

World Cultural Festival: Italy's puppeteer mesmerizes Karachi with Silent Puppet Drama **Celina Ali**

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Portugal to launch new platform to accelerate citizenship application processing **Newsire**

Lisbon: Portugal's Institute of Registries and Notaries will launch a new platform to accelerate the process of granting citizenship. The platform aims to increase the capacity of the services to process

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Whole world risks losing from US-China rivalry



the world's largest creditor and the world's largest trading power in the process. The results are on display all over the world, whether it is high-speed rail in Indonesia, ports and bridges in Africa or an intercontinental highway crossing central Asia. Western countries can and do point to the flaws in China's Belt and Road Initiative, notably the huge debts owed to Chinese lenders that weigh on countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Zambia. But for developing countries that are seeking to make rapid economic progress, the Chinese offer remains attractive.

As Daniel Runde, a former USAID official, told Congress this year: "From project identification to signing, commencing and completing - China is much faster and cheaper than the United States at virtually every stage." The US is trying to push back. Last year, America's Eximbank signed a deal to finance more than a billion dollars' worth of transport and power projects in Angola. But with a yawning US budget deficit and new trade deals off the table in Congress, it will be all but impossible for America to rival China's economic offer.



Gideon Rachman
London: American and Chinese foreign policy sometimes feel like mirror images. The Americans are obsessed by containing Chinese power. The Chinese are obsessed by containing American power. But the mirroring stops when it comes to how these policies are executed. Washington and Beijing bring different strengths to their battle for power and influence. As a result, they are

pursuing different strategies. America's singular strength is its military might and its willingness to offer security guarantees to its allies. The United States has collective defence agreements with 56 countries around the world, in Europe, Asia and the Americas. It also provides crucial military aid to other countries, such as Israel and Ukraine, that are not formal treaty allies. China, by contrast, has a mutual defence treaty

with just one country - North Korea. Unlike the US, it also has territorial disputes with many of its neighbours, which tends to push them in the direction of America. But when it comes to economic relations, China has the advantage. Australia's Lowy Institute calculates that 128 countries now trade more with China than with the US. Over the last decade, China has spent more than a trillion dollars in more than 140 countries on infrastructure investment, becoming

Pakistan signs agreement with Denmark to restructure maritime sector

Celina Ali
Islamabad: Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh signed an agreement with Denmark's Industry, Business and Financial Affairs Minister Morten Bodskov this week which would allow the South Asian country to restructure its maritime sector and provide technical trainings to its ports. With access to the Arabian Sea, Pakistan's sea ports in the

coastal city of Karachi are vital for international trade, help facilitate international trade and provide jobs for thousands of people in the country. Pakistan has been keen on restructuring and upgrading its ports. In August, state media reported that Danish shipping firm Maersk will invest \$2 billion in Pakistan's port and transport infrastructure over the next two years. "After this MOU, Maersk (Danish Shipping Company) is ready to invest almost two billion dollars in Pakistan's maritime sector," a media report said.



curriculum and equipment and provide continuous technical and training assistance to Pakistani ports. Shaikh noted that Maersk has the highest market share of 20 percent for containerized imports and exports in Pakistan. Apart from that, the global market capital of this company is around 175 billion Danish Krone, he said. The Danish Ambassador to Pakistan Jakob Linulf also thanked the Government of Pakistan and Minister for Maritime Affairs on this progress. Both sides were willing to strengthen ties for the growth of maritime sector.

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Zardari urges int'l community's role to stop Israeli adventurism, restore peace



Liaquat Ali

Islamabad President Asif Ali Zardari this week expressed deep concerns over the growing Israeli adventurism in the region and called for the international community's role to take swift action to restore peace and prevent conflict from spilling over. The president, in his remarks at the All Parties Conference, convened by the government to mark a year of Israel's barbarism in Palestine, said that during the last year, the Israeli occupation forces had killed over 41,800 Palestinians besides destroying the infrastructure. The moot was attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman of Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, federal cabinet members, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Jamat-e-Islami Ameer Hafiz Naemur Rehman and leaders of other mainstream political parties. The president said that Israel had even expanded its relentless attacks to target Lebanon, Syria and Yemen and endangered regional and global peace and security. He said that regrettably, the international community had failed to stop Israel from committing genocide against the Palestinian population, specifically in Gaza and also questioned the prevailing situation of impunity. President Zardari said that it was crucial for the international community to take swift action to de-escalate the tension and prevent further loss of lives and conflict from spilling over to other parts of the region. He also emphasised the UN Security Council to fulfill its responsibility of establishing peace and security in Palestine and Lebanon and reiterated Pakistan's decades-old stance for a two-state solution by establishing an independent Palestine state on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds as its capital. President Zardari stressed that peace in the Middle East could not be achieved without resolving the Palestine issue in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. Calling for a total withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestine, he also asked the UNSC to restrain Israel from violation of international laws to restore peace in the Middle East. The president reiterated Pakistan's position of total withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab territories including Jerusalem and restoring the inalienable right of Palestinian people to self-determination.



Cross-border bus service between Gilgit, Kashgar resumes after 14 years



NewsWire

The resumption of this bus service is expected to greatly improve connectivity between Pakistan and China, facilitating increased tourism and trade, particularly in the scenic and strategically important region of Gilgit-Baltistan.

This development is a significant part of the broader China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), further solidifying the economic and transport ties between the two neighboring countries.

On September 30, 2024, the Ministry of Communications had granted NATCO a No Objection Certificate (NOC), allowing the corporation to proceed with finalizing an agreement with its Chinese counterpart to officially restart the service.

The ministry's approval is in line with discussions held during the Second Meeting of the Xinjiang-Pakistan Economic and Trade Cooperation Working Group. NATCO has also been instructed to submit the finalized agreement for record-keeping. NATCO spokesperson Ehsan Shah said that the bus service is scheduled to begin before the Khunjerab Pass closes for the winter in December. He noted that the two sides are working on updating certain aspects of the original 2006 agreement, with a formal signing ceremony expected in the coming weeks.

The reestablishment of the Gilgit-Kashgar bus service will reforge the connection between the picturesque Gilgit-Baltistan region and Kashgar, a key trade hub in China's Xinjiang province, providing new opportunities for economic cooperation and cultural exchange.



NewsWire
Islamabad: The Northern Areas Transport Corporation (NATCO) has officially received approval from Pakistan's Federal Ministry of Communications to restart its cross-border bus service between Gilgit and Kashgar, China, after a 14-year suspension, officials said this week. This service, which had been discontinued in 2010 due to a natural disaster, was

halted when a massive landslide led to the creation of Attabad Lake, submerging a 14-kilometer stretch of the crucial Karakoram Highway (KKH). The restoration of this vital transport link is the result of a collaborative effort between NATCO, a state-owned transport company in Gilgit-Baltistan, and Xinjiang-Kashgar Xin Lu Transportation Co. Ltd, a Chinese company.

Seminar discusses export of Cherries to China

Gwadar Pro
Gilgit: The Pakistan Horticultural Development & Export Company (PHDEC) under the Ministry of Commerce held a one-day seminar titled "Export of GB Cherries to China: Lessons Learned, Future Strategies & PHDEC Project on Development of High-Demand Cherry Varieties" this week. The seminar brought together a diverse group of stakeholders including farmers, exporters, processors, researchers, representatives from academia, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, government departments, and business support organizations from Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The event marked a historic achievement for Pakistan, celebrating the successful export of the first-ever consignment of cherries from GB to China. The milestone seen as a breakthrough in the region's horticultural sector, highlights the export potential of GB cherries and sets the stage for future growth. PHDEC's CEO opened the event by welcoming participants and reaffirming PHDEC's unwavering commitment to supporting the horticulture sector in Gilgit-Baltistan. He emphasized that following the success of the first cherry exports to China PHDEC is now embarking on a new project to develop high-demand cherry varieties that

will further enhance Pakistan's position in the global market. Presentations were made by key experts including Mr. Iqbal Hussain from the Agriculture Department, Mr. Nazir Ali from the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), and exporters Faisal Mir and Arman Shah as well as farmers' representatives, Chirag and Usman. The discussions focused on the success of the initial exports, lessons learned and future strategies for scaling up production and improving the supply chain. Faisal Mir reflected on the lessons learned from the first export initiative, expressing optimism that with continued dedication, GB could achieve an export target of 100,000 tonnes of cherries by 2030. Mr. Arman Shah provided a detailed overview of the cherry supply chain, while Nazir Ali highlighted the joint efforts of PHDEC, TDAP, NLC, DPP, M/s Hashwan Traders, and local departments that contributed to the success of the project. Dr. Mubarak Ahmed, consultant for the Agro Division at TDAP shared his insights on the export potential of GB cherries, noting the enthusiasm within the sector and the commitment of various departments to support horticultural growth in the region. Sector expert, Zulfiqar Ali Ghazi addressed the need for improved coordination among departments to fully capitalize on GB's cherry export potential.

The event concluded with closing remarks from Brig (R) Saleem Mahmood of Green Pakistan who praised the agricultural heritage of GB, where nearly every household owns fruit trees. He expressed confidence that with continued dedication to agriculture GB will achieve its goals and foster the prosperity envisioned for the region. A notable highlight of the event was the strong participation of women farmers, processors, and traders, reflecting the inclusive nature of the horticulture sector in GB. The seminar not only celebrated the success of the cherry exports but also paved the way for future collaborations and strategies to strengthen Pakistan's horticultural exports, particularly in high-demand international markets like China. Dr. Mubarak Ahmed, Consultant for the Agro Division at TDAP, shared his insights on the export potential of GB cherries, noting the enthusiasm within the sector and the commitment of various departments to support horticultural growth in the region. Sector expert, Zulfiqar Ali Ghazi, addressed the need for improved coordination among departments to fully capitalize on GB's cherry export potential. The event concluded with closing remarks from Brig (R) Saleem Mahmood of

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CPEC second phase officially kicks off



NewsWire
Islamabad: The second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has officially begun, marked by the signing of a series of significant new agreements between Pakistan and China. This phase is primarily centered around bolstering the agricultural and industrial sectors in Pakistan, with a focus on improving both productivity and quality in these vital areas. In a major breakthrough, Pakistan's International Innovation Park Limited and China National Cereals, Oils, and Foodstuffs Corporation on Saturday afternoon signed a high-value agreement in the agricultural domain. The deal, valued at US \$400 million, was formalized during a high-profile ceremony in Beijing.

This agreement paves the way for a wide array of Pakistani products to gain duty-free access to international markets, providing a significant boost to the nation's agricultural export potential and creating new opportunities for economic growth. Further enhancing the partnership between the two nations, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has also been signed to digitally transform and optimize the supply chain in 200 textile factories across Pakistan. Given that textiles play a central role in the country's economy, this initiative aims to elevate the sector's efficiency and global competitiveness through enhanced cooperation between the two countries. These agreements represent a crucial milestone in the evolution of CPEC, further deepening the economic partnership between Pakistan and China. As both nations continue to collaborate closely, these new ventures are set to stimulate growth, create new opportunities, and advance development efforts under the CPEC framework.

World Cultural Festival: Italy's puppeteer mesmerizes Karachi with Silent Puppet Drama



Celina Ali
Islamabad: This week Italian puppeteer Nina delivered a captivating performance at the Arts Council of Pakistan in Karachi during the World Cultural Festival. Her show, titled "I Put My Heart Into It," was unique in that it featured no spoken words, relying entirely on the expressive gestures of her puppets and an evocative musical score to weave a beautiful narrative. This was Nina's debut in Pakistan, where she was joined by French theatre artist Alien Voyagers, who entertained the crowd with a dynamic street performance. Nina shared insights into Italy's rich tradition of puppetry. She discussed Pulcinella,

a witty and satirical hand puppet deeply embedded in Neapolitan culture, often used to comment on social and political issues. She also touched upon Opera dei Pupi, a Sicilian marionette theatre known for its grand portrayals of medieval knights and heroic tales. These elaborately crafted puppets, donned in intricate costumes, have earned Opera dei Pupi recognition as a UNESCO cultural heritage. Nina's performance in Karachi stood out not only because it was a silent drama but also due to her unique approach. She has developed her own original puppetry style, distinct from traditional Italian forms. Her show, which featured two birds and a puppet named Nina, unfolded

entirely without dialogue, letting the expressiveness of the puppets and the accompanying music tell the story. Nina traveled all the way from Italy with her show props, including a suitcase full of puppets, music, and even the table used in the performance. Nina expressed her admiration for Pakistan's hospitality, sharing that she had always heard of the warm nature of Pakistanis but was now experiencing it firsthand. She also enjoyed local cuisine, particularly chicken biryani and chai, and praised Karachi's vibrant culture. The World Cultural Festival at the Karachi Arts Council, which features performances by artists from 40 different countries, continues until November 2, blending traditional and contemporary artistic expressions from around the world.



In 75 years, China has become increasingly prominent in driving global development



Global times

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China is a momentous occasion, not only for the over 1.4 billion Chinese people but also with global significance and historical importance.

Over these 75 years, the journey of Chinese modernization has profoundly transformed China and influenced the world, truly realizing that "our work will be written in the annals of human history."

This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Amid a changing international landscape, China has steadfastly maintained an independent and peaceful foreign policy, upholding international fairness and justice. As China increasingly approaches global center stage, it continues to make new and greater contributions to the cause of peace and development for humanity.

Seventy-five years ago, when this ancient nation in the East opened a new chapter in its history, the world was just beginning to recover from the devastation of two wars. From a struggling agricultural country, China has evolved into the world's second-largest economy, the world's leading manufacturing power, the top trader of goods, and the holder of the largest foreign exchange reserves. This historical elevation in national strength matches China's significant contributions to global development.

From 1979 to 2023, China's average annual contribution to global economic growth reached 24.8 percent, with an average of over 30 percent from 2013 to 2023. For 12 consecutive years, China's outbound direct investment in foreign countries has ranked among the top three globally, holding over 10 percent of the global share for eight years. China's "new three items" - electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries, and solar cells - are facilitating the globe to accelerate their green and low-carbon transi-

tions, while its infrastructure projects span over 190 countries and regions worldwide. Today, averagely speaking, China engages in approximately 80 million yuan (\$11.4 million) worth of trade with the world every minute, invests approximately 112 million yuan abroad every hour, and attracts about 3.377 billion yuan in foreign investment daily. The development of China is intricately linked with global progress, achieving mutual success, and driving the world toward greater progress and prosperity.

A great nation with over 5,000-year-old civilization stands majestically in the East, as over 1.4 billion people stride forward on the path to modernization. Such a vast scale itself is one of the main powerful driving forces for the progress of the entire world and human society. The practices of Chinese modernization teaches us that development is the key to solving all problems. China has proposed the Global Development Initiative to support the development and revitalization of countries in the Global South. By the end of 2023, China's direct investment in countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative had exceeded \$300 billion. Chinese companies have built the first ultra-high voltage direct current transmission line in the Americas, the first electrified railway, the first digital mine, and numerous infrastructure and livelihood projects in Africa, making an indelible contribution to global infrastructure construction.

From "seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China" to "seek peace even if you have to go as far as China," peace is a valuable public good that China offers to a turbulent world. Over the past 75 years, China has never initiated any war or conflict and has never occupied an inch of another country's territory. In the face of numerous international security challenges, China has proposed the Global Security Initiative. It has mediated the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, facilitated a historic reconciliation among Palestinian factions, and promoted a political resolution to the crisis in Ukraine. Today, China has become the second-largest contributor to the UN regular budget, the second-largest contributor to peacekeeping operations, and the largest troop-contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council. China has always been committed to promoting world peace and development. To leave behind achievements worthy of being engraved

in world history, a nation and its people must not only be judged by their material accomplishments but also by the amount of spiritual wealth they have contributed. The latter often holds more profound significance than the former.

In today's world, where the destinies of nations are closely intertwined, China has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative, advocating cultural exchanges that transcend estrangement, mutual learning that transcends clashes, and coexistence that transcends feelings of superiority. It addresses significant questions, such as how different civilizations can coexist and where human civilization is headed, offering Chinese wisdom and solutions to promote cultural exchanges and the advancement of human civilization.

Over the past 75 years, China has demonstrated an uncommon empathy in the political arena of major powers throughout human history. From proposing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, emphasizing equality and non-interference in other countries' internal

China has advocated that the sovereignty of all countries are equal regardless of size on global arena while showing respect and support for the development of other countries.

China has provided the worldview of "shared future" and the methodology of "jointly building and win-win cooperation" for all mankind, breaking the nearly 500 years of narrow perspective of the West in viewing the world and building order from the perspective of "hegemonic hierarchy," "center-periphery" and "cultural monism." This is rare in the history of human civilization and is urgently needed in today's world.

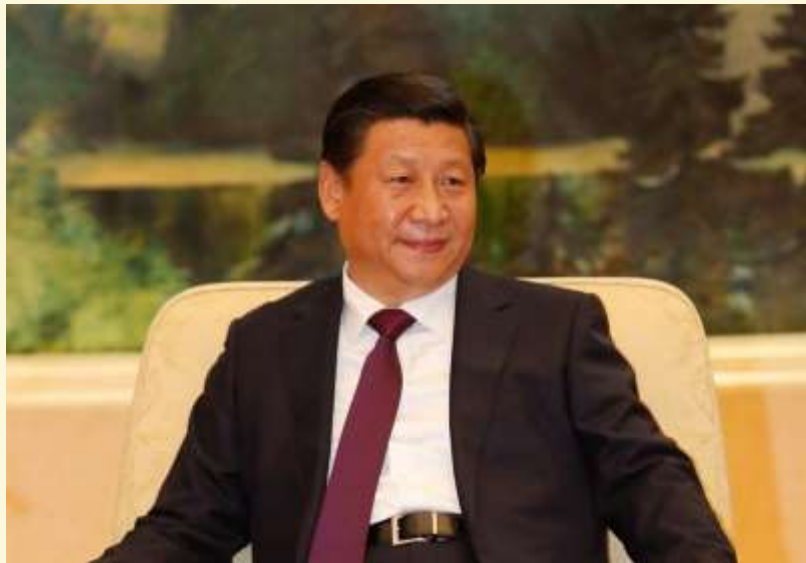
The 75-year journey through challenges has underscored the invaluable role China plays in global peace, development and progress. The modernization China has promoted, which embodies justice, openness, mutual benefit, people-first policies, diversity, inclusiveness, eco-friendliness, and peace and security, will only become more significant and valuable to the world as time progresses.



Global Times

affairs, to the new era's initiatives like jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative, building a community with a shared future for mankind, and the promotion of solidarity and cooperation among the Global South,

Did 1.4 billion Chinese achieving poverty alleviation cut into Washington's cake?



Global Times

These days the People's Republic of China is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Over the past 75 years, China has grown from a poor and backward country to the world's second-largest economy, with about one-sixth of the world's population escaping poverty.

However, as China continued to rise, the US' attitude toward China has changed dramatically. Be it the "China threat" narrative or the "China challenge" theory,

US politicians have become increasingly anxious about China's development. This anxiety has turned into slander and attempts to portray China as a force threatening global development.

Recently, a former American government official claimed that China aims to impose its ideology on the rest of the world, posing an unprecedented threat to the US.

Over the past few years, many US politicians have stressed the threat of China. But what exactly has China's development

taken away from the US?

When China was still a poor and backward country, the US never worried about China's ideology "threatening" the world. However, as soon as China achieved economic takeoff, US politicians began exaggerating China's "ideological threat."

Over the past 75 years, if China's ideology had been detrimental to development and harmful to its own and the world's progress, China would not be standing so proudly before the US today. China's development demonstrates that its ideology contributes to global growth, as proven by its achievements.

Even though China has become the world's second-largest economy, its per capita GDP is still far below that of the US. In 2023, China's per capita GDP was about \$12,720, while the US was about \$76,000, nearly six times higher. China must continue to advance steadfastly on its chosen path of development.

In 2020, the US Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China (May 20, 2020) read, the CPC has "accelerated its efforts to portray its governance system as functioning better than those of what it refers to as 'developed, Western countries.'" Based on this assumption, then such competition should contribute to

global development. Indeed, only through such competition can we show that human development is a diverse process. Every country has the right to choose its own path of development.

Isn't it good for humanity if more countries develop through self-reliance like China? China has always adhered to the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs and has never attempted to export its ideology to other countries. However, China has proven that a country can achieve economic takeoff and social progress without copying Western models.

This successful approach has shaken the long-held discourse power and dominance of the West, especially the US, thus posing a significant challenge to the US' global strategy.

Suppose the development model and path advocated by the US are no longer the only correct ones. In that case, the foundation of its global strategy and influence will be shaken.

When some US politicians claim that China's ideology

poses a threat, they are actually making excuses for Washington's hegemonism. The "rules-based international order" in the mouths of American politicians is actually an order where the US makes the rules and other countries obey. Any country that attempts to challenge this order, regardless of its intentions, will be labeled an "ideological threat."

China has chosen a suitable path for itself and achieved great success. This success should not be a reason for demonization. If Washington cannot accept and recognize a prosperous and stable China and tries to set China as an opponent or even an enemy of the US, that would be a huge threat to world peace and development.

Global Times

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High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri launches book on Pakistan



Covert Report Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week launched a book on Pakistan.

“Reverie of the Highlands-A visual journey through Pakistan’s spectacular North” launched at a ceremony organised @PakinAustralia to display Pakistan’s beauty and diversity,” the

envoy posted on X. Gaynor Shaw, the wife of former Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Dr. Geoffrey Shaw, has artfully documented her experiences and insights in this compelling book.

‘Reverie of Highlands’ is a tribute to the beauty and diversity of Pakistan’s northern areas, reflecting her deep connection and appreciation for the region.



Barkaat’s exhibition in Paris showcases convergence of disability and artistry

Covert Report Paris: A solo painting exhibition by Barkaat titled “Silent Horizons – a journey through brush and soul” was held at Pakistan House, Paris displaying the convergence of disability and artistry as a rarity of remarkable beauty. The event was attended by a number of ambassadors, art lovers and people from all walks of life. Ambassador of Pakistan to France Asim Iftikhar Ahmad while welcoming the guests highlighted that Silent Horizons showcased the convergence of disability and artistry, a rarity of remarkable beauty. It was not just an exhibition of paintings – it was a real life story, he added. Introducing the artist, the ambassador recalled that some 16 years ago, a life-altering accident involving brain damage left Barkaat paralyzed and aphasic, yet his journey of self-discovery through painting emerged. He said the exhibition was a testament to the indomitable human spirit. Disability here was not a hindrance, but the crucible that forged a remarkable talent. These paintings depicted triumph over adversity. Barkaat not only engaged in painting as a way of communicating, his ambition led him to earn a Bach-

elor of Fine Arts honours degree from Punjab University and an M. Phil in Visual Arts from National College of Arts, Lahore. His thesis work was dedicated to disability. Barkaat has exhibited nationally and internationally. Barkaat’s work has consolidated the Disability Arts Movement in Pakistan which is helping to mainstream the role of art and creative empowerment for inclusion of people with special needs. The program also featured a discussion with Dr. Arshia Ahmad, Neurologist and Barkaat’s sister who was instrumental in his remarkable recovery and rehabilitation and artistic journey. Various dimensions from medical and scientific to social issues were highlighted through Barkaat’s story of art and disability. Chairperson of UNESCO Executive Board Ms. Vera Lacoecilhe, the chief guest, also spoke on the occasion. The guests were delighted to meet Barkaat, commended his achievements and took keen interest in his creative work.



Pakistan stands for expanding interregional cooperation with Kazakhstan

Abdullah Jan Islamabad: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, had a meeting with Nawabzada Yousaf Khan Hoti, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan from the Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PMLQ) party, representing the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the press service of the Kazakh MFA reported. The sides discussed the current state and future prospects of Kazakhstan-Pakistan cooperation across various sectors, with particular emphasis on strengthening business ties, establishing a dialogue on security issues, fostering interaction at the regional authorities’ level, and simplifying the visa regime between the two countries.

Ambassador Kistafin briefed on the priorities of the Kazakhstan-Pakistan agenda, highlighting the importance of enhancing information exchange between the two countries. According to him, strengthening information interaction contributes to a deeper mutual understanding and supports the development of connections, including those between business communities. The Ambassador also underscored strategic significance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, describing it as a “gateway” for Kazakhstan. In turn, Hoti provided an overview of the current situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the business opportunities available for developing trade and economic cooperation with Kazakhstan. He

emphasized the close, friendly relations between the two countries and expressed his readiness to facilitate interaction with the official, business, and academic communities of the province. At the end of the meeting, the Pakistani politician extended an invitation to the head of the Kazakh mission to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and his hometown of Mardan to explore and discuss potential areas of the bilateral cooperation.



Bilawal Bhutto's call for constitutional court part of PPP manifesto: Umar Rehman Malik



Abdullah Jan Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this

week said PPP's long-standing promises, as outlined in the party's manifesto and the Charter of Democracy (CoD).

those qualified to be Supreme Court judges would serve six-year terms, while the Supreme and High Courts would focus on civil and criminal cases.

"This reflects Chairman PPP's commitment to fulfilling Shaheed Moh-tarma #BenazirBhutto's vision and the party's pledge for judicial reforms," he added. Earlier, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that everyone would have to accept the constitutional court in which provinces have equal representation. Addressing members of Balochistan High Court Bar Association in Quetta, Bilawal Bhutto said "How can you say that you will not accept the constitutional court? The Constitution must be obeyed."

"Don't call yourselves lawyers and politicians if you don't obey the constitution," Bilawal said adding "When General Musharraf was in power then nobody remembers the

constitution." Throwing light on PPP's support for the constitutional package, Bilawal said so far his party had agreed to the government's proposal for the formation of a constitutional federal court. He said his party had no problem if anyone of the top two judges of the country chaired the constitutional court. "After the struggle of 30 years, we have decided to form a constitutional court," he said, adding his struggle for the constitutional amendment was not for the current Chief Justice, Qazi Faez Isa. "Your agenda could be a person-specific, not mine," he remarked. Bilawal said the state has become more like a father than a mother while severely criticizing the mindset of individuals like Iftikhar Chaudhry



for damaging the judiciary. He added that the judiciary has continuously launched attacks on the parliament. He emphasized the unique bond between the lawyers and the PPP, a connection that no politician or institution could claim.



week said PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's call for constitutional court was part of the PPP manifesto. "Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's call for constitutional courts aligns with the

The CoD proposes a Federal Constitutional Court to handle constitutional matters, with equal representation from all federating units," he said. Umar Rehman Malik said judges or



Blue Bulgaria coalition's Tsveta Kirilova on solutions in energy sector

Kirilova on solutions in energy sector



Covert Report Sofia: In a position to BTA, Blue Bulgaria Coalition's top-of-the-list candidate in Haskovo (Southeastern Bulgaria) Tsveta Kirilova said that there is governance and communication chaos when it comes to the green transition. By now, Bulgaria should have thought about and found a solution for its national energy security and independence, she argued.

"If not for the neglected innovative achievements of the Bulgarian team that created a prototype, a technology for extracting brown gas from seawater, we could have solved to a large extent the energy problems in Bulgaria and we would not have these unsolvable headaches," Kirilova pointed out.

"Today we would not be hearing that the workers there [the coal regions of Bulgaria] are struggling for their bread and trying to save their jobs, because they would already have new and secure jobs. We would not have heard statements like, 'I am going to pick strawberries in England and I am a

qualified specialist in the energy sector," Kirilova pointed out.

"This is what the criminal negligence of the state government towards the people and their future has led to, not only in the energy sector, but in all other areas of the state. More and more individuals are entering our politics who have no interest in solving problems. It is important for them to absorb multibillion-dollar sums without doing anything for the development of the community, while watching poverty engulf our entire country.

But we, the conscious and responsible Bulgarians, can no longer tolerate the quality of governance in Bulgaria to be at this low level," Kirilova underscored.



Party island. This dreamy Greece trip changed my mind

Saskia O'Donoghue

I have never been a party girl. When I was at university, you'd never find me out at student bars; instead, I'd be holed up in my accommodation, watching news analysis shows.

I like to think I've become rather more fun in the intervening decade but, still, I was a little nervous ahead of my visit to Mykonos.

I needn't have worried.

Perhaps the world's most famous party island, this Cycladian hotspot certainly boasts its fair share of wild parties and decadence both 18-year-old and 30-something-year-old me would balk at - but my experience couldn't have been more different.

Arriving at Kivotos Mykonos, set on the banks of the truly breathtaking Ornos Bay, I knew I was in for a treat. One of the first boutique hotels on Mykonos, Kivotos opened its doors three decades ago. Today, it offers luxury I'd only dreamed of.



Thanks to its 30-plus years open, the hotel manages to pay tribute to the rich traditional heritage of Greece, while still having its finger firmly on the pulse.

As soon as I arrive in any hotel, the first thing I do is test the bed. At Kivotos Mykonos, it's beyond comfortable with delectable sheets and the best pillows I've ever had the pleasure of laying my head on.

From that vantage point, I can take in the rest of my surroundings: all white, with Grecian architecture-inspired curves and nods to ancient history. Think: statues of Greek gods on shelves and in the bathroom, and - my personal favourite - a coffee table modelled after a Greek man - all in white, naturally.

Having settled in, it's off to the resort's in-house restaurant, Namah. I'd previously eaten at MAVRO, the glorious restaurant at Kivotos' sister resort on Santorini, so I know I'm in for an incredible meal.

To start, the bread basket comes with a twist. On Namah's menu, you'd be forgiven for being a little confused as to what is coming, as it reads: "reference to the manner of the Ancients about the sourdough bread, the figs and olive oil".

In actual fact, that's about as accurate a description as it's possible to write. The



sourdough comes in a bread tin, with a bed of grains and wheat sheaves as a garnish. Dipping it into the fig-infused olive oil, I'm convinced I've just tasted heaven.

My super friendly waiter insists I try Namah's twist on the Greek salad - a truly excellent recommendation.

In my many years visiting Greece, I must have eaten hundreds of iterations of the famous dish - but this isn't your standard green salad with perfumatory tomatoes and a block of feta plonked on top.

Instead, this salad - called Ancient Greece - is a sight to behold. Buckwheat, cherry tomatoes, cucumber spirals, caper leaves and oxymel - a mixture of honey and vinegar - give this stunning salad texture and punchy flavour. But the cheese is the true star of the show.

Namah's chefs use a local Myconian kopanisti cheese mousse, just spicy and peppery enough to set off the other flavours perfectly.

When it comes to food, at least, I am not afraid

of a little decadence - and my main course, the beautifully named Lobster Ark, is just that.

Arriving on a wonderfully creamy risotto base, it's the juiciest, plumpiest lobster I've ever been lucky enough to taste. Its flavour is complemented with apricot, cashew, red basil and spearmint gel, as well as a tart addition of citrus and Myconian sour cheese snow. Topping it off is a generous helping of Ossetra caviar, one of the world's most prized.

As much as I would like to sample a pudding, I'm simply too full, so I round off my meal with a Red Paloma cocktail instead.

Made with fresh watermelon, tequila blanco, agave, lime and cherry soda, it's the perfect end to a truly perfect meal and helps me fall into a deep slumber in my beautiful suite.

Portugal to launch new platform to accelerate citizenship application processing



months of this year. In addition, the statistics from IRN reveal that there was a significant increase compared to last year's same-period figures. However, the increasing number of applications for citizenship brought notable challenges for the country's authorities in terms of processing applications.

Tammy Cavaleiro, partner at Você Europeu, said that due to the increased number of citizenship applications, a large number of requests are being delayed. In addition, last year, the IRN registered a total of 230,000 applications for Portugal nationality, accounting for the highest number ever.

NewsWire
Lisbon: Portugal's Institute of Registries and Notaries will launch a new platform to accelerate the process of granting citizenship. The platform aims to increase the capacity of the services to process citizenship applications by 50 per cent. The platform consists of new functionalities, automation and artificial intelligence. In a bid to accelerate the process of granting citizenship to foreigners, Portugal plans to launch a new platform with new functionalities, automation and artificial intelligence. The new platform, which will be launched by Portugal's Institute of Registries and Notaries (IRN), is expected to increase the capacity of the services to process citizenship applications by 50 per cent, Schengen.News reports.

The new Nationality Platform will allow the dematerialisation of operations associated with nationality applications, from the submission of the application and respective documents, analysis and final decision. The new portal consists of new functionalities, automation and artificial intelligence, according to a report from Observador. The same notes that the new portal will start operating at the Central Registry Office in Lisbon and at Porto Central Archive, and should be extended from November 4 to November 16 branches operating in the Civil Registry services throughout the country. The security in the verification and validation of all elements, the bureaucracy in receiving requests, the multiple manual and redundant tasks, cause bottlenecks in the processing of nationality requests. Portugal's government hopes the new

technology will help to reduce the backlog of pending citizenship applications and eliminate one of the frustrating aspects of applying for citizenship, which is the long wait times. Through the new platform, the employee will only have to validate the information uploaded, therefore the IRN estimates a reduction in the average time from about two hours to around half an hour. The IRN has estimated that in the field of Nationality, the reception of paper documentation is the main reason for inefficiencies, adding logistical burdens and the risk of fraud to the process. The figures from the Institute of Registries and Notaries (IRN) reveal that more than 63,000 applications for Portuguese citizenship have been registered in the first four



Japan visit visa from Pakistan: Bank statement update in October 2024



Covert Report

Tokyo: Japan is a fascinating destination, offering tourists a perfect mix of ancient traditions and futuristic advancements. Travelers to Japan can experience the tranquil beauty of temples in Kyoto alongside the vibrant energy of Tokyo's streets. The natural allure of Mount Fuji and the breathtaking cherry blossom season captivate visitors, while Japan's diverse cuisine, including sushi and ramen, offers a treat for food lovers. The country's well-organized public transport system makes it easy to explore everything from Hokkaido's historic castles to Okinawa's tropical beaches. For Pakistani citizens, traveling to Japan requires a visit visa. The Embassy of Japan in Pakistan does not accept visa applications directly. Instead, applicants must apply through VFS Global or Gerry's Visa. Documents requirement: Before applying for a tourist visa, Pakistani applicants need to gather the following documents: Passport and a copy of the personal status page Visa application form and one photograph (4.5 cm x 4.5 cm, white background) Flight itinerary from a travel agency or airline office Travel itinerary detailing planned visits and accommodations Hotel booking confirmations Certificate of employment or a letter from the organization certifying the purpose of the visit Business profile (Chamber of Commerce/NTN/SECP documents) if applicable Bank statement for the last three months. If someone else is paying for the trip, a document certifying the relationship must be submitted Copy of student card (A4 size)

if the applicant is a college student Copy of CNIC (A4 size) Family Registration Certificate (FRC) Bank statement requirements: For a single-entry Japan visit visa, the applicant must have a bank statement showing a minimum balance of Rs1 million. For a multiple-entry visa, the required balance is Rs2.5 million. These statements must cover the most recent three months before the application submission. By following aforementioned guidelines and ensuring the correct documentation is in order, Pakistani travelers can begin their journey to experience Japan's unique blend of cultural and modern wonders.

US Deputy Chief of Mission explores Lahore's rich and diverse culture on inaugural visit

Covert Report

Lahore: On her inaugural visit to Lahore, US Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Natalie Baker, joined by US Consul General Kristin Hawkins, this week explored how U.S.-Pakistan partnerships have been strengthening bilateral trade and investment, cultural preservation efforts, and educational

opportunities for youth in Punjab. DCM Baker met with representatives of U.S. businesses to discuss how American companies are generating high-quality jobs for Pakistani youth and giving back to Pakistani communities through a wide range of corporate initiatives. In a strong show of support for gender equity, DCM

Baker and Consul General Hawkins played cricket with female athletes at the National High-Performance Center (NHPC), where DCM Baker highlighted U.S.-funded initiatives empowering young Pakistani women through sports, exchange programs, and more. Over the past year, the United States has supported efforts at 14 schools and universities across Punjab to expand opportu-



nities for women and girls to participate in sports and develop leadership skills. "The United States is deeply committed to advancing gender equity, and ensuring that everyone – regardless of gender or gender identity – has the opportunity to succeed," DCM Baker said. "Through programs like the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, the TechGirls exchange initiative, and the Women in Energy Scholars program, we are equipping women and girls with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive." DCM Baker also met with members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network, recognizing the crucial role that Pakistani alumni of U.S.-funded exchange

programs play in building bridges between the United States and Pakistan and in using the knowledge they gained through their exchange programs to benefit their local communities. On a visit to the Walled City of Lahore, including the iconic Lahore Fort and Badshahi Mosque, DCM Baker spotlighted the United States' investment in 35 cultural preservation projects across Pakistan, including an ongoing, approximately \$1 million investment to preserve seven sites at the Lahore Fort. "These projects are a testament to the shared commitment between the United States and Pakistan to preserve cultural heritage. They not only strengthen community bonds but also support economic development and inspire future generations to celebrate Pakistan's rich history and diversity," said DCM Baker.

EU support improves community resilience through WFP in Pakistan



making, and beautician services, as well as business management, digital marketing. Women constituted 80% of the participants, whose income increased threefold from Rs5,000 to Rs15,000 (approximately \$18 to 54), empowering them economically. "In the aftermath of large-scale disasters such as the devastating 2022 floods, life-saving food security assistance combined with recovery and resilience building support is so critical. With EU's generous

kits, these teams are better prepared to support local disaster response efforts, bolstering community readiness for future emergencies. In 2023, Pakistan continued to grapple with the compounding impact of the devastating 2022 floods that affected more than one-third of the country. WFP played a pivotal role in supporting nearly 4.4m people, following the flood crisis through a variety of complementary interventions to address both critical and immediate humanitarian needs through unconditional cash support to approxi-

Celina Ali

Islamabad: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) this week completed its 'Enhanced Food and Nutrition Security for Vulnerable People in Flood-affected Areas of Pakistan' project, funded by the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). For eighteen months, WFP supported the most vulnerable households in Pakistan's worst flood-hit districts to facilitate early

districts in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh. More than \$3.6m in cash assistance was distributed, enabling participants to access nutritious food in exchange for their involvement in community asset creation and skills development activities. The EU Ambassador to Pakistan Riina Kionka reaffirmed the EU's dedication: "Community resilience is at the core of our efforts in Pakistan.



land and 40,000 houses. Additionally, the distribution of 1,700 fuel-efficient stoves and 10,000 tree planting will contribute to reducing harmful climate activities and mitigate impacts of future weather events on these vulnerable communities. This project also delivered over 400 training sessions in marketable skills such as sewing, embroidery, dress-

support, this project adopted a community-based approach working together towards a more food secure and resilient future," said Coco Ushiyama, the Country Director and Representative of WFP Pakistan. Additionally, WFP, in collaboration with Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence experts successfully established and trained 114 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). Equipped with essential rescue tool

mately 1.7m people in 2023 and longer-term needs to build resilience, enhance livelihoods opportunities, and address malnutrition. The United Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

recovery, rehabilitation, and stabilisation. The EUR 5 million from the European Union (EU) enabled a transition from emergency relief to early recovery and community stabilisation efforts. This project used a community-based approach to reduce tensions and promote social cohesion by forming village committees, ensuring fair resource distribution, and improving infrastructure. It also strengthened livelihoods and resilience by restoring assets like water systems and promoting income-generating activities, leading to lasting stability. Through this EU-funded project, WFP provided direct assistance to more than 97,000 people and indirect support to 700,000 people across seven vulnerable

The EU is proud to have contributed to building stronger, more resilient communities in the face of adversity by strengthening local capacities and fostering solidarity." As part of the project, vulnerable communities benefited from rehabilitation activities that restored physical and natural assets and created infrastructure to protect them from future climate shocks. This includes the construction of 550 water management structures and rehabilitation or construction of 650 flood protection walls, safeguarding 76,000 acres of habitable/agricultural



British envoy Jane Marriott, Governor Faisal Kundi vow to enhance bilateral ties



The British High Commissioner assured the governor of the UK's continued support not only in development projects but also in cultural and sports activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized the importance of investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, enhancing trade relations, and the exchange of cultural delegations, stressing that these efforts would help engage the youth in positive activities. He also suggested or-

ganizing joint programs with British teams and artists and arranging sports competitions. On this occasion, both agreed that cultural activities and sports are excellent means to train and enhance the skills of the youth, and cooperation in these areas would not only strengthen public relations but also promote cultural harmony between the two countries. They expressed their commitment to advance cooperation in various sectors and working on projects of mutual interest.



Celina Ali
Islamabad: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and British High Commissioner Jane Marriott this week vowed to enhance bilateral ties. At a meeting here, Faisal Karim Kundi, and Jane Marriott dis-

cussed strengthening bilateral relations, increasing cooperation in various sectors, and promoting cultural and sports activities. Ahmed Karim Kundi, a PPP lawmaker, was also present at the meeting.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on the law and order situation in the province, development projects, education and health sectors, as well as cooperation in culture and sports.

UK Labour Party leader meets Bilawal Bhutto



Liaquat Ali
Islamabad: Former President of the Oxford University Union and leader of the UK's Labour Party Alex Just this week met Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Alex Just was accompanied by Nargis Khan, the Resident Program Director of the International Republican Institute.

During the meeting, Bilawal, Alex Just, and Nargis Khan discussed strategies to combat fake news and disinformation in the modern era, said a PPP statement. Asifullah Khan, the Head of PPP Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Coordinator of the PPP Central Election Cell was also present during the meeting.

“One thing I have learned is that I am not the owner of my talent, I am the manager of it.”

— Madonna

COVERT

TRUTH UNFOLD

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“If everything was perfect you would never learn and you would never grow.” – Beyonce

Italy: Meloni withdraws defamation suit against historian



Covert Report

Rome: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has withdrawn a defamation suit against a historian who called the far-right leader a "neo-Nazi at heart", his lawyer said this week.

Left-wing classicist Luciano Canfora, 82, made the comments during a school debate in Bari, southern Italy, in April 2022 - six months before the Brothers of Italy leader took office.

The trial was to open October 7, with Meloni seeking 20,000 euros (\$21,260) in damages.

Canfora's lawyer Michele Laforgia said that Meloni has withdrawn her suit, without providing further details.

Meloni last year successfully sued journalist Roberto Saviano for criticising her stance against migrants in December 2020, with an Italian court handing him a suspended fine of 1,000 euros.

She has also brought a suit against the frontman of British rock band Placebo, after he called her "racist" and "fascist" during a performance in Italy in July 2023. That trial has yet to start. An Italian court approved the defamation case against Canfora in April.

Speaking ahead of that decision, Canfora - a former professor in Greek and Latin philology at the University of Bari who is well-known in Italy - was unrepentant. "When you say neo-Nazi, you don't think of someone who is perpetrating crimes, or murders, you think of someone who still has some ideas, some mental attitudes that hark back to the past," Canfora said. He noted that in her 2021 autobiography "I am Giorgia", Meloni wrote about hav-



ing "taken up the baton" of Italy's post-war far-right leaders, including Giorgio Almirante.

Almirante was one of the founders of the now-defunct Italian Social Movement (MSI), a party formed after World War II by supporters of Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

He was also an official of the Italian Social Republic (RSI), a wartime Nazi-controlled puppet state. Meloni's Brothers of Italy is a political descendant of the MSI, although she told parliament when she took office that she had "never felt sympathy

or closeness to undemocratic regimes... including Fascism".

Canfora has been supported by many Italian and foreign intellectuals in his case, with French left-wing newspaper Liberation organising a petition to support him.



France plans 60 billion euro budget squeeze for next year

Newswire

Paris: The French government plans to subject the budget to a 60 billion euro belt-tightening effort next year to hit new fiscal targets aimed at reining in a spiralling deficit, officials said this week.

Prime Minister Michel Barnier told lawmakers he would reduce the budget deficit - which is set to reach 6.1 per cent of GDP this year - to 5 per cent by the end of 2025 but would have to push back the target date for reaching the eurozone's common 3 per cent deficit goal to 2029 from 2027. Three government officials involved in preparing the 2025 budget said the 60 billion euro squeeze - equivalent to roughly 2 per cent of GDP - was needed to correct the deficit from where it would otherwise have been if nothing had been done.

Tax revenues have fallen short of expectations this year while the government has struggled to contain spending, leaving Barnier with the huge task of drafting a 2025 budget, due to be presented on Oct 10, that narrows the hole but can also get through France's unruly hung parliament. The stakes are considerable with Paris' credibility with financial markets and its EU partners on the line after the European Commission earlier this year opened an excessive deficit procedure against France. Barnier, appointed last month, said that two

thirds of the belt-tightening push comes from spending cuts with the rest coming from targeted tax increases that would spare the average working person.

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One of the officials said that the spending reductions would cut across France's various ministries, saving over 20 billion euros while separate spending on welfare, health and retirement would also take hits. For example, pensions, a major expense on the public finances, will not be adjusted for inflation at the start of the year, but rather at the middle of the year.

The official said that the belt-tightening effort would keep France within the wiggle room allowed under the European Union's fiscal rules and that reforms would be announced to show Paris' commitment to remaining in line with the rules.

A second official said that the 2025 budget was based on the forecast that the economy would grow 1.1 per cent, the same as this year, and that inflation would average 1.8 per cent this year after 2.1 per cent this year.

