

# China urges fair treatment for EVs in Europe



## Zhong Nan

Beijing: China this week expressed its disappointment with the European Commission's recent decisions regarding the EU's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric vehicles, stressing it will take all necessary measures to defend the interests of its businesses.

On September 12, a spokesperson for the European Commission stated that the price commitment solutions submitted by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, as well as all electric vehicle manufacturers, regarding the EU's anti-subsidy case on electric vehicles, did not meet the necessary requirements. The EU intends to reject the related price commitment applications.

China finds the EU disregarded the good faith and efforts made by the Chinese EV industry by rejecting flexible solution proposals without conducting thorough consultations, per a spokesperson from the Ministry of Commerce in an online statement.

On August 20 and September 9, the EC released its final disclosure in the EV anti-subsidy case, maintaining its stance and imposing high tariffs. On August 24, within the legal time frame of the investigation, the Chinese EV industry proposed a price commitment solution, which fully took into account the EU's concerns and demonstrated maximum flexibility.

The Chinese EV industry believes that the proposed price commitment is compliant, enforceable, and all technical issues could be resolved through negotiations. It was reported that several EU member states also showed considerable interest in this proposal.



According to the statement, the EC rejected the solution without a detailed evaluation, undermining the confidence of the Chinese EV industry and failing to meet the expectations of EU member states.

Since the launch of consultations on the EU's EV anti-subsidy case on June 22, China and the EU have conducted more than ten rounds of intensive discussions. China has submitted a substantial amount of factual evidence, along with a flexible resolution proposal, demonstrating considerable effort, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The spokesperson stated that while the EU claims to be willing to resolve the issue through dialogues, it has

hastily and carelessly rejected China's proposals, without ever providing any concrete counter-offers or showing any genuine intent to meet China halfway. If the consultations ultimately fail to reach a consensus, the responsibility will rest entirely with the EU.

It was also stressed that the key issue now is whether the EU has the political will to resolve the problem and called on the EU to demonstrate sincerity and consider the legitimate concerns of the Chinese EV industry. China has the utmost sincerity in resolving differences through dialogue and consultations, as well as the strongest determination to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies. "The country will closely watch the EU's subsequent actions and will take all necessary measures to defend the legal rights of Chinese companies," said the Ministry of Commerce.

# Denmark returns iconic indigenous cloak to Brazil

## Gabriela Pomeroy

Copenhagen: Indigenous leaders in Brazil this week celebrated the return of a sacred cloak that had been on display at a Danish museum for more than 300 years. The 1.8m-long cloak, made of 4,000 red feathers from the scarlet ibis bird, was officially unveiled at a ceremony in Rio de Janeiro. It was attended by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The cloak was taken from the Tupinambá people during the Portuguese colonial period and had been on display in Copenhagen since 1689.

"Our ancestors say that when they [the Europeans] took it away, our village was left without a north," indigenous chief Sussu Arana Morubyxada Tupinambá said.

Several Tupinambá sacred capes, which have survived hundreds of years, are still on display in museums across Europe. They are thought to date back to the 16th Century.

Tupinambá leaders say this is not just about bringing artefacts back to their original homelands, but about recognising indigenous people, their lands and rights.

Brazil's president has previously pledged to recognise indigenous land



Indigenous leaders say its return highlights the importance of demarcating their ancestral lands to keep their traditions alive.

A group of 200 Tupinambá people camped outside the building, with drums and pipes filled with medicinal herbs, waiting to see the precious cloak and to reconnect with their ancient traditions.

Yakuy Tupinambá travelled more than 1,200km (745 miles) by bus from the eastern Olivença municipality to see the garment.

"I felt sadness and joy. A mixture between being born and dying," he said.

reserves, but the Tupinambás' territory has not yet been formally demarcated by the government.

Speaking at the event President Lula said: "I am also against the time limit on Indigenous land claims."

"I made a point of vetoing this attack against the indigenous peoples. But the National Congress, using a prerogative backed by law, overruled my veto. The discussion continues in the Federal Supreme Court."

"And my position has not changed: I am in favour of the rights of the indigenous peoples to their territory and culture, as established by the Constitution."

"Therefore, I am against the absurd idea of the limit on land claims."

The Tupinambás say the mineral-rich territory is being devastated by large agriculture and mining businesses.

# Bilawal Bhutto advocates end to political rivalry cycle

## Liaquat Ali

Islamabad: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari this week urged the political leadership of the country to end "the cycle of political enmities against one another" and stressed the need to shift focus towards serving the public and protecting their rights.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, Bilawal said that personal grievances, such as who jailed whom, must be set aside in favour of serving the people in parliament. He suggested that the speaker form a high-powered committee to restore the functionality of the house.

The PPP chairman stressed that without establishing the supremacy of the Constitution, no institution could function. He lamented that politics had become a curse in the country, warning that if the focus remained on "who to jail next", politicians would continue to be trapped in the same cycle.

"The future of the country is present in parliament today," Bilawal said, gesturing towards the students seated in the visitors' gallery. He said that he reflected on what the youth might be thinking about the future. "Not many of them would aspire to become politicians," he added.

"Politics has become a curse, but it is the same politics that will bring employment to the youth, economic justice to the people, and govern the country," he continued. "The country is currently facing multiple crises, but when today's children grow up, they will lead the region."

He urged the people's representatives in the house to maintain a working relationship. "If the government is constantly engaged in fire-fighting, and the opposition continues to curse, make noise, and act below the belt, they cannot fulfil their duty of holding the government accountable," he said.

"If they claim the government's economic or security policies are flawed, they must also propose solutions. Failure to fulfil their responsibilities means the opposition will not achieve its own objectives," the PPP chairman told the house.

"While it is expected from the opposition to raise the matter of their imprisoned leaders, the more pressing issues for the people they represent include unemployment, inflation, education, health, and terrorism," he stressed.

In an apparent reference to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Bilawal said that if a Chief Minister cursed the media and opposition, and used his own government to initiate vindictive actions against judges in the anti-terrorism court, it did not address the issues of the people.

In the same vein he also warned the coalition government. "On the other hand," he said, "if the government's primary focus is who to jail next, it might bring momentary satisfaction, but tomorrow we will all be trapped in the same cycle."

Bilawal recalled the cases and jailing of the PPP leaders during the tenure of former prime minister Imran Khan. However, he added that the party did not harbour any personal grudges against Imran, rather it wanted to protect the Constitution and democracy to solve problems of the people.

"This was the reason for the signing of the Charter of Democracy between Sheehed Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. He stressed that both sides must work together for the country's prosperity."

Bilawal said he criticised the government where necessary, adding that now was the time to evaluate the current government's performance on key issues. He pointed out that the government's target was to reduce inflation to 12%, the rate has already dropped to 9.6%, with the year not yet over.

"While we have criticised the government's economic policies, the house should commend the reduction in inflation, and now everyone must contribute their input," he said.

He said that from 2008 to 2013, the government operated with consensus, engaging with the same opposition that was responsible for keeping his father in jail for over a decade. He added they developed a consensus-based document that strengthened all constitutional institutions.

However, he warned that a lobby existed against that consensus, and sought to undermine it to create more space for anti-democratic forces. One such effort took shape under former chief justice of Pakistan Ifkhar Chaudhary, he said.

"Another involved intelligence officers, backing a political party, pushing the political system to a point where even basic cooperation is elusive," the PPP chairman continued. "This is playing with the destinies of future generations," he added.

Bilawal urged the speaker to restore the functionality of the house, because a "functional parliament is essential for a functional country". He reiterated that the responsibility of parliament was not only to legislate but also to create conducive environment.



He expressed disappointment over the resignation of senior politician Akhtar Mengal, who could have played a significant role in Bilawal's politics. "All it takes for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing," Bilawal said regarding Mengal's resignation from the National Assembly.

He emphasised the need for all members to take responsibility. He reminded the house that during the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government, he had advised against boycotting the assemblies – a reference to the resignation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members.

"Now, both the opposition and the country are suffering as a result," he said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has endorsed PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's proposal to sign a 'Charter of Parliament', agreeing that it would help strengthen democracy.

The PM on Wednesday met with a PPP delegation led by Bilawal. The delegation also included PPP leaders Syed Naveed Qamar and Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab.

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday promised legal action against those involved in violating the sanctity of the lower house. He stated that he would nominate officials - including police and masked men - in the FIR, if necessary.

Regretting that the Parliament House had been attacked multiple times during his tenure, the speaker said he learned about the arrests from the lawmakers' speeches. He added that he had recorded video footage of the assembly precincts and would assign responsibility after reviewing the record.

# Chinese, Pakistani firms sign agreements worth \$400 million at CIFTIS



**China Economic Net**  
 Beijing: International Innovation Park Limited EPZ and China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs (COFCO) this week signed an agreement to cooperate in the agriculture sector worth more than \$380 million on Saturday at the China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing. Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, Ghulam Qadir Trade and Investment Counselor, and representatives from the firms witnessed the ceremony. Khalil said on the occasion that "it is a milestone for Pakistan because Chinese companies are working with Pakistani firms to develop their products in Pakistan." He added, "When it comes to market access, Pakistan has preferential trade agreements with major global economies, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and China through CPFTA. This allows many Pakistani products to enter these markets duty-free. To further support invest-

tors, we have established the Special Investment Facilitation Council, which provides a range of incentives and tax breaks within our Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Export Processing Zones (EPZs), and Special Technology Zones (STZs)". Jai Kumar, Chairman of International Innovation Park Limited EPZ, told China Economic Net (CEN), "this agreement is a game changer in the agricultural sector of the country, we can improve quality we can improve production capacity, and can build a strong storage system for food security." Liu Zhai, Sr. Vice President of IBI and CEO Toodudu, and Naveed Asghar, Chairman and CEO of Waetz Asia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in the textile sector, which will focus on digital transformation and supply chain optimization for 200 textile factories in Pakistan.

# CIFTIS opens new avenues for boost China-Pakistan banking ties

**China Economic Net**  
 Beijing: The China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) has emerged as a pivotal platform, fostering enhanced financial cooperation between Chinese banks and their international counterparts, said Shaikh Muhammad Shariq, Vice President of National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) and Chief Representative in China. Addressing a seminar titled "Investment in Pakistan," Shaikh Shariq said that this year's fair not only showcases innovative financial services but also facilitates meaningful dialogues and partnerships aimed at strengthening global financial ties, particularly for NBP. "As the National Bank of Pakistan seeks to navigate an increasingly interconnected world, CIFTIS offers a unique opportunity to explore collaborative ventures that can drive mutual growth and stability in the financial sector," he added. He said that NBP can leverage the opportunity to showcase its services, connect with potential business partners, and explore new avenues for collaboration with Chinese financial institutions.

"We are constantly working on technology upgradation to position ourselves as a digitally competitive, agile, and secure bank driven by data and innovation. The upgrade of the core banking application will continue through 2024, alongside the strengthening of our cyber security. Substantial investment in hardware and software will continue this year," he stated. He mentioned that with a total asset base of PKR 6.7 trillion (USD 23.6 billion) and accounting for 14% of total industry assets, NBP is the highest capitalized bank in Pakistan with PKR 382.8 Bn (USD 1.36 Bn) in net assets. This year, NBP has participated in two major locations of CIFTIS: the Shougang Park where NBP presents its portfolio with all international banks, and the main National Convention Center. It is to be noted that Shougang is the main venue for financial institutions to present their services in CIFTIS 2024, which is scheduled from September 12-16.



# Pak amb invites HK entrepreneurs to invest in at the 9th Belt and Road Summit

**China Economic Net**  
 Beijing: Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi represented Pakistan at the 9th Belt and Road Summit in Hong Kong under the theme "Building a Connected, Innovative, and Green Belt and Road" and invited Hongkong entrepreneurs to invest in Pakistan under BRI projects. The summit gathered international leaders, business representatives, and industry experts to discuss the Belt and Road Initiative's (BRI) future, emphasizing the importance of global partnerships and sustainable development in leveraging Hong Kong's unique strengths. The Ambassador of Pakistan expressed how China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had transformed Pakistan's economic landscape over the past decade. He

explained that the project had created significant employment opportunities and added 8,000 MW to the national power grid, while developing 800 km of road networks and transmission lines. He further stated that CPEC's next phase would evolve into a multidimensional corridor focused on growth, innovation, and inclusiveness, aligned with Pakistan's "5Es" strategy, which centers on exports, digital transformation, climate change, energy, and equity. The Ambassador highlighted Pakistan's burgeoning IT sector, noting its rapid expansion supported by a growing internet user base and cellular connections. He remarked that Pakistan's fintech sector, though nascent, presented substantial opportunities for Hong Kong-based firms to introduce digital banking platforms and blockchain solutions. He emphasized that while the demand for innovative financial solutions is rising, fintech startups in Pakistan require venture capital investments,

which Hong Kong is well-positioned to provide. The Ambassador also stressed Pakistan's commitment to sourcing 30% of its energy from renewables by 2030. He pointed out the untapped potential in hydropower, solar, and wind, inviting Hong Kong's financial institutions to collaborate in green energy projects. He also mentioned the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC as attractive locations for Hong Kong enterprises to explore early-bird investment opportunities, particularly in manufacturing and logistics. During his stay in Hong Kong, the Ambassador also interacted with Hong Kong leadership and media.



# Naples: Italy coastal jewel rich in history, flavor, charm



is conveniently close to the city, just about 15 minutes away by taxi, which costs around 30 euros (\$33.25).

For accommodation, I recommend the boutique Romeo Hotel Napoli, centrally located across from the port. The hotel has 76 rooms and is adorned with modern art pieces, creating a contemporary design. Recently renovated, it is also a member of Small Luxury Hotels and enjoys a prime location.

The top floor houses a restaurant by world-renowned chef Alain Ducasse, his first in Italy. The hotel offers breakfast and lunch prepared under his direction. On the terrace, there's an infinity pool and a lounge called La Terrazza, perfect for enjoying cocktails while watching the sunset. From the rooms, you can enjoy views of both the sea and the iconic Mount Vesuvius, which looks like a painting, especially on clear days.

A five-minute walk from the hotel takes you to Castel Nuovo, one of the city's most important landmarks and a 10-minute stroll brings you to Spaccanapoli, the city's most vibrant street.

Since 1882, the Grand Hotel Vesuvio has been a favorite among celebrities and travelers worldwide. As the only 5-star deluxe hotel on the Naples waterfront, it boasts 160 rooms, 21 suites and two panoramic restaurants, both showcasing the culinary brilliance of chef Emanuele Petrosino. I highly recommend trying both. Located along the Santa Lucia Harbor, it's just minutes from Naples' bustling streets. Naples reminds me a lot of Istanbul with its crowded streets, architecture and culture – it feels quite familiar. It's often said that "Naples has the best food in Italy," and this claim certainly holds true.

Built in the 18th century, this five-story palace with 1,200 rooms was added to the UNESCO list in 1997 and remains the world's largest palace.

Located in Piazza San Carlo, this grand gallery with a glass roof was built in 1887 and now hosts cafes and shops. It's an architectural masterpiece and a popular meeting spot for locals.

Constructed in 1289, this iconic castle is open to visitors six days a week. Built in 1846 near the seaside, this square is admired for its grand architecture and is a major tourist attraction.

Rebuilt after a fire in 1816, this opera house hosts impressive performances year-round. If possible, book tickets in advance to experience a show.

Naples is the pizza capital and I highly recommend trying Da Michele or Di Matteo. Both are fantastic, though expect long lines. These restaurants are open every day except Sunday, offering a taste of authentic Neapolitan pizza.

For seafood, my two favorite spots are:

1. Sapori Della Pescheria Azzurra  
A seafood market located in the heart of Naples, serving a variety of fresh fish, seafood, and delicious fried dishes, perfect for both lunch and dinner.

2. Osteria Da Antonio  
A family-owned restaurant with the freshest seafood in the city. Be sure to make a reservation, as it's quite small. Save room for dessert – their lemon cake and rum baba are must-tries!

Shopping in Naples: Compared to other Italian cities, shopping in Naples is more affordable. On Via Toledo, you will find a



Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Marilina Armellin & Husband

**Newswire** initially consider the city dangerous, their views often change once they experience its lively and vibrant life. Naples has its own charm in every season. Being by the sea, the average temperature



third largest in the country. With its mysterious streets, laid-back atmosphere and delicious cuisine, Naples is one of Italy's most beautiful cities. Although some may

is around 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit). Turkish Airlines (THY) offers two direct flights to Naples daily, in both the morning and evening. The airport



mix of local Italian and international brands. On Saturdays, visit the Mercato di Antignano market for a unique experience. For luxury shopping, head to Via Domenico Morelli and the surrounding

streets. One must-visit shop is Michele Franzese Moda, a fashion boutique offering unique collections in a strikingly designed space. Don't leave without stopping by!



# China's investments evolve with Africa's changing development needs

Ding Gang

In June of this year, Kenya experienced protests primarily targeting the government's proposed policy to increase taxes. When analyzing the causes, Western media largely focused on Kenya's foreign debt issue, with some even linking it to the country's debt to China.

Kenya's foreign debt amounts to \$82 billion, but only about \$8 billion is owed to China, which is less than 10 percent of the total. While this total debt is substantial for a country with a GDP per capita of just over \$2,000, for a rapidly developing country like Kenya, the question is more about how to repay the debt rather than whether it can be repaid.

In fact, the Western media's focus on China-Africa relations has consistently centered on the debt issue, as this narrative aligns with their subjective assumption of the "China threat theory." This association aims to tarnish the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, which has played a significant role in promoting African

development and is undergoing adjustments to further enhance the economic capacity of African countries.

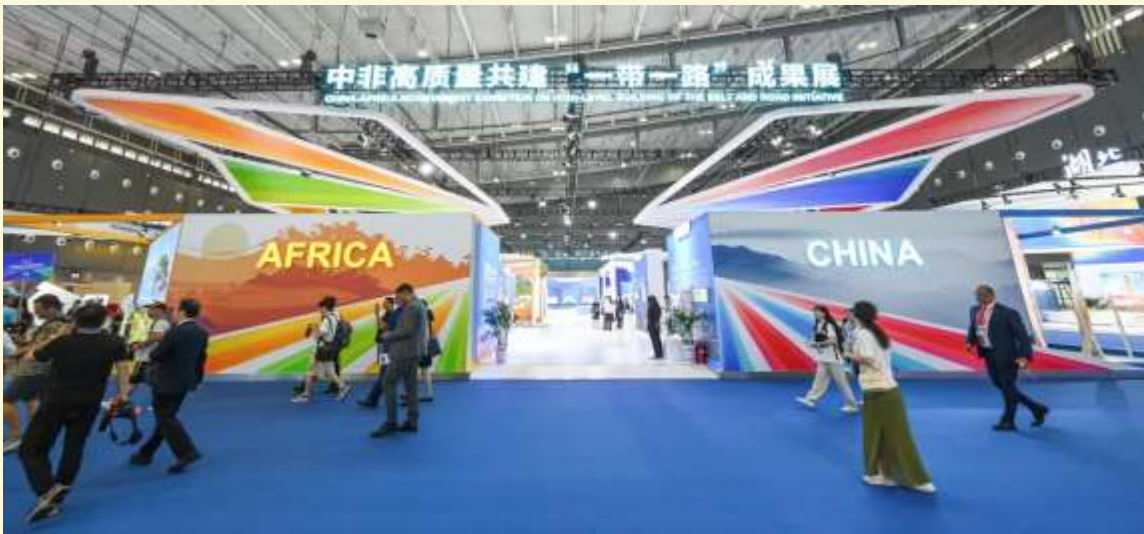
Of course, Western media is also concealing an increasingly prominent issue that constrains African development: Why didn't Western colonizers leave behind an economic foundation capable of supporting continued growth in Africa, such as basic manufacturing capabilities? Even the education system left by colonizers is now limiting young people's employability, becoming increasingly disconnected from local development. I discussed this matter with some locals during my recent trip to Kenya. The issues behind the recent protests are problems Kenya's economy encounters after rapid growth, which is somewhat familiar across Africa.

The protests were mainly driven by Generation Z, which is grappling with severe unemployment. The main reason for this critical issue is the maladjustment brought about by Kenya's economic rise, accelerated urbanization and the increasing number of young people receiving basic and higher education.

The most significant change I observed during this visit was that all children could now attend school. Improved road connections have enabled many young people to seek work in cities. This change has fundamentally altered the traditional tribal structure, which has been part of their culture for hundreds of years.

However, those working in cities told me that many of these young people flocking to urban areas can only find low-end jobs. Meanwhile, many newly established small and medium-sized enterprises struggle to find suitable labor.

Kenya's future looks promising with the potential of China-Africa vocational education cooperation. The current university system, established according to Western standards, offers overly theoretical courses. Graduates often lack the practical skills needed to meet the demands of the job market, especially in manufacturing. However, the introduction of vocational training institutions could bridge this gap and significantly



enhance the country's employability.

Our African guide said that speaking Chinese has become an important employment skill as many Chinese tourists visit Kenya. Also, many Chinese businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises, need employees who can speak Chinese. Enhancing young people's employability is crucial for Kenya's economic development and long-term debt solution. This requires policy adjustments and profound reforms, with education reform being the most important.

This is also why China's increased investment in improving the quality of the labor force in African countries, including Kenya, is a reassuring sign for the country's economic future. China's influence, far from weakening due to reduced infrastructure investment, is promoting change through more targeted training

programs, which bodes well for Kenya's labor force and economic development. As creditors, the World Bank and the West could play a greater role in talent training and cultivation. The key question is whether these Western nations will prioritize African development based on the needs of the African people or focus primarily on countering China's influence.

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# Why the CIFTIS 'circle of friends' continues to expand

Global Times

From September 12 to 16, the 2024 China International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) was held in Beijing.

In a congratulatory letter, Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out that CIFTIS, having been successfully held for 10 years, is a vivid illustration of the high-quality development of China's service industry and service trade, making positive contributions to the building of an open world economy. As the largest comprehensive exhibition in the global service trade field, this year's CIFTIS continues to be highly attractive. In total, 85 countries and international organizations have set up exhibitions and more than 450 Fortune Global 500 and industry leading companies have participated offline, making it a bridge for all parties to share development opportunities, promote industrial growth, and strengthen communication and exchanges.

Trading "tangible goods" is called trade in goods, while trading those invisible products or services is usually categorized as trade in services. The WTO divides trade in services into 12 major areas, including tourism and travel-related services, business services, transportation services, construction and related engineering services,

and financial services. From the perspective of world trends, the importance of trade in services has become increasingly prominent. According to WTO statistics, global service exports grew at an average annual rate of 4.9 percent from 2013 to 2023, approximately twice the growth rate of goods exports, and the proportion made up by services trade in total trade in goods and services increased to a quarter. China is a big manufacturing country. Moving toward becoming a strong manufacturing country and expanding high-level opening-up to the outside world cannot be achieved without a strong modern service industry.

China has a high position in promoting the development of the service industry. It does not do it behind closed doors, but is instead committed to promoting the in-depth cooperative development of global trade in services and service industry and making progress together with the world. Since its establishment, the CIFTIS has attracted more than 900,000 participants from 197 countries and regions, and established itself as a global brand. The much-anticipated and widely welcomed CIFTIS has refuted those who believe that the attractiveness of the Chinese market has declined. During this year's CIFTIS, hundreds of activities will be held and

more than 200 integrated innovation results will be released. Fortune Global 500 and industry leading companies such as Siemens, Google, Amazon, and GE HealthCare will actively participate in the conference, and "old friends" of CIFTIS such as Philips and Tesla have chosen to "debut" their cutting-edge innovative products at CIFTIS, which demonstrates that these companies still attach great importance to the Chinese market, and China's opening-up has brought new opportunities to foreign enterprises. Meanwhile, the momentum of China's economic recovery has not changed, and the rising willingness for international cooperation is even clearer.

We have observed that although global economic growth has slowed and trade protectionism and trade friction have increased, the process of digitalization, intelligence, and greening of China's service trade has been accelerating, and the attractiveness of opening up the service industry remains strong. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, the value-added of China's service industry grew by 4.6 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2024, and service industry accounted for 56.7 percent of the country's GDP. The scale of service trade reached a record high for the same period, with total service imports and exports reaching 3.6 trillion yuan, an increase of 14 percent year-on-year. The level and scale of service trade are continuously improving and expanding, showing an "acceleration" of China's openness to the world. Globally popular phenomena this year, such as "China Travel" and "Black Myth: Wukong," are closely linked to the openness and progress of China's modern service industry.

The measures China has taken to promote the development of its service trade are steady. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee explicitly urged the country to "innovate and upgrade trade in services"; the General Office of the State Council has unveiled a set of guidelines to promote high-quality development of trade in services with high-standard opening-up; the Ministry of Commerce rolled out national and pilot free trade zone versions of negative lists for cross-border trade in services; pilot programs to expand opening in the medical field were launched, allowing foreign-funded hospitals to be established in Beijing, Tianjin, and other regions; and the number of comprehensive pilot cities for expanding the opening-up of the service industry increased to 11, with over 1,300 pilot measures introduced across 13 sectors including



technology, telecommunications, culture, tourism, and finance. Through these measures, the world can recognize China's willingness and determination to promote development through openness and achieve mutual benefits through openness.

Judging from the impressions of this year's CIFTIS, the enthusiasm of old friends has not diminished, new friends have come in droves, and the CIFTIS "circle of friends" continues to expand. This is also an epitome of China's high-level opening-up to the outside world and a reflection of deepening economic globalization. From developed countries to developing countries, from international giants to small- and medium-sized enterprises, everyone has brought more updated achievements, technologies and applications to CIFTIS to fully demonstrate their attractiveness. What reso-

nates with the attractiveness of the large platform of CIFTIS and the big Chinese market behind it is the mutual fondness between exhibitors from all over the world and the Chinese market.



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# High Commissioner Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri visits Pakistan Pavilion at Fine Food Australia



### Covert Report

Canberra: Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri this week visited Pakistan Pavilion at the Fine Food Australia. "Visited Pakistan Pavilion at the Fine Food Australia. Glad to see great variety of quality food products from Pakistan. Australia is a great market for Pakistani food products," the envoy said in a post on X. This week, Fine Food Australia has concluded its 2024 event with a remarkable turnout over four days at Melbourne's Convention and Exhibition Centre, celebrating 40 years of the iconic expo. This year's event attracted industry experts, chefs, baristas, and visitors from around the globe, showcasing cutting-edge products and innovations in the foodservice and hospitality sectors. The expo featured over 875 exhibitors from both Australia and abroad, highlighting a diverse range of categories including catering equipment, bakery, beverages, food products, hospitality technology, meat and seafood, and packaging. Sinead Kavanagh, Event Product Manager, reflected on the event's success, stating, "The excitement and buzz at Fine Food this week shows that while the past years have been challenging, the industry's thirst for knowledge, innovation, and connection remains strong." She added, "The large number of international visitors and over 200

buyer meetings are a testament to the global reputation of Australian products." Key competitions added excitement to the event. The Nestlé Golden Chef's Hat Award, aimed at recognising emerging culinary talent, saw Archer Houghton crowned as the 2024 Golden Chef of the Year. Additionally, the Great Aussie Pie Comp celebrated its 35th anniversary, with Buddy Bakery from Melton, VIC, winning the Plain Meat Pie category, and Orange Spot Bakery from Glenelg, SA, taking first place in the Plain Sausage Roll category. Other competitions included the ACF Culinary Challenge, where Victoria's Bivushan Bhandari was named 2024 Most Outstanding Chef, and the Bake Skills Australia competition, with Ryan Wu from Victoria claiming the Champion Baker title. The Fine Food Australia Expo will return to Sydney's ICC from 8 to 11 September 2025, as organisers continue to drive innovation and creativity in the foodservice

# Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad - A shining star

### Celina Ali

Islamabad: The Pakistani community in France this week expressed its deep appreciation and well-wishes for Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, as he prepares to assume his new position as the Additional Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in the near future. Ambassador Ahmad, who is serving as Pakistan's envoy to France, is widely recognized as a shining star for his pivotal role in strengthening diplomatic relations between Pakistan and France during his tenure. His efforts have helped foster closer political, economic, and cultural ties between the two nations. He has been a key figure in promoting Pakistan's interests on the international stage, gaining respect and admiration from both the diplomatic community and the Pakistani diaspora in France.

Under his leadership, the Pakistani community in France felt a renewed sense of pride. He worked tirelessly to promote Pakistan's culture, heritage, and values, while creating meaningful connections between the community and French institutions. His presence and advocacy brought visibility to Pakistan's contributions and enriched the lives of many in the diaspora. As Ambassador Ahmad prepares to move on to his new role at the United Nations, the Pakistani community has expressed confidence that he will continue to represent the country with the same level of excellence and dedication. His diplomatic experience and vision are expected to further enhance Pakistan's role in global affairs. The Pakistani community has extended heartfelt gratitude for his services in France and wished him great success in his new endeavors. Ambassador Ahmad's upcoming departure from France is seen not only as a loss to the local community but also as a proud moment for Pakistan as he steps onto a broader international platform.



# Churchill photo stolen in Canada discovered in Italy

### NewsWire

Rome: An original print of a famous photograph of Winston Churchill has been found in Italy after going missing from an Ottawa hotel and replaced with a fake. The 1941 photo - known as "The Roaring Lion" - was taken by Yousuf Karsh shortly after Churchill gave a wartime speech to Canada's parliament. On Wednesday, Ottawa police said the portrait had been found in the possession of a private buyer in Genoa, Italy, who was unaware that it had been stolen. Officials also announced the arrest of a man from Powassan, Ontario, in connection with the theft and illicit sale. The 43-year-old man, whose name is covered by a publication ban, faces several charges in Canada, including forgery, theft, trafficking and damage to property. He was arrested on 25 April, investigators say, and appeared in court in Ottawa the following day.

The photograph shows Churchill, the British war-time prime minister, on Parliament Hill moments after Karsh famously took a cigar out of Churchill's mouth. "I held out an ashtray, but he would not dispose of it...I waited; he continued to chomp vigorously at his cigar. I waited," Karsh later recalled. "Then I stepped toward him and, without premeditation, but ever respectfully, I said 'forgive me sir' and plucked the cigar from his mouth." By the time Karsh returned to his camera, he wrote, Churchill looked "so belligerent he could have devoured me". A staff member at the Château Laurier hotel first noticed the photograph had been replaced on 19 August, 2022. "We are deeply saddened by this brazen act," the hotel's general manager said in a statement at the time. Police believe the photo was stolen sometime between 25 December 2021 and 6 January 2022, amid strict Covid lockdowns. Police say the photo - one of the most famous

portraits ever made and which also appears on the UK £5 bank note - was sold through an auction house in London to a private buyer in Italy. "Both of whom were unaware that the piece was stolen," police said in their statement. The suspect was identified by tips submitted by the public, forensic analysis and by using "open-source research", police say. Later this month, Canadian investigators will travel to Rome to attend a ceremony in which the unidentified buyer will formally return the artwork. "Once in Ottawa Police custody, the portrait will be ready for the last step of its journey home to the Fairmont Château Laurier, where it will once again be displayed as a notable historic portrait," police said.



# Umar Rehman Malik celebrates PPP's victory in NA-171



**Abdullah Jan** Islamabad: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Umar Rehman Malik this week celebrated the victory of PPP candidate Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin in the NA-171 Rahimyar Khan by-elections. poised to advance the mission of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto." Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin of the PPP secured 116,429 votes. In contrast, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate Hissan Mustafa received 58,251 votes.



"Heartiest congratulations to #PPP's leadership, MNA Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin & workers on a resounding victory in the NA-171 Rahimyar Khan by-elections. This victory is a testament to the dynamic leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari," he said in a statement. Umar Rehman Malik added that this also demonstrated the "unshakable commitment of our PPP workers. Together, we are The election was expected to be a tight contest between Makhdoom Tahir Rashiduddin of the PPP and Hissan Mustafa of PTI, with four independent candidates also participating in the race. This seat became vacant following the death of PTI's Member of National Assembly (MNA) Mumtaz Mustafa. The constituency has a total of 526,973 registered voters.



**NA-171: PPP clinches by-election with lead of over 50,000 votes**

# Greece introduces cash incentives, tax breaks to address declining birthrate



countries including France, Italy, Norway and Spain have spent billions of euros on pro-child measures, to little effect. The measures are part of a broader plan aimed at reversing the downward trend of Greece's birthrate, which officials had said would be unveiled in May but has been pushed back to later this year. The plan includes affordable housing for young people, financial incentives

for assisted reproduction, and incorporating migrants into the workforce. "They (these measures) will have no dramatic impact on births," said Byron Kotzamanis, a leading demography expert in Greece. "There needs to be a different policy to tackle the problem at its core," he said, adding this included giving young people incentives to remain in Greece and attracting back those who left.

**Newswire**  
Athens: Greece outlined measures to boost its lagging birthrate on Thursday, from vouchers and childcare benefits to tax breaks for new parents, although experts questioned the plan's effectiveness. Greece has one of Europe's lowest fertility rates, a dire demographic state driven by a decade-long economic crisis, emigration and changed attitudes among the young. The

prime minister has called it a national threat and a "ticking time bomb" for pensions. It currently spends around one billion euros a year on pro-child measures. Yet it recorded its lowest ever number of births in 2022. The measures outlined on Thursday by the family, interior, finance and health ministries include tax relief for new parents, daycare vouchers, a rise in the minimum wage from 2025, pension increases and social contribution reductions.

But demography experts and even government officials acknowledge the long road ahead. "It is a given that the demographic problem ... cannot simply be solved by benefits and cash incentives," deputy finance minister Thanos Petralias told journalists on Thursday. Petralias said fixing the problem also required improving the education and health systems, boosting incomes and better work-life balance conditions. Tumbling birthrates are a problem for governments across Europe, where



# Bulgaria's tourist overnights revenue rises 15% y/y in July



al Statistical Institute (NSI) said in a regular report. The total number of nights spent increased by 2.4% year-on-year to 5.9 million in the review month. Overnights spent by foreigners amounted to 3.8 million. In July, the total number of tour-

ists who stayed in accommodation facilities in Bulgaria rose by 0.7% on the year to 1.5 million. Of those, 794,300 were foreign visitors, up by an annual 3.6%, while the number of domestic tourists slipped by 2.7% to 656,800, the NSI said.



**Newswire**  
Sofia: Total revenue from tourist overnights in Bulgaria grew by an annual 15.4% to

524.6 million leva in July (\$296.2 million/268.2 million euro), the statistical office said.

Revenue from domestic tourists stood at 158 million leva, while foreign visitors generated revenue of 366.6 million leva, the Nation-

# Cristiano Ronaldo presented with special 'GOAT' jersey as Al Nassr honour Portugal star for 900 goal milestone



Lisbon: Cristiano Ronaldo this week scripted history during the international break, scoring his 900th goal during Portugal's Nations League fixture vs Croatia. The former Manchester United star is now back with his Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr, and was also awarded a special

'GOAT' jersey by the club with the number 900 on the back. Ronaldo was given the memento on Friday, before kick-off for Al Nassr's match vs Al Ahli. There was also a tifo carrying messages like '900 goals' and 'Only heroes achieve glory'. Ronaldo's goal vs Croatia was a late winner, after he came on as a second-half substitute. In the 88th-minute with the score level at 1-1, Nuno Mendes whipped in a cross, which deflected off Diogo Jota's foot, and fell for Ronaldo, who converted it with ease for a 2-1 win. Portugal are on top of League A Group 1



with six points, having already beaten Croatia in their opener. Croatia are second with three points. Scotland have lost both matches, crashing to late goals. Recently Ronaldo also broke a record off the field, as he became the first individual to reach one billion followers on all social media channels. Taking to X, he wrote, "We've made history — 1 BILLION followers! This is more than just a number - it's a testament to our shared passion, drive, and love for the game and beyond." "From the streets of Madeira to the biggest stages in the world, I've always played for my family and for you, and now 1 billion of us stand together. "You've been with me every step of the way, through all the highs and the lows. This journey is our journey, and together, we've shown that there are no limits to what we can achieve. "Thank you for believing in me, for your support, and for being part of my life. The best is yet to come, and we'll keep pushing, winning, and making history together."



# Japan jumps to No. 2, from sixth place, in best countries index

**Elizabeth Beattie**

Tokyo: Japan is the second-best country in the world, according to a ranking published by U.S. News & World Report with input from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. It jumped from 6th place on the 2023 list as a post-COVID boom and reforms helped bump it up on the subindexes used to calculate the overall score. Switzerland is No. 1 in the 2024 rankings, the United States is No. 3 and the United Kingdom is No. 8. For the index, U.S. News rates countries based on a variety of subcategories, including openness for business, power, adventure, social purpose and cultural influence. Japan has experienced a postpandemic boom, with tourists pouring back in after restrictions closed the country's borders to travelers. It has also become a key target for international investment in part due to

wide-ranging corporate reforms and rising stock prices. Japan did well in the entrepreneurial category, which scores countries based on their connections to the rest of the world, education, innovation, skill, infrastructure development and whether they possess a robust legal framework to underpin the corporate environment. "For countries to spread prosperity to citizens, governments must find industries where they can compete globally in the digital age. These countries are seen as innovative with educated and enterprising citizens," the publication wrote in discussing the rankings. The Best Countries index is in its ninth year and ranks 89 nations. The data are gathered by researchers surveying around 17,000 individuals in 36 countries, including business leaders and "citizens who are nationally representative of their country." Switzerland has ranked No. 1 seven times,



while the U.S. at No. 3 is an all-time best for the country. An improved perception of business openness helped the United States. In the quality of life category, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland ranked in the top three in the 2024 survey, while Italy, France and the United States took out the top three places in the cultural influence subranking. The results provide a snapshot of how nations are perceived on the world stage, according to U.S. News executive chairman and CEO Eric Gertler.

"The report sheds light on a country's potential for economic, political and cultural success and can serve as a strategic decision-making tool for citizens, business leaders and governments to better evaluate their countries," Gertler said. The rankings also offer insight into attitudes on various issues. More than 80% of survey respondents in Vietnam, China and Thailand are relatively open to artificial intelligence, agreeing with the statement that it offers more benefits than threats. In the West, it was seen as more of a threat. "The Best Countries report speaks to the

value of having a strong global image as nations compete for foreign trade, tourists and socioeconomic influence," said David Reibstein, professor of marketing at the Wharton School. "The Best Countries ranking is more than a beauty contest. Global leaders need to realize that how their countries are viewed affects their economies through tourism, foreign direct investment and foreign trade, all critical components of their GDP," Reibstein said.

# Pakistan Investment Roadshow highlights growing US-Pakistan economic partnership

**Celina Ali**

Islamabad: The United States (US) and Pakistan this week pledged to continue to strengthen their longstanding partnership through innovative economic initiatives. The recently concluded Pakistan Investment Roadshow, organised by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under its Investment Promotion Activity, exemplified this collaboration by showcasing the potential of Pakistani firms to US investors in New York, San Francisco, and Washington. The roadshow is a key part of USAID's broader mission to promote economic growth in Pakistan by attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and enhancing bilateral trade between the two nations. The series aimed to raise \$15 million in FDI commitments by connecting 27 curated Pakistani firms with US investors eager to explore emerging markets, said a USAID statement. These firms, representing sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, Healthtech, Fintech, Edtech, Agritech, Climatetech, and Software as a Service, captivated

investors with their innovative solutions and potential for scaling globally. In New York, the Founder's Panel Discussion highlighted Pakistan's tech ecosystem, featuring prominent CEOs and founders discussing technology trends and investment challenges. The San Francisco event, a hub of technology innovation, allowed Pakistani firms in AI, Fintech, Healthtech, and more to present their cutting-edge solutions to Silicon Valley investors. In Washington, DC, the symposium spotlighted trailblazing women entrepreneurs, emphasizing their role in driving social and economic change. USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia, Michael Schiffer, emphasised that, "We're cultivating deeper, more lasting relationships with private sector partners, from small businesses to large corporations. USAID's 'Investment Promotion in Pakistan' activity is a prime example of this work—how we work to unlock greater resources dedicated to taking on the world's greatest challenges." Afsheen Shakoor, USAID's Project Management Specialist, emphasised the significance of the roadshow, stating, "These events have not only spotlighted the remarkable innovation and talent coming



from Pakistan but have also paved the way for deeper US-Pakistan economic ties. The strong participation from US investors reaffirms the incredible opportunities for collaboration and growth."

As the roadshows conclude, USAID remains committed to build on the momentum generated by these events, foster sustainable investment flows, and support long-term economic growth in Pakistan.

The shared vision of the United States and Pakistan to drive innovation, job creation, and economic progress continues to strengthen the partnership between the two countries.

# EU Special Envoy on freedom of religion or belief visits Pakistan



**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: Ambassador Frans van Daele, Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) outside the European Union, this week concluded his week-long visit to Pakistan. FoRB is a key priority for the EU, including in the context of the strategic engagement with Pakistan.  
During the visit, he met Federal and Provincial

Government officials, the Parliament, religious leaders, Non-Government and Civil Society Organisations, human rights defenders and local communities, to engage and exchange on the state of freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan and to foster the respect for diversity of religions and beliefs. In his meeting with Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani; National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq; Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Law and Justice, Human

Rights and Parliamentary Affairs; Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhry Salik Hussain; the Special Envoy enquired about the challenges of freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan and mentioned areas of concern, in line with the last GSP+ monitoring report of November 2023.  
The Special Envoy noted that the next GSP+ monitoring mission is expected in early 2025.



He encouraged Pakistani authorities to continue implementing the relevant international conventions to facilitate Pakistan's reapplication for the trade scheme once the new Regulation on GSP is in force. In his interactions with interlocutors, Ambassador van Daele underlined the EU's continued support for and interest in enhanced cooperation with Pakistan. Ambassador van Daele began his visit in Punjab, where he engaged with local communities in Jaranwala and Rabwah. In Lahore, he held meetings with Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, Minister for Minorities Affairs, Government of

Punjab; and Dr. Usman Anwar, Inspector General of Police Punjab. He also expressed his appreciation for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' facilitation of his visit during a meeting with Pakistan's newly appointed Foreign Secretary, Ms. Amna Baloch. The mandate of the Special Envoy involves raising awareness and engaging with state and non-state actors, civil society, churches, faith-based and religious organisations, as well as non-confessional organisations in order to prevent and address violations of the freedom of religion and belief.

# UK waives settlement fees for bereaved partners, unveils new diplomatic visas



**H.E. Jane Marriot**  
British High Commission Islamabad



**Newsire**

London: Eligible foreign nationals dealing with the death of a partner and facing financial hardship will soon be able

parts of our communities can now apply for a fee waiver if facing destitution, in order to settle and keep the life they have built. This marks a fairer and more compassionate approach to those unable to

afford the settlement fees, but who have often worked, paid their taxes and contributed to life here in the UK, including the partners of our military veterans," she said.



to apply to have the application fee for settlement in the UK waived, under new rules laid out in Parliament this week. Currently, people who wish to apply for settlement in the UK following the death of their British citizen partner are required to pay a GBP 2,885 fee, irrespective of a change in financial circumstances following a loss. Migration and citizenship minister Seema Malhotra told Parliament on Tuesday that this fee will now be waived from October 9 as part of a "fairer and more compassionate approach" to those wishing to stay in the UK and facing acute financial vulnerability during times of grief. "Losing a loved one is a deep and unimaginable pain, all too often compounded by the immense financial strain faced by those left behind," said Malhotra. "Widows, widowers, and their dependent children who had become integral



**A conservative is someone who makes no changes and consults his grandmother when in doubt.**  
- Woodrow Wilson

**Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time.** - E. B. White

# Italy: Marmolada glacier could disappear by 2040, say experts

**Celina Ali**  
Islamabad: The Marmolada glacier, the largest and most symbolic of the Dolomites, could melt completely by 2040 owing to rising average temperatures, experts have said. Italian scientists who are monitoring glaciers and the impact of climate emergency, and who took part in a campaign launched

by environmentalist group Legambiente, the international commission for the protection of the Alps (Cipra), with the scientific partnership of the Italian Glacier Committee, said on Monday the Marmolada was losing between 7 and 10cm of depth a day. Over the past five years 70 hectares (173 acres) of its surface – equalling 98 football fields – have disappeared.

Since the beginning of scientific measurements in 1888, the Marmolada glacier has withdrawn by 1,200 metres in an “irreversible coma”, according to organisers of the campaign, titled Caravan of Glaciers.

The effects of climate emergency are visible all across the Dolomites, which have experienced winter droughts with very little snowfall. According to experts, this, combined with the unusually high temperatures across the region over the summer, is causing glaciers to rapidly melt. Forni, one of Italy’s largest valley glaciers, has retreated 800 metres within the past 30 years and 1.2 miles (2km) over the past century. In the summer of 1987, the guard of a shelter looking out towards Forni witnessed huge chunks of ice fall from the glacier amid days of heavy storms, eventually producing a rock avalanche that triggered the Val Pola landslide and killed 43 people. In 2022, the collapse of a glacier on the Marmolada mountain, which

sent an avalanche of ice, snow and rocks down the slope, killed 11 people. Owing to the melting of the glacier, tonnes of waste of all kinds have emerged in the area, including perfectly preserved weapons, sledges, letters, diaries and the bodies of soldiers who fought in the so-called white war, the fighting in the Alps of the Lombardy region of Italy and the Dolomites in Trentino Alto-Adige during the first world war. “The Alps are a fundamental place at the national and European level, but they are becoming increasingly fragile due to the advancing climate emergency,” Vanda Bonardo, national Alpine coordinator of Legambiente and president of Cipra, said. “The glacier of Marmolada is an important example.” The general director of Legambiente, Giorgio Zampetti, urged the implementation of mitigation policies, such as “an effective national adaptation plan to the climate crisis, starting from the most vulnerable areas, such as high mountains”.



**Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Marilina Armellini**

# The French far left has lessons for how to defeat the far right

**Sophie Binet**  
Paris: In the recent elections in France, the far right loomed on the precipice of power. The only thing that stopped them from winning was the mobilisation of the far left. The far right was defeated, and the centrist Emmanuel Macron lost 70 MPs. The left, meanwhile, came out on top. This victory is the fruit of the broad mobilisation of trade unions and citizens. The main French trade unions put all their strength into the battle, called for the construction of a Popular Front and, with the majority of the French trade union organisations, raised a call to protest and vote against the extreme right. This intense mobilisation enabled the forces of the left to unite and form a front against the far right, at a time when part of the ruling class was ready to collaborate with rightwing extremists. This was a magnificent victory, which no polling institute had predicted, and which remains very fragile. To ensure that the popular upsurge does not turn into a reprieve, lessons must be learned. Voting for the far right is no longer just a protest vote, but a misguided vote of hope. To combat this, it is vital that the forces of the left unite to propose alternatives to the neoliberal policies that are fuelling social despair. The programme of France’s New Popular Front was a break with Macronism. The violence of neoliberal globalisation, deindustrialisation, the closure of public services and the devaluation of work whose wages no longer allow people to live all generate a powerful feeling that things were better before. The far right has seized on this and turned it into a cultural issue with its “great replacement” theory. The far right ignores the ravages of neoliberal-

ism and blames immigrants for the relative decline in living conditions. In order to protect capitalist globalisation, the far right shifts our attention away from finance and towards cultural globalisation instead. To avoid this trap, the left must be able to put forward a credible vision that will enable us to regain control over the multinational corporations and the powers of capital. It is no longer possible to adopt a blissful approach to free trade and globalisation. We can no longer defend free trade that leads to the dumping of wages and the destruction of the environment. The contradictions between social and environmental issues are a breeding ground for the far right. To overcome them, it is essential to attack capitalist powers. For example, the transition of the car industry from internal combustion to electric vehicles is being used by carmakers as a tool to increase the relocation of factories away from France and towards low-income countries in the global south. Renault and Stellantis are closing dozens of factories in France and concentrating on top-of-the-range electric vehicles, often not even produced in France, which guarantee them maximum margins. A double whammy for workers: tens of thousands of job losses and the financial impossibility of buying an electric vehicle, and therefore soon of being able to drive in large parts of the country. This risks a provoking a backlash against electric vehicles and other climate technologies. To win back the blue-collar vote, the left needs to make a strong case for reindustrialisation, and breaking with the great blindness of the 1990s and 2000s in favour of a factory-free economy.

We need to radically transform the production model to make it environmentally sustainable. The same applies to agriculture and food. To respond to the mobilisation of farmers who are demanding to be able to make a living from their work, we need to attack the profit margins of agricultural giants instead of, as the French government has done, calling into question the environmental transition of the agricultural model. A critical assessment of public services needs to be done. Austerity measures have considerably weakened the quality of care in public schools and hospitals. All those who can afford it are turning to the private sector. This pauperisation of public services is fuelling the “tax bowl”. The middle classes feel they are having to bleed to pay for public services from which they no longer benefit, while at the same time the richest pay no more tax. Professionalised politicians are less and less representative of the realities experienced by workers. Bending to the dictates of employers, politicians give them an excessive say on pay and working conditions. We need to build a new relationship between the left and the trade unions, one that respects their independence. All over the world, the far right comes to power through an alliance with the right and part of the business community. This is being organised by a number of billionaires such as Vincent Bolloré and Pierre-Édouard Stérin in France and Elon Musk in the United States, who are buying up press titles and social net-

works to wage their ideological offensive. A full 80 years after the second world war, the dykes built against fascism are falling. Macron’s strategy of demonising part of the left in the same breath as attacking the extreme right has undermined our ability to respond to the far right. By turning the far right into a party like any other, and by echoing their talking points on immigration and security, Macron and the right are trampling on the heritage of Gaullism and the French resistance. The far right are not regular political opponents. They are openly racist, homophobic, sexist and

antisemitic. Racist violence by far-right groups has helped to open people’s eyes to the true nature of their party. But everyone needs to put their own house in order. Voting for the far right has a racist component, and trade union organisations must step up their campaigns against racism. The trivialisation of the far right is flourishing, particularly since the attacks of 7 October. The French trade union organisations have just decided to join forces in a major campaign against racism and antisemitism in the workplace to show that these struggles are inseparable and must not suffer from any ambiguity. It’s a momentum that must be replicated.

