

Portugal may become first European country to offer residency in exchange of Bitcoin investments **NewsWire**

Lisbon: Portugal may offer residency through a decentralised cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin, as part of its Golden Visa Program. In this way, Portugal could become the first European country to offer residency through its Golden Visa Program, in exchange **(Page-8)**

British High Commissioner Jane Marriott completes one successful year in Pakistan **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott this week completed her first successful year in Pakistan. At this point, she said Pakistan was facing a crucial year ahead, with significant economic reforms necessary to ensure long-term success. "This year is a critical year for **(Page-11)**

China opening up to bring new opportunities for China-EU cooperation: Wang Yi

Covert Report

Beijing: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell in Vientiane, Laos this week. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee has drawn a new blueprint for further deepening reforms in a comprehensive manner and advancing Chinese-style modernization. China's high-quality development and high level of opening up will also bring new opportunities for China-EU cooperation, Wang added. The consensus between China and the EU far outweighs the differences, Wang said, noting that a healthy, stable and sustainable China-EU relationship is in the fundamental interests of both sides and is also the common expectation of the international community. He added that China and the EU should stay committed



to the partnership, keep to the overall direction of cooperation, respect the will and choices of their respective people, dialogue on an equal footing, enhance understanding, and cope with the uncertainty of the international situation with the stability of China-EU relations. Wang said China will, as always, support the European integration and the EU on maintaining strategic autonomy. The Chinese side hopes that the new EU leadership will pursue a rational and pragmatic policy towards China, look at China's development in an objective and friendly way, and realize a smooth transition in China-EU relations. Wang said the EU's anti-subsidy investigations into China's electric vehicles is typical trade protectionism and is not conducive to global green transformation. It is hoped that the two sides will find a reasonable solution through dialogue and consultation to jointly safeguard the free trade system and economic globaliza-

tion, Wang noted. Borrell said the EU attaches importance to Europe-China relations and maintains an independent policy towards China, noting that the EU is willing to maintain communication with China for the two sides to better understand their respective positions. The EU is not involved in curbing China's development and is happy to see China's rise, and hopes to share mutual concerns with China openly and frankly, and develop a balanced Europe-China economic and trade relationship, Borrell said. The EU has always maintained that Taiwan is not a country and the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China, said Borrell, adding that the EU will continue to pursue the one-China policy. The EU attaches importance to the peace initiative of China and Brazil on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, congratulates China for promoting the reconciliation of Palestinian factions, and is willing to work with China to promote peace, said the EU official. Wang, the Chinese foreign minister, elaborated on China's principled position on the Ukraine crisis, saying that the most urgent task is to cool down the situation, and that China has always insisted on urging peace and promoting talks and a political solution. The Chinese side supports the EU in playing a leading role in exploring a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture, Wang said.

King Frederik of Denmark enjoys holiday with wife Queen Mary in Italy



anti-terrorism tasks among others. The training for the Frogman Corps is notoriously difficult with participants having to complete stages including a scuba diving course, a survival course and a combat swimmer course in nine months. Only 311 soldiers have been accepted into the unit since its creation. Prince Frederik's grandfather, King Frederik IX, who ruled Denmark from 1947 - 1972, also acquired tattoos during his time in the navy, having birds and dragons inked on his torso and arms. The shark tattoo on Prince Frederik's leg was first seen in 2005, when Frederik was still in the Danish Elite Forces. The royal couple - who were last night spotted in Paris to celebrate the upcoming Olympics - were pictured taking a dip in the ocean on Monday, in a very different look to their usual formal regalia. Known for her age-defying looks, Mary looked stunning in an elegant patchwork one-piece, emphasising her gorgeous figure. She kept her brunette locks loose as she swam in the sea and opted to go without make-up, looking like the epitome of relaxation as she grabbed a drink while back on the shore. Even while going in the sea, Mary kept her jewellery on, wearing what appeared to be her prized Cartier bracelets.

NewsWire

Sardinia: He's been spotted soaking up the sun and enjoying a dip in the sea in Sardinia with Queen Mary of Denmark. But while his wife, 52, showed off her age-defying figure in a patterned swimsuit, Danish King Frederik, 56, offered a rare glimpse of the tattoos on his leg and shoulder. When enjoying his time in the ocean at Nikki Beach in Porto Cervo this week, the father-of-four cut a casual figure in a pair of orange swimming shorts, meaning his sentimental inkings were on full display. On his leg, there's a shark tattoo which is the insignia of the Danish Navy's elite frogman corps, possibly chosen as a tribute. His arm inking, meanwhile, refers to the nickname Pingou that he was given after completing his training to become a badged Frogman. The Frogman Corps are a unit of professional divers and commandos that are tasked with assaulting enemy ships, advanced force and maritime



President Zardari calls for expanding outreach of BISP, number of beneficiaries

Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari this week underscored the need for enhancing the outreach of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) as well as the number of beneficiaries for the uplift of underprivileged sections of society. President Zardari was talking to Chairperson BISP Rubina Khalid during a briefing on the program. President Asif Ali Zardari asked the Chairperson of BISP to establish an office at Gwadar so that the deserving people of the area could benefit from the Programme. Taking note of the 0.45 percent service charges by the banks from BISP cardholders, President Zardari said that the service charges need to be waived off, and in this regard, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should be approached. The President said that the new payment system would also protect BISP beneficiaries from exploitation. President Zardari also called for engaging donors and the private sector to



support BISP in its endeavours to provide scholarships to the maximum number of deserving students. During the briefing, President Zardari was informed about the core initiatives taken by BISP, including the Benazir Kafalat Program, Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Program, BISP Scholarships for Undergraduates Program and Benazir Nashounuma Program. The BISP Chairperson informed that 598.718 billion rupees have been allocated for BISP during the ongoing fiscal year. Rubina Khalid said that Benazir Kafalat is the flagship program of BISP, providing unconditional cash transfers to eligible women and transgender persons across Pakistan.

China committed to fuelling high-quality development with sci-tech innovations

China Economic Net

Beijing: The Chinese leadership has once again demonstrated its determination to develop economic driving forces via sci-tech innovations, according to a resolution on further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization.

The resolution, recently adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, states that high-quality development is the primary task in building China into a modern socialist country in all respects.

It calls for improving the institutions and mechanisms for fostering new quality productive forces in line with local conditions and pledges to improve policies and governance for strategic industries such as next-generation IT, AI, aviation and aerospace, new energy and new materials.

Some Western media questioned that the key policy session did not introduce strong economic stimulus measures or offer immediate solutions for the decelerating real estate sector, so it cannot bring much hope for an economic upswing.

But remaining committed to the pursuit of high-quality development driven by innovative emerging and future industries actually reflects a responsible, deliberate, and scientific vision for the country's modernization drive.

The high-quality development strategy has already achieved great results. From 2013 to 2023, the added value of the large-scale, high-tech manufacturing industry experienced a robust annual growth rate of 10.3 percent. There was an evident surge in the production of innovative products in 2023, with the output of service robots, solar cells and high-speed trains up 23.3 percent, 54 percent and 63.2 percent respectively compared to the previous year.

Those who doubt China's economic future should come and see

what is happening here. Take a tour around, let's say, north China's Shanxi Province, for example, and you may understand why Chinese leaders have made such choices.

Once a typical example of extensive development, Shanxi, known for its rich energy and raw material resources, has long been plagued by resource wastage and environmental degradation. For years, its landscape was exploited and destroyed by coal mines, steel mills, and quarries, with the air quality so poor that coal dust and slag permeated its atmosphere.

In recent years, propelled by technological innovations, Shanxi has embraced the new path of high-quality development. The proportion of its smart coal mining capacity has soared to 54 percent, its installation of wind and solar energy facilities has multiplied, and its new energy vehicle and hydrogen energy industrial chains have improved. The low-carbon transformation has restored blue skies and clean waters and generated a wealth of new development opportunities.

"Stone Age," a local stone processing firm, once encountered a reduced demand for stone materials amid the slowdown in the real estate industry. In response, it chose to cooperate with scientific researchers and turned limestone into a new promising and lucrative nanomaterial that can be widely applied in industries like rubber production and paper-making.

Pulling through the early challenges of transformation under the support of local incentive policies, many traditional enterprises like "Stone Age" in China have successfully upgraded their technologies and products, gaining new competitive edges. Meanwhile, a wave of tech unicorns has emerged, leading the way in new industries and business models.

High-quality development not only is key to China's modernization but also presents abundant opportunities for foreign businesses,



fuelling global economic recovery.

More foreign firms are setting up R&D and innovation centers in China, boosting foreign investment in high-tech manufacturing. Notable examples include Tesla's energy storage mega factory in Shanghai, Volkswagen's intelligent vehicle R&D center in Hefei, Anhui Province, and AstraZeneca's planned new small molecule factory in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province. Experts believe it reflects their strategic shift from "Made in China" to "Created in China."

While China keeps its doors open for cooperation to create a win-win situation, the United States, however, persistently attempts to disrupt high-tech collaboration between China and the rest of the world, aiming to hinder China's progress and secure its dominance in science and technology.

Faced with the tech blockade, China is determined to build self-reliant and risk-controllable industrial and supply chains. The newly adopted resolution urged bolstering key industrial chains, including integrated circuits, industrial machine tools, medical equipment,

basic software and industrial software, which cannot be achieved without sci-tech innovations.

In order to uphold a stable environment for sci-tech advancement, the resolution proposes a series of reform measures to support all-around innovation, such as improving the management of sci-tech plans and reinforcing the principal role of enterprises in innovation. Some Western media distorted China's innovation policies, assuming they're driven by ideological directives rather than market signals, which is a total misconception.

China's decision makers never overlooked the market's importance. As highlighted in the resolution, they are committed to using the nation's enormous market to guide innovation, optimize resource coordination, and encourage the synergy between scientific and industrial advancements. Undoubtedly, market needs and industry growth are essential to the innovation agenda.

Enterprises have always been the backbone of China's tech innovation, propelling the evolution of new quality productive forces. The

resolution advocates for nurturing leading tech firms and deepening industry-academia-research collaboration. It also empowers scientists with enhanced authority over deciding on technology roadmaps, spending funds and allocating resources. Thus, it may maximize the creativity of both businesses and individuals.

China's deepening tech reforms have kept channeling innovation resources and talents toward businesses and resulted in a steady rise in the number of tech firms. By 2023, corporate-invented patents accounted for over 70 percent of all valid domestic patents in China. Additionally, in the first half of this year, China took the lead globally by adding 32 new companies to the list of the world's top 500 unicorns.

The role of policies cannot be downplayed, either. Without policy backing, innovation's full potential wouldn't be unleashed, nor would its momentum be rapidly harnessed, both of which are crucial for China's high-quality development and modernization drive.

Ambassador of Pakistan concludes official visit to Kunming city

NewsWire

Kunming: Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi visited Kunming, capital city of Yunnan Province in Southwestern China this week.

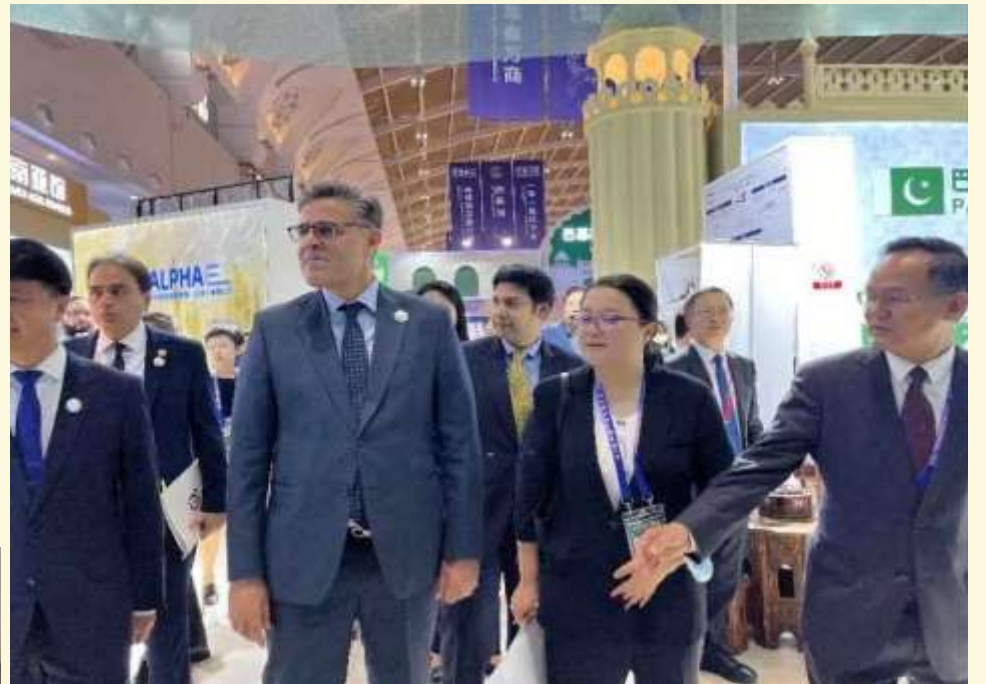
The visit was undertaken at the invitation of the provincial authorities of Yunnan on the occasion of the 8th China-South Asia Expo, in which Pakistan was designated as the theme country of honour, said an official statement issue here on Thursday afternoon.

During his stay in Kunming, Ambassador Hashmi spoke at various important forums including the 5th China-South Asia Cooperation Forum; the 17th China-South Asia Business Forum; and China-South Asia Government, Industry, Aca-

demia, and Research Collaboration Event.

Besides, he interacted with the political leadership of Yunnan province; held important meetings with academia and enterprises; and engaged with media platforms. Inaugurating Pakistan Pavilion at the China-South Asia Expo, the Ambassador highlighted Pakistan's substantial participation in this year's expo with the presence of FPCCI, KCC, and 180 businessmen.

Underlining the significance of utilizing such platforms for strengthening regional connectivity, he briefed the audience on the upward trajectory of Pakistan-China trade and investment relations and the positive impact of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit on further strengthening of the bilateral economic ties.



He also toured the Pakistan Pavilion and visited booths of the participating businesses. During all of his speeches, the Ambassador underscored Pakistan's position on regional connectivity and economic integration; strength of its partnership with China, including under China-Pakistan Economic Cooperation (CPEC); and the need to enhance multi-faceted cooperation despite the challenges posed by the challenging regional and international environment.

On the diplomatic front, the envoy underscored the need for peaceful resolution of outstanding disputes, and the importance of regional peace and stability as a necessary precursor of prosperity and developments.

While interacting with various interlocutors in Yunnan province including political leadership, enterprises, academia and media, Ambassador Hashmi focused on further deepening practical cooperation for the mutual benefit of Pakistan and China.



Pakistani, Chinese universities sign MOU to facilitate exchange of students, faculty members

NewsWire

Islamabad: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed this week between the Department of Media & Communication Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) and the Department of Journalism and Communication, School of Media and Law, NingboTech University, Ningbo, China to establish a collaborative partnership to facilitate the exchange of students and faculty members in the field of Media and Communication.

The signing ceremony took place at the new campus of IIUI, witnessed by Acting President Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar.

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Zafar Iqbal signed on behalf of IIUI, while Vice Dean, School of Media and Law & Vice Director, Digital Culture Innovation Center, Professor Wang Junwei signed for NingboTech University.

According to the MOU, both parties agreed to develop education and teaching by sharing educational resources, joint student training, and student exchange and visits.

They also vowed to work together to improve scientific research by initiating platform development, collaborative projects, and academic cooperation. The parties also agreed to develop faculty through discipline construction, visiting



scholar programs, and faculty sharing.

Acting President IIUI Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar stated that the university aims to enhance its bilateral educational cooperation worldwide.

He noted that the university already had a significant presence of Chinese students and this venture boosted research in social sciences.

Pakistan, Italy pledge to deepen bilateral ties and parliamentary cooperation



Celina Ali Islamabad: The Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, emphasized on the long-standing cordial relations between Pakistan and Italy based

on a shared commitment to global peace and sustainable development during a meeting with Italian Ambassador Marilina Armellini this week. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq called for strengthening political, cultural, economic, and

people-to-people connections. Discussions between the two sides encompassed a wide array of regional and global developments, highlighting the importance of continuous collaboration to advance bilateral relations positively and explore new avenues for engagement. In particular, parliamentary cooperation was emphasized, with the speaker advocating for regular interaction through parliamentary friendship groups and the exchange of delegations to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation. Expressing gratitude for the warm reception, Ambassador Armellini reaffirmed Italy's view of Pakistan as a crucial regional stakeholder and expressed eagerness to enhance ties across various sectors of mutual interest, emphasizing the significance of fostering parliamentary and cultural exchanges. The meeting concluded with her desire to further strengthen linkages in all areas of mutual interest, in addition to fostering parliamentary and cultural exchanges.



CHAIRMAN SENATE, SYED YOUSUF RAZA QILANI IN A MEETING WITH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO PAKISTAN, H.E. MARILINA ARMELLINI AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE ISLAMABAD ON JULY 03, 2024.

Inheriting Silk Road spirit, road of China-Italy ties will become wider

Global Times

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Italy, as well as the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's death. Both sides should view and develop bilateral relations from a historical dimension, facing important opportunities for mutual development. On the afternoon of July 29, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who is on an official visit to China, at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. Xi's remarks highlighted not only the profound historical significance of China-Italy relations but also their contemporary relevance as a bridge for East-West exchange. Meloni said that as ancient civilizations, Italy and China have always admired and learned from each other. Italy highly values China's international status and role and is willing to inherit the long-standing spirit of the Silk Road to develop a closer and higher-level partnership with China, she noted.

In addition to coinciding with these two important anniversaries, Meloni's visit to China itself has garnered widespread attention. She is the first G7 leader to visit China following the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee and this is her first visit to China since taking office. Meloni announced this visit during a press conference following the G7 summit last month, which was seen as a subtle

shift in Italy's approach to China, seeking to develop relations with China beyond the G7's tough stance. On July 28, Meloni stated that her five-day trip was a "demonstration of the will to begin a new phase, to relaunch our bilateral cooperation."

From the current perspective, this visit, widely interpreted as a "new chapter" and "restart," has indeed yielded fruitful results. It has met Italy's domestic aspirations for cooperation with China and provided strategic planning and arrangements for bilateral economic and trade cooperation. Most notably, the two sides issued a 2024-2027 action plan on strengthening their comprehensive strategic partnership. The bilateral cooperation covers emerging fields such as electric vehicles, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence and aims to upgrade traditional cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, industrial manufacturing, technological innovation, and third-party markets. Additionally, China and Italy signed several bilateral cooperation documents in industry, education, environmental protection, geographical indications, and food safety.

In recent years, due to the influence of some internal and external factors, there have been some twists and turns in the China-Italy relationship. It should be said that through this visit, the two sides have not only reached many cooperation agree-

ments and brought new opportunities to both sides, but also deepened political mutual trust and once again stood at a new starting point. Practice has proven that China and Italy are indispensable partners on the path of development, and can share development opportunities on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Italy's choice also indicates that as long as dialogue is conducted based on a pragmatic and rational attitude, the space for win-win cooperation and mutual development between China and Italy is still very imaginative.

From a deeper perspective, whether it is the establishment and deepening of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Italy, or the historical echoes of Marco Polo spanning 700 years, the key to the enduring vitality of the China-Italy relationship lies in the ability to approach and understand each other with equality and sincerity. China and Italy are both ancient civilizations on the Eurasian continent. Marco Polo was the first person to introduce China to Europe. If we can continue to uphold the spirit of the Silk Road of civilization exchange and mutual learning, then China-Italy relations will have a continu-



ous source of vitality and dynamism.

Just as President Xi Jinping pointed out, "China and Italy should uphold and promote the Silk Road spirit, view and develop bilateral relations from a historical dimension, strategic height and long-term perspective, and push their relations to go steady and far."

We also noticed that Prime Minister Meloni said during this visit that Italy is ready to play a positive role in the candid dialogue between the EU and China and foster a more stable cooperative relationship. She said in a speech at

an exhibition themed around Marco Polo and the Silk Road that the road from Italy to China is sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, but this road is always passable. In the current global era of great changes, as two major civilizations and markets, China and Europe urgently need more and deeper equal exchanges and mutual understanding. At this moment, Italy, as a bridge between East and West and a role in maintaining road access, will surely have a lot to offer.

Global Times

Math Olympiad mirrors US-China talent rivalry



Ding Gang

In a twist worthy of a Hollywood screenplay, the US team recently edged out Chinese team by a mere two points in the 2024 International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO), ending China's decade reign.

Each team has six representatives, and there are six problems, each worth 7 points, with a total of 252 points. The US and China are ahead of third-place South Korea by 20 points, reflecting the competitive edge of the two countries, as well as their consistent performance in math.

But here's the kicker: A quick glance at the US roster reveals a plot twist - at least four of the six team mem-

bers are highly likely of Chinese descent as they have Chinese surnames.

This unexpected "Chinese vs Chinese-American" showdown adds a layer of intrigue to the competition.

Visit any top US high school, and you'll find honor rolls peppered with many Asian surnames, a testament to the academic prowess of immigrant families.

This reflects the traditional cultural background that emphasizes education, especially among immigrant families like those in the Chinese community.

This is why China rose so quickly after its reform and opening-up began at the end of 1970s. The reforms unleashed a traditional spirit among Chinese people that values education, hard work and commitment to study.

The IMO, a cerebral gladiatorial arena where nations pit their brightest young minds against fiendishly tricky math problems, has impressively grown from seven countries to over 100 countries and regions. The IMO

has become a significant proxy battlefield for global talent potential and primary education.

This mathematical tug-of-war mirrors the broader US-China rivalry.

China's educational system, turbo-charged by the country's economic reforms, has produced a formidable talent pipeline.

The US, meanwhile, relies on its ability to attract global brainpower, with Chinese-Americans often leading the charge.

A friend recently joked after visiting Silicon Valley, "The fierce competition that politicians talk about between the US and China is really between Chinese nationals and Chinese-Americans."

The US is the largest importer and beneficiary of global talent. A central aspect of its international talent strategy is an open approach that attracts individuals worldwide. Consequently, incorporating diverse global talent is now



future growth.

American companies leverage global talent to secure top positions in high technology, while Chinese companies often rely on local talent to push forward. The difference now is that many Chinese companies that have gone international have gained the strength to attract global talent. They are establishing talent hubs one after another and are resiliently advancing their layout of worldwide talent and R&D centers despite the constraints imposed by the US.

Leveraging global talent to enhance China's development and openness through cooperative mutual benefit is another challenge for the country, especially for Chinese companies stepping on the world stage.

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High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri presents credentials to PNG Governor General as non-resident envoy



credentials to PNG Governor General as non-resident envoy

Mr Chaudhri has earlier served as Director General (Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey), Director General (South Asia & SAARC), Director (India), Deputy Director (South East Asia and the Pacific), Deputy Director (Economic Coordination) and Assistant Director (Personnel) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has also served as Director General (Economic Coordination) at President's Secretariat and Joint Secretary (National Security) at the National Security Division. He has served at key Pakistani Missions abroad including the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington DC, USA; High Commission for Pakistan, London, United Kingdom; and the Consulate General of Pakistan, Dubai, UAE. He holds an LLM (International Economic and

Trade Law) degree from the University of London, United Kingdom and MBA from the University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. He is also an alumnus of the American University and the National Defence University, Washington DC.



Covert Report Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week presented credentials to Sir Bob Bofeng Dadae, Governor General of Papua New Guinea (PNG) as non-resident High Commissioner for Pakistan to PNG. "Presented my credentials to H.E. Sir Bob Bofeng Dadae, Governor General of Papua New Guinea as nonresident High Commissioner for Pakistan to PNG," the envoy posted on X with a picture.

Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri is a career diplomat. He joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan on 30 September 1993. Mr Chaudhri has served at key positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad and at Pakistan Missions abroad. Prior to his appointment as High Commissioner to the Commonwealth of Australia, he served as Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Additional Secretary responsible for Asia Pacific.

Amb Asim Iftikhar Ahmed hosts "meet and greet" event with Pakistani athletes



Covert Report Paris: A meet and greet event with the athletes representing Pakistan at the Paris 2024 Olympics was hosted this week at the Embassy of Pakistan in France led by Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmed. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Rana Sanaullah Khan represented Government of Pakistan at the Olympics Opening Ceremony was the Chief Guest. Members of Pakistani diaspora, media and many other friends attended the event and were excited to mingle with the members of the Pakistani Olympic contingent including Javelin Thrower Arshad Nadeem, swimmers Jehanara Nabi & M. Ahmed Durrani and sprinter Faiqa Riaz. Great support and best wishes for the Team Pakistan

The composition of the Pakistan team is as follows- Athletics: Arshad Nadeem – Athlete, Javelin Throw (Qualified); Ms. Faiqa Riaz – Athlete, 100m (Universality Place) – approved by World Athletics; Salman Iqbal Butt – Athlete Support Personnel and Dr. Ali Sher Bajwa – Athlete Support Personnel, said a press release. Swimming: Muhammad Ahmed Durrani – Athlete, 200m Freestyle (Universality Place) – approved by World Aquatics; Jehanara Nabi – Athlete, 200m Freestyle (Universality Place) – approved by World Aquatics and Lt Col (R) Ahmed Ali Khan – Athlete Support Personnel. Shooting: Ghulam Mustafa Bashir – Athlete (25m Rapid Fire Pistol) – Qualified; Gulfam Joseph – Athlete (10m Air Pistol, 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team) – Qualified; Ms. Kishmala Talat – Athlete (10m Air Pistol, 25m Pistol, 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team) – Qualified; Col Junaid Ali – Athlete Support Personnel; Gennady Solodovnikov, Athlete Support Personnel. The contingent officials include

Muhammad Shafiq – Chef de Mission (CDM); Javaid Shamsad Lodhi, Deputy CDM; Ms. Zainab Shaukat – Admin Official. The Special Appointments from IOC certified Personnel and Embassy of Pakistan in France comprise Dr. Syed Meesaq Hussain Rizvi, OLY – Chief Medical Officer; Kashif Jameel – NOC Olympic Attaché (Head of Chancery, Embassy of Pakistan in France); Rizwan Ahmed – Welfare Officer (IOC certified Safeguarding Officer in Sports). Arshad Nadeem, Athlete (Athletic) and Ms. Jehanara Nabi, Athlete (Swimming) represented as flag bearers of Pakistan in the Opening Ceremony on July 26.



Ambassador Amna Baloch, WCO head discuss customs cooperation

Covert Report Brussels: Ambassador of Pakistan to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Amna Baloch this week met with Secretary General of World Customs Organization (WCO) Ian Saunders here. In the meeting, they discussed the ongoing engagements between Pakistan and the WCO in the domain of customs cooperation. Besides, they also deliberated on exploring ways to further strengthen the partnership between the WCO and Pakistan.



Ali Rehman Malik on a mission to 'save people'



in this rescue mission was, Ali told me: "my role was to help support in any way I can, from helping on the ground in Pakistan (once they had been evacuated) to helping secure safe passage to the United Kingdom. "I am unable to share the details regarding

things very difficult", says Ali. Ali Rehman Malik, and others who helped in this selfless cause, are relieved that this humanitarian rescue mission was accomplished successfully. "I felt the responsibility of it very heavily on my shoulders. Remaining in Afghanistan would have

Raza Hussain

A story with a good ending doesn't just happen in Hollywood movies. It also happens when a group of determined, altruistic and hardworking individuals come together with one common goal: TO SAVE PEOPLE. This is what defines the humanitarian mission by Ali Rehman Malik. This humanitarian mission – an evacuation to save people from death, torture and a draconian life under the Taliban regime – all began when a BBC journalist contacted the Ciro & Armand Charity Foundation Help Children Now, alerting them to the plight of young female athletes in Afghanistan. The charity, in turn, contacted Ali Rehman Malik, asking for his assistance in evacuating this group of female athletes to safety, to a better life, to a future away from the backward regime in Afghanistan, who have banned women from playing sports amongst wide ranging essential as well as leisure activities. 'Since taking power in August 2021, the Taliban have imposed policies severely

restricting rights – particularly those of women and girls', states Human Rights Watch. 'They have banned women from many forms of employment and prohibited girls and women from attending secondary school and university', Human Rights Watch adds. Amnesty International, meanwhile, has detailed how, in June and July of 2023, 'nearly 4,500 women were reportedly dismissed from jobs in education'. Ali Rehman Malik, Chairman of the Institute of Research and Reform Pakistan, because of his belief that "each and every human being has the right to live a life of dignity and happiness", decided that helping these young women and girls was the only way forward. The group of evacuees, which he, Ciro & Armand Charity Foundation Help Children Now and others evacuated, also included personnel who had assisted NATO troops whilst they were stationed in Afghanistan and family members of the women athletes. When asked about what his specific role



the evacuation of the girls and where they were hiding before escaping from Afghanistan due to safety concerns for the girls and for anyone still stuck in Afghanistan, however, I can say some of the stories I heard were very harrowing". A rescue mission of this size and the risks associated with it does not come without its challenges. Ali tells me: "There was the logistics of everything from the start to end. From their evacuation to their housing and maintenance in Pakistan. The management of many families who did not want to be separated under any circumstances. Even if it meant a direct threat to life. A lot of the work on the ground in Pakistan was well handled by Mr Orsini (whose love, sincerity and care for the children and the young athletes was very touching to see). "We had to make sure the families had a suitable and safe place to live (in secret). Everything from food and basic utilities to healthcare had to be managed, in the time it took to secure their safe passage to the UK". The obstacles and challenges didn't stop there. "The girls also faced challenges after arriving in the UK due to the language barriers and other cultural differences. They had also been through intense trauma and were suffering from PTSD which made

almost certainly meant imprisonment or death for the girls and their families. At that point, the only solution remaining was evacuation to a safe zone" Ali Rehman Malik's rescue mission is also a testament to the age old saying "like father, like son". Late Senator Rehman Malik, Ali's father and Pakistan's longest serving Interior Minister, worked with others and myself to help evacuate a family from Afghanistan when NATO troops withdrew back in August 2021. "My father instilled an underlying desire to be of service to people in need... it is also a legacy I wish to carry on", Ali Rehman Malik tells me. Ali Rehman Malik now chairs the Institute of Research and Reform Pakistan, an organisation founded by his late father. Speaking of the aims, the ethos and prospective plans of the organisation, Ali told me: the vision is "to help. To help those in need and fight for those who don't have a voice. We believe each and every human being is equal and deserves to be able to live a life of dignity and peace. "It's my goal to carry on the legacy he (Senator Rehman Malik) left behind, and to reach out and help people in need all over the world", says Ali Rehman Malik.

Greece's Santorini bursts with tourists as locals call for a cap on visitors



Athens: Armed with selfie sticks and phones, the tourists flood into Santorini from everywhere — on dinghies from giant ocean liners, on coaches that zigzag up the steep hillsides, atop donkeys that clip-clop along the narrow cobbled streets.

Some brave the afternoon heat to find a good spot among the white-washed houses and blue-domed churches where they then wait hours to watch the Greek island's famed sunset. As the sun dips, many more join them, squeezing along the cliffside or onto balconies, cameras at the ready.

"This has been my dream since high school," said American tourist Maria Tavarez, 40.

But for many of Santorini's 20,000 permanent residents, the once idyllic island of quaint villages and pristine beaches has been ruined by mass tourism.

As protests against excessive tourism erupt in other popular holiday destinations, including Venice and Barcelona, Santorini represents one of the starkest examples of how hordes of visitors can impact a place. Authorities on the island have joined other tourism hotspots in calling for a cap on visitors.

The growing number of foreign tourists — some 3.4 million visited the island last year, according to mayor Nikos Zorzos — are putting pressure on its outdated infrastructure and are pricing islanders out of the housing market.

Zorzos says he has been pushing authorities for years not to allow a single extra bed on the island and has proposed a cap on the number of cruise ship visitors to 8,000 a day, down from around 17,000.

"It is in the best interest of our land for there to be a

Newswire

limit," he said.

Even business owners who benefit from tourism are worried.

"Our standards of living have gone down. It's as simple as that," said Georgios Damigos, who runs a 14-room hotel his parents opened in the 1980s.

"Santorini is a wonder of nature" that risks turning into "a monster," he said.

Santorini's tourism boom is echoed across Greece. National tourism revenues rose 16% in the first five months of this year, data shows, and 2024 is forecast to outstrip last year's record 33 million arrivals.

Like other popular tourist destinations, the Cycladic island perched on a volcano is approaching over-saturation, and now wants to restrict the number of cruise ships.

"Everything is possible when there is planning and infrastructure," said Alexandros Pelekanos, vice president of the island's umbrella trade association.

"Do we want money or not? Do we want to have work and revenues or not?" he said. "You cannot have your peace and quiet and make money."

The tourists don't seem to mind as they cheerfully trundle past a sign that reads "RESPECT. It's your holiday... but it's our home."

"It's hard to walk around the narrow streets but it's quite beautiful," said Portuguese tourist Rita Critovao. "I would advise everyone to come."



Portugal may become first European country to offer residency in exchange of Bitcoin investments



Newsire

Lisbon: Portugal may offer residency through a decentralised cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin, as part of its Golden Visa Program. In this way, Portugal could become the first European country to offer residency through its Golden Visa Program, in exchange of investments made through Bitcoin. According to co-founder and CEO of Unbound Fund, Alessandro Palombo holding Bitcoin worth €500,000 (\$542,000) through the Unbound Fund could lead to a residency in Portugal. Portugal may become the first European country to offer foreigners residency in exchange for an investment made through a decentralised cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin.

The new opportunity has been brought by the co-founder and CEO of Unbound Fund, Alessandro Palombo, in a post on his X account, Schengen.News reports.

Palombo claims that holding Bitcoin worth €500,000 (\$542,000) through the Unbound Fund could lead to a residency in Portugal, through the Golden Visa Program.

He recommends using Bitcoin as a mechanism for reciprocal advantages and freedom of mobility in Portugal.

I believe it's time to use Bitcoin as a tool for freedom of movement in a mutually beneficial way with Portugal, a country I have chosen to live in with my family.

Besides, Palombo considers European citizenship -by-investment programs strategically and technically the best option. Currently, he is holding discussions with complementary teams to enhance the fund's offerings.

The Golden Visa Program of Portugal offers residency to internationals provided they contribute financially to this country and meet some specific requirements.

Internationals are eligible to acquire residency through several options offered through this scheme.

A large number of golden visas were granted through the real estate investment option, which was among the most sought-after options. However, in a bid to better manage the housing crisis, this route was terminated by the government of Portugal.

As a result, other options have now been brought into the spotlight, such as the following ones:

- Investment in research and developments
- Cultural Heritage Donation
- Investment in funds or venture capital funds

Besides, in a bid to expand the categories of investment for the Golden Visa Program, last month, authorities in Portugal unfolded plans to introduce the Residence Permits for Social Investment option.

Through this option, foreigners would be eligible to obtain residency through the Residency by Investment scheme, by investing in reception facilities and infrastructure and in immigrant integration projects.

"We want ARIs [Residence Permits for Investment] to be mobilised and used to finance investment in equipment and infrastructure to support the reception and integration of immigrants."

The figures from Portugal's Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) reveal that from 2012 until 2023, a total of 12,718 golden visas were granted. In addition, a total of 20,424 dependent family members accompanied them. Among the main beneficiaries of this scheme are nationals from China, Brazil, the United States, Türkiye and South Africa.



US-Pakistan ties go beyond security: Donald Blome



Celina Ali
Islamabad: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome this week underlined the US commitment to supporting Islamabad in various areas, including countering regional threats, economic collaboration, renewable energy, climate management and education. Addressing a conference 'Strengthening Pakistan-US Relations' under the auspices of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and Beaconhouse National University (BNU) Lahore, the US envoy underscored that the US-Pakistan partnership goes beyond security and includes significant investments in health, trade and development sectors.

Ambassador Blome highlighted the US recognition of Pakistan's potential, particularly its dynamic young population and economic opportunities. He discussed the importance of US-Pakistan relationship, emphasizing the long history of partnership and cooperation between the two nations. The event featured distinguished diplomats, practitioners, and academics from both Pakistan and the United States. Additional Foreign Secretary (Americas), Ambassador Mariam Madiha Aftab, said that the Pakistan-US relationship is dynamic and multifaceted, covering areas such as health, trade, defence, and energy security. She emphasised the importance of economic collaboration, security cooperation, educational exchanges and climate

change initiatives. Beaconhouse Center for Policy Research (BCPR) Director Mansoor Khan emphasised the multifaceted nature of Pakistan-US relations, highlighting political, security, defence cooperation, and economic ties. He announced the launch of a new undergraduate course on Pakistan-US relations at the BNU. ISSI Centre for Strategic Perspectives Director Dr Neelum Nigar noted the significant contributions of the US to Pakistan's development in sectors like education, healthcare, and climate change. She stressed the need for mutual respect and cooperation to address contemporary challenges and opportunities. ISSI Director General Sohail Mahmood acknowledged the evolving nature of Pakistan-US partnership. Stressing the importance of realistic expectations, he called for

greater attention to Pakistan's historical role and cumulative power potential in the emerging global order and the need for the US to focus on Pakistan's preoccupations and interests. Relating to regional concerns, particularly the impact of US-India strategic partnership on Pakistan's security especially within the 'Indo-Pacific' construct, he called for a responsive approach from Washington.



Japan cracks down on use of rideable electric suitcases amid tourist boom

Covert Report
Tokyo: As record numbers of tourists flock to Japan to take advantage of the weakness of the Japanese yen, some are running into trouble with authorities thanks to the growing popularity of motorised, rideable suitcases. Two major Japanese airports have already asked travellers not to ride motorised suitcases within their facilities, according to Kyodo news agency, while police are urging domestic retailers to warn customers of the strict laws concerning their use. In recent years motorised luggage, similar to children's scooters but powered by lithium-ion batteries, have become

more common among travellers, while also being popularised by celebrities like Paris Hilton and Shilpa Shetty. According to Kyodo, Japan currently classifies the electric suitcases, which are popular in the rest of Asia, as "motorised vehicles that can be ridden on roads only with the required safety equipment and a driving licence". In June, a Chinese woman in her 30s, studying in Japan, was referred to prosecutors for driving without a licence, after she allegedly rode a three-wheeled suitcase on a sidewalk in Osaka on 31 March, according to Osaka Prefectural Police. Under Japan's traffic laws, the woman's suitcase, which can travel up to 13km an hour, is categorised as a "motorised bicycle", the same as some mopeds. The police reiterated to



the public in June that licenses are required for such mobile luggage. In July, a boy from Indonesia rode a motorised suitcase past pedestrians along a street in Osaka's bustling Dotonbori shopping district, according to Kyodo, which said his family was surprised to learn that a driving licence was mandatory for such vehicles in Japan. According to Takeru Shibayama, a senior scientist at the Vienna University of Technology's Institute for Transportation, Japan's broad range of vehicles - which fall under the

category of motorised bicycles - may force the country to discuss "whether a new classification should be established" to deal with electric suitcases. Japan has struggled to deal with new forms of transportation lately. Traffic violations involving electric scooters surged fourfold in the six months after restrictions were eased in July 2023, according to the National Police Agency. The loosened regulations allow for people over age 16 to ride them without a driver's licence, and they are now a common sight in big cities like Tokyo.

Poland suggests Hungary leave EU and join “union with Putin” after Orbán criticism



Covert Report

Warsaw: A Polish deputy foreign minister has suggested that Hungary could leave the EU and NATO and instead “create a union with Putin and authoritarian states”. His remarks came in response to a speech on

do not do business with Russia, unlike Prime Minister Orbán, who is on the margins of international society – both in the EU and NATO”. Orbán’s speech was “an attack on Poland, the US, the EU and NATO,” said Bartoszewski. “I don’t really understand why Hungary wants to remain a member of organisations that they



“If you don’t want to be a member of a club, you can always leave,” continued the Polish minister.

“Why doesn’t he [Orban] create a union with Putin and some authoritarian states of this type?”

That in turn prompted a response from Hungarian foreign minister Péter Szijjártó, who said that Bartoszewski’s “reaction proves that the truth hurts”.

“While the current Polish government judges and accuses us because we import petroleum from Russia... if we take a good look at the list of buyers of one of the largest Russian oil com-

panies, we will certainly find the Poles there as well,” continued Szijjártó. “You shouldn’t be hypocritical and accuse others.”

Szijjártó did not offer any details of what he was referring to. Poland ended almost all of its Russian oil imports in 2022 after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. However, Polish state energy giant Orlen has continued importing significant quantities of Russian oil to its refineries in the Czech Republic.

In response to Szijjártó’s remarks, Krzysztof Brejza, an MEP from Poland’s main ruling Civic Platform (PO) party, accused the Hungarian foreign minister of “lying publicly, looking for arguments to defend the dictator Orban”. Poland and Hungary have regularly clashed over

their differing approaches to the war in Ukraine, with Warsaw among Kyiv’s closest allies but Orbán maintaining friendly ties with Moscow.

Earlier this month, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk mocked Orbán’s “peace mission” to Moscow, asking: “Is there anyone who feels safer after Victor Orbán’s exchange with Vladimir Putin on the ‘post-war European security architecture’?”

Shortly afterwards, it emerged that Hungary has been blocking EU funds earmarked for Poland to compensate for military aid Warsaw has provided to Ukraine.



Saturday by Viktor Orbán in which the Hungarian prime minister criticised the West, praised Russia, and accused Poland of “hypocrisy” for “morally lecturing” Hungary over relations with Moscow while continuing to buy Russian oil. During a speech at an event for the ethnic Hungarian minority in Romania, Orbán discussed the war between Russia and Ukraine. He criticised the “weakness” of the West, accused EU leaders of “following US foreign policy unconditionally”, and praised Russia’s “hyper-rationality” and “soft power”. Orbán declared that “there is no longer a Paris-Berlin axis”, referring to the traditional Franco-German leadership of Europe. “It is replaced by [a] London-Warsaw-Kyiv [axis].”

don’t like so much and that supposedly treat them badly.”

“Public opinion punishes German and French policies that do not meet the interests of the US,” he continued. “Poland could be the new headquarters of the US in Europe. The goal is to weaken Russia. That’s why Poland gave up the V4 [Visegrad Group] axis.”

Orbán then accused Poland of “hypocrisy”, noting that they have regularly criticised and “morally lectured” Hungary over its business ties to Russia while “at the same time they are doing business with the Russians”. He claimed that Poland is indirectly buying Russian oil and using this to “run their economy”.

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The Hungarian prime minister’s speech prompted an angry reaction from Poland, with deputy foreign minister Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski telling the Polish Press Agency (PAP) that “we



British High Commissioner Jane Marriott completes first successful year in Pakistan



Celina Ali

Islamabad: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott this week completed her first successful year in Pakistan. At this point, she said Pakistan was facing a crucial year ahead, with significant economic reforms necessary to ensure long-term success. "This year is a critical year for making the economic reforms necessary to ensure Pakistan's long-term success: an inclusive approach with buy-in from all the key players is essential," High Commissioner Marriott said in a message on the completion of the first year in Islamabad.

She said Pakistan faced a daunting task in adapting lives and livelihoods across the country to the impacts of climate change, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had declared an Education Emergency, aiming to get Pakistan's large cohort of out-of-school children back on track with their education. "Having met Pakistanis, I know their strength, innovative nature and resilience puts them in an excellent position to tackle these issues head on, with the UK as a close friend and partner," she said. The Higher Commissioner said it had been a great year since she arrived in Pakistan a year ago. "It's a country that I'd always wanted to live in, with a wonderful reputation in the UK thanks to its warm hospitality, natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and culinary delights. It was not disappointing," she added.

Jane Marriott said she felt lucky to be able to hike in some of the most beautiful parts of the world, regularly taking advantage of the Margalla Hills on her doorstep in Islamabad, and some special weekends to the nearby Nathiagali. She said while it wasn't the year for both British and Pakistani cricket teams, it didn't take away from the electric atmosphere when she visited Rawalpindi stadium for the PSL and the Oval in London to see the Pakistan-UK T20. "Although if you saw me attempting to bat some balls with the Women's team and Marina Iqbal, safe to say I won't be getting called up any time soon!" the envoy said.

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

COVERT

TRUTH UNFOLD

August 4 - 10, 2024

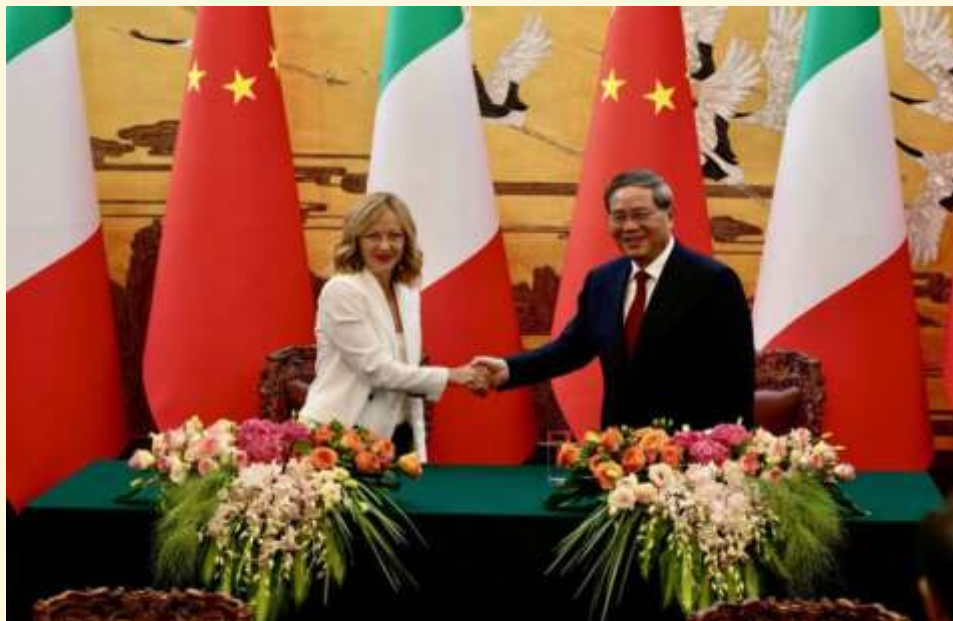
I believe every human has a finite number of heartbeats. I don't intend to waste any of mine.” - Neil Armstrong

Italy: Meloni signs deal to 'relaunch' ties with China

Newsire

Rome: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was in Beijing this week to boost ties as concerns of a trade war with Europe grow. The two countries agreed to collaborate on green technology, including electric cars and renewable energy. Italy and China signed a three-year economic cooperation deal, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said, following talks with Chinese Premier Li Qiang. Meloni said her first visit to Beijing as Italian leader was a "demonstration of the will to begin a new phase, to relaunch our bilateral cooperation." The leader of the right-wing populist Brothers of Italy party also spoke of wanting to see trade relations with China become "fairer," the Italian news agency ANSA reported. "Chinese investment in Italy accounts for about a third of Italian investment in China," she said, adding that she would like to see this

gap narrow. Meloni later said the 3-year deal with China includes cooperation on strategic sectors such as electric vehicles and renewable energy. Li said the two nations had agreed on "mutually beneficial cooperation" in the fields of "shipbuilding, aerospace, new energy, artificial intelligence," in a statement released by his office. Rome is looking to rebuild ties with Beijing amid growing fears of a trade war between Europe and China and after Italy pulled out of China's massive infrastructure program, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in December. The BRI aims to smooth trade ties between China and the rest of the world, through road, rail and sea links, as well as energy and digital infrastructure. Italy was the only G7 nation to sign up to the BRI, in 2019, but was pressured by Washington and Brussels to withdraw due to concerns over the rising threats from the world's second-largest economy. Chinese state media said Meloni's trip was aimed at "clarifying some



misunderstandings" over Italy's withdrawal from the BRI. In 2023, Italy's bilateral trade with China was worth €66.8 billion (\$80 billion), heavily tilted in Beijing's favor. The Chinese and Italian delegation sit down for talks during the visit of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on July 28, 2024. The Chinese and Italian delegation sit down for talks during the visit of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on July 28, 2024. Meloni noted how renewables and electromobility were "sectors where China has already been operating on the technological frontier for some time ... and is sharing the new frontiers of knowledge with partners." Italian tire maker Pirelli, energy group ENI, defense group Leonardo, wine producers and several Italian luxury fashion groups, such as Dolce & Gabbana, took part in the forum. Li also spoke at the business forum, pledging to open Chinese markets further and create a transparent business environment so that foreign companies get the same treatment as Chinese ones. "At the same time, we hope the Italian side will work with China to

provide a more fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese companies doing business in Italy," he said. In May, the Italian-American automaker Stellantis, which owns Fiat, signed a joint venture with Leapmotor, a Chinese electric car startup, and Rome is keen to attract other Chinese automakers to the country. At the same time, Rome supports the European Union's new provisional tariffs of up to 37.6% on Chinese automakers, who Brussels accuses of dumping cheap electric vehicles on the continent. Beijing has retaliated by launching probes into the trade practices of European brandy and pork and could also target dairy products and large-engined petrol cars made by European firms. The two sides are holding talks to try to resolve the issue by a deadline set for early November.

French climber summits Pakistan's K2 in 11 hours, a record time

Abdullah Jan

Islamabad: French climber Benjamin Vadrines summited Pakistan's K2 in record time on July 28, reaching the top of the world's second-highest mountain in just under 11 hours. The 32-year-old specialist in high-speed ascents - made without the aid of oxygen - left K2 base camp just after midnight on July 27 and reached the summit 10 hours, 59 minutes and 59 seconds later.

The ascent slashes by more than half the previous record for climbing K2 without the aid of bottled oxygen, completed in 23 hours by another Frenchman, Mr Benoit Chamoux, in 1986. Mr Vadrines attempted the summit in 2022 but was forced to turn back after suffering from hypoxia, a lack of oxygen in the blood caused by thin air at high altitudes. "I took my revenge on this mountain," Mr Vadrines said in a voice message. "But, above all, I wanted to reconcile with it by doing things



with maturity." "It was very symbolic for me because I was returning in my footsteps to where I experienced those very unique moments," he said. "I really enjoyed seeing the same sections again, but with lucidity this time." Standing at 8,611m on the Pakistan-China border, K2 is 238m shorter than Everest but is considered more technically challenging - earning it the nickname "Savage Mountain". Elite climbers regard the mountain, which was first scaled in 1954, as a quintessential achievement, and often attempt to set records on its jagged slopes. Norwegian climber Kristin Harila and her Nepali guide Tenjin Sherpa conquered K2 a year ago, capping a record for the fastest summit of all 14 of the world's 8,000m mountains. The pair completed the feat in three months and

one day. Mr Tenjin was killed in an avalanche less than three months later as he guided another climber on Mount Shishapangma in Tibet. In January 2021, a 10-man team from Nepal became the first to summit K2 in winter as temperatures plunged to minus 65 deg C. The mountain regularly claims the lives of elite climbers. Mr Vadrines is considered one of France's pre-eminent climbers and set a speed record climbing Pakistan's Broad Peak in 2022 before descending by paraglider. He reached the top of the 8,051m mountain, not far from K2, in seven hours and 28 minutes.

