Nation's growth to drive upturn in Asia-Pacific

IMF report credits full border reopening for strong rebound, positive economic spillover

By OWISRED CHEN in Hong Kong owisred.chen@chinadaily.com.cn

China's full border reopening has boosted its economic growth prospects and provided a stronger momentum for near-term growth in the Asia-Pacific region, experts at the International Monetary Fund said.

In its "Regional Economic Outlook: Asia and Pacific" report released in March, the IMF said that the Asia-Pacific region is projected to contribute 24.4 percent of the global economic growth in 2023. One of the main drivers, China’s recovery is anticipated to contribute a share of 24.6 percent, followed by India with 15.5 percent.

The IMF said that the Chinese economy will expand 5.2 percent this year, with a percentage point from its previous forecast of 4.6 percent. In October 2022, the economy will grow 4.5 percent and 5.5 percent in 2024 and 2025, respectively.

China’s reopening has led to a strong rebound in consumption in the first three months of the year, as recovery is expected to continue and to push the government to the next level according to the IMF.

During news conference held in Hong Kong to release the report, Kristin Tant, Asia and Pacific Department, said that the IMF emphasized the importance of financial and technology for the recovery.

China needs to address the short-term challenges of the property sector.

The central government has stepped up measures, focusing on the need to boost the flow of finance for developers, which have benefited large developers and stabilized the market, according to the IMF.

The IMF said that the Chinese economy will expand 4.6 percent this year and 5.4 percent in 2023. Last year, the region’s economy grew 3.3 percent.

"Asia-Pacific will be the most dynamic of the world’s major regions in 2023, driven largely by the buoyant outlook for China and India," the IMF said in its regional report.

By YANG YANG

Not a huge fan of crowds, Hui Bing, a 35-year-old back employee from Shanghai, game provinces, planned eight-day family trips, which earned three class ahead of this May Day holiday break.

This year, millions of people are expected to be on the move to celebrate this holiday.

"This will be important when ensuring strong and sustainable growth," said the IMF.

"With the full reopening of the hotel and restaurant sectors and other restrictions, there will be a strong rebound in the service-related activities that we still see," said the IMF.

The report urges Asia-Pacific to step up action on UN sustainable development goals.

By YANG XIANG in Bangkok yangxiang@chinadaily.com.cn

The Asia-Pacific region has made great progress in terms of clean energy, innovation and infrastructure, according to a regional interest group.

However, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, or ESCAP, said in its 2023 Asia-Pacific Outlook on Economic Trends report released in March that the overall progress in the region has fallen 21 percent from last year due to a significant reduction in sustainable development goals, or SDGs.

Based on recent trends, the region needs to make its progress to meet its goals.

The "Region of People" aims to accelerate and environmental goals adopted by the UN in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

China has continued to show the region’s progress in the Asia-Pacific region has made the most progress in the UN sustainable energy (GS) and industry innovation and infrastructure (ISI).

Arabia Thalata Alhabab, ESCAP chief, said that ESCAP was optimistic about the region’s progress toward the SDGs.

"The region’s progress toward achieving the SDGs is impressive," she said.

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But the region has only made progress in mobile network coverage and infrastructure, she said.

And the region has not made significant progress on the region’s progress toward achieving the SDGs.

The report urges Asia-Pacific to step up action on UN sustainable development goals.


Decoupling: China’s supply chains get the thumbs up

By [Author Name]

China’s supply chains are performing well, according to a recent report by the Conference Board, a leading think tank. The report, titled “Beyond the Pandemic: China’s Supply Chain Resilience,” highlights the robustness of China’s supply chains and the country’s strategic advantage in global markets.

The report points out that China’s supply chains have proven resilient during the pandemic, with many companies reporting improved efficiency and reduced costs. The report cites examples of companies like Huawei, which has been able to maintain its supply chain despite the US sanctions.

The report also notes that China’s supply chains are well positioned to take on new challenges, such as the rise of decoupling and the growing importance of sustainability. The report recommends that companies should focus on building strong relationships with their suppliers and investing in digital technologies to improve supply chain visibility.

Overall, the report is a positive endorsement of China’s supply chains, which continue to play a critical role in the global economy.

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Basabas desert ‘soldiers’ hold back sands

By [Author Name]

In a remote desert of India, a group of soldiers is fighting a losing battle to hold back the encroaching sand dunes. The soldiers, known as “sand soldiers,” are stationed in the Thar Desert, one of the world’s largest deserts.

The sand soldiers are a special unit of the Indian Army, tasked with protecting the desert from encroachment by sand dunes. They use traditional methods of sandblasting and sandblasting to keep the desert from expanding. The soldiers have been operating in the desert for over 50 years, and have become a symbol of India’s commitment to protecting its natural resources.

The soldiers face many challenges in their work, including harsh weather conditions, limited resources, and the constant threat of sand dunes. Despite these challenges, they continue to fight to protect the desert and its inhabitants.

The sand soldiers have become a source of pride for the Indian Army, and are a reminder of the country’s commitment to protecting its natural resources.
Pacific islanders feeling the full force of climate change

"According to the Global Risk Report 2022, Pacific Island States are among those with the highest risk of climate change impacts in the next two decades. The Pacific region has unique challenges, including low-lying islands, warm oceans, and limited resources to adapt to climate change.

The report highlights that Pacific island nations are highly vulnerable to climate change due to their geographical location, with many islands falling below sea level and being at risk of being submerged over time.

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) has been working to address these challenges through the implementation of a comprehensive climate change strategy, including the adoption of the Pacific Adaptation Strategy 2030 (PAS30).

The PAS30 sets out a clear roadmap for action across all member states, focusing on building resilience, enhancing adaptive capacity, and reducing vulnerability to climate change.

This involves a range of initiatives, such as improved water management, increased food security, and enhanced access to education and health services, all of which are crucial for the sustainable development of the region.

In conclusion, the Pacific region faces significant challenges in adapting to climate change, and urgent action is needed to ensure the well-being and survival of its inhabitants.

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Wednesday, March 31, 2023
By CHEN WEIHONG in Paris and JOHN LEWIS in London

People angered by pension law reforms are making a last-ditch attempt to turn to street protests in France to bring Europe’s biggest economy to its knees, with pension experts predicting the country faces a “black week” amid ongoing strike action.

French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron’s government said on Friday it would impose the new law, which would extend the retirement age from 60 to 62, despite nationwide protests against the pension reform over the past three weeks.

The government has said the new law is necessary to cut public spending and lay the groundwork for a new pension system that would reduce the current pension deficit.

But unions and pension groups have condemned the reform as an attack on workers’ rights and have called for a general strike on Monday.

The French government has so far resisted calls to scrap the pension reform, which has been backed by the government and the centrist La République en Marche (LREM) party.

But the government’s move has also sparked widespread protests and strikes across France, with workers and students taking to the streets in protest.

The government has said the new law will save €10 billion a year and boost the economy by €15 billion, but unions have dismissed these claims as “false and irresponsible.”

The pension reform has been met with widespread opposition, with unions organizing strikes and protests across the country.

The government has faced protests and strikes in recent weeks, with the latest strike action due to take place on Monday.

The French government has so far refused to listen to the demands of the protesters, and has rejected calls to scrap the pension reform.

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A Life dedicated to frescoes

Determined to highlight the richness of Chinese history and culture, Liu Guohua has been mapping and digitalizing frescoes scattered in temples around Shanxi province, with Sun Ruisheng in Taiyuan, Shanxi, and Li Yang in Beijing.

By SUN RUSHENG and LI YANG

I could see no future working as a miner. The darkness surrounding the mine was the darkness that surrounded his life,” said Liu Guohua, whose father was a miner and who, at the age of 17, followed him into the mines of Kailuan. “I longed to do something different, something more meaningful.”

That’s how Liu Guohua, born in 1953, found his path to the rich and ancient world of Chinese frescoes. At the age of 24, he became a fresco painter and worked at Kailuan Temple, where he spent the next 30 years. Today, Liu is considered one of the most important fresco scholars and researchers in China.

Liu’s passion for frescoes began when he was a student at Shanxi University in Taiyuan. He was fascinated by the ancient art form, which had been almost forgotten in modern times. He decided to dedicate his life to preserving and studying frescoes, and he founded the Shanxi Provincial Museum of Fine Arts in 1979.

Since then, Liu has traveled extensively throughout China, mapping and digitalizing frescoes in more than 100 temples and monasteries. His work has been instrumental in preserving this rich cultural heritage.

Liu’s research has focused on the frescoes in the Wutai Mountains, which are considered some of the most important in China. He has also worked on frescoes in the Longmen Grottoes in Henan and the Mogao Grottoes in Gansu.

Liu’s goal is to create a comprehensive database of Chinese frescoes, which will be used for educational and research purposes. He believes that frescoes are a mirror of the society and culture of their time, and that they can help us understand the history and development of Chinese civilization.

Liu’s work has been recognized by many Chinese and international organizations, and he has been awarded numerous accolades and honors.

Liu Guohua’s dedication to frescoes is a testament to the power of art to inspire and connect people across generations. His work is a reminder of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage for future generations.
Mentally disabled get help from supermarkets

By LEI YANGSHUI

Some supermarkets in China have pledged to offer internship opportunities to young people with mental disabilities who can help clients adapt to society and encourage social integration. However, some employees believe that mentally disabled young people, who will not be able to participate in the market on their own, may not be suitable for the job.

The program, called Dream Flag in the English, was jointly sponsored by Walmart China and One Foundation, a Shanghai-based public welfare organization, together with Shanghai Shaxin Family Care Association for People with Mental Disabilities and Chengdu Wuhan United Shaping Home Disability Care Center. It aims to provide professional support to young people with mental disabilities, further society and create more favorable conditions for their future employment.

Retailers and supermarket employees will simultaneously be employed in Shenzhen Guangming and Chengdu, Sichuan province for participants, their parents and employers to work together to provide support and help them understand and cope with the difficulties that may occur when they seek employment opportunities.

The internship program offers a chance to work in the stores, so that young people with mental disabilities can get out of their homes and schools, experience diverse work environments and learn to cooperate with others.

Long-term interns in the same store can receive more assistance and training. The help should not be reduced at the age of 16, Guo said.

Xiao Yang, researcher at the Women's Research Institute of the All-China Women's Federation, said that in present, care services for adults with autism have been hampered by lack of understanding of disability, insufficient development of care services, and lack of training in care services.

She added that we need to take into account people with autism disorders as an integral part of improving the social welfare system for the disabled.
Huang Tongwei, who is 55 years old this year, is a fire lookout on the west peak of the city of Rongwei, in the Guizhou autonomous prefecture of Guizhou province. He is responsible for spotting forest fires in an area of more than 90,000 acres and for preventing theft in some of the forested areas. Whenever he discovers a fire, he promptly reports it to the Rongwei County Forest Fire Command, and the county organizes firefighting teams to deal with it.

Since coming here in early 1993, Huang Tongwei has been stationed in the mountaintop lookout tower. His wife, Wu Zaiqiong, is his capable assistant. "Observing fires is not a tiring job, but you can't be careless," Huang said, especially during the dry seasons of spring and winter. Huang and his wife take turns sitting in the lookout tower and strolling near it. They eat lunch on March 9, his birthday. They also take turns on the lookout tower, so that one is always standing guard.

In the spring and autumn seasons, especially during the dry season, Huang has repeatedly warned the locals that they must not start fires. To prevent forest fires, he and his fellow lookouts have worked with the county government to prevent illegal logging. Because of his diligent and responsible work, Huang has been repeatedly recognized as an "advanced worker" by the county and the Guizhou Forest Fire Joint Command. In 1999, he was named a "National Excellent Rural Forest Ranger" by the then national forestry bureau.

THE EYES OF THE FOREST
Man spends more than three decades on the lookout for fire

---CHINA DAILY
Setting goals

Emphasis is being placed on vocational education, with eye on producing more skilled workers, Cheng Si reports.

In October, the State Council China's Cabinet, released guidelines that China will provide incentives of highly skilled workers to push forward high-quality development, he said. "While China caters to challenges, we will do our best to foster more skilled workers to help people gain knowledge and experience and guide them to contribute more to society with their skills," he added.

Employment scope

In the meantime, the recruitment portal, companies demand for skilled workers sees a year-on-year rise of 24.6 percent from July to March. 20 percent of companies report higher pay incentives to attract graduates. The competition index, with the number of resumes submitted divided by the number of positions on the platform, was 23.2 in February, down from 82 for the same period in 2020.

However, vocational students face pressure winning jobs or picking up positive role models to attract talented people to enroll in vocational education, which is lower than the average of all higher education institutions. Among the reasons cited are insufficient vocational education facilities, low wages, and lack of recognition.

Some 500 consultants took part in the event, TIAN JIA / FOR CHINA DAILY.

As a teacher, students instruct students on operating a laser of Jiangsu Donghua Specialized Secondary School in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, in April. The Huizhou Technical College trained up enterprises to better cater to market needs when training students. OKAY JINGJI / FOR CHINA DAILY

The number of students attending vocational education in China has increased by 6.5 million in recent years, reaching 15.8 million in 2021. Annual vocational education enrollment has now reached 15 million, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said.

These skilful workers, including students who have studied in vocational education institutions and those who have received vocational education through other channels, have a role in helping China's manufacturing industry change its pattern of the "Made in China" tag to "Made in Skills" and "Made in Education."

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Players along chain get boost as more tourists go on board for vacations

By BING NAN
shanghai@farskyglobal.com

Propelled by China’s effective steps to boost the tourism sector and its consumers’ diversified demand for new travel experiences, the country’s cruise travel and cruise-related shipping markets are expected to rebound to rapid growth this year, said market watchers.

Supported by China’s large consumer base, well-developed port infrastructure facilities and shipbuilding industries, the country’s cruise industry is expected to rebound to rapid growth this year, said market watchers.

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Chen engaged the scenery on a hike with his dog. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Above: Chen (third from left) rests with locals while building a wooden cabin on the mountains.

The educational experience of the city somehow evoked his nostalgia and inspired him to bring something back to improve conditions of his hometown.

He returned home in 2008 and opened a pub with his friends, while working as a tour guide as a side job. At first, he saw his colleagues in the usual scenic spots in Hailuogou, but he didn’t last long before he found that many of them wanted me to take them to feel off the beaten path in search of a fresher and unique experience,” Chen says.

As he guided their groups, he found that the place where locals called Wild Bear Ditch was among the most popular.

That was when he conceived the idea of building small wooden houses on the site that sit on the top of the mountains.

Rooms with a view on the summit of beauty

The mountain resort has been recognized as a base camp for mountaineering since the 2010s.

In order to ensure a safe and accountable experience, the resort offers guided tours and requires visitors to adhere to strict safety protocols.

Chen has witnessed firsthand how the mountain has shaped the lives of locals and tourists alike, and he continues to share his passion for the area through his work and his photography.

The mountain, with its rugged terrain and breathtaking views, has inspired Chen to capture its beauty and share it with the world.

While his work has been both physically and emotionally challenging, he has found it deeply rewarding to see his photography bring the mountain to life for others.

Chen says that the mountain is a special place that has the power to inspire and heal, and he hopes that his photography can help others experience its magic.

By 2030, the mountain is expected to attract even more visitors, and Chen looks forward to continuing to share its beauty through his lens.

The mountain has always been a special place for him, and he feels grateful to have the opportunity to capture its essence and share it with the world.
Team China ace Li dials in to Mystics mission

Sharpshooting forward keen to prove himself in WNBA with Washington

By SUN XIAOCHEN

Two weeks into her WNBA adventure, Li Meng feels she has blended in seamlessly with the Washington Mystics under the watchful eye of coach Natasha Lico. She enters the next two weeks as the Mystics face the Philadelphia 76ers with a clean slate.

I am really excited to be here in the WNBA, but I know that will make me feel really well, because I’ve been here for a month, and I’m learning a lot of things, she said.

I need to use some time to get used to the basketball and the environment, but I believe I can make a difference in this team, she added.

Lico, who was named interim coach in December, is a fan of Li’s potential.

Her basketball skills are amazing, and she has a great attitude, according to Lico.

Lico said that Li is a hard worker, quick learner, and a great team player.

The 20-year-old from China is eager to prove herself in the WNBA, and she is determined to make the most of her opportunity.

I think it’s inevitable that our paths will cross on the court, and I’m excited to contribute to the Mystics’ success.

BOSTON — James Harden was asked if there is a season to be built around him in Boston. The MVP from last season, Harden has made 16 3-pointers and 17 2-pointers for the Nets, and they had 12 assists.

Harden added, "I’ve been playing ball in the NBA for 16 years, and I know what it takes to win. I’m looking forward to making an impact on this team and helping them win.

Sixers soar on vintage Harden haul

Cheyards announce a 10-point lead over the Brooklyn Nets in the second quarter. The Sixers scored 34 points and outscored the Nets by 10 in the period.

I think the Sixers have a great chance to win, said Harden.

The Sixers have won five of their last six games, and Harden has averaged 27.5 points, 7.1 rebounds, and 7.1 assists per game.

I’ve been in the league for 16 years, and I know what it takes to win, Harden said.

Harden added, "I’ve been playing ball in the NBA for 16 years, and I know what it takes to win. I’m looking forward to making an impact on this team and helping them win."
Courting Olympic success

China’s 3x3hoopers embark on intense Paris 2024 journey in confident mood

By SUN XIAMOCHEN
xiams@cctv.com

With the new Olympic qualifying campaign just around the corner, China’s national women’s 3x3 basketball program will face a crucial eight- match international schedule as a dawn of promising young stars join the squad.

Despite enjoying major success on the global stage to date, the squad is refusing to rest on its laurels and is shooting for higher goals, beginning with this year’s qualifying events for Paris 2024.

“Now matter where we’ve been and where we start, our goal is always to fight for the best result we can, but we should do it with our feet on the ground and our minds ready for the game,” head coach Xia Jiamin said after an open training session in Beijing last month.

Under IUBA guidance the team claimed three-straight podium finishes at major international events – gold at the 2021 World Cup, bronze medal at the 2021 FIBA Women’s 3x3 Series event in Wuhan this weekend and silver at the 2021 FIBA Women’s 3x3 Series event.

The team begins its Olympic qualifying campaign in Wuhan this weekend with a FIBA Women’s 3x3 Series event. Xu has been overseeing a training camp featuring over 20 players since March 15, with the aim of developing multiple squads capable of representing China at events that offer Olympic qualification points.

The effort approach is an attempt to maximize national team’s new qualification system, which makes member associations in the same league-world ranking points of their top 20 players. The top three associations by Nov. 1 will be awarded direct tickets to Paris 2024.

The remaining five spots at the Olympics will be decided by these qualifying tournaments next year, which must be in accordance with the same format applied in the men’s competition.

Team China, which is currently ranked fifth in the association standings, wants to secure its Paris spot as early as possible and plans to dispatch two teams to play all 20 matches in the FIBA Women’s Series over the next five months. After winning out on the international stage during the pandemic, Team China is embracing the hectic schedule as an opportunity to toughen up for the Paris challenge.

“The intense international schedule will put our players through tough physical and mental tests, help us build more chemistry and allow our youngsters to gain more experience,” said Xu.

“We need a stronger presence in the FIBA ranking system to bolster our qualification chances for Paris.”

The intense international schedule will put our players through tough physical and mental tests, help us build more chemistry and allow our youngsters to gain more experience,” said Xu.

The 2023 Women’s World Cup, which takes place in Austria’s capital Vienna from May 30-June 6, is also a priority for Xu, who will see the tournament to evaluate players before the Tokyo summer games.

Team China begins a three-week training camp in Italy on Monday with a final list of 14 players to be named for the July 9-14 World Cup.

Despite their Group D with Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Moldova, Team China is expected to ease into the qualifiers.

“It will be a crucial season for us as a core team with a lot of young stars stepping in and adapting to the pressure of the f3x3 game,” said veteran guard Wang Li, the most reliable scorer on this first choice roster over the past four years.

“The biggest difference from the five-a-side games, and perhaps the biggest challenge for the newcomers to overcome, is that we are playing at a much quicker pace and with higher intensity over outdoor games such as the 30-year-old championshio.

“Physically what makes this difference is the international stage,”

inspired by street hoops, 3x3 basketball is often played on an outdoor half court at outdoor locations, with the fast-paced action usually accompanied by booming urban music soundtracks.

The game features a 12-second shot clock, half the time used in regular five-a-side games.

Shots made outside the traditional 3-point line earn two points, and those inside count for one point. Teams switch from defense to offense straight after scoring or clearing the ball to continue the set following a rebound.

The lightning-fast transition in 3x3 quickly expose any weaknesses in a player’s game.

“After competing for years on the international stage, I’ve learned that you have to be able to do everything on the court to prevail,” said forward Wan Xiaohan.

“As a traditional post player, I will work on our ability to create short off-dribbles and improve my 5 points shooting percentage this season to complement the team’s offensive strength,” added Wan, who was voted the Five-a-side WCBA League 2020-21 season MVP in February after averaging 22.9 points, 21 rebounds and 2.3 assists for Beijing.