



vision of state-of-the-art health facilities to the people of this province and the BIUT was the

joining areas who earlier had to travel to Karachi and other cities for such treatment.

Whether it's the state of the art Children's hospital in Sukkur or provision

of world class ambulances in interior Sindh to name just a couple, the PPP

has always been one step ahead," he said in a statement.

He added: "(PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's tireless work in this field has been a testament to what the PPP can do for the people once given the mandate."

Last year, Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho had inaugurated the Benazir Institute of Urology and Transplantation (BIUT). The 300-bed hospital is meant for kidney patients needing best possible treatment as is being offered at the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplant in Karachi and Sukkur, according to Senior SIUT Professor Dr Anwar Naqvi and SIUT-BIUT coordinator Mohammad Ameen, who



Greece becomes visa-free for 188 countries, including the UK, the Netherlands and Spain

Newsire

Athens: Greece became visa-free for 188 countries, including the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany and the US; encouraging tourism at a time when the rest of Europe takes new measures to reduce the flood of foreign visitors. From August 2024, Greek authorities dropped the Schengen visa requirements, allowing visitors from the 188 countries to arrive comfortably for a holiday getaway. The changes reflected Greece's willingness to promote tourism, at a time when countries like Italy and Spain are taking measures to combat visiting crowds. Greek authorities of Rhodes Island had previously launched a similar pro-tourism campaign on April 1, with the launch of the visa-express programme for Turkish tourists. Under the scheme, Turkish citizens became able to visit 10 Greek islands for stays of up to seven days

without the need to apply for full access to the Schengen area. The decision was made not only to fuel tourism but a diplomatic measure to "reduce ongoing tensions between the two countries," said Greek officials. Last year, Greece received 33 million tourists; more than thrice the country's population. The economic impact of tourism has increased significantly in the past few years, rising from €9,5 billion in 2010 to €20,5 in 2023; a further 10 per cent increase is expected this year. The revenue from tourism was the key power in handling the economic crisis in Greece, yet many have concerns about being over-reliant on the tourist sector. 17 per cent of the workforce in Greece is employed in the tourist sector; this is three times the European average and more than double that of Spain and Italy. With the extensive transport



ation infrastructure and accessible transport through air travel, boats, trains and buses. Greece continues to be one of the top holiday destinations, especially for cruise trips. With paradisaical coastline views, unique islands and mountains, Greece has been the dream location for visitors across the world for many years. Now hosting 18 UNESCO World Heritage Sites; among the most in Europe, Greece is also attractive for its density of archaeological sites and historic architecture. At the same time, its expansive nightlife is a magnet for tourists,

Greece's love-and-hate relationship with tourism, however, continues to be the driving force behind new regulations and future goals. Like Italy and Spain, the Greek capital, Athens hosted groups of residents protesting against tourists. Graffiti targeting foreigners and vandalism was reported on the city streets. One of the protesters, resident Anna Theodorakis, who was forced out of her home in Athens said to the Press that tourism was "wiping out the traditional places" and that she felt like a "foreigner in my own country."

Another resident and a property developer, Dimitri voiced his concerns; "Eighty per cent of this neighbourhood are Airbnbs. Tourists who come here want to see the Greek culture, so if no more Greeks are living here, tourists won't want to come." The Mayor of Athens Haris Doukas argued that despite the extreme numbers of visitors, tourism does not foster the local economy; "Each visitor brings €0,40 to the city, and we haven't seen the money yet. We need to find a way to make tourism viable."



Bulgaria seeks to facilitate issuance of tourist, work visas

Newsire

Sofia: Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism Evtim Miloshev and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Maria Angelieva this week discussed plans to facilitate the issuance of tourist and work visas. During a meeting held between representatives of both ministries, the easing of the work of consular services in third countries was also discussed, in Schengen.News reports.

The Minister of Tourism, Evtim Miloshev, said that people who create tourism in Bulgaria are the investors. He said that for them "business is today and now", stressing that that's why the country needs to understand their problems and find a solution to get rid of them. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Maria Angelieva, the Ministry is working with the Ministry of Finance to facilitate the entry process for those interested in working in Bulgaria. We are actively working to obtain funding from the

Ministry of Finance to provide additional consular officers to serve more citizens in our priority consular offices in Delhi, Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa, Doha, Jakarta, Tashkent, Dubai, Cairo, Riyadh, etc. These are the destinations from which we receive numerous requests for work in our country. She added that in the past few years, the volume of work in these consular offices has increased significantly due to the increased interest of citizens from these countries to work in Bulgaria and also visit the country for tourism purposes.



Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism Miloshev and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Angelieva also discussed the temporary suspension of visa issuance from August 9 to August 18. The suspension comes following the implementation of the new version of the National Visa Information System (NVIS) that will be introduced during that period. Minister Miloshev said that this temporary suspension is a step forward, and it is part of the full integration into Schengen. We have made it possible to accept applications for the issuance of temporary passports in urgent cases and to verify powers of attorney and declarations in urgent and humanitarian cases, for example, force majeure, natural

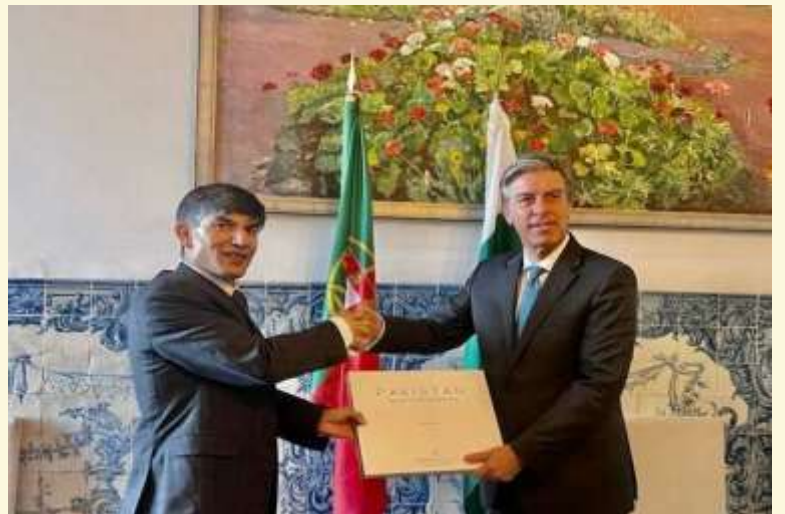
disasters, urgent travel related to illness or death of a loved one family member and cases of travel of minor children. Bulgaria's Minister of Tourism Evtim Miloshev also discussed easing the visa issuance procedures for Turkish tourists planning to visit Bulgaria. Miloshev said that even the local government in Bulgaria notes the actions of Greek authorities and the flexible options it has introduced for Turkish tourists. In April this year, Greece introduced the Express Visa Scheme, permitting Turkish citizens to obtain visas upon their arrival at Greek islands. The scheme so far brought 35,000 Turkish tourists to Greece.

Portugal Schengen visa from Pakistan: A brief guide



Celina Ali
 Islamabad: Portugal offers a stunning blend of rich history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture, making it one of the popular tourist destinations. A huge number of visitors travel to the European country to explore historic sites like the Tower of Belém and Sintra's fairytale palaces in Portugal. Whether seeking adventure, relaxation, or cultural immersion, Portugal's timeless charm is the best destination. Pakistani tourists are required to obtain the short-term Schengen visa to travel to the European country for tourism purposes. Among various other requirements, minimum bank balance plays a key role in acceptance of your application for the Schengen visit visa.

To obtain a Schengen short-term visa for Portugal, you will typically need to show he/she intends to spend there: Country Daily Required Amount: Portugal



proof of sufficient funds to cover your stay in the country. Following is the minimum daily required amount for bearing expense of stay in Portugal. An applicant is required to show the amount which is enough for the days 75 Euros. As of August 8, 2024, one Euro is equal to Rs304.57. It means you need to have around Rs 685,000 in your bank account if your stay is for 30 days in Portugal.



Japan's state debt tops ¥1,300 trillion for 1st time

Covert Report Tokyo: Japan's state debt swelled to a record 1,311.04 trillion yen (\$9 trillion) as of the end of June, topping the 1,300 trillion yen mark for the first time ever, government data

showed this week, underscoring its dire fiscal health. The debt increased by 13.88 trillion yen from three months earlier, as Japan has had to ramp up spending to help households hit by accelerating

inflation. The total is more than twice the size of the 600 trillion yen Japanese economy. The Bank of Japan has entered its interest rate hike cycle and plans to cut its buying of government bonds,



as it whittles down massive monetary stimulus provided over the past decade or so to achieve its inflation goal of 2 percent. Borrowing costs are expected to rise for households and businesses and debt-servicing costs will increase for the government. The BOJ owned about half of the outstanding government debt in June as part of its powerful monetary easing. According to the Finance Ministry, government bonds totaled 1,160.14 trillion yen, up 3.03 trillion yen from the end of March, making up the

bulk. Of the total, general bonds came to 1,059.56 trillion yen, up 5.91 trillion yen. The government uses tax revenue to redeem and pay interest on general bonds. Japan has increased fiscal spending to ride out the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis partly caused by Russia's war on Ukraine that sent energy prices higher. While efforts are under way to cut spending, the government relies on debt issuance to fund about a third of its annual expenditure.

Ambassador Donald Blome commends Pakistan's Afghan refugee policies



Celina Ali

Islamabad: US Ambassador Donald Blome met with Minister of States and Frontier Regions Amir Muqam this week to thank the Minister for Pakistan's long history of hosting Afghan refugees and reaffirm the United States' commitment to working with Pakistan to assist Afghan refugees and Pakistani community members in areas hosting refugees. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for Pakistan's recent decision to extend the validity of refugee Proof of Registration cards, for the positive

steps taken to address protection concerns, and for our countries' continued cooperation to facilitate the safe, efficient resettlement of eligible Afghans to the United States. During the meeting here, the minister expressed his gratitude for the long-standing cooperation of US with Pakistan. He said that Pakistan was combating successful war against terrorism and also rendered countless sacrifices in terms of human lives and economic losses.

He said that more than 70,000 lives had been lost due to terrorism in Pakistan since 2001 and more than \$150 billion in economic losses. Amir Muqam urged the international community to recognize Pakistan's efforts in the war against terrorism. He emphasized the need for the assistance of the United States and other international partners in the return of Afghan refugees. He emphasized on increasing US aid to host communities and efforts to create favorable conditions in Afghanistan for the return of refugees.

European Union takes the global lead in AI legislation



The limited-risk category covers those associated with lack of transparency in AI usage. The new Act introduces specific transparency obligations to ensure that humans are informed when using systems such as chatbots, so they can decide whether to continue or not with such an interaction.

In addition, certain AI-generated content, including deep fakes, must be labelled as such, and users must be informed when biometric categorisation or emotion-recognition systems are being used. Furthermore, providers will have to introduce systems that mark and tell users that synthetic audio, video, text and image content are being artificially generated or manipulated.

The minimal-risk category applies to the great majority of today's AI systems and includes AI-enabled recommender systems and spam filters. Such systems, despite being a bane for citizens across the EU (and the rest of the world) are not subject to the main obligations defined in the AI Act because, despite being an unconscionable nuisance and intrusion, they are categorised as not being a risk to the rights and safety to EU citizens.

Companies "can voluntarily adopt additional codes of conduct", but the queue of them waiting to sign-up is conspicuous by its absence. To complement the above system, the AI Act also applies rules to "general-purpose AI models" defined as "highly capable of performing a wide variety of tasks, such as generating human-like text". General-purpose AI models are increasingly used as components of AI applica-

"national competent authorities" to oversee the application of the rules for AI systems and carry out market surveillance activities. The EC's AI Office will be the key implementation body for the AI Act at pan-EU level, as well as the enforcer for the rules for general-purpose AI systems identified as being of unacceptable risk, which will be subject to full enforcement in six months time. To bridge the transitional period before complete implementation of the Act, the EC has introduced the "AI Pact" which "invites AI developers voluntarily to adopt key obligations of the AI Act ahead of the legal deadlines." Oh dear.

Implementation of the Act will be supported by the European Artificial Intelligence Board (EAIB), which will police the actor to ensure the uniform application of the AI Act across member states. It will oversee a panel of independent AI experts that will provide technical advice and input on enforcement of the new law. It will be particularly responsible for the issue of alerts to the AI Office on risks associated with general-purpose AI models.

The AI Act does not alter the fact that the EU GDPR law on the protection of personal data, privacy and the confidentiality of communications will apply to the processing of personal data in connection with the AI Act.

Despite the scope of the legislation, penalties for those found to be in breach of it seem very limited. Companies and organisations found to have broken the law will face fines of up to 7% of the global annual turnover where violations of banned AI applications are concerned, up to 3% of annual turnover for violations of oth-

Covert Report

Brussels: The European Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), the world's first extensive and far-reaching legislation on AI, has come into force.

Its purpose is to ensure that AI developed and used in the European Union's member states is trustworthy and thus the Act is hedged around with comprehensive safeguards to protect people's fundamental rights. The law was three years in the making, having been first mooted by the European Commission (EC) in 2021 and agreed by the European parliament in December 2023. It delineates the legal obligations of developers and deployers in regard to the specific uses of AI.

The Act further prepares the ground for the establishment of a harmonised internal market for AI across all EU member states, encouraging the uptake of AI technology and the creation of "a supportive environment for innovation and investment." It is also designed to reduce administrative and financial burdens for business in general, and for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular. In due course, we'll see how that particular intent turns out in practice in those parts of the EU where bureaucracy is still the be all and end all of daily existence. Names could be named, but the people who live there know who they are.

The new AI Act is part of a great overarching European AI strategy that includes the AI Innovation Package – measures to support European startups and SMEs in the development of trustworthy AI that respects EU values and rules – and the Coordinated Plan on AI, which aims to increase investment in AI, implement AI strategies and programmes and align AI policy to prevent fragmentation within Europe. The Act addresses the structure of AI applications, prohibits AI practices that pose unacceptable risks and sets parameters and controls for high-risk applications via governance structures set at both the European and the individual member state level. It also categorises AI into systems judged to be of unacceptable risk, followed by high-risk and then cascading down the stack via limited risk and minimal or no risk. Each categorisation is subject to specific obligations that become more stringent as the risk level rises. The category of unacceptable risk covers AI systems deemed to be a clear threat to the fundamental rights of people. This includes those that "manipulate human behaviour to circumvent users' free will, such as toys using voice assistance encouraging dangerous behaviour of minors, systems that allow 'social scoring' by governments or companies, and certain applications of predictive policing."

Additionally, some types of biometric systems will be prohibited, "for example emotion recognition systems used at the workplace and some systems for categorising people or real-time remote biometric identification for law enforcement purposes in publicly accessible spaces."



Any such AI systems will be banned in their entirety.

AI systems regarded as being high-risk will have to comply with strictly enforced requirements, including risk-mitigation systems, the highest quality of datasets, the logging of all activities, be documented in comprehensive detail, provide clear user information, be subject to human oversight at all times and under all conditions while being fully secure, robust and accurate and a high level of robustness, accuracy and cybersecurity. The EC gives as an example of a high-risk AI systems being those "used for recruitment, or to assess whether somebody is entitled to get a loan, or to run autonomous robots" as well as, critical infrastructures, such as transport, that could put the life and health of citizens at risk, and educational or vocational training that may determine the access to education and professional course of someone's life (including the scoring/marking of exams). Also included are the safety components of products such as AI applications in robot-assisted surgery (quite a handy one that) and the management of workers and access to self-employment, which includes areas such as CV-sorting software for recruitment procedures. Other sectors covered are essential private and public services – here, the example given is credit scoring denying citizens the opportunity to obtain a loan – and law enforcement that may interfere with people's fundamental rights, such as the evaluation of the reliability of evidence. Other high-risk examples are those AI applica-

tions that are applied to migration, asylum and border control management and those attendant on the administration of justice and democratic processes.

and the AI Act "will ensure transparency along the value chain and addresses possible systemic risks of the most capable models." Now the AI Act is EU law, member states have until this time next year to designate

er obligations and up to 1.5% for supplying incorrect information.



British High Commission at the forefront of floods response in Chitral



Celina Ali

Islamabad: The British High Commission has been amongst the earliest organisations to provide relief interventions, following devastating



bridges, 55 irrigation channels, 9 link roads, 3 schools building, protection walls (4,000 feet), and 20 local shops have been fully/partially damaged. The British High Commission used their exist-

ing presence in Chitral to respond to immediate needs through their partners, Concern Worldwide and the Agha Khan Foundation. They are supporting emergency relief and restoration of infrastructure and livelihoods. So far, the UK has funded essential items like kitchen sets, hygiene kits, water storage containers and more for around 300 families. Partners continue to work on immediate restoration of damaged drinking water systems, the restoration of essential irrigation channels, and debris



removal to re-enable access and livelihoods, UK support is expected to benefit over 20,000 people in Chitral. The UK are also considering on longer-term recovery plans for affected areas, in close coordination with government counterparts and humanitarian partners. Chargé d'Affaires of the British High Commission, Andrew Dalgleish said: 'The recent floods in Chitral are devastating. Lives and livelihoods have been destroyed. The UK is here to support Pakistan. These floods are a stark reminder that there is much more to be done to improve Pakistan's climate resilience.'

for the UK Government. During the devastating floods of 2022, the UK helped over 2.3 million people, dedicating a total of £39 million in UK aid. The British public mobilised, and raised £41.5m as part of the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal. Support included emergency cash assistance, shelter kits, nutritional support, learning kits and infrastructure repair. The UK's focus is on improving Pakistan's climate resilience long-term, rather than purely responding to disasters. The UK has already helped 1.5 million people improve their resilience to extreme climate events, and aims



floods in Chitral. Between 29 July and August 3, Chitral suffered severe damages from torrential rains, flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods. 14 drinking water supply schemes, 15 jeep-able

ing presence in Chitral to respond to immediate needs through their partners, Concern Worldwide and the Agha Khan Foundation. They are supporting emergency relief and restoration of infrastructure and livelihoods. So far, the UK has funded essential items like



Floods have already led to 141 deaths, 266 injuries and damage to over 1,000 houses in Pakistan this year. Climate change is a priority

to support a further 3 million people in the next 4-5 years.



"I was taught that the way of progress was neither swift nor easy." - Marie Curie

COVERT

TRUTH UNFOLD

August 18 - 24, 2024

"Love the life you live. Live the life you love." - Bob Marley

Bob Marley

Italy: Meloni says she set example for mothers by taking daughter to China

Newswire

Rome: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni this week said that taking her seven-year-old daughter on an official visit to China set a good example that should help advance the rights of working mothers.

In an interview with lifestyle magazine Chi, she said there had been a lot of debate in Italy after being pictured hand-in-hand with her daughter Ginevra as they left the plane in Beijing to be

greeted by Chinese officials at the start of the visit.

Critics on social media had questioned the decision to expose her daughter to the public spotlight on a high-profile trip, but Meloni said the alternative would have been to leave the girl behind in Italy for the best part of a week.

Meloni, who broke up with Ginevra's father last year, said every mother had to choose what was right for their child.



"But there's more to it, there is a cultural challenge that affects all women," she said in advance excerpts of the interview.

"I think that if I, as prime minister, manage to show that my role is compatible with motherhood, then there will no longer be excuses for

those who use motherhood as an excuse not to promote women at work," she added.

The rise of Meloni, who became prime minister two years ago, shattered a glass ceiling for Italy's women politicians but she is not known as a feminist.

In the past, she has opposed female quotas in boardrooms and parliament, arguing that women should advance through merit.

France stays top EU power exporter in H1 with 31% rise



during periods of negative prices", the report said.

In 2023, France regained its position as Europe's largest net power exporter after becoming a net power importer for 2022, at around 17 TWh, for the first time in more than 40 years. Most power from France flowed to Britain, which received 11.7 TWh, while Italy, Germany and Switzerland received 9.4 TWh, 8.8 TWh and 7.4 TWh, respectively.

Sweden was the second largest net power exporter in Europe in H1, at 15.3 TWh, and the Netherlands overtook Norway to become the third highest, at 8.8 TWh.

"An increase in solar capacity and new offshore wind farms coming fully online were key reasons why the Netherlands leapfrogged Norway," said Jean-Paul Harreman, director at Montel Analytics.

"In contrast, Norway's hydro reserves dropped... which reduced the pressure to dump cheap power into neighbouring countries."

Meanwhile, Italy remained Europe's largest net power importer at 25.4 TWh, of which 9.4 TWh came from France and 10.3 TWh from Switzerland. Britain ranked second, taking in 18.9 TWh of imports.

Italian power prices were likely to increase amid new cuts in French power exports, analysts told Montel last week. French TSO RTE said last week that France's net electricity exports on commercial exchanges in H1 reached a record 42 TWh and could break the record set in 2002 if the trend continued in H2.



Paris: France remained Europe's top physical net power exporter in the first half of the year at 40.8 TWh – a 31% jump from the second half of 2023, a Montel Analytics report showed this week. The surge was due to increased nuclear output, a surplus of hydropower generation and persistently low demand, despite French solar and wind plants "frequently ramping down