

UK's Princess Eugenie quietly hosts famous American couple at her Portugal home **Newswire**

Lisbon: Princess Eugenie and her husband, Jack Brooksbank have secretly hosted a special guest couple, Ayda Field and Robbie Williams, at their Portuguese house. While the 35-year-old princess or her husband have kept the family getaway secret, the Ameri (Page-8)

British High Commissioner Jane Marriott wants to travel to Manchester on direct PIA flight Celina Ali
Islamabad: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott has expressed her intention to travel directly from Pakistan to Manchester aboard a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight. In a video mes- (Page-11)

Where guns once roared, violins strike new chord in rural China

Henan Daily

Zhengzhou: Braving the sweltering summer afternoon in central China, 12-year-old Chen Yulin steadied her violin beneath her chin and, joined by four classmates, played the patriotic tune "My Motherland and I" with practiced precision. The students, from Queshan County in Henan Province, were rehearsing for a school performance to mark the 80th anniversary of China's victory in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-1945), scheduled for early September. Tucked into the hills of southern Henan, Queshan was once a major stronghold of the Communist Party of China (CPC) during the war. Late Chinese leaders Liu Shaoqi and Li Xiannian, and famed generals including Wang Zhen and Zhang Aiping, worked and fought in Queshan. Many Party and military elites were trained here. Units of CPC-led New Fourth Army fanned out from here to fight the aggressors.

Over the past decade, Queshan, long constrained by its geographical conditions, waged a different kind of battle, spending years lifting itself out of absolute poverty. Today, the county offers something few might expect: free violin lessons in several public schools, an opportunity still rare even in many Chinese cities. For more than two years, Chen has taken part in such a program at her school, where she and more than 70 classmates receive professional training and instruments entirely free of charge. What makes this possible is Queshan's thriving home-grown violin-making industry. According to industry data, 90 percent of the world's violins are made in China, and 80 percent of the country's mid- to high-end handcrafted violin-family instruments come from Queshan. Today, this rural county produces more than 400,000 violins, violas, cellos and double basses each year, accounting for over 30 percent of China's total output of

the violin family. Most are exported to Europe, North America and other markets. These remarkable figures reflect how deeply the craft has reshaped not only the local economy but the cultural identity of Queshan. Just above the students' rehearsal room in Queshan Violin Industrial Park, rows of craftsmen work diligently, cutting, carving, sanding and varnishing instruments by hand. "Each violin goes through more than 10 major steps," explained Jiang Hexi, a production supervisor at Haoyun Musical Instruments, one of the park's flagship manufacturers. "From selecting the wood to final tuning, it's all handmade." Jiang knows the process inside out. In 2001, at 18, he left Queshan to work in a violin-making factory in Beijing, following the path many locals took in search of better income. They learned quickly. After years of painstaking, repetitive work, Queshan's migrant workers mastered the craft that originated in 16th-century Italy. "The hands that once held farming tools are now capable of producing world-class violins," Jiang said. In 2015, Jiang returned to Queshan as part of a wave of skilled craftspeople drawn back by a local government initiative to jump-start the industry. The county allocated over 200 mu (about 14 hectares) of land to build the violin industrial park. Authorities offered rent-free factory space, tax breaks and streamlined permits to attract investment and encourage entrepreneurship. What began with a handful of workshops has grown into a full-fledged industrial cluster of 144 manufacturers and workshops. The county now boasts a complete supply chain, from raw material processing and body assembly to varnishing and component production. Haoyun, where Jiang now works, employs more than 200 people, most from nearby villages. "New workers go through three months of training before joining the production line," said general manager Guo Xinshe. "These jobs now pay far more than traditional farming." The county's total annual output of string instruments is valued at around 600 million yuan (about 82 million U.S. dollars). Zang Yuxia, a local official, noted that Queshan's transformation is built on a deeper foundation. Her 96-year-old father once served in the New Fourth Army and fought against Japanese aggression in Queshan in the 1940s.



Having grown up with stories of resistance and seen her hometown transform, Zang said, "Back then, the people of Queshan fought for independence with guns. Today, we're building the future with violins." The growth of the violin industry has rippled far beyond the factory floor. Queshan is no longer just a place that makes violins; it's becoming a place where the instrument's melodic strings also echo. On the streets of the county seat, children carrying instrument cases are a common sight after school time. Street lamps shaped like violins now line the roads outside local music schools. "Developing our own brand, offering high-end custom instruments, and training luthiers with strong musical backgrounds is the future of Queshan's violin-making industry," Guo said. This vision inspired Haoyun's early support for the free violin training program launched in early 2023 and jointly funded by the government. The company supplies

free instruments to participating students, including those at Chen's school. The school now offers weekly violin classes starting from second grade, with plans to expand to first graders in the upcoming term. Jiang is heartened to see more children in Queshan picking up the instrument. For the past eight years, he has driven his son to Zhumadian — the prefecture-level city that administers Queshan — every weekend for violin lessons. Now 15, his son has already reached Grade 8 proficiency in the exams of the Central Conservatory of Music, one of China's most prestigious music academies. "I've worked with violins my entire adult life, yet I can't play a single note," he said. "I hope this instrument becomes something more for the next generation, a part of their lives and not just a way to make a living."

Denmark to complete \$3.4 billion of air defense purchases by year-end

Rudy Ruitenberg

Paris: Denmark plans to wrap up its acquisition of ground-based air defense systems by the end of the year, with a total planned investment of as much as 25 billion Danish kroner (US\$3.4 billion), according to the country's Defence Ministry. For the long-range component, Denmark expects to choose between the U.S. Patriot and the French-Italian SAMP/T system during fall 2025, the ministry told Defense News. The country intends to conclude all contracts by year-end, including a potential purchase of additional short- to medium-range systems, the MoD said. With European policymakers observing the devastation wrought by Russian aerial attacks on Ukrainian cities, and with NATO having identified air defense as an investment priority, governments across the continent are scrambling to either bolster what they already have or put in place the means to defend their skies. Denmark in the past two months secured air defense systems from three different producers in order to build an initial capability as soon as possible, 20 years after decommissioning its air defense units operating Hawk missile systems. The country will lease a NASAMS system from Norway, buy two VL MICA fire units from MBDA and an IRIS-T SLM system from Germany's Diehl Defence. "The systems will be operational from approximately around end of 2025 to the beginning of 2027, NASAMS anticipated to be the first," the ministry said. The bill for pulling together the initial capacity will be more than 6 million kroner, which includes operating costs for "a certain amount of time," the MoD said. The four systems cover the initial capacity requirement, with no further systems in the pipeline for now, the ministry said.

For the longer term, Denmark has "not yet fully decided" whether it needs more short- to medium-range systems, nor whether the country will continue to operate multiple systems or eventually pivot to a single system, according to the ministry. The planned purchase of the long-range system is referred to as "a permanent solution," the Danish MoD said, with the combined budget for short- to medium-range and long-range systems about 19 billion to 25 billion kroner, including operating costs for a certain amount of time. For comparison, Belgium, another country that lacks any ground-based missile defense, last month announced a budget of €2 billion (US\$2.3 billion) to buy and operate 10 NASAMS systems about 19 billion to 25 billion kroner, including operating costs for a certain amount of time. Around the Baltic Sea, other countries are also building up their defenses, with Estonia on July 30 announcing plans to establish a dedicated air-defense brigade and buy additional IRIS-T, Piorun and Mistral systems, as part of €10 billion in defense spending over 2026-29. Denmark's neighbor Sweden in June announced the purchase of seven additional IRIS-T SLM systems for around 9 billion Swedish kronor (US\$805 million), while Norway that same month contracted new NASAMS systems for as much as 4.8 billion Norwegian kroner (\$468 million) to replace equipment donated to Ukraine. Denmark and Sweden acquired their IRIS-T systems under the umbrella of the German-coordinated European Sky Shield Initiative, with countries including Slovakia and Switzerland also buying the Diehl system through the initiative this year.



PPP expresses concern over HR situation in Balochistan

Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Human Right Cell's President Farhatullah Babar this week expressed concern over the human rights situation in Balochistan and called upon the government to heed the recent report of the fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on the subject. Mr Babar said that the voice of the Baloch women and children camping at the Super Market of Islamabad for the last three weeks against the enforced disappearances of their near and dear ones must be heard. Interestingly, the PPP is itself ruling the Balochistan province and the party's HR cell is expressing concern over human rights violations in the province. Speaking at a news conference in the central secretariat of the party here, accompanied by the party's general secretary of HR cell Malika Raza, Natasha Doulatana, MNA, and other office-bearers, Mr Babar said that enforced disappearances are a crime against humanity under international law. The security-centric approach of the state was alienating the people from the state. The government's commission on enforced disappearances has failed to prosecute anyone behind such disappearances, the PPP leader said. Secondly, he said, the democratic credibility has been severely undermined in the province by electoral manipulation. "This has marginalised position of nationalist parties that believe in federal parliamentary democracy and this situation has emboldened the hands of extremists and insurgents," the PPP leader said. He demanded that provincial autonomy, particularly in natural resource governance in KP and Balochistan, must be honoured. Mr Babar urged the government to adopt a rights-based, inclusive political solution to problems in the provinces if further instability in the provinces is to be avoided. Expressing concern over the internment centres in KP, he said these centres violated the principle of due process, the separation of powers and the fundamental rights of citizens. He said the matter has been under challenge in the Supreme Court since Dec 2019, but no hearing of the case has taken place for the last over five years.



The HR cell appreciated the verdict of the single bench of IHC Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan last month which ordered the government to set up a commission within 30 days to investigate the misuse of blasphemy laws and complete its work within four months. The court had cited widespread concerns over alleged entrapment, custodial deaths and serious investigative lapses. The HR cell noted that the verdict of the single bench was subsequently suspended by a division bench of the same court for one month. It expressed the hope that after the one-month stay granted against its implementation by a double bench is over, the government will set up the commission in accordance with the order of Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan of IHC. Speaking on the occasion, Malaika Raza expressed concern over deteriorating human rights of women and children and asked the government to address the human rights issues of women and children. Lawmaker Natasha Daulatana spoke about the plight of farmers in Punjab. She said that farmers and agriculture were the backbone of the country's economy, and neglecting them would wreak havoc with food security and national economy.

Pakpattan Chamber delegation explores Chinese partnerships during visit to PCJCCI



Gwadar Pro Lahore: Aiming to foster regional economic collaboration and deepen ties with Chinese investors, a high-level delegation from the Pakpattan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) visited the headquarters of the Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) in

Lahore on Wednesday afternoon. The delegation, led by PCCI President Dewan Muhammad Azmat Mehmood Chishti, included senior members Tanveer Ather Hussain Bukhari and Khalid Raffique Chaudhry. The visit underscored

Pakpattan’s strategic intent to become an active participant in the broader framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) by inviting Chinese engagement in its growing regional economy. Welcoming the delegation, Zafar Iqbal, Acting President of PCJCCI, emphasized the chamber’s commitment to extend its collaborative network beyond Pakistan’s major urban centers and tap into the economic potential of underrepresented regions such as Pakpattan. “We see great promise in Pakpattan’s evolving SME landscape and its agricultural richness,” he said. “Our goal is to enable targeted collaboration through training programs, technology exchange, and project-specific investment linkages between Chinese firms and regional businesses.” Highlighting Pakpattan’s economic profile, President Chishti noted the city’s core strengths in agriculture, food processing, and the textile value chain. “Pakpattan’s agri-based economy, particularly in wheat, rice, cotton, and dairy sectors, offers viable grounds for joint ventures in agro-technology, value-added processing, and food packaging,” he said.

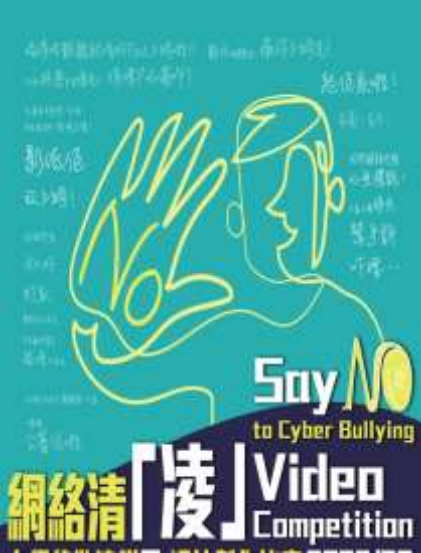
Khalid Raffique Chaudhry further proposed the launch of joint capacity-building programs for local entrepreneurs, especially in product development, export readiness, and understanding Chinese business protocols. He also suggested initiating pilot projects with Chinese collaboration, including cold storage units, drip irrigation systems, and small-scale textile manufacturing using Chinese equipment and expertise. Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General of PCJCCI, floated the idea of hosting a dedicated “Pakpattan-China Investment Roundtable” under the Chamber’s platform. The event would target Chinese companies interested in agri-tech, rural industrial development, and textile machinery, providing them a direct channel to interact with stakeholders from Pakpattan. Both chambers reached consensus on a series of collaborative initiatives, including entrepreneur training workshops, industry-specific matchmaking events, and co-development of proposals to attract Chinese investment into South Punjab’s agro-industrial and light engineering sectors.

Short-video sharing platform Douyin vows to crack down on cyberbullying



Henan Daily Zhengzhou: Douyin, a popular Chinese short-video sharing platform, responded this week that it is cooperating with an investigation and will tighten its management of improper, unfriendly content of cyberbullying. The response followed a recent incident where a 57-year-old obstetrician-gynecologist sumamed Shao died after falling from a hospital in Zhoukou, Henan province, earlier this month, suspected of being involved in three medical disputes and bearing long-term cyberbullying from family members of the patients. In Douyin’s statement, it said that 15 accounts registered by the patients and their family members of the three medical disputes had posted 89 videos telling their experiences, complaining, and condemning the doctor and the hospital from Dec 4, 2024, to Aug 1. Among the total, 76 videos have been not allowed to be viewed or even taken down by the platform for violating the platform’s rules, with the removal of 457 improper comments by the 15 accounts. Between December and January, the platform also received 48 reports from Shao and her agents, of which, 32 were approved by the platform. It took down 19 videos complaining or condemning Shao and prohibited one account from posting videos, according to the statement.

Douyin said that it checked comments on videos posted by Shao in the past eight months — from Dec 1 to Aug 2, stating that Shao got 10,900 comments during the period with most speaking highly of her medical skills and ethics. Fifty-one of 60 unfriendly comments attacking Shao under her account were removed by the platform soon after being posted. “So far, aside from accounts registered by the patients and their families, we have not identified any other instances of escalated verbal attacks or unfriendly statements against Shao. We are collaborating with the authorities’ investigation,” Douyin said in the statement. It added that combating cyberbullying and handling improper content is the responsibility of the platform, and it will continue to optimize its management to protect its users by regulating unfriendly or aggressive content. It also encourages its users to report to the platform whenever their rights are being encroached upon.



Chairman CCP showcases investment potential to All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce delegation

Gwadar Pro Islamabad: A senior-level delegation from the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce (ACFIC) visited the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) this week, as part of a broader initiative to explore cross-border investment opportunities and deepen regulatory cooperation between China and Pakistan. The Chinese delegation was led by Mr. Yi Jiang, Director at ACFIC, and included Mr. Fuzhong Yang, Director for Logistics & Tourism, Mr. Ge Xu, Director, and Mr. Mingqian Sun, Managing Director of Leviathan Holdings Ltd. The meeting was hosted by Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chair-

man of CCP, who provided the visitors with an in-depth overview of Pakistan’s evolving business climate and investment landscape. Dr. Sidhu emphasized CCP’s mandate to maintain competitive markets and prevent monopolistic practices. “Our legal and regulatory frameworks are designed to ensure transparency, fair competition, and investor protection. These are vital pillars for building long-term confidence among foreign investors,” he stated. The visiting Chinese delegation expressed particular interest in opportunities within Pakistan’s renewable energy, healthcare, education, and logistics sectors, areas seen as pivotal for long-term bilateral cooperation. ACFIC officials praised the regulatory

mechanisms enforced by the CCP, describing them as conducive to fair market practices and essential for ensuring the stability of business operations in a developing economy. Chairman Dr. Sidhu welcomed the delegation’s interest in Pakistan and reiterated CCP’s readiness to provide regulatory support, facilitate market entry, and encourage innovation through fair competition policies. “We look forward to building long-term cooperation with ACFIC and its member enterprises. Pakistan offers a diverse array of investment avenues, and the CCP will remain a partner in ensuring these ventures are governed by transparency, equity, and compliance.”



When did the Etruscans arrive in Italy?



Another viewpoint is that the Etruscans arrived at or just after the Bronze Age. This theory makes them Bronze Age inhabitants of western Anatolia. This theory, like the previous one, considers the Villanovan culture to have been part of the Etruscan civilization. In fact, the even older cultures of the c. 1200 to 900 BC period should likewise be considered Etruscan. On the other hand, another version of the Anatolian theory argues that the Etruscans first arrived in Italy much later, in c. 700 BC. This would exclude the Villanovan culture from being a true part of the Etruscan civilization. On the surface, this question is an easy one to answer. To see when the Etruscans arrived in Italy, we could simply look to the earliest Etruscan inscriptions. When we do this, we see that the earliest ones date to c. 700 BC.

no one would say that the Latin-speaking Italic tribes first arrived in Italy in that century. Therefore, c. 700 BC simply marks the latest possible date for when the Etruscans arrived. It does not necessarily mean that they were not there before that era. However, there is one particular inscription which does support a relatively recent date. This is known as the Lemnos Stele. This stele contains a fairly lengthy inscription around the profile of a warrior. This inscription is written in a form of Etruscan. This makes sense, given that several ancient writers claimed that the Etruscans lived on Lemnos. Since Lemnos is right next to the western coast of Anatolia, this is logically interpreted as a stele made by the descendants of settlers who stopped off at Lemnos on the migration from Anatolia to Italy. While some linguists class it as a separate language, it is so similar to Etruscan proper that it is more accurately described as a distinct dialect. When did this diverge from the language of the Etruscans who inhabited Italy? According to one viewpoint, this would have been around 1200 BC. However, according to Sybille Haynes, one of the leading authorities on the Etruscans, this is impossible. She states that it is so similar to Etruscan proper that it must have diverged from Etruscan only a few generations before the inscription was written.



Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, H.E. Marilina Armellin

unarguable that there is evidence for the emergence of a distinct culture in 700 BC. This coincides with the aforementioned evidence from the Lemnos Stele.

There is also supporting evidence for this from the writings of Conon, a Greek writer of the first century BC. He referred to the fact that the Etruscans inhabited Cyzicus in northwest Anatolia until they were expelled by the Milesians. It is generally held that the Milesians inhabited Cyzicus from some point in the eighth century BC. Therefore, this literary record supports the conclusion that the Etruscans had been in Anatolia until some point in about the eighth century BC. The Etruscans must have arrived in Italy after that. Hence, the evidence converges on the conclusion that the Etruscans left Anatolia at some point after the start of the eighth century BC at the earliest. They stopped off at Lemnos, some of them settling there permanently. They then arrived in Italy around 700 BC, while naturally merging to some extent with the existing Villanovan culture.

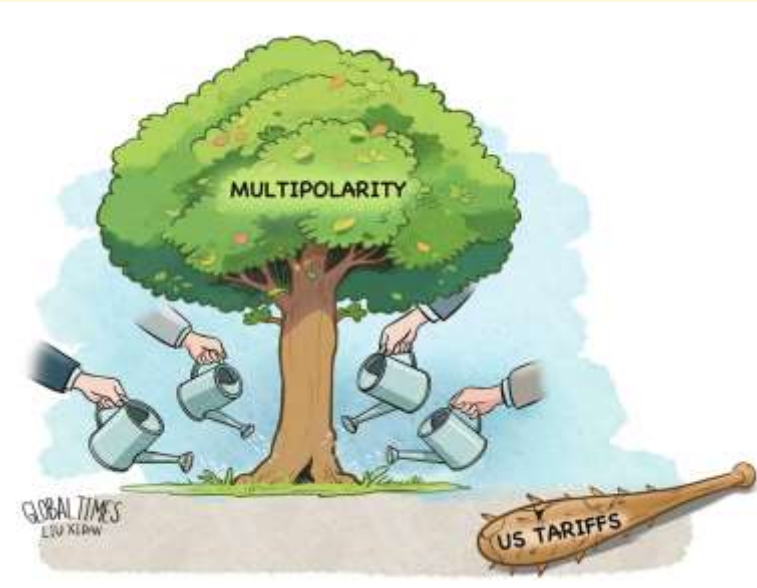
NewsWire
Rome: The Etruscan civilization had a massive influence on the Roman Empire that came after it and eventually absorbed it. As such, we often see people describe the Etruscans as being the predecessors of the Romans. But when, really, did the Etruscans arrive in Italy? What does the archaeological and literary evidence show about this subject?

Firstly, let us consider why this issue is so controversial. There are a variety of strong opinions about this. Some scholars argue that the Etruscan civilization emerged gradually from the native cultures that had been present in Italy since the Bronze Age. According to this viewpoint, the Villanovan culture from around 900-700 BC can properly be considered part of the Etruscan civilization.

us with our answer: the Etruscans arrived in Italy in c. 700 BC. However, the reality is not as simple as this. There is one obvious problem with using inscriptions to try to establish when a certain nation was first present in a region. The problem is that this may simply mark the moment when that nation first began to use a written script. For example, the earliest Latin inscriptions date to the seventh century BC, but



US' tariff gamble brings Global South closer



Leonardo Attuch

The 50-percent tariff hike imposed by the Trump administration on Brazilian products signals more than a trade dispute: It exposes the erosion of US hegemony and accelerates the consolidation of a multipolar world. By trying to isolate and punish strategic partners in the Global South, the US achieves the exact opposite effect - bringing emerging economies closer together and strengthening cooperation mechanisms that reduce dependence on Washington. This tariff shock is not occurring in a vacuum.

For decades, the US cultivated an aura of reliability and soft power in Brazil, projecting itself as a model and a partner. But recent actions have shifted this perception. Beyond the tariffs, unilateral decisions such as attempts to apply the Magnitsky Act against Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes have been interpreted as diplomatic hostility and an affront to Brazilian sovereignty. Online discussions, street debates and the media landscape all reveal the same trend: When Brazil feels disrespected by Washington, national pride resurges across party lines. While the US closes its market, China is, as

always, deepening ties with Brazil. The coffee case is emblematic. As the White House raises barriers against one of Brazil's most iconic agricultural exports, Beijing has approved 183 new Brazilian companies to sell coffee to the Chinese market. This is not just a commercial transaction but a strategic gesture: if Washington builds walls, Beijing builds bridges.

The cooperation goes far beyond coffee. Chinese capital is flowing into Brazilian infrastructure, energy, railways, ports and manufacturing. These investments are structural and long-term, embedding Brazil more firmly into the architecture of South-South cooperation. Each new project makes Brazil less vulnerable to US political swings and tariff shocks, while signaling to other emerging economies that diversification is a path to sovereignty.

During his phone call on Wednesday with Celso Amorim, chief advisor to the president of Brazil, Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, said that China is willing to work with Brazil to deepen bilateral cooperation and leverage the stability and complementarity of their cooperation to effectively offset external uncertainties. He also stressed that China firmly supports Brazil in defending its right to development and opposing the bullying practices of arbitrary tariffs.

The US' tariff war is also a lesson for the entire Global South. The aggressive use of tariffs and sanctions has made it clear that the US is willing to weaponize both trade and finance to impose its will. This realization has accelerated collective efforts to create alternatives: from the BRICS' push for de-dollarization to the strengthening of regional financial arrangements and



bilateral trade in local currencies.

In this context, Brazil emerges as a key multipolar actor - a founding BRICS member and an agricultural, environmental and energy powerhouse. The country is finding space to grow, diversify exports, and strengthen strategic autonomy in alignment with fellow emerging economies. Also on Wednesday, in an interview with Reuters, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva revealed plans to call the leaders of China and India to discuss a joint BRICS response to US tariffs. "I'm going to try to discuss with them about how each one is doing in this situation, what the implications are for each country, so we can make a decision," he was quoted as saying in the Reuters' report. "It's important to remember that the BRICS has 10 countries at the G20," he added.

Every unilateral US measure only reinforces the perception that the unipolar era is ending, as countries of the Global South are less willing to tolerate economic coercion. The message of this tariff shock is clear: Brazil grows stronger when it acts with pragmatism and sovereignty. The US closes doors, China opens windows, and the winds of history are blowing toward multipolarity. The more Washington tries to enforce old hierarchies, the faster the new world order takes shape - one where the Global South is no longer a spectator but an architect of its own destiny.

The writer is editor-in-chief of Brasil 247, a Brazilian news and political analysis website

'No way to stay out of it' or actively getting involved? Manila, don't pretend to be innocent

Global Times

During his recent visit to India, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr made highly provocative remarks regarding the Taiwan question. He claimed that if a confrontation occurred over the Taiwan question, "there is no way that the Philippines can stay out of it," "if there is an all-out war, then we will be joined into it." And his excuses were "physical geographic location" and "large volume of Filipinos working in Taiwan," framing it as a humanitarian concern. He claimed he would mobilize everything he could to bring their people out. This statement aligns with Manila's recent actions on the Taiwan question, revealing the Philippines' true intent: to actively involve itself, curry favor with the US, and mask its political calculations to get involved in the Taiwan Question under the disguise of "humanitarian concerns."

The Philippine government has once made serious commitments to China that it adheres to the one-China policy, recognizes that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory and understands the Chinese government's efforts to realize national reunification. The Philippine leader also said clearly to China that the Philip-



ppines is committed to the one-China policy, and the Taiwan question is purely China's internal affair that must be solved by the Chinese people. These pledges constitute not only the political foundation of China-Philippines relations, but also an essential premise for maintaining mutual trust between the two countries on sensitive issues.

Manila has not only betrayed its promises, but have repeatedly escalated its substantive moves on involving itself in the Taiwan question. Last year, the Philippines nearly doubled the number of military bases opened to US forces, including three facing Taiwan island. In April this year, it eased restrictions on interactions with officials of Taiwan authorities, including allowing Philippine officials to visit the island. Later, the Philippines and Taiwan authorities discussed about conducting joint patrols in the Bashi Channel, and in late July, the two sides negotiated an agreement concerning the facilitation of cooperation on law enforcement in fisheries matters and pledged to implement the one-hour advance notification mechanism. An article in The Washington Post this July stated that security cooperation between the Philippines and Taiwan island is "further along than publicly disclosed." The latest public remarks by the Philippine leader in India sent an even more dangerous signal of a deliberate attempt to stir up tensions in the Taiwan Straits, undermining the political foundation of China-Philippines relations.

The shift in stance on the Taiwan question was not a passive reaction by Manila, but a deliberate, proactive design. Manila is aware that the Taiwan Straits is one of US' most sensitive strategic focuses. When selling instability in the South China Sea can no longer attract significant attention,

signaling involvement in the Taiwan Straits allows Manila to further assert its "strategic value" and secure greater security assistance and political support from the US.

Recently, US media reported that "the Philippines is quietly working with Taiwan" to counter the Chinese mainland. Even third parties can clearly see this new tactic, yet the Philippines still tries to "feign innocence" on the international stage. The so-called "humanitarian" rhetoric of protecting overseas nationals is merely a cover, covering up its line-crossing behavior and aggressive strategy in humanitarian language. Manila's claim that its "greatest concern" is the evacuation of Filipino nationals in Taiwan. Such attempt is to signal its pro-US strategic stance, but also for creating public opinion space in advance for future coordination with US forces regarding port and airspace usage. If the Philippines were truly concerned about the safety of its nationals, it should promote regional peace and stability, rather than making high-profile declarations at international forums that it "cannot stay out of it," let alone bind itself to a potential military confrontation. The Philippines' military deployments in the north, the opening of bases, and multilateral military exercises with the US and Japan clearly have nothing to do with humanitarian concerns but are closely linked to intervention in the Taiwan Straits, the containment of China, and jeopardize regional peace and stability.

The "no way to stay out of it" claim fails to convey Manila's innocence or passivity. On the contrary, it exposes its deliberate efforts to create preemptive friction. The Philippines is located at the southern end of the Taiwan Straits - a geopolitically sensitive position, which is an objective fact. But the level of risk is not entirely determined by geography; there is no predeter-



mined geopolitical destiny for the Philippines. The key lies in its own choices. Right now, Manila is pushing itself toward the frontlines of a potential conflict through actions that betray trust and good faith. This kind of reckless provocation also undermines the peace and stability that the region holds most dear, violates the ASEAN Charter and the expectations of regional peoples, and increases the risk of overlapping tensions in both the South China Sea and the Taiwan Straits.

Manila must face reality. The Taiwan question is China's internal affair and represents the core of China's core interests. The Philippines' justification for intervention based on "geographic location" and "the large volume of Filipinos working in Taiwan" is untenable and will never be accepted by China. The more it provokes on

this issue, the more it puts itself in danger and loses the opportunity to maintain constructive relations with all parties. If Manila keeps going on the path, he so-called "no way to stay out of it" will become a self-fulfilling prophecy - the Philippines could very well become the next flashpoint and a troublemaker igniting regional instability.

Global Times

Editor-in-Chief: S. Ali
Associate Editor: Afzal Butt
Email: editor@covert.com.pk
Phone/Fax : +92-51-2723419
690. Street 17 Block E Bahria Town phase 8, Islamabad, Pakistan

Ambassador Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri leads Youm-e-Istehsal observance in Jakarta to highlight plight of Kashmiris

Newswire
Jakarta: In solemn remembrance of the ongoing suffering and oppression of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the Embassy of Pakistan in Jakarta observed Youm-e-Istehsal (Day of Exploitation) on August 5, 2025. The occasion marked six years



since India's unilateral and illegal revocation of the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019. A seminar titled "Ongoing Human Rights Abuses in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)" was the central feature of the observance, bringing together Indonesian academics, researchers, policy experts, human rights activists, and members of the diplomatic and media communities. Ambassador Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, in his keynote address, underscored the gravity of India's actions in IIOJK and the importance of continuing global advocacy for the rights of the Kashmiri people. "August 5 is a dark day not only in the history of Kashmir but in the annals of international law and human rights," said the Ambassador. "The unilateral and unlawful steps taken by India in 2019 violate UN Security Council resolutions and have intensified the suffering of the Kashmiri people." Ambassador Chaudhri reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the cause of Kashmir, noting that despite decades of brutal repression, the spirit of resistance among the people of IIOJK remains unbroken. "India has failed to crush the Kashmiri people's resolve. The occupation forces continue to operate with impunity, committing egregious human rights violations—ranging from extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances to sexual violence and suppression of free speech," he added. The Ambassador emphasized that Pakistan would continue to raise the Kashmir issue at every international forum and urged the global community to fulfill its moral and legal responsibilities toward the people of Jammu and Kash-



mir by ensuring the implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. To further sensitize the audience, a documentary highlighting the human rights abuses in IIOJK was screened during the event. A photo exhibition depicted harrowing visuals from the conflict-ridden region, leaving a strong impact on attendees. Ambassador Chaudhri also engaged with local media, urging Indonesian journalists and civil

society to raise their voice in support of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Outreach efforts also extended to local think tanks, academicians, and policy influencers, with the Embassy providing historical context and updates on the current situation in the occupied territory.

On Youm-e-Istehsal, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad calls for justice, UN action on Kashmir



Newswire
New York: As Pakistan marked Youm-e-Istehsal—the Day of Exploitation—Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, issued a strong statement reaffirming the country's unwavering support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), and called on the international community to play its role in ending the ongoing injustice. "The resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is essential for reducing tensions between Pakistan and India," said Ambassador

Ahmad, emphasizing the centrality of the issue to peace and stability in South Asia. He underscored that Pakistan has consistently urged the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to fulfill its legal and moral responsibility by implementing its own resolutions on Kashmir. "We continue to remind the United Nations of its commitment to the Kashmiri people. The right to self-determination is not just a principle—it is an obligation under international law," he said. Referring to India's unilateral and illegal actions of August 5, 2019, which revoked Article 370 and stripped the region of its autonomy, Ambassador Ahmad stated: "These actions have no legal standing in the eyes of the international com-

munity and the United Nations. They were categorically rejected by the UN Secretary-General in his statement of August 8, 2019." He noted that all legislative, administrative, and demographic measures taken by India after August 5, 2019, are in direct contravention of international law and Security Council resolutions. "Every step taken by India following the abrogation of Article 370 is unlawful. These are desperate attempts to alter the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir," the Ambassador stressed. He reiterated that Pakistan's position remains unchanged—that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be the core issue in any meaningful dialogue with India.

Pakistan embassy in Senegal observes Youm-e-Istehsal, honours Kashmiri struggle for freedom



Newswire
Dakar: The Embassy of Pakistan in Senegal, under the leadership of Ambassador Saima Sayed, held a solemn and dignified ceremony to observe Youm-e-Istehsal, marking six years since the unilateral revocation of Article 370 by India and the intensification of human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The event began with the reading of special messages from the President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, each of whom reaffirmed Pakistan's resolute solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and reiterated the country's diplomatic, political, and moral support for their just struggle for self-determination. Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Saima Sayed highlighted the ongoing humanitarian crisis in IIOJK, noting that the people of Kashmir continue to face widespread repression, military lockdowns, and denial of basic freedoms.

"August 5, 2019, marked the beginning of a new phase of systematic suppression and demographic engineering by India, designed to alter the identity and will of the Kashmiri people," she said. A documentary screening followed, offering a poignant portrayal of the Kashmiri people's resilience and steadfastness in the face of decades of occupation. Attendees were deeply moved by the visual narrative of life under siege and the enduring spirit of those living through constant surveillance and suppression. A photo exhibition, curated by the Embassy, presented powerful visuals documenting the atrocities committed by Indian forces in IIOJK. The images served as a stark reminder of the urgent need for international accountability and human rights monitoring in the region. The event concluded with a collective prayer for the freedom, dignity, and justice of the Kashmiri people. Members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from the local community, and Pakistani nationals in Senegal joined in expressing solidarity with Kashmiris and reaffirmed support for the peaceful resolution of the dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

PPP-led Sindh govt committed to best health facilities' across Pakistan: Umar Rehman Malik



gy and nephrology in Pakistan, known for providing free healthcare services. The new SIUT Kidney Hospital in Sargodha will extend SIUT's reach and impact beyond the province of Sindh. The PPP, in power in Sindh, is promoting this expansion as part of its legacy of public service and its vision of healthcare as a right. The Sindh government's decision is being hailed as a "landmark act of compassion and vision."



Abdullah Jan
Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Umar Rehman Malik said this week that the PPP-led Sindh government is committed to best health facilities' across the country. In a post on X, he said: "A landmark act of compassion and vision as Sindh Cabi-

net approves a grant for SIUT Kidney Hospital in Sargodha, a Punjab based facility, reaffirming PPP's unmatched legacy of public service and solidarity," - citing the recent approval of the grant. The PPP leader added: "From JPMC, NICVD, NICH to Gambat Liver Center and now SIUT Sargodha,

PPP has transformed Sindh into a model of free, world class healthcare and is now extending this vision beyond provincial borders. This is Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision, where humanity rises above politics, and healthcare is a right, not a privilege." Umar Rehman Malik said the PPP has proven that it wishes to see a healthier Pakistan where the youth as ample opportunities to flourish. The Sindh government is supporting the establishment of a Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT) Kidney Hospital in Sargodha, Punjab. This initiative is part of a broader effort by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to extend its vision of free, world-class healthcare beyond Sindh's borders. The Sindh government's decision to fund a facility in Punjab signifies a commitment to public service and solidarity. SIUT is a leading institution in urolo-



Germany's Opportunity Card attracts huge number of Pakistani professionals



Celina Ali

Islamabad: Thousands of Pakistanis are eyeing Germany’s much-awaited Opportunity Card visa “Chancenkarte” as a gateway to Europe’s largest economy, hoping to escape limited job prospects at home and tap into high-demand sectors abroad. Designed to attract skilled workers without requiring a job offer, the visa offers a clear route to employment and integration—especially for professionals in IT, engineering, and healthcare. Launched in mid-2024 and streamlined with a digital application portal in June 2025, the Chancenkarte allows eligible individuals to live in Germany for up to one year while actively searching for a job—a significant shift from traditional job-seeker visas. With Pakistan’s growing population of educated youth, especially in fields like

IT, healthcare, and engineering, the Chancenkarte provides a much-needed channel to Germany’s thriving job market. Its digital, transparent, and cost-effective process helps applicants bypass agents and excessive service charges. Applicants need at least six points based on education, work experience, age, and language skills. They must also show proof of financial self-sufficiency through a blocked account of €13,092 and hold a recognized qualification. Strong German language skills and a clear career plan can greatly boost one’s chances. Hira, an IT graduate from Gujrat, described the application process as straightforward but noted that embassy appointment wait times can stretch beyond a year. Aniee, a journalist from Islamabad, is preparing to apply but first needs to have her degree evaluated, as it is not listed under Germany’s H+ recognized qualifi-

cations. She expressed concern about delays, even after fulfilling all requirements. Iqra, another hopeful applicant, emphasized the importance of learning German while waiting, noting that language skills not only improve visa scores but also ease integration once in Germany. These personal experiences reflect both the potential and challenges of the Chancenkarte. While the simplified visa pathway is a positive development, issues like long wait times, degree recognition, and language expectations continue to frustrate applicants. Early preparation and proper guidance remain crucial. The high interest in the Chancenkarte from Pakistan has overwhelmed the German embassy, leading to significant delays. Lennart Trautmann, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Chancenkarte.com, noted that the embassy may be facing logistical pressures, especially due to its dual role in handling Afghan and Pakistani applicants. He advised applicants to apply early, stay well-prepared, and manage expectations. “Unfortunately, the remonstrations process (appeals for rejected applications) is no longer available, so every applicant must ensure their application is complete and strategic,” he said. Trautmann added that showing commitment to German language learning and a clear career strategy greatly enhances success. Despite bureaucratic hurdles, the Chancenkarte remains one of the most progressive immigration routes available to skilled Pakistani professionals. Embassy

systems are expected to improve over time, reducing waiting periods. For now, Germany’s message is clear: skilled professionals from Pakistan are welcome—but preparation, patience, and persistence are key. Sheikh Ahmed, a seasoned immigration consultant, told APP that while the Chancenkarte process is simpler, the complexities of documentation and language still lead many applicants to seek expert help—driving increased demand for consultancy services. With a GDP exceeding \$4.5 trillion, Germany is Europe’s largest and the world’s third-largest economy, heavily reliant on skilled labor to sustain its industrial and technological edge. Facing acute shortages in sectors like IT, engineering, healthcare, and skilled trades, the country

is increasingly turning to foreign talent. An estimated 100,000 Pakistanis already live and work in Germany, contributing significantly in software development, medical services, mechanical engineering, and academic research—underscoring the growing role of Pakistan’s educated diaspora. The German Consulate in Karachi has remained operational, while the consulate in Islamabad—which serves the two major provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir—has caused significant inconvenience for the majority of visa applicants. Applicants from Islamabad said the waiting time has shown more than one year since applying through the new portal, and the situation remains unchanged.



Majority of Bulgarian companies ready to hire non-EU workers

NewsWire

Sofia: Over 60% of businesses in Bulgaria are open to hiring workers from non-EU countries, according to findings shared in the context of the ongoing project “Functionally Sustainable Migration and Integration in Bulgaria”. The initiative is being carried out by the Bulgarian

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) in partnership with the Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development. As part of the project, the two organizations held an online meeting to plan upcoming joint activities, including a national roundtable set to take place on September 25, 2025, in Sofia. The

event will be held in a hybrid format and will bring together a broad range of participants – representatives of government and local institutions, international and non-governmental organizations, academic circles, business associations, and employers – with the aim of discussing workforce integration in Bulgaria. During the roundtable, results from a nationwide employer survey conducted earlier in the year will be presented. The poll examined the attitudes of Bulgarian businesses toward recruiting workers from countries outside the European Union. Preliminary data, shared at a BCCI-hosted event in early July titled “Triple Transition: When Green and Digital Support Social Integration,” show that over 78% of companies are facing labor shortages. Of those, 64% are prepared to hire third-country nationals. Employers have outlined several key criteria that potential foreign workers must meet. More than half (52%) of surveyed companies require relevant work experience and qualifications. About 22% prioritize proficiency in the Bulgarian language, while 9% stress the importance of formal education. Another 9% focus on specific skills relevant to the job. These expectations suggest that while there is openness to hiring from abroad, employers are seeking candidates who can integrate relatively quickly and effectively into the workplace. Labor market challenges are expected to be a core part of the discussion at the upcoming



roundtable. BCCI has noted that the subject of bringing in workers from outside Bulgaria is a recurring one in its ongoing dialogue with both domestic and international partners. In recent months, the Chamber has held discussions with representatives from countries such as India, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and China, all of which are considered potential sources of labor.

The project also involves efforts to simplify the process for companies to attract third-country workers. During their latest meeting, the project partners finalized the methodology for reducing administrative hurdles related to labor migration. They also reviewed plans for upcoming informational events around the country and exchanged views on current developments affecting the initiative.



UK's Princess Eugenie quietly hosts famous American couple at her Portugal home

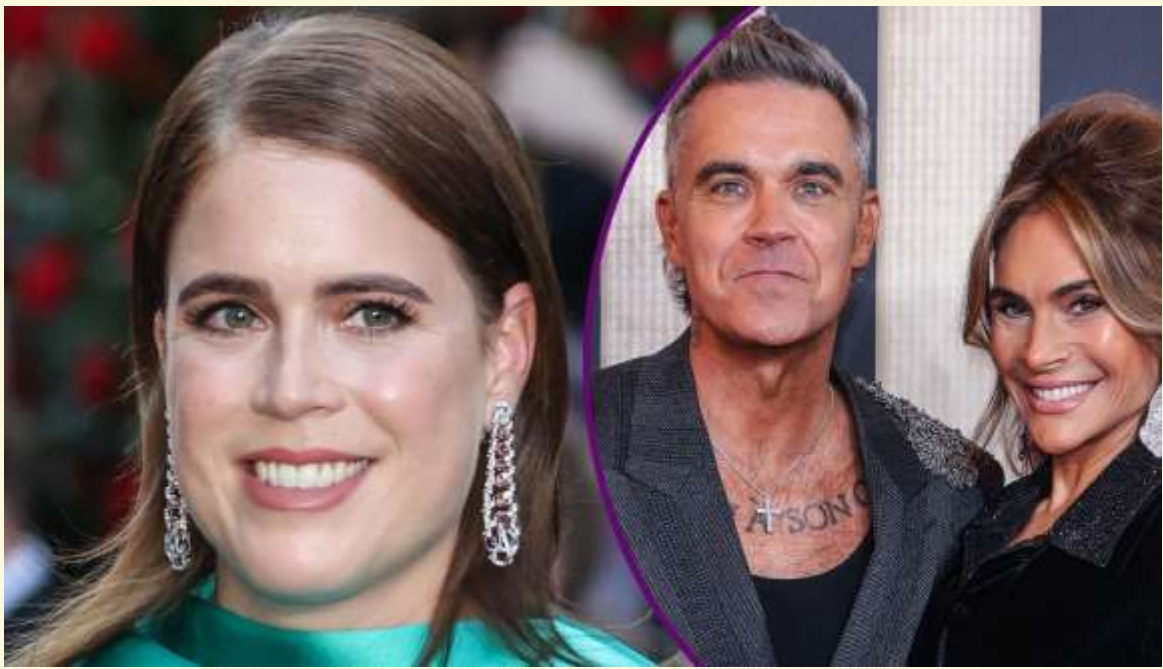


Newswire

Lisbon: Princess Eugenie and her husband, Jack Brooksbank have secretly hosted a special guest couple, Ayda Field and Robbie Williams, at their Portuguese house. While the 35-year-old princess or her husband have kept the family getaway secret, the American actress shared a slew of glimpses from the sun-soaked trip on her Instagram account. Her carousel featured many heart-warming photos of herself, Williams

and their kids, a son Charlie and daughter Coco, as they enjoyed various sunny moments together. However, it was two hidden photos in her photo-dump which caught the eyes of royal fans as it featured none other than the niece of King Charles. In the first photo, the Loose Women alum and Princess Eugenie could be seen standing amidst an iron wrought gate as they strike a posed towards the camera. The daughter of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson looked effortlessly elegant in a khaki sleeveless tiered dress which she paired with cream sandals.

Meanwhile, Ayda radiated summer vibes in a white linen two-piece with an embroidered short-sleeve shirt and wedge flatforms. Another image showed the princess beaming with delight in a striped shirt and a baseball cap as she posed for a selfie alongside Ayda and Robbie. “Obrigada #summer #familytime,” the 46-year-old actress captioned her post. Princess Eugenie and Ayda Field have been close friends for years. The royal even asked the American star’s daughter, Teddy, to be a flower girl at her 2018 wedding in Windsor.”



Japan sees record drop in population in 2024



Covert Report

Tokyo The population of Japan shrank by 0.75% in 2024, marking a record high since records began in 1968, according to official data. The decline amounted to 908,574 people, the largest population drop since records began in 1968. This is the 16th straight year in which the Japanese population has shrunk, reducing

it to 120.65 million people down from a peak of 126.6 million in 2009, according to the Internal Affairs Ministry. Japanese nationals aged 65 or over made up 30% of the country's population, while 60% of Japanese nationals were between 15 and 64. Although many more economically developed countries have aging populations,

Japan has the second-oldest, after the tiny state of Monaco, according to the World Bank. Japan also saw births fall below 700,000 for the first time on record, according to Health Ministry data released back in June. Some 686,061 newborns were recorded in 2024, the lowest number since records began in 1899.

Pakistan says US doubling tariffs on India presents ‘strategic opening’

Covert Report

Karachi: US President Donald Trump’s move to double tariffs on Indian goods presents a “strategic opening” for Islamabad to deepen its trade partnership with Washington, Pakistan’s finance adviser Khurram Schehzad said this week.

Trump signed an executive order to place an additional 25 percent tariff on India on top of a 25 percent tariff that went into effect last week. The move made India one of the most heavily taxed US trading partners in Asia.

Pakistan, India’s traditional arch-rival, has meanwhile improved its ties with Washington. Pakistan and the US finalized a trade agreement last week under which a 19 percent tariff was imposed on a wide range of Pakistani goods. The new rate marked a considerable reduction from the initially proposed 29 percent under a sweeping executive order signed by Trump. “The US tariff hike on Indian goods presents a strategic opening for Pakistan,” Schehzad said.

Washington’s 19 percent tariff on Pakistani goods makes them less expensive than Indian goods, making Pakistan one of the countries with the lowest tariff profiles in the region.

“We see this as a moment of opportunity to deepen trade and economic ties with the United States,” the finance

The US is Pakistan’s largest export destination, State Minister for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani said on Thursday. He added that out of \$32 billion of Pakistan’s exports in the last fiscal year, \$6 billion went to the US.

Pakistan’s tariff deal with the US took place at a time when Islamabad is pushing for an economic revival, buoyed by a \$7 billion financial bailout package by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Pakistan has undertaken financial reforms over the past two years. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has tasked authorities to ensure Islamabad’s \$32 billion annual exports surge to over \$60 billion by fiscal year 2028-29.

Pakistan, having one of the lowest regional tariff profiles and also attracting a growing US investment interest, is positioned to expand its exports, particularly in textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, technology, mining & minerals, and other value-added manufacturing, Schehzad said.

“This agreement will help us realize the long-term export targets we have set under Uraan Pakistan program,” he said, referring to the government’s economic plan that aims to make Pakistan a trillion-dollar economy by 2035.

Pakistani businesspersons, especially those related to textiles, think otherwise. Atif Ikram Sheikh, president of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), said the US has imposed the lowest trade tariffs in the region on Pakistan, which Islamabad should take full advantage of. However, he said higher production costs in Pakistan could neutralize



this benefit. “Taxes and high electricity and gas prices for the industry are major obstacles to taking advantage of low tariffs,” Sheikh said.

The textile industry is Pakistan’s biggest foreign exchange earner, fetching \$18 billion during the last fiscal year, most of which came from the US.

Kamran Arshad, chairman of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), was also unsure whether the new trade agreement with the US would benefit Pakistan significantly. “The costly power and high interest rates would not allow us to compete (in the global textile market) at this 19 percent tariff,” Arshad told Arab News.

Last week, Pakistan’s central bank kept the policy rate unchanged at 11 percent, adopting a cautious approach. According to the APTMA, Pakistan has a higher interest rate of 11 percent, compared to India’s 5.5 percent, Bangladesh’s 10 percent, Vietnam’s 4.5 percent, Sri Lanka’s 7.75 percent, Indonesia’s 5.25 percent and Cambodia’s 3 percent.

The power tariff for industries in Pakistan, meanwhile, stands at \$0.16 kilowatt per hour as compared to \$0.096 in India, \$0.10 in Bangladesh, \$0.08 in Vietnam, \$0.06 in Sri Lanka, \$0.07 in Indonesia and \$0.135 in Cambodia, the data shows.

Pakistani businesses are paying 29 percent corporate

income tax and as much as 10 percent super tax compared to the 27.5 percent preferential taxes their competitors from India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Cambodia are paying on incomes.

“Pakistan’s corporate tax, policy rate, labor costs, electricity rate put us at a disadvantage with India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Indonesia,” Arshad noted.

Shankar Talreja, head of research at Karachi-based brokerage firm Topline Securities, said the US is a “big market” for pharmaceuticals, textiles and food products. “If Pakistan gets preferential treatment in the US market, this will help our companies grow further,” he said.



official added.

Outgoing head of European delegation Riina Kionka calls on President Zardari



Celina Ali
Islamabad: The outgoing Head of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka this week paid a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr (President's House). Welcoming Dr. Kionka, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its multidimensional partnership with the European Union. He observed that a strong Pakistan-EU relationship contributed to regional

stability and global security in a volatile world. President Zardari highlighted that the European Union was one of Pakistan's largest trade and investment partners. He said there was vast potential to further expand development cooperation with the EU, given Pakistan's large young population and significant industrial growth prospects. The president also expressed hope that Pakistan would continue to bene-



fit from European expertise through programs such as Erasmus Mundus and Horizon Europe. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the full implementation of the Pakistan-EU Strategic Engage-

ment Plan, underscoring that shared objectives in trade, development, climate, migration and regional peace form the basis of an enduring and stronger partnership. President Zardari congratulated Dr.

Riina Kionka on the successful completion of her tenure in Pakistan and lauded her valuable contributions to further strengthening Pakistan-EU relations. He wished her continued success in her future endeavours.



British High Commissioner Jane Marriott wants to travel to Manchester on direct PIA flight



between the two countries. “Come fly with me! I enjoyed my PIA flight from Karachi to Islamabad. The UK has lifted its air safety ban, a milestone reflecting the hard work of aviation experts in Pakistan and the UK to meet international safety standards,” Marriott said in her statement on X (formerly Twitter). During the flight, she visited the cockpit, where the flight captain briefed

Celina Ali

Islamabad: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott has expressed her intention to travel directly from Pakistan to Manchester aboard a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight. In a video message shared after travelling from Karachi to Islamabad on a domestic PIA flight, the envoy stated that she planned to fly to Manchester in the near future via a direct PIA service. She described her experience aboard the national carrier as “enjoyable” and praised the restoration of direct air links

her on aviation protocols. The PIA chief executive officer has presented her with a captain’s cap and conferred upon her the honorary title of pilot. The British envoy extended her best wishes to PIA and commended the efforts undertaken to restore the airline’s operational credibility in international aviation.



“The very essence of **romance** is uncertainty.”
- Oscar Wilde

There is no charm equal
to tenderness of heart.”
- Jane Austen

Leonardo acquires Iveco defence vehicles for €1.7 billion

Covert Report
Rome: Italy’s Leonardo is going to purchase IDV, the military subsidiary of Iveco Group, for €1.7 billion. This would enlarge Leonardo's land

systems portfolio. Leonardo has agreed to buy Iveco Group's military vehicle branch, Iveco Defence Vehicles (IDV), for €1.7 billion. The transaction comprises IDV's wheeled armoured vehicles and Astra-branded heavy-duty trucks,

media reports said. The present cash reserves that Leonardo possesses will be sufficient to finance the total cost of the transaction, which is scheduled to be finalised in the first quarter of 2026. Through this acquisition, Leonardo



Stefano Pontecorvo, Chairman, Leonardo

has taken a significant step towards achieving its objective of increasing the number of land systems products it offers and enhancing its competitive position within the European military sector. The firm aims to provide more inte-

grated and technologically advanced land solutions by combining IDV's vehicle platforms with Leonardo's powerful electrical systems. The deal may also pave the way for deeper collaboration with Germany’s Rheinmetall, Leonardo’s current partner on heavy ground platforms.

92% of international doctorate holders who graduated in France are professionally integrated

Newswire
Paris: The French Ministry of Higher Education and Research has released a “Note Flash” on the professional integration of doctorate holders who graduated in 2020. According to this statistical report, the professional integration percentage of French nationals doctors three years after earning their doctorate is very close to that of foreign nationals (94% vs. 92%). Among these international doctorate holders who graduated in France in 2020 and were employed in 2023, 57% were working in France and held managerial-level positions. The Notes Flash, published on a regular basis by the French Ministry of Higher Education, provide a focused

look at key indicators from the Ministry’s statistical office, summarizing initial data analyses. The note titled “Three-Year Professional Integration of 2020 Doctorate Graduates” falls into the category of short, targeted, analysis, this time comparing the 2023 results to those from 2021. This new Note Flash presents the three-year integration outcomes of 2020 doctorate graduates by field of study, gender, and nationality. It is based on a survey conducted between April 2024 and January 2025 across around one hundred institutions offering doctoral degrees. More than 10,000 doctorate holders of all nationalities and ages who passed their degree in France were surveyed regarding their professional status three

years after graduation. The study’s first general finding: three years after completing their thesis, 94% of 2020 doctorate graduates are employed, a 5-point increase compared to just one year after graduation. Once integrated into the professional market, the Ministry notes that 76% hold stable jobs, 94% are employed in executive-level positions, and 95% work full-time. Stability in jobs has increased sharply compared to 2021 (+27 points), though differences persist across disciplines: Conversely, 80% of doctorate holders in exact sciences and applications and 83% of doctorate holders in sciences of society have a stable job. What kinds of jobs do they work in? Three years after passing their degree, says the Note, 74% of doctorate holders who graduated in 2020 and currently working are in public or private research. The academic sector is the “first employer” of doctorate holders who graduated in 2020 (48% vs 55%), while private research employs 26% of doctorate holders. And, slightly over a quarter of doctors who graduated in 2020 (26%) work out of the research industry (public sector excl. academic sector and private sector excl. research). To be noted that 85% of graduate holders declare they are satisfied with their professional situation, but this level of satisfaction varies depending on the discipline: it is higher in exact science and applications (88%), and in life science (85%). Another observation: in all doctorate holders from 2020, the professional integration of French doctors three years after passing their degree is almost the same as for foreign doctorate holders (94% vs 92%). The Note Flash shows that in 2020, 43% of doctorate holders who graduated in France were foreign nationals, and 57% of those foreign graduates employed three years later were working in France. The proportion of foreign doctorate holders who graduated in 2020 working in France in executive-level positions (94%) is almost the same as that of French doctorate holders (95%). However, the Ministry notes that foreign doctorate holders are slightly less likely to hold permanent positions (80%) compared to their French counterparts (84%), particularly in the academic sector.

More specifically, 54% of jobs held in France by foreign nationals with doctorate holders awarded in 2020 are in the private sector, compared to 40% for French nationals. Three years after earning their degree, 35% of foreign doctorate holders working in France are employed in private research, nine points higher than French doctorate holders. Conversely, the proportion of foreign doctorate holders working in the academic sector in France is lower than that of French doctorate holders. “More than half of all doctorates are awarded to men, and their employment conditions are better than those of women.” This is yet another finding, though a familiar one, highlighted by the Ministry’s Note Flash, which goes so far as to speak of “significant gender inequalities.” In 2020, more than half of doctorates (57%) were awarded to men. But three years after graduation, men enjoy better employment conditions than women: men are more likely to hold permanent positions (78%) compared to women (74%). Men are also more likely to hold full-time, executive-level positions than women. Similarly, in 2023, male graduates were more likely than female graduates to be employed in the private sector overall (43% vs. 36%). Notably, 30% of male doctorate holders work in private-sector R&D, compared to just 21% of female doctorate holders. In contrast, women are more frequently employed in the public sector outside of academia than men. In another report from the same series of studies, another Ministry Note Flash shows that the number of doctorates awarded in 2024 has declined by 3%, following a 9.6% rise in 2023 due to post-pandemic catch-up.



Some figures are more encouraging: the share of theses defended in less than 40 months rose by 4 points, and the number of first-time doctorate enrollees for the 2024–2025 academic year increased by 3.2% compared to the previous year. Likewise, in 2024–2025, the percentage of first-year PhD students with funding rose to 81%. Although international joint supervisions still account for a small proportion of doctorate candidates (6%), the number of first-year doctorate students enrolled in joint supervisions has increased by 1.9%. This growth, according to the Ministry, is driven by an increase in joint supervisions enrollments with researchers from Europe (+5.1%) and Africa (+10.2%).

