

## Portugal receives over 63,000 citizenship applications in first 4 months of 2024 **NewsWire**

Lisbon: More than 63,000 requests for Portuguese citizenship have been received in the first four months of 2024. The figures provided by the Institute of Registries and Notaries (IRN) reveal that there has been a significant increase in the number of citizen (Page-8)

## UK expands eVisas to new biometric customers **Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), vignette stickers in passports or 'wet ink stamps' are among some of the physical documents that will no longer be needed. "If you are granted a visa to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months (Page-11)

# If a China and America war erupts? After 45 days of conventional fighting nukes would be tempting, wargamers suggest

### The Economist

It is bad enough to contemplate a war in Asia. It is grimmer still to think through a nuclear one. But somebody has to. And so Andrew Metrick, Philip Sheers and Stacie Pettyjohn, all of the Centre for a New American Security (CNAS), a think-tank in Washington, recently gathered a group of experts to play a tabletop exercise—a type of wargame—to explore how a Sino-American nuclear war could break out. The results were not encouraging. In the exercise scenario, it is 2032 and a war over

Taiwan has been raging for 45 days. China uses "theatre" nuclear weapons—with a shorter range and smaller yield than the city-busting "strategic" missiles—to shorten the war by coercing America into submission. The targets include Guam and Kwajalein Atoll—a pair of islands vital to America's military position in the Pacific—as well as an American aircraft-carrier strike group. That is distressingly plausible. One reason is the geography of the Asian battlefield. During the cold war America and the Soviet Union both planned to use lots of tactical nuclear weapons to destroy large and dispersed troop formations, often in the vicinity of towns and cities. "Today in the Pacific", notes the study, "naval vessels at sea and military airbases on small islands are a

vastly different target." Fewer nukes would be required and there would be less civilian harm than in cold-war strikes. That is related to a second reason: the evolution of weaponry. Most people, not unreasonably, think of conventional weapons as being less escalatory and thus more usable than nuclear ones. But today's low-yield nukes—20 kilotonnes of explosive power, roughly Hiroshima-size—can be delivered with extreme precision and less collateral damage. "The line between low-yield tactical nuclear weapons and precision-guided conventional weapons in terms of both their operational effects and perceived impact is blurring," says CNAS.

The third factor is the effect of a long war. Weeks into a conflict, both sides would run short of conventional weapons. Theatre nuclear weapons would become more attractive. "On a per-weapon basis", note the authors, "nuclear arms are more efficient at destroying large-area targets." Their immense power means that they would also continue to work even if weeks of war had degraded the command, control and intelligence systems that conventional munitions rely on. The result of all this, in the wargame, was a strange sort of nuclear war: China was incentivised to use nuclear weapons first, despite its formal "No First Use" pledge, but once it did so, and in contrast with expectations for how a US-Soviet war would have played out in Europe, things did not necessarily spiral into an apocalyptic exchange of strategic nuclear weapons. In the world of nuclear strategists, that is what counts as good news. The exercises suggested China had more reason for cheer. The experts and officials playing as China had a wide range of military targets—Asia is chock-full of American facilities and naval assets. (Though there is little evidence that China possesses low-yield nukes right now.) The American team, by contrast, struggled



with the fact that many of the most attractive targets for retaliation were on the Chinese mainland. Striking those with tactical nuclear weapons would carry a much higher risk of escalation to general nuclear war. Moreover, the players found that America did not have the weapons needed to hit the "very small number" of lower-risk targets—mostly warships and Chinese bases on disputed reefs in the South China Sea. Its most advanced non-nuclear missiles would have run out by day 45. America, unlike Russia, no longer has a nuclear-tipped anti-ship missile. A new submarine-launched nuclear cruise missile is slated for the 2030s. But it could not be used for signalling to deter Chinese nuclear use

before the fact without giving away where it was. It would also tie up scarce attack subs in the middle of a naval war. Nuclear strategy has its own macabre grammar, steeped in the assumptions and experience of the cold war and reshaped by the march of military technology. It boils down to politics, though. Faced with the nuclear annihilation of 5,000 American sailors on a carrier or nuclear attack on American territory such as Guam, would an American president respond with nuclear force, reach for what would be a shrinking quiver of conventional weapons—or fold? That, concede the authors, is "the fundamental, unknowable component".



## Southern European tourists flock to Denmark to escape the heat

### NewsWire

Copenhagen: While the south swelters, Denmark's mild temperatures and extended daylight hours are providing the perfect summer escape for many. With rising temperatures in southern Europe, more and more tourists are flocking to cooler destinations in the north. Denmark, in particular, has become an increasingly popular choice for those looking to escape the scorching summer heat.

According to the recently published report from DMI, the official Danish meteorological institute, the national average temperature of July 2024 was 16.2C. For much of southern Europe, high temperatures tell a very different story. Italy has been enduring nearly constant heatwaves since mid-June, with parts of the country experiencing record temperatures exceeding 40C. France has also faced several days of high-temperature alerts, with temperatures soaring over 30C across the country last week.

Amid the bustling crowds in Copenhagen's iconic Nyhavn, it's not uncommon to catch snippets of French, Spanish, and Italian, as tourists from across southern Europe flock to the city with its cooler climate.

Sagrario, normally a resident of Madrid, stopped by in Denmark on a cruise ship tour in Scandinavia with her daughter.

"In Madrid, we've had a heat wave for three straight weeks with temperatures of minimum 30C and maximum temperatures of 40C," Sagrario's daughter Sofia said. Copenhagen's hospitality industry, which traditionally caters to tourists from northern Europe and the United States, has noticed a significant increase in visitors from southern Europe.

Carsten Vammen and Sebastian enjoying the warm weather at Bellevue Beach north of Copenhagen on Saturday, Oct 1, 2011.

"We definitely see a big increase in southern European tourism. It's France, it's Greece, it's Spain, and Italy," Karin Nielsen, the CEO of Kolpin Hotels which owns Hotel Sanders in Copenhagen, told Euronews.

"And that increase we have seen that coming for the last 5 or 6 years but the last two years it has been increasing a lot. And, here at Hotel Sanders, we normally have something like 80 per cent Americans, but that number is actually decreasing a little bit. And we see especially from Spain and Italy, we have approximately 10 per cent of our occupancy from southern Europe now. That's a quite big increase from formal numbers from 3-4 per cent" Nielsen added.

Nielsen attributes this increase to southern European guests seeking cooler weather in the north.

South Zealand, about 80 kilometres outside Copenhagen, is an emerging destination for those looking for a cool summer vacation.



"The trend for southern European guests coming to Denmark started around three years ago. Last year we really saw it. And this year, I'd use the word extremely high. And it has gone from maybe 5 per cent to 30-35 per cent of our guests," Filip Rasmussen, the owner of Jungshoved Præstegård, a traditional Danish B&B in Præsto, said. Rasmussen noted that while a new agreement with a French travel agency has contributed to this increase, there has also been a notable rise in visitors from southern Switzerland, Italy, and Spain.

"The topic is heatwave which is actually the first thing they say if you ask "why are you visiting Denmark?" he added.

People move to the beach in Copenhagen, Denmark, during a hot summer day with temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, Friday, June 18, 2021. Patricia Levantis and Franck Wattinne, residents of Marseille staying at Jungshoved Præstegård, say they are satisfied with Denmark's cool late August climate, which allowed them to enjoy outdoor activities.

"25 degrees during the day. In the evening, you can wear a small sweater or a small jacket. So we can do very pleasant things," Wattinne said. The official tourism organisation of South Zealand and Moen, Visit Sydsjælland & Møn, confirms the trend.

Bender also noted that while the tragic fires in Greece are a sombre backdrop, Denmark is glad to offer a cool respite for those affected.

"When you see all the fires in Greece and so on. It's a tragic background. But of course, then we are happy to say, come and cool down for a couple of weeks up here at North and discover our beautiful nature and culture," Bender added.

Stakeholders of the tourism industry in Denmark say that the new influx of tourists are not just coming from southern Europe but other parts of northern Europe such as the Netherlands and Belgium.

"It's also not only people from the southern part of Europe. It's also people who used to travel to the southern part, but now choose the north and find out the quality we have. In the middle of the summer, we have much, much longer nights. We call them the white nights even," Rasmussen.

People bathe in the sea and sit on the beach at the Kastrop seaside resort in Copenhagen, Denmark, Friday June 1, 2018. At the height of summer, during the solstice, the sun doesn't set until around 10 PM in Denmark, giving visitors almost an hour more daylight compared to Italy, for example. According to data from Visit Denmark, the Official Tourism Organisation of Denmark, the number of Italian and French tourists visiting the capital region this June has surged by 23%, growing from around 49,000 in 2019 to nearly 60,000 in 2024. Copenhagen has recently broken records for overnight stays as the city gains popularity, a trend explained by Wonderful Copenhagen, the official tourism organisation for Denmark's capital region. Wonderful Copenhagen says, however, that the record-breaking trend cannot be attributed to the cool climate but is thanks to the culture and culinary scene in the city.



## President Zardari announces national awards for 104 Pakistanis, foreigners on Independence Day

### Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari this week announced the conferment of national awards for 104 Pakistanis and foreigners in recognition of their services, excellence, and sacrifices in their respective fields.

The awards were announced on Pakistan's 78th Independence Day and will be presented to the awardees at an investiture ceremony on Pakistan Day, March 23, 2025. The president conferred awards in the fields of science and engineering, education, medicine, arts, literature, sports, social services, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, taxpayers and exporters, public services, gallantry, and services to Pakistan.

The Nishan-i-Pakistan was conferred on former president and prime minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in recognition of his public services.

In the sports category, Zardari announced the Hilal-i-Imtiaz for Arshad Nadeem, who recently bagged gold and broke the Olympic record at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Meanwhile, Sitar-i-Imtiaz will be conferred posthumously on renowned climber Murad Sadpara, who succumbed to his injuries on Monday morning after the army launched an operation to rescue him from Gilgit-Baltistan's Broad Peak.

Other awardees for sports include Maqsood Ahmed, Amad Shaheel Butt, Rehman Ishtiaq, Mir Nadir Khan Magso, who will all receive the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, while Amir Ishaq will be conferred with the Presidential Pride of Performance award.

In recognition of their excellence in the field of science, the president conferred the Hilal-i-Imtiaz on Amir Hafeez Ibrahim, Sitar-i-Imtiaz on Dr Gulam Muhammad Ali and Sardar Muhammad Aftab Ahmed Khan; and Tamgha-i-Imtiaz on Dr Sara Qureshi, Dr Rafuddin and Professor Dr Usman Qamar.

In the field of education, Sadia Rasheed will be awarded the Hilal-i-Imtiaz, while Dr Suleman Shahabuddin and Syed Azhar Hussain Abidi will be awarded the Sitar-i-Imtiaz. The Pride of Performance award will be conferred upon Barkat Shah, Abdul Rasheed Kakar, and Aneeqa Bano.

For their contribution to the field of medicine, Zardari will award the Hilal-i-Imtiaz to Dr Shahryar and Dr Zaryab Sethna, and the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz to Dr Akifullah Khan, Dr Syed Abid Mehdi Kazmi, and Ikrumulh Khan.

In the field of arts, Collin David was bestowed with the Sitar-i-Imtiaz, while Arshad Aziz Malik, Bakhtiar Ahmed, and Barrister Zafarullah were conferred with the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz. The Pride of Performance will be awarded to Farida Pervaiz, Hamid Rama, Shiba Arshad, and Naveed Ahmed Bhatti.

The recipients in the fields of literature include Javed Jabbar (Hilal-i-Imtiaz); Salman

Awan, Zafar Waqar Taj and Muniza Shamsi (Sitar-i-Imtiaz); Syed Jawad Hussain Jafari (Tamgha-i-Imtiaz) and Ambreen Haseeb (Pride of Performance). The Nishan-i-Imtiaz was posthumously conferred upon Nasir Kazmi.

Other recipients of the Sitar-i-Imtiaz include Mian Aziz Ahmed, Humaid Lakhani, Sana Hashwani and Safiazur Munir, the duo behind the luxury clothing brand Sana Safinaz. The Hilal-i-Imtiaz will be conferred upon Khwaja Anver Majeed and Hussain Dawood. Taxpayers and exporters who were conferred the Sitar-i-Imtiaz include Syed Imran Ali Shah, Nazimuddin Feroz, Imtiaz Hussain, Adnan Niaz, Zahid Ahmed Ghareeb, and Syed Asad Hussain Zaidi.

The president also announced the conferment of Sitar-i-Shujaat on Panjgur Deputy Commissioner Zakir Hussain Baloch who was recently

martyred in a terrorist attack in Mastung. Meanwhile, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Khurram Agha, Dr Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah, and Umar Farooq will be awarded the Hilal-i-Imtiaz. In the field of public service, the Sitar-i-Imtiaz will be conferred upon Dr Rubaba Khan Buledi, Dr Hamid Attie Sarwar, Waqasuddin Syed, Jameel Ahmed, Ayaz Khan, Ahmed Ishaq Jahangir, and Irfan Nawaz Memon. The Tamgha-i-Imtiaz was announced for Syed Shaheel Shah, Ashad Jawad, Rubab Sikandar, Muhammad Yousuf Khan, Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Rehan Mehtab Chawla, Rear Admiral Tanvir and Amir Mahmood Lakhani.

To recognise their gallantry, the president conferred the Hilal-i-Shujaat posthumously on Sub Inspector Taimur Shahzad Shaheed, Sepoy Muhammad Asif Shaheed, SP Muhammad Aijaz Khan, DSP Sardar Hussain Shaheed, DSP Allama Iqbal Shaheed, LHC Muhammad Farooq Shaheed, Additional SHO Adnan Afridi Shaheed, Allah Rakho Nandwani, Constable Jahanzeb, and Constable Ishaq Ali Shaheed.

Malik Sabz Ali Shaheed and Retired Captain Hanza Anjum were conferred the Sitar-i-Shujaat, while the Tamgha-i-Shujaat was announced for Malik Mahmood Jan Shaheed, Saeed Khan, Samiullah Shaheed, Sahib Khan and Dr Shafi Muhammad Buzenjo.

For their services to Pakistan, the following foreigners were conferred with national awards: Saudi Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman al Saud (Hilal-i-Imtiaz); Fu Zhiheng (Hilal-i-Quaid-e-Azam); Mohammad Saif Al Suwaidi (Hilal-i-Quaid-e-Azam); Majid bin Abdullah Al Kassarbi (Sitar-i-Pakistan); Abdullah Al-Swaha (Sitar-i-Pakistan); Haydar Qurbony (Sitar-i-Quaid-e-Azam) and Dr Christine Schmotzer (Sitar-i-Quaid-e-Azam).

The president also conferred Tamgha-i-Pakistan on Mountaineer Lukas Woerle, Dr Aureo Dither, Prof Valeria Fiorani Piacentini, and Agostino Da Polenza. The Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam was conferred upon Zhang Baozhong and Xinmin Liu, while the Tamgha-i-Khidmat was awarded to Diana McArthur.





# Book titled 'CPEC Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development' launched

**NewsWire**

Islamabad: The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) this week hosted the launch of the book titled "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030: A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development."

Edited by Dr. Rabia Akhtar and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), this book explores the future of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a focus on sustainable development and green initiatives.

The event was marked by the presence of prominent guests, including Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as the Chief Guest and Mr. Xu Hangtian, Minister Counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, as the Guest of Honour. Among the distinguished reviewers were Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, former Pakistani Ambassador to China; Dr. Salma Malik, Associate Professor at Quaid-i-Azam University; and Dr. Hassan Daud Butt, former CEO of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment. During his address, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of ISSI, emphasized the importance of the enduring Pakistan-China Strategic Cooperative Partnership, with CPEC as a cornerstone. He noted that as a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), CPEC links China's western regions with the Arabian Sea via Pakistan. This transformative project aims to alleviate Pakistan's energy shortages, address infrastructural deficiencies, and enhance regional connectivity. By revitalizing trade routes and promoting economic integration, CPEC is set to position Pakistan as a central gateway to Asia, the Middle East, and beyond. Ambassador Mahmood also reflected on the tangible benefits that CPEC has delivered over the past 11 years. He further highlighted the book's focus on the potential

of CPEC to drive sustainable growth. It envisions CPEC evolving into a green development initiative that aligns with global sustainability efforts and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By incorporating green technologies and sustainable practices, CPEC is poised to not only boost economic growth but also lead in environmental stewardship. The book serves as a strategic roadmap, offering actionable recommendations to ensure that CPEC contributes positively to long-term regional development.

Mr. Felix Kolbitz, Country Director of FES, expressed his gratitude to the editor and authors of the book and commended the ISSI for their collaboration. He expressed hope that the book would inspire new ideas, promote further research, and significantly contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable development within the CPEC framework.

Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi noted the book's exploration of the intense debates and emotions surrounding CPEC and other connectivity projects in today's geopolitical climate. She remarked that the book presents a compelling counter-narrative in support of the BRI and CPEC, addressing both challenges and long-term solutions.

Dr. Salma Malik highlighted the book's examination of the political, geostrategic, and environmental dimensions of CPEC. She emphasized the concept of a "Green CPEC" as part of CPEC 2.0, advocating for the alignment of projects with SDGs and UN guidelines to ensure sustainable development.

Dr. Hassan Daud Butt discussed the focus on developing environmentally sustainable Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC. He stressed the need for government policies that facilitate private sector investment in these zones.

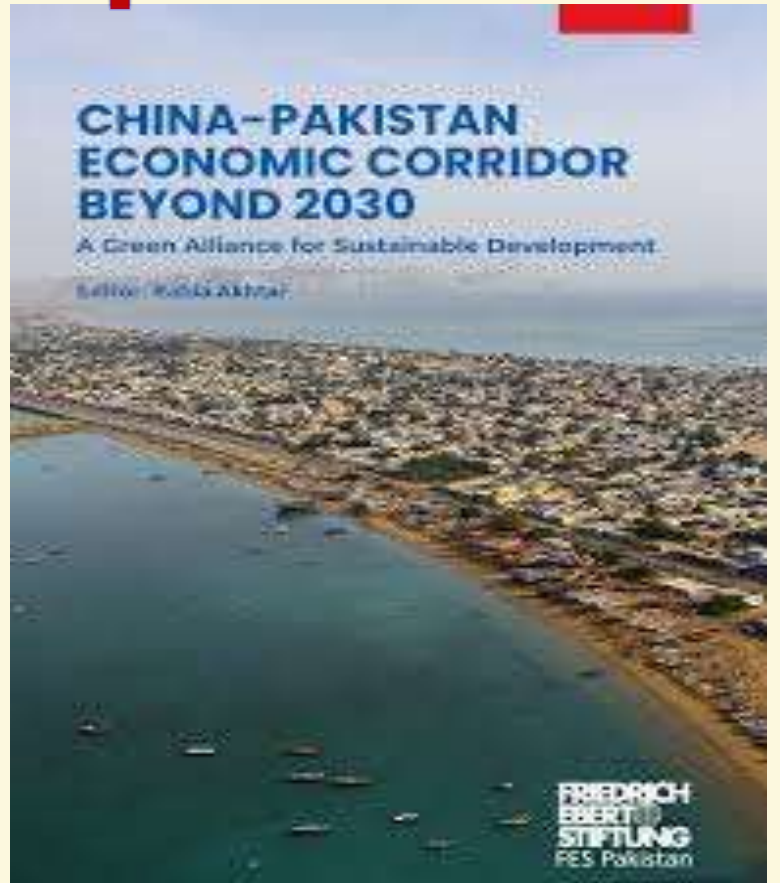
Dr. Rabia Akhtar, the book's editor, described the

volume as a call to action for re-imagining the future of CPEC beyond economic metrics, with a focus on balancing development with sustainability. She asserted that CPEC should be more than just a commercial corridor; it should be a corridor of consciousness and a keystone for forging a green alliance.

Mr. Xu Hangtian, the Guest of Honour, praised the dedication of the authors and their comprehensive work, describing the book as a valuable resource on CPEC that will endure for years. He acknowledged the sustainability challenges faced by both China and Pakistan during CPEC's implementation, noting that numerous projects, including those focused on sustainable energy technologies like solar and wind, have been undertaken to address these challenges. In his address, Chief Guest Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed reflected on China's path to modernization, its peaceful rise, and its success in lifting 800 million people out of poverty. He noted that despite criticism from Western nations, China's Belt and Road Initiative has inspired similar projects, such as the Build Back Better World (B3W) and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Senator Mushahid also stressed the importance of countering the global smear campaign against the BRI and CPEC, lauding the book's contributions to highlighting CPEC's significance and proposing a green development trajectory.

Earlier in the event, Dr. Talat Shabbir remarked that the book serves both as a reflection on the past 11 years of CPEC and as a forward-looking roadmap, addressing the progress, challenges, and opportunities that lie ahead. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood emphasized that CPEC is not an isolated initiative but a central component of the broader BRI, the most ambitious infrastructure development project in history. He acknowledged the challenges and opposition faced by CPEC and called for the construction of an effective counter-narrative.

The book launch was well-attended by diplomats, practitioners, academics, think-tank experts, students, members of the business community, and the media.



# Chinese companies decry unfair import duties by Europe

**NewsWire**

Islamabad: A group representing Chinese companies this week said the European Commission's plan to slap import duties of up to 36 percent on Chinese electric cars was "unfair" and would worsen trade tensions.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce to the EU (CCCEU) "expresses its strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the EC's protectionist approach," the group said in a statement.

"The EC's unfair use of trade tools to hinder free trade in electric vehicles, along with this protectionist approach, will ultimately weaken the resilience of the European electric vehicle industry," the group added.

"It will exacerbate trade tensions between China and the EU, sending a profoundly negative signal to global cooperation and green development," it warned.

Brussels last month slapped Chinese EVs with hefty provisional tariffs of up to 38 percent - on top of current duties of 10 percent.



# Book "Xinjiang ke Khushal Uyghur" launched by ISSI

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) this week organized a book launch for "Xinjiang ke Khushal Uyghur (Xinjiang's Prosperous Uyghur)," authored by renowned columnist and author Ms. Naz Parveen.

The event was graced by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as the chief guest. Distinguished speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Prof. Zamir Ahmed Awan, founding chairperson of the Global Silk Route Research Alliance; Professor

Dr. Azhar Ahmed, Independent Analyst; and Ms. Nabila Jaffer, Research Analyst and Lead of the China Program at the Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood expressed gratitude to the guests for attending the book launch. He highlighted three key aspects: Firstly, the unique and cherished relationship between Pakistan and China - marked by strategic mutual trust and mutual support, nurtured by successive generations, and strengthened by transformational initiatives like CPEC. Secondly, Ms. Naz Parveen, the author and director of

China Window, has made notable contributions through her writings and facilitated deeper understanding of China's culture and traditions. Thirdly, this book contains her detailed account based on observations and experiences particularly in Kashgar and Urumqi, and debunks many of the motivated narratives emanating from the West regarding the treatment of Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang Region. Prof. Zamir Ahmed Awan, emphasized the significance of cultural diplomacy in understanding China and lauded the author for her accessible and engaging writing style. He elaborated on the rich history and cultural heritage of China's Xinjiang region, noting how the book captures the essence of this dynamic area and encourages greater appreciation of Chinese culture among readers in Pakistan. Professor Dr. Azhar Ahmed commended the author for her achievement in publishing such a detailed and vivid travelogue. He praised the book's ability to transport readers into the heart of Xinjiang, making them feel as though they were experiencing the journey alongside the author. He also stressed the importance of such works in dispelling negative perceptions and promoting a deeper understanding of China's cultural landscape. Ms. Nabila Jaffer expressed her admiration for the book's imaginative and artistic narrative, which she found to be a refreshing departure from typical political discourses. She highlighted the book's emphasis on personal experiences and cultural exchanges, which she believes are crucial for fostering stronger ties between Pakistan and China. Ms. Naz Parveen, the author, shared her motivation for writing the book, which stemmed from her experiences at China Window in Peshawar and her desire to counter the negative narratives surrounding China's treatment of Uyghur Muslims. She recounted her journey through

Beijing, Chengdu, Kashgar, and Urumqi, where she was deeply moved by the warmth and hospitality of the Uyghur people and their socio-economic development, which starkly contrasted with the negative portrayals often carried by the Western media. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, the chief guest, congratulated Ms. Naz Parveen for her exceptional work and commended the book for its communicative style and insightful content. He reflected on the evolution of China, highlighting its revolutionary reforms and criticized the Western media's attempts to demonize China. He stressed the importance of Pakistani voices in countering such propaganda and called for greater efforts to promote understanding between the two nations. Earlier, in his introductory remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of the China Pakistan Study Centre, introduced the book. He emphasized the importance of producing more literature on China-Pakistan cultural relations in Urdu to reach a broader audience. He commended the author's literary skills and praised her work as a significant contribution to the literature on China's culture. In his vote of thanks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman of the ISSI Board of Governors, emphasized the profound connection between Pakistan and China, rooted in mutual trust and respect. He praised the book for its personal and thought-provoking insights into Chinese culture, which serve as a powerful rebuttal to negative narratives. The book launch was well attended by academics, students, members of the diplomatic community, and civil society.





# A guide to visit Italy from Pakistan



**News wire**

Rome: Italy stands out when it comes to best tourist destinations in the European region owing to its fascinating culture, natural landscapes, artistic sites, and renowned cuisine. Pakistanis, who intend to explore Italy as a tourist, are required to obtain a short-term Schengen visa to enter Italy. They can lodge the application for the visa at the Consulate of the country that he/she intends to visit.

If you intend to visit several Schengen States and the stays will be of equal length, you must apply at the Consulate of the country whose external borders you will cross first when entering the Schengen area.

The Applicant has to meet various requirements to obtain the visit visa for Italy. One of the most important is the bank statement that shows the traveller has sufficient funds to meet expenses during his stay in Italy.

The bank statement, a document that shows you have sufficient financial resources for your stay in any Schengen country. It should be no more than 30 days old.

Following is the minimum daily required amount for bearing expense of

stay in Italy. An applicant is required to show the amount enough for the days he/she intends to spend there: Around 28 Euros per day if your stay is above 20 days.

As of August 23, 2024, one Euro is equal to Rs310.78. It means you need to have around Rs 261,055 in your bank account if your stay is for 30 days in Italy.



Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Marilina Armellini & her husband





# Who is dragging the Pacific Islands into 'unbridled strategic rivalry'?

**Global Times**

Less than a week before the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, a think tank is already intensifying its rhetoric about the strategic rivalry between the West and China in the Pacific region.

The 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting will be hosted by Tonga from August 26 to 30.

The Lowy Institute, an Australia-based think tank, has released a report titled "The Great Game in the Pacific Islands," which highlights that the Pacific Islands region is facing challenges due to "unbridled strategic rivalry."

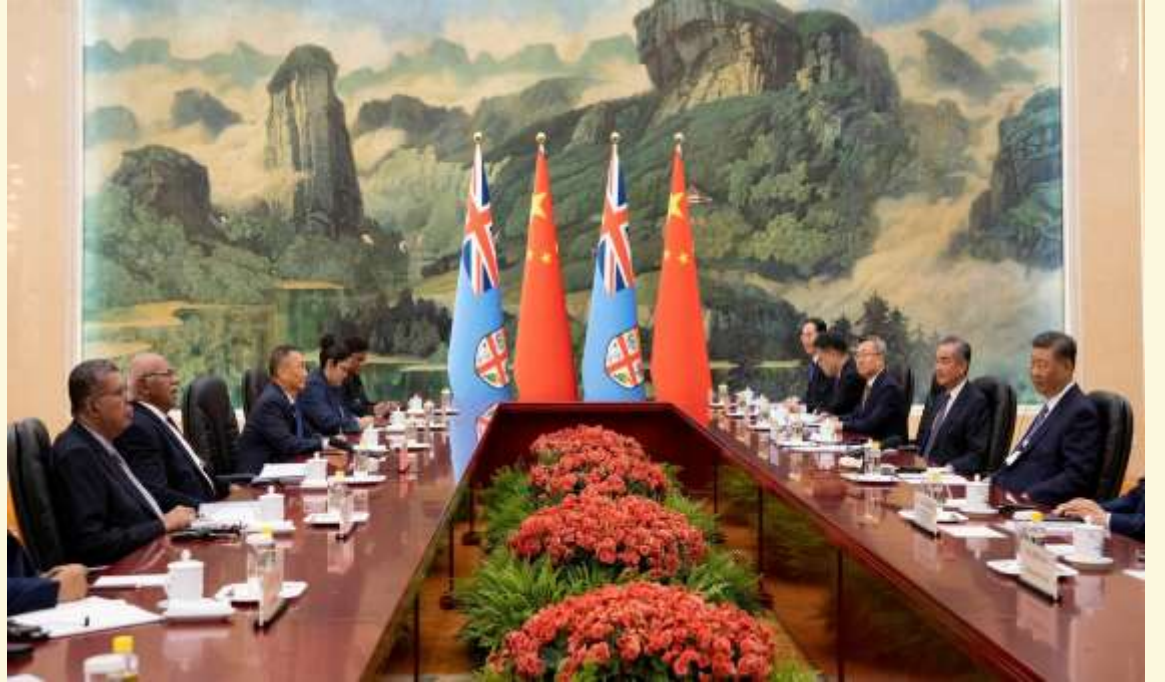
The report suggests that "Australia, the US, and New Zealand as political and development partners are being directly challenged by China." This narrative appears rather "timely" and raises questions about whether Western countries' "intense interest" in Pacific Islands affairs is merely a strategic ploy.

The report is riddled with bias, presenting itself as an

objective analysis of the geopolitical impacts facing Pacific Islands Countries amid great power competition. The third sentence of the report, "China's outreach and activities in the region appear indefatigable," positions China as an "aggressor." As the report concludes, "traditional partners such as Australia and the US worry that the regional balance of power is changing and their influence is waning." Consequently, they feel compelled to counter China. But this concern is fundamentally based on a Western-made false premise.

The report reflects the West's usual approach of ignoring China's real contributions to the Pacific Islands Countries while exaggerating its own "contributions," which strains the relationship between the region and China.

Instead of portraying China as an "aggressor," it would be more productive to consider whether Western countries' so-called cooperation in the region is as altruistic as they claim. The "China threat" narrative is merely a cover for Western interests and strategic calculations in the region. By exaggerating the threat from China, the West



is forcing the Pacific Islands into a binary choice, which inevitably puts these countries in a more precarious position.

Pacific Islands Countries are trapped by a complex dilemma, facing not only the challenge of economic development but also external political pressures. For these countries, the real challenge has never been the "China threat," but rather achieving sustainable development under the shadow of the global competition heavily amplified by the West.

"China is always pleased to see any development that benefits the economies and livelihoods of Pacific Island Countries. By contrast, the US, under its 'Indo-Pacific Strategy,' views the region as a crucial strategic point and seeks to turn it into a base for containing China," said Chen Hong, director of the Australian Studies Center at East China Normal University.

The more the West smears China, the more it highlights how China's cooperation in the region is widely welcomed. China attracts Global South countries

through its strength and actions, while the West distorts this as coercion or manipulation.

The Western countries' history of coercion and manipulation has limited their perspective; no wonder they cannot appreciate the appeal of China's commitment to peaceful development.

Global Times



# How should China address US' extensive Sinophobia?

**Zheng Yongnian**

As some American scholars have acknowledged, Sinophobia in the US today has reached its highest level. In fact, if someone regularly reads American newspapers, they can find a wealth of hysterical rhetoric - constantly criticizing, opposing and attacking China.

In the US, Sinophobia exhibits several characteristics. First, this fear is comprehensive, covering almost all aspects, including geopolitics, military, trade, technology and systemic issues. Second, it is a government-wide phenomenon. Third, the government's fear has spread to all corners of US society, as reflected in various opinion polls. Fourth, it has a strong tendency to spread and infect other countries.

In the economic realm, the US remains the world's largest economy. Whether in terms of market or technology, the US continues to be admired by many countries. In this realm, the US' fear stems

from the fact that, despite the country having invested in suppressing China, the Chinese economy is not only surviving in an increasing number of areas and showing remarkable resilience, but also growing stronger.

The deepest layer of the US' fear regarding China lies in the realm of systems and institutions. In this regard, US Senator Marco Rubio's statements are particularly representative. This outspoken critic of China stated that "Capitalism didn't change China. China changed capitalism," leading the US to face "this historic and catastrophic mistake." President Joe Biden framed the competition between the US and China as a struggle between "democracy" and "authoritarianism," and has shown confidence that the former will win. However, American society has long lost its confidence in US democracy. This is because US democracy is facing unprecedented internal challenges, primarily due to extreme social

inequality and division.

All of this fear ultimately translates into geopolitical anxiety toward China. Anything China does can be interpreted by Washington as part of its geopolitical rivalry with the US which absolutely will not tolerate any other country challenging its hegemonic position. Clearly, for China, a core issue in international relations and diplomacy for the foreseeable future is how to manage the US' Sinophobia.

First, to address the US' fear of China, we need to stay calm, closely analyze how this fear is expressed and understand its reasons before developing and taking effective countermeasures.

Second, it's crucial to present China in a positive light. We need to "tell China stories well." The goal of that is to help other countries understand and accept China. China stories are aimed not at anti-China critics but at the majority of foreign readers.

Third, in specific areas, including economics and trade, technology, and political systems, we can respond. But we should be aware that responses must be purposeful and rational rather than simple emotional reactions.

Fourth, in terms of geopolitics, China does not pursue the same ambitions as the US. Since China's major geopolitical interests are in its surrounding regions, the US concentrates on containing and encircling China in these areas. Therefore, China needs to enhance its national defense to ensure it can adequately protect itself.

To effectively respond to the US, China's cooperation should extend beyond its neighboring countries, such as the Belt and Road Initiative. While the US focuses on containment and encirclement through alliances in China's surrounding regions, China emphasizes defense and seeks breakthroughs through inclusive multilateralism. Globally, while the US prioritizes national security, China focuses on economic development, helping regional countries balance their security and development needs.

The US has framed the competition between China and itself as a clash of political systems, which is



something China must confront directly. It is important to highlight that China's political system is tailored to Chinese civilization, culture and its national conditions. It is a non-Western system, not an anti-Western system. China does not aim to impose its system on other countries, but rather it hopes that every nation can find a political system that aligns with its civilization. At the same time, China also supports mutual learning and exchanges between countries, encouraging countries to share and adopt the best practices from different systems through civilizational dialogue.

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## High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri holds productive meeting with Premier Chris Minns

**Covert Report** NSW Chris Minns.

Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week had a productive meeting with the Premier of

NSW, the Hon. Chris Minns. We discussed various opportunities to further

strengthen Pakistan-NSW cooperation and highlighted the significant role of the Pakistani Diaspora in the state," the popular envoy said in a statement after the meeting.

Pakistan and Australia enjoy friendly ties. Recently, Chief of Defence Forces Australia General Angus J. Campbell paid a visit to Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, the military said. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), they engaged in discussions on matters of bilateral professional interest, with a particular focus on the global and regional security environment and cooperation between the two armed forces.

ISPR said that both parties expressed a mutual desire to further expand military-to-



-military cooperation. The Australian Chief of Defence Forces expressed his admiration for the high professional standards maintained by the

Pakistan armed forces, their notable achievements in the fight against terrorism, and their continued efforts to promote regional peace and stability.



## Young foreign service officers visit Pakistan's amb in Brussels

**Covert Report**

embourg Amna Baloch this week.

Brussels: A group of young officers from the Foreign Service of Pakistan (FSP), currently undergoing diplomatic training at Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands, called on Pakistan's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium, and Lux-

Ambassador Baloch extended a warm welcome to the young officers and congratulated them on their recent induction into the prestigious Foreign Service of Pakistan.

She expressed her confidence in their

ability to represent and advance Pakistan's interests on the global stage, emphasizing the crucial role they will play in the country's diplomatic efforts.

In her address, Ambassador Baloch provided the officers with an insightful briefing on the roles and responsibilities of the Embassy.



She shared her own experiences and offered a comprehensive overview of the current state and future prospects of Pakistan's relationships with the European Union, Belgium,

Luxembourg and NATO. She encouraged the officers to remain informed and actively engage with the ever-changing landscape of international relations, particularly in relation to key partners such as the EU.



## Canada stops shelter payments for Afghan migrants in Pakistan

**Covert Report**

for Afghan migrants currently waiting in Pakistan to be resettled in Canada, media reports said.

Ottawa: The Canadian government this week stopped providing financial support

Canada had promised immigration visas to Afghans who had worked with Canadian forces in Afghanistan. Many of these Afghans moved to Pakistan following the return of the Taliban's government in Afghanistan and are awaiting transfer to Canada. Reports indicate that the Canadian immigration and settlement office provided temporary shelter funds for these Afghans.

According to CBC News, the Canadian government has now halted these payments. Officials told CBC that this financial support was a temporary measure and an exceptional step to provide temporary housing while the migrants completed their documentation.

Currently, thousands of Afghan citizens are awaiting evacuation in Iran and particularly in Pakistan. Most of them are in an uncertain situation in these countries.





# Umar Rehman Malik highlights PPP's commitment to health sector



**Abdullah Jan**

Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) this week Umar Rehman Malik highlighted the PPP's commitment to the health sector. "PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has inaugurated Pakistan's first #CyberKnife surgery facility at Jinnah Hospital, Karachi. This cutting-edge technology offers advanced, non-invasive cancer treatment with exceptional precision," Umar Rehman Malik said. He added: "In a truly transformative move, the PPP is ensuring that this expensive treatment will be 'free of cost' for the poor, making world-class healthcare accessible to all. This initiative reflects #PPP's unwavering commitment to improving the lives of the people and advancing Healthcare equity." Earlier, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated two different departments of over one hundred beds each and the latest cancer fighting technology CyberKnife S7-FIM at Jinnah Hospital, Karachi. CyberKnife is a robotic technology that uses high cancer-killing doses of radiation in a precise, painless and non-invasive manner, according to the JPMC based in Sindh's capital city. The two departments launched today by the PPP chief include a 120-bed Department of Psychiatry and Behav-

oural Sciences, and a 110-bed Department of Neurology and Stroke Unit. Addressing a ceremony at the Jinnah hospital, Bilawal said that the CyberKnife is the most expensive machine in the world and the provincial government is providing these facilities to people free of charge. "People talk about the Sindh government that it does not do anything. But, the Sindh government's work speaks for itself," he said, adding that the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD), National Institute of Child Health (NICH) and JPMC are the best examples of the government's performance. "All these three hospitals are an example of good governance of the provincial government while in other provinces even a CT scan facility is not available to the public free of

charge." The CyberKnife facility is available only at the JPMC in the entire country, he added. It is pertinent to mention that the CyberKnife system was set up at the JPMC for the first time in December 2012. The PPP leader also directed Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to continue serving the people with the best healthcare facilities. Bilawal, who served as the foreign minister in the last government, also directed the Sindh CM to take Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to visit the hospital whenever he trips to the city. The PPP leader said that he would tell the premier that the PPP-led government is ready to assist the Punjab government in the health sector.





# Generational shift: Nearly half of Bulgaria's workforce will be over 55 by 2044

## Covert Report

Sofia: In the next 20 years, nearly half of Bulgaria's workforce is expected to be over the age of 55, reflecting a significant aging trend in the country. A study by the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce (BCC) reveals that if this trend continues, the proportion of older workers could reach 48 percent, with two-thirds of the employed population representing older generations. This demographic shift has been analyzed across five economic sectors: canning, woodworking and furniture, metallurgy, beer production, and petroleum product trade. The research was conducted under the "Together for Sustainable Employment" project, a collaboration between the BCC, the Ministry of Social

Affairs, and the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria, running from 2024 to 2027.

The study highlights that the workforce has decreased by an average of 16 percent over the past five years, driven by factors like the reduction in the number of enterprises in some sectors and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most significant decline has been in the furniture industry, while the brewing and metallurgical sectors have remained relatively stable.

The growing age stratification in the labor force presents challenges, with four distinct generations—each with different values, work attitudes, and behaviors—now coexisting in the workplace. Managing these generational differences and leveraging their strengths for corporate benefit is becoming increasingly challenging for companies. The study suggests that effective management of age diversity requires shifting focus from organizational needs to

people-centric strategies. This includes implementing programs that foster an inclusive work environment where all employees feel valued and can maximize their potential.

The study also identifies several issues faced by enterprises, including low motivation, reluctance to learn, and a lack of efficiency and creativity among workers. Additionally, communication skills and stress management are noted as significant challenges for both management and staff.

Employee turnover is another concern, particularly among younger generations. The survey indicates that nearly one in four workers aged 27-39 have left their jobs in the past two years. Generation Y, or Millennials, are the most sought-after in the job market and are quick to change jobs if their expectations are not met. Generation X, aged 40-54, also shows a high turnover rate, primarily driven by concerns over salaries.

The study also points to deeply rooted prejudices and stereotypes related to age that continue to influence workplace attitudes and relationships. These biases are particularly pronounced among younger generations, with Generation X and Generation Z displaying more ageist attitudes than their older counterparts. Conversely, older workers, especially those in Generation T (55-65+), often exhibit self-directed ageism, harboring incorrect beliefs and barriers related to their age group.



# President Zardari holds meeting with outgoing Greece Ambassador Konstantinos Moatsos

## Celina Ali

Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari this week has emphasized strengthening bilateral relations with Greece.

He was talking to outgoing ambassador to Greece to Pakistan Konstantinos Moatsos who paid a farewell call on him in Islamabad today. Pakistan and Greece enjoy friendly and cordial relations. Pakistan opened its embassy in Athens in 1975. Greece established its resident diplomatic Mission in Islamabad in 1987.

The bilateral relations are based on mutual understanding and respect. Pakistan's community in Greece is the third largest expatriate community in the country.

Both countries share common perceptions on a variety of important issues of peace and development concerning South Asia, EU and the world at large. Both countries have also been cooperating with each other at the UN and other international organizations.





# Portugal receives over 63,000 citizenship applications in first 4 months of 2024



ment, the growth curve in citizenship applications is very steep. This has a negative impact on processing times, with many applications being delayed, which further lengthens waiting times for new applicants.

Last year, of about 200,000 citizenship applications, only 116,000 were granted. Cavaleiro said that the demand for Portugal's citizenship should continue to grow, driven mainly by the stability that the country offers.

Among the reasons for applying for citizenship in Portugal is that the country is among the easiest ones for obtaining nationality. According to a study from the Canadian Immigration Agency, CanadaCIS, Portu-



**NewsWire**  
Lisbon: More than 63,000 requests for Portuguese citizenship have been received in the first four months of 2024. The figures provided by the Institute of Registries and Notaries (IRN) reveal that there has been a significant increase in the number of citizenship applications. The surge in the number of citizenship applications has brought difficulties to authorities when it comes to the processing of requests. Over 63,000 requests for Portuguese citizenship have been received in the first four months of this year, based on the figures provided by the Institute of Regis-

tries and Notaries (IRN). The statistics show that there has been a notable increase compared to the figures from last year when 198,000 applications were registered, Schengen.News reports. The surge in the number of applications for Portuguese citizenship has brought new challenges for the country's authorities when it comes to the processing of applications. In this regard, Tammy Cavaleiro, partner at Você Europeu, told Mercados y Eventos that due to the high number of applications, a large number of applications are being delayed. Despite efforts to increase staff recruit-



These are times of global uncertainty, and the advantages of citizenship can be decisive. Applicants should only be aware of the challenges that may result in delays. It is essential that they are prepared to face possible obstacles. In May this year, it was reported that over 500,000 applications for Portuguese citizenship are waiting to be processed for up to two years. The government said the main reason for the ongoing delay is the high demand. Portugal Among Ten Easiest Countries for Acquiring Citizenship

gal is among the top ten countries on the list when it comes to obtaining nationality. In the study, Portugal was ranked fourth among the 32 European countries when it came to granting citizenship. According to the report, more than three in every 50 residents of third countries become citizens of Portugal, which corresponds to 6.6 per cent of the total. In spite of the study concluding that it is easy to acquire citizenship in Portugal, commenters of the Portugal News didn't agree with these findings.





# PDMAs and coastal communities strengthen disaster risk management with support from Japan, UNDP

**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: Supported by the Government of Japan and in partnership with the Economic Affairs Division and PDMAs in Sindh and Balochistan, UNDP has jointly conducted a closing ceremony to commemorate the successful completion of USD 3.7 Million project 'Strengthening Tsunami and Earthquake Preparedness in Coastal Areas of Pakistan' in Islamabad this week.

The project has concluded, but resilient empowered, knowledgeable communities and institutions remain, marking the start of a new chapter in Tsunami & Earthquake Preparedness in Coastal Areas in Pakistan. The project's success in strengthening disaster preparedness and response has laid a foundation for continued resilience in Pakistan's coastal communities. Through this project, the UNDP has addressed a

critical development challenge in the coastal districts of Malir, West/Keamari Karachi, and Gwadar in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan, by reducing tsunami risks and their potential impact on coastal communities in Pakistan. This was achieved through the revision of guidelines for tsunami and earthquake preparedness and enhancing the disaster response and preparedness capacity of vulnerable coastal communities. The project also prioritized gender equity in its approach to mitigate coastal hazards.

Wajahat Ahmed, Assistant Director (Civil), PDMA, Sindh, "This project marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to enhance disaster resilience. It has testified to the power of collaboration, expertise, and a shared commitment to saving lives. Let us take the lessons learned and apply them to further develop the resilience of vulnerable commu-

nities in the Coastal Belt, making them more resilient to natural disasters."

Addressing the ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E Mr. Mitsuhiro Wada, underlined, "With its historical frequency of natural disasters, Japan has gained significant knowledge and experience in climate and disaster risk management, preparedness, and response. Japan's Development Cooperation Charter highlights the importance of disaster risk reduction for realizing poverty eradication and sustainable development. Japan is committed to promoting these efforts that leverage Japan's expertise in this area."

UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative Dr. Samuel Rizk said on the occasion, "The project has concluded, but the resilient, empowered, and knowledgeable communities and institutions it leaves behind will continue to make a difference. Our collaboration with Japan has been instrumental in building a more resilient future."



# USAID Celebrates International Youth Day 2024 with the Launch of "Dil Dil Mein Pakistan" Song



Development (USAID) this week announced the launch of the song, "Dil Dil Mein Pakistan," in celebration of International Youth Day 2024. This song is the culmination of a youth talent hunt, "Voices of Pakistan," a campaign dedicated to empowering and celebrating the vibrant youth of Pakistan.

The song launch ceremony, held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), was attended by USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri, Director General Ayoub Jamali, Music Composer Ali Ashraf, and the six talented young singers who emerged as winners from the five provinces, Azad Kashmir and Islamabad.

While congratulating the singers, Mission Director Somvongsiri said, "USAID believes in fostering opportunities for all, especially the youth. By engaging with young people, we hope to promote a message of growth, cooperation, and inclusivity."

The "Dil Dil Mein Pakistan" campaign highlights the incredible potential of Pakistan's youth while preserving the nation's rich cultural heritage. By showcasing local talent and diverse cultures, this initiative ensures that regional voices and stories are celebrated on a national platform. The song emphasizes values such as passion, resolve, love, and peace, which are essential for creating a harmonious and vibrant nation. It also underscores USAID's commitment to fostering opportunities through education, health, and skills, leading to overall prosperity.

The theme of this year's International Youth Day, "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development". By leveraging digital platforms, "Dil Dil Mein Pakistan" enables young voices from across the country to be heard, showcasing their talents and promoting sustainable development. This campaign demonstrates how digital innovation can drive positive change and create a brighter future through technology.

Director General Ayoub Jamali of the PNCA added, "The 'Dil Dil Mein Pakistan' campaign beautifully showcases the rich cultural diversity and immense talent of our youth. We are proud to be part of an initiative that not only celebrates our cultural heritage but also empowers the next generation of Pakistani artists."



**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The United States Agency for International





# EU's GSP-Plus status to Pakistan increasing bilateral trade: Ambassador Riina Kionka



**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Pakistan, Dr Riina Kionka this week said the European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus status (GSP+) to Pakistan is an exemplary step for increasing economic and trade cooperation between the two sides. "Pakistan and the European Union are major trading partners and Pakistan's annual exports with the EU are 30 percent of its total exports, which is far below its potential and needs to be increased", the Ambassador said. In an interview, the Ambassador to Pakistan said that after getting GSP-Plus status trade between Pakistan and the European Union has increased manifold and the role of the private sector is significant for increasing the trade volume on both sides. She said that the private sector, including the

Chambers of Commerce, should play its due role in this regard, and there is a need to increase both economic and commercial activities on both sides. She said that as a major trading partner, the European Union is playing its due role in growth in Pakistan's economic, trade, and tourism sectors added that work is ongoing on the promotion of tourism, micro Hydel energy projects, and many other projects in Gilgit-Baltistan region. The envoy said that some new development projects are also coming for sustainable development in the region. She said that in Gilgit-Baltistan, "We are running several projects, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors. She informed that for technical and skilled education, the EU has established a Center for Excellence to develop human capital

resources in GB. The ambassador said that climate resilience is necessary for green and sustainable growth in GB to work jointly with the local community. Dr. Riina Kionka said that an environment-friendly economic echo system is necessary throughout Pakistan especially in the northern region and for this, the European Union will cooperate fully. She said that there is a need to prevent deforestation in Gilgit-Baltistan and it is necessary for a sustainable environment in the region. The European Union envoy said that the European Union intends to start many projects to develop energy and tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan. She said that Gilgit-Baltistan is one of Pakistan's most beautiful regions, and its indigenous culture portrays the soft image of Pakistan in front of the world. The ambassador said that by increasing tourism facilities in Gilgit-Baltistan, this region can be made the center of international tourism. She said that the northern region of Pakistan is one of the most significant regions in the world for adventure tourism, where there are six major mountain peaks in the world, which provide the best opportunities for adventurers all over the world. Dr Riina Kionka said that the European Union is working with the federal and provincial governments on tourism infrastructure in GB. She said that to portray a better image of Pakistan at the international level, there is a need to promote the local Indigenous culture of Gilgit-Baltistan, which will highlight the concept of socio-cultural and economic diversity. The Envoy said that the concept of diversity and unity of the European Union is significant for promoting socio-economic inclusion and sustainable economic development in GB.





# UK expands eVisas to new biometric customers



**Celina Ali**

British High Commission said. High Commissioner Jane Marriott CMB OBE said: "We are constantly innovating to make it easier for Pakistanis to travel to the UK. This new use of technology will streamline a key part of the visa process, make it more secure and reduce the dependence on paper documents." The process is free, secure, and straightforward. You can find out more, including how to create an account, on our website: [gov.uk/eVisa](http://gov.uk/eVisa). You must not travel to the UK until you have received your passport and valid UK visa back from the Visa Application Centre (VAC). Updating a physical document to an eVisa does not affect your immigration status or the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in the UK. Upon arrival in the UK you will still be required to collect a BRP. All BRP cards are valid until 31 December 2024, but the expiry of your BRP card does not affect your immigration status. You can use your BRP card to create your UKVI account and access your eVisa. You should continue to carry your BRP until it expires, and take your BRP and your passport when travelling overseas to prove your permission to return to the UK.

Islamabad: Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs), vignette stickers in passports or 'wet ink stamps' are among some of the physical documents that will no longer be needed. "If you are granted a visa to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months – for example to work or study – you will now need to create a UKVI online account to access your eVisa. The account acts as an online record of your immigration status. For those granted a visa to stay in the UK for less than 6 months, for example as a tourist, you do not need to create a UKVI account," the

ument to an eVisa does not affect your immigration status or the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in the UK. Upon arrival in the UK you will still be required to collect a BRP. All BRP cards are valid until 31 December 2024, but the expiry of your BRP card does not affect your immigration status. You can use your BRP card to create your UKVI account and access your eVisa. You should continue to carry your BRP until it expires, and take your BRP and your passport when travelling overseas to prove your permission to return to the UK.





**“It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.” - J.K. Rowling**

**“The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.” - Jane Austen**

# Italy's Meloni: Economic and social rebirth is an essential investment

## News wire

Rome: “Eight years ago the catastrophic earthquake that devastated Central Italy. The terrible shock at 3,36am, fixed in the minds of each of us by the stopped clock of the Civic Tower of Amatrice, triggered a seismic sequence which spread its destructive effects for several months to follow and involved a very vast territory of the our nation”, declared the Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, on the occasion of the eighth anniversary of the earthquake in Central Italy.

“We will never forget the night of August

24, 2016. The images of the catastrophe, the destroyed villages, the pain and anguish of our compatriots, the heroism of the rescuers are pieces of a collective memory that time will not affect. On this anniversary we remember those who are no longer with us and we join the families and loved ones of the victims: you have never been alone, and Italy is and will always be at your side,” she added.

“Creating safe places, developing cutting-edge projects, guaranteeing infrastructure to combat isolation, supporting businesses and productive activities: this is the strate-

gy that the government has undertaken and is pursuing with great determination. The teamwork between the Minister for Civil Protection Musumeci, Commissioner Castelli, the Regions involved and the 138 Municipalities of the crater has brought about a change of pace and the renewed institutional cohesion around the objective of reconstruction is an added value to be preserved. The economic and social rebirth of the central Apennines is not only a duty for those who have always loved and lived here, but an essential investment for the entire nation”, PM Meloni said.



# France: New record for longest period under caretaker govt

## Pierre Breteau

Paris: August 24 marked 39 days since French President Emmanuel Macron accepted the resignation of Gabriel Attal's government. Since then, the caretaker prime minister and his team have been managing "day-to-day affairs," while waiting for a government to emerge from the legislative elections of June 30 and July 7. Since the advent of the Fifth Republic in 1958, this is the first time that a transition period between two governments has exceeded nine days (this record was previously set in 1962 by Georges Pompidou's first government, under the presidency of Charles de Gaulle).

This represents the longevity of caretaker governments in the French Fourth Republic (1946-1958) and Fifth Republic (1958-) compared with the current caretaker government led by Gabriel Attal. Only caretaker governments that were in place for at least nine days are included. This transition period is even longer than the record of 38 days set by René Mayer's government in 1953, under the Fourth Republic – even though the Fifth Consti-

tution largely designed to remedy the instability of its predecessor. Renowned for its instability, the Fourth Republic saw 24 successive governments in its 12 years (1946-1958), notably due to Parliament's predominance: it closely controlled the government within an Assemblée Nationale fragmented into three major forces. The proportional voting system (by department) forced MPs to form alliances in order to build majorities, which they then broke at the whim of political events. Governments, which had no means of overriding the Assemblée – Article 49.3, which allows the government to pass a bill without a vote, did not exist – were frequently overthrown or forced to resign, and were left to manage day-to-day affairs for an average of 13 days.

Despite this French record, Attal's resigned government is still far from competing with some other parliamentary regimes. Belgium went 540 days without a full government in 2010-2011, Lebanon 396 days in 2020-2021, and Spain 121 days in 2023.

