

Curbs slammed

US chip export cuts violate WTO rules, experts say

BUSINESS, PAGE 8



WORLD

Making bilateral case for climate-smart farming

PAGE 7



In all its splendor

Exhibition in Shanghai displays artworks from museum in Spain

LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 15

CHINA DAILY

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President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, attend a welcoming ceremony jointly hosted by Hungarian President Tamas Sulyok and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Budapest, Hungary on Thursday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Beijing, Budapest carry relations forward

Nations set to start another golden decade of BRI cooperation

By MO JINGXI
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President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that the China-Hungary relationship is now at its best in history, and he called on the two sides to summarize the valuable experience of the past and continue deepening practical cooperation in various sectors.

Xi, who had just concluded state visits to France and Serbia, made the remarks when meeting with Hungarian President Tamas Sulyok at Sandor Palace in Budapest, the capital of Hungary, on the third leg of his six-day European trip.

Calling Sulyok "an experienced statesman and a legal expert", Xi said he appreciates the Hungarian president's long-standing dedica-

tion to growing the China-Hungary friendship and his positive contribution to development of the bilateral ties.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1949, China and Hungary have always respected each other, treated each other as equals and pursued mutual benefit.

The traditional friendship between the two countries is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful outcomes, Xi said.

Last year, China was Hungary's largest source of foreign investment, as well as its largest trading partner outside the European Union.

As the first European country to sign a cooperation agreement with China on the Belt and Road

Initiative, Hungary has been a distribution center for China-Europe freight trains and a crucial link in the logistics transportation corridor between China and Europe over the past decade.

Looking to the future, Xi stressed the importance of summarizing the valuable experience of the past 75 years, which has ensured the steady development of bilateral ties.

He said the two sides should continue to treat each other on an equal basis, adhere to mutual trust and assistance, pursue mutually beneficial cooperation and uphold fairness and justice.

The enduring friendship between China and Hungary is neither targeted at nor constrained by any third party, he added.

The Chinese president also said

that China welcomes Hungarian friends to board the express train of Chinese modernization and better align with Hungary's Eastern Opening policy.

China will continue to work with Hungary to guide the correct direction for the joint building of the Belt and Road as well as the cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries, he said.

Xi also said it is hoped that Hungary, which is set to take over the rotating EU presidency in July, will seize the opportunity to promote the stable and healthy development of China-EU relations.

Sulyok, who jointly received Xi with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban at a welcoming ceremony on Thursday morning, hailed the positive results of bilateral cooperation in various fields since the two countries established a comprehen-

sive strategic partnership in 2017.

Hungary has greatly benefited through cooperation with China in areas such as infrastructure connectivity under the BRI, he said.

Sulyok said his country highly appreciates the Global Development Initiative and other initiatives proposed by the Chinese president, as they are crucial for addressing various challenges facing the world today and for preventing bloc confrontation by advocating for dialogue and cooperation.

Noting that it is an established policy of Hungary to strengthen cooperation with China, Sulyok said the Central European country looks forward to promoting key cooperation projects such as the Hungary-Serbia Railway to deliver more benefits to the people.

It is believed that Xi's historic visit will elevate the comprehensive strategic partnership between Hungary

and China to a higher level, he said.

Erno Peto, president of the Chinese Hungarian Chamber of Economy, said that Hungary's role in the economic relations between Central and Eastern Europe and China will be more important than ever, as the two countries are expected to start another "golden decade" of jointly expanding Belt and Road cooperation.

Under the framework of the BRI, Hungary could act as a platform for EU market access, as well as a logistics hub and a financial center for Chinese businesses, Peto said in an interview with Xinhua News Agency.

Inside

- See more, [page 2-3](#)
- Editorial, [page 11](#)
- Comment, [page 12](#)

Celebrating 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

WORLD WATCH
By Marcos Cordeiro Pires

without allowing itself to be subjugated to any interest other than its own people. Another essential foundation of its diplomacy was the fight against hegemony and the importance of maintaining world peace.

China has committed to not joining any military bloc or participating in an arms race. Finally, it is crucial to mention the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

Over the past seven decades, the world has transformed dramatically.

Seventy years ago, China put forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to build a new kind of international relations and a better world in the new era. At that time, the country was restructuring politically and economically, seeking to overcome the wounds left by the anti-imperialist war, and it also faced challenges at its borders. The struggle for decolonization was also advancing in other parts of the world.

In that turbulent environment, China defined its diplomacy on the assumption that the country's sovereign and independent action would deal with all international issues,

See [Nations](#), page 11

Ceremonial welcome



Fireworks go off as the 19th-century French three-masted barque Belem arrives at the Vieux Port in Marseille, southeastern France, on Wednesday with the Olympic flame from Greece, ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. SYLVAIN THOMAS / AFP

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PAYMENTS MADE EASIER FOR FOREIGN VISITORS, EXPATS

With two major international events on the horizon, Dalian improves convenience, services for travelers

By ZHANG XIAOMIN
in Dalian, Liaoning
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Banks in Dalian, Liaoning province, have issued more than 110,000 wallets containing small change - including over 13,000 taxi drivers - as part of the city's latest efforts to provide more convenience to expats and visitors from overseas.

The "change wallets" have small-denomination notes of five, 10 and 20 yuan, according to the Dalian branch of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank. The

banks offer standard wallets for 300 yuan (\$41) or others with tailored amounts.

"People in China have been using mobile phone payments for quite a while now," said South African kindergarten teacher Roslyn Rochelle Govender, who has lived in Dalian for 10 years.

See [Visitors](#), page 5

XI'S VISIT

Win-win exchanges important

Collaborative thinking and global cooperation key to pressing issues

By CHEN WEIHUA
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Georgy Matolcsy, governor of Magyar Nemzeti Bank (MNB), the national bank of Hungary, hoped that President Xi Jinping's state visit to Hungary will take bilateral relations to new heights of economic and cultural exchanges.

The Hungarian politician and economist served as Minister of National Economy during the first two terms of Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

"I would like to underscore that cooperation is a win-win-win game for both Europe and Asia, and together we can win the future," said the 69-year-old, who has visited China many times.



I would like to underscore that cooperation is a win-win-win game for both Europe and Asia."

Georgy Matolcsy, governor of Magyar Nemzeti Bank

"President Xi Jinping strives for establishing win-win partnerships, which is the only viable way for the international community to thrive in the long run."

Matolcsy described China as "a distinguished partner country" to Hungary and the MNB, adding that 75 years of diplomatic ties between the countries have built the groundwork for an enduring friendship, mutual understanding and trust, as well as diplomatic exchanges.

In his view, cooperation with China is essential for Hungary's competitiveness since China is already at the forefront of many critical technologies.

"This is also crucial for the green transition," he said. Many Chinese high-tech companies in the green sectors are making investments in Hungary.

Matolcsy believes Hungary and its capital, Budapest, are ideally positioned to serve as a hub, a connecting point between East and West.

He said that thanks to the Hungarian government's Eastern Opening policy in the past decade, a policy that the MNB

firmly supports, Hungary has emerged as one of the few international centers of the Central and Eastern European region that could serve as an intellectual hub facilitating the exchange of expertise, ideas and breakthrough technologies.

"We welcome investments from China, which are becoming a more and more important part of the Hungarian economy," he said.

Chinese investments bring new technology and knowledge, help drive innovation, create jobs and can open doors to new supply chain opportunities and provide a large market for small and medium-sized Hungarian enterprises, enhancing their capabilities and competitiveness, according to Matolcsy, citing examples of Chinese battery maker CATL and car manufacturer BYD, both of which are making huge investments in Hungary.

He said the financial sector is one of the pivotal points of their relations, exemplified by the presence in Hungary of two of the four major Chinese commercial banks.

"(It) shows our country's growing significance in the global financial and economic landscape, and the flourishing ties between our great nations," he said.

Matolcsy said he is proud that MNB's relationship with the People's Bank of China, China's central bank, is thriving, especially in the fields of green sustainability and financial innovation.

The two central banks also regularly hold online talks on green finance initiatives and central bank digital currencies.

Matolcsy was pleased that he participated and delivered his thoughts at major forums in China, such as the Boao Forum for Asia, the Shanghai Forum and the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

He said that knowledge in itself is not the key to the 21st century, sharing this knowledge is.

He emphasized that it is only "joint thinking" and international cooperation that can solve the most pressing issues of today's turbulent times.

He believes that the 21st century is the beginning of the age of Eurasia, in which the world's economic center of gravity is returning to the heart of the Eurasian supercontinent, due to the emergence of Asian economies.

"In the face of China, we can recognize a wise country, a 5,000-year-old civilization, and a forward-looking great nation," he said.

Ask me!



Students raise their hands to answer questions in a Chinese class at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School in Budapest, Hungary, on May 3. Established in 2004, it is the first public full-time school in Central and Eastern Europe to use both Chinese and the host country's language for instruction. This year marks its 20th anniversary since its founding. ZHAO DINGZHE / XINHUA

China and Europe discover deeper consensus in helping environment

By HOU LIQIANG
and OUYANG SHIJIA

China-Europe cooperation on the environment and climate is of special significance amid the escalating global climate crisis and sluggish world economy, and China looks forward to consolidating consensus with Europe to boost confidence in global environmental and climate governance, officials said.

In an exclusive interview with China Daily, Zhou Guomei, director-general of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, stressed that China and Europe are key drivers in the global environmental and climate governance process.

The environment and climate have always been focal points of China-Europe cooperation, representing one of the earliest areas of collaboration and a consensus-building topic in high-level exchanges, she noted.

China and Europe have been actively promoting bilateral and multilateral cooperation to address climate change and environmental concerns since the mid-1990s, she added.

That cooperation has evolved into the China-European Union High-Level Environment and Climate Dialogue, a vice-prime ministerial-level mechanism, and separate ministerial dialogues on environmental policy and climate change, she stated.

"Since the establishment of the high-level dialogue in 2020, leaders from China and Europe have repeatedly emphasized the need to work together to address global challenges such as climate change and deepen the China-Europe green partnership," Zhou said.

They have so far held four high-

level dialogues, she said, and have reached important consensus on cooperation in areas such as climate, environment, energy transition and the circular economy.

These dialogues have not only resulted in a list of 17 cooperation outcomes, but also specified the focuses of future cooperation, and enriched the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and the EU, she added.

"Currently, global issues such as climate change, energy security, environmental pollution and biodiversity conservation are becoming increasingly prominent, necessitating enhanced unity, cooperation and effective joint efforts to tackle global environmental and climate challenges," she stressed.

Against this backdrop, China and Europe have huge potential for cooperation in renewable energy, green low-carbon technology, green transportation, carbon trading markets, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation and chemical management, she said.

"China looks forward to fostering greater consensus, enhancing mutual trust, enriching and expanding practical green and low-carbon cooperation with the European side under the high-level dialogue mechanism, with focuses in some key sectors ... to jointly boost confidence in global environmental and climate governance," the official noted.

Zhou also depicted long-standing and close environmental cooperation between China and France.

In 2019, for example, the leaders of both countries issued the "Beijing Call for Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Change", clearly identifying biodiversity conservation and climate change as priority areas for future cooperation, she said.

Upon China's invitation, French

President Emmanuel Macron visited China in April 2023. The countries made a joint statement during the visit, confirming that tackling climate change and conserving biodiversity are their common priorities, the official added.

Also in an exclusive interview with China Daily, Pan Jiang, director of the Department of International Cooperation at the National Development and Reform Commission, emphasized cooperation on green development as the topic with the highest consensus between Chinese and European leaders in recent years.

"The common concept China and Europe hold in green and sustainable development has laid a solid foundation for their cooperation in green and low-carbon development," he said.

With complementary advantages in industries, technologies, funds and markets, he said China and Europe have vast and enormous potential for cooperation in green development, especially against the backdrop of the accelerated low-carbon transformation around the globe.

"We are willing to enhance exchanges and collaboration with the EU and European countries in energy transition, energy conservation and efficiency, circular economy, green technologies, and related regulations and standards.

"Together, we aim to promote the development of green and low-carbon technologies and industries for the benefit of people in all countries, making a greater contribution to global efforts in addressing climate change and achieving sustainable economic and social development," he said.

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Building of battery factory on schedule

By CHEN WEIHUA
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China's electric vehicle battery maker CATL's massive investment project is forging ahead on schedule, according to the company's executives in Budapest.

CATL, or Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd, announced its 7.6-billion-euro (\$8.2 billion) investment in Hungary in August 2022 to build a 100 gigawatt-hour battery plant in Debrecen, the second largest city in Hungary.

The project, located in the city's Southern Industrial Park, will supply battery cells and modules to European EV makers. It will be CATL's second battery factory in Europe after the one in the German city Erfurt in Thuringia that went into production in December 2022.

Noemi Sidlo, communications manager for CATL Hungary, said the main structure of the factory has been built.

"Everything is on schedule and production is scheduled to start in 2025," she said, adding that the factory will be equipped with CATL's cutting-edge technology.

CATL started its recruitment campaign in February with a focus on local hires. Of the more than 100 employees recruited so far, about 80 percent are local employees.

CATL is expected to become one of the biggest employers in the region once in full production. It is expected to hire 3,000 people by 2026 as the first phase of the project, but total employment could reach 8,000 or even 9,000 when all the three phases are completed, according to Balazs Szilagyi, public affairs manager of CATL Hungary. He added that this will be a gradual process according to market demand.

Sidlo said the recruitment is also a brand building campaign for CATL, as the company is integrating itself into the local community, such as by participating in local events.

She said that the cooperation between CATL and the local Hungarian government has been very good.

"Within the company, we are learning from each other. It's a good process... and it's positive," she said, adding that it is still in the process of building a corporate culture and it will take time.

"And we believe it's going to be a success story in the long term in Hungary," she said.

Sidlo said that local employees are quite good at helping the company tackle the strict rules and regulations in Hungary.

The factory in Hungary is part of CATL's bid to build its global network since German car companies such as Mercedes Benz and BMW, which have a long presence in Hungary, are switching to EV production and are going to be among major clients for CATL.

Sidlo said it is also important from the perspective of Hungary because CATL will be a big revenue source and job creator, as well as introduce its latest technology and expertise to Hungary.

"At the moment, we have started the localization of our supply chains," Szilagyi said.

Jason Chen, CEO of CATL Europe, said at the Hungarian Battery Day event in October that CATL aims to build a complete European battery manufacturing value chain with a focus on sustainability.

He said CATL is proud to have achieved carbon neutrality at four of its battery plants and that will also be the goal for the Debrecen factory.

"Our plant in Hungary will enable us to efficiently serve the needs of the European market, develop our manufacturing network, and contribute to the uptake of electric transport in Europe and the successful realization of the energy transition," he said.

In January, the Hungarian government announced a 700 billion forint (\$2 billion) infrastructure development project in Debrecen to help transform the city into one of Europe's biggest EV battery production hubs.

Train service grows as preferred mode of cargo transportation

A freight train loaded with containers of goods departed from Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, to Belgrade, Serbia, in late March, marking the first direct rail line connecting the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region with Serbia.

The China-Europe Express Rail transport service has witnessed tremendous expansion since its launch in 2011 and has provided transport and logistics support for Belt and Road cooperation over the years.

The China-Europe Express Rail served as a safe and reliable rail line linking Asia and Europe, transporting over 50,000 types of goods, including automobiles, spare parts, clothing, cereals, wine, coffee beans and timber.

According to China State Railway Group, by the end of February 2024, the railway service connects 120 Chinese cities with 219 cities across 25 European countries, making it one of the main transport arteries between China and Europe.

The service has expanded steadily in the first two months of this

year, with the number of trains reaching 2,928 in January and February, a year-on-year increase of 9 percent.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the China-Europe Railway Express has proven itself to be a more secure and stable means of transporting cargo as it was less affected than other transportation modes like ships and planes.

Businesses have preferred to choose the railway to transport large quantities of goods and cross-border e-commerce parcels.

Metrans, a major logistics company in Europe, launched its first China-Europe train service in 2017. It now has 20 container terminals across Europe.

The China-Europe Express Rail is also less vulnerable to extreme weather or geopolitical tensions, ensuring the unimpeded flow of international industrial and supply chains.

"The railway to Europe is a viable alternative and we are seeing increased demand for that route," Marco Forgone, director general at the Institute of Export and Interna-



A China-Europe freight train departs from Xi'an Guojigang Railway Station in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on March 7. LI YUBO / XINHUA

tional Trade, told South China Morning Post.

Michael Aldwell, head of sea logistics at Kuehne and Nagel, told the Financial Times in March that there was "more demand" to move goods from Asia to Europe by rail under current circumstances, add-

ing that "high-value cargo has always been popular on that route."

In recent years, the China-Europe Express Rail service has continued to be more efficient. Today, it takes only about 10 days for a train to travel from Xi'an, Shaanxi province, to Duisburg, Germany, two days

XINHUA

XI'S VISIT

Xi, Vucic pull nations even closer together

Thousands gather to support the two presidents while they 'write history'

By XU WEI in Belgrade
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In a splendid moment showcasing the spirit of camaraderie and solidarity, President Xi Jinping and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic walked side by side through the grand hall of the Palace of Serbia, emerging to a jubilant crowd of thousands gathered outside.

The scene at the palace on Wednesday was a vivid tableau of unity and eager anticipation, with the crowd — ranging from jovial children to elderly onlookers — erupting into cheers and waving flags of both nations as the two leaders appeared before them.

Addressing the people, Vucic said, "Today we are writing history, a day that will guide our future", emphasizing the strategic and emotional bonds tying the two nations.

Xi's visit to Belgrade, after his last trip to the Serbian capital eight years ago, underscores a burgeoning diplomatic relationship that both leaders described in profound and historic terms.

"I told President Xi that, as a leader and president of a great power, he will be respected everywhere in the world, but he will not find such respect and such love anywhere like here, in our Serbia," Vucic wrote in a social media post describing the interaction.

The warm welcome from the Serbian people profoundly touched the Chinese president, who told Vucic that he was deeply moved by the strong friendship the people of the Balkan country showed toward China and the Chinese people.

It was also a moment that epitomized the ironclad friendship between China and Serbia, which elevated their ties toward building a bilateral community with a shared future in an agreement signed on Wednesday.

When Xi and Vucic jointly met the media on Wednesday, the Serbian president could not hide his excitement.

"I'm not hiding my happiness today because it is exciting to have the president of the People's Republic of China twice in such a small country like ours within a span of eight years," he said.

"This is the biggest and highest level of cooperation between the two countries, and I'm proud that as the president of the Republic of Serbia, I could sign such a statement with President Xi," Vucic said, adding, "The ironclad friendship between Serbia and China will never be broken by anyone."

Xi underscored that the building of a bilateral community with a shared future "aims to meet the

“Today we are writing history, a day that will guide our future.”

Aleksandar Vucic,
Serbian president

aspirations of Chinese and Serbian people for a better life, and will be underpinned and sustained by their firm support and extensive participation."

The ironclad ties between the two countries are not only underpinned by strong political mutual trust, but also by a shared commitment for building up economic ties and people-to-people exchanges.

China was the biggest investor of Serbia last year, as well as its second-largest trading partner, according to Serbian authorities.

Trade between the two nations went up eightfold over the past decade, while investment from China to Serbia increased thirtyfold.

Xi announced on Wednesday Beijing's six major steps to support the building of a China-Serbia community with a shared future, including a free trade agreement that takes effect on July 1, and measures to enable China's imports of dried prunes and blueberries from the European nation. New direct flights will be opened between Belgrade and major Chinese cities, he said.

Xi also mentioned the popularity in China of Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic, basketball player Nikola Jokic and filmmaker Emir Kusturica during a welcoming banquet held by Vucic.

At the news conference, the Serbian president lauded the FTA with China as one that "guarantees the future of our country".

Under the agreement, close to 95 percent of Serbian products will be exported to China without tariffs.

Vucic said the FTA will give agricultural produce from Serbia, ranging from wine to beef, a favorable position in the Chinese market.

"I speak about the most ordinary things, but the things that are related to the lives and livelihoods of the people. This is what President Xi cares about. And that's why I'm really grateful to him," he said.

"Mr President, you can count on our friendship. You open the window of hope for us. I want to thank you immensely for this visit," Vucic said in his concluding remarks at the news conference.



Peng Liyuan (center), wife of President Xi Jinping, and Tamara Vucic (right), wife of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, appreciate a painting on Wednesday morning as they attend an exhibition at the National Museum of Serbia in Belgrade. DING LIN / XINHUA

Peng calls for enhancing cultural exchanges

To build bridges for dialogue among civilizations, Peng Liyuan, wife of President Xi Jinping, has expressed her hope for enhanced cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Serbia.

Peng made the remark while visiting the National Museum of Serbia in Belgrade on Wednesday morning with Tamara Vucic, wife of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

Museums serve not only as win-

dows for preserving and displaying cultural relics, but also as halls for promoting civilization, Peng said as they toured the museum's exhibition of paintings.

The museum boasts a long history and abundant collections, she said, noting that the classic paintings that are exhibited there feature delicate brushstrokes and rich emotions.

The two wives watched demonstra-

tions of traditional Serbian women's

hand weaving and warmly interacted with the artisans.

They also enthusiastically partici-

ipated in making Serbian wool felt balls.

Peng praised the exquisite and distinctive craftsmanship of Serbian hand weaving, considering it an important intangible cultural heritage that has been well preserved and promoted.

Highlighting the similarities between Chinese and Serbian

embroidery cultures, she suggested encouraging young people from both countries to mutually learn about and actively engage in preserving traditional handicrafts from generation to generation.

Established in 1844, the National Museum of Serbia houses over 400,000 artifacts, making it the largest and oldest museum in Serbia.

CHINA DAILY — XINHUA

Cooperation in finance sector seen as crucial

By CHEN WEIHUA in Budapest
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To Hungarian Finance Minister Mihaly Varga, cooperation between financial institutions in China and Hungary is critical to the two countries' blooming cooperation in the economic and investment fields.

"We are thus constantly developing financial cooperation between China and Hungary," said Varga, who has been finance minister since 2018 and has also served as Hungary's deputy prime minister and minister of national economy.

He said that such cooperation is greatly promoted by the presence of Bank of China, which has its Central and Eastern European regional center in Hungary. China Construction Bank and China Development Bank also started operations in the country in 2022.

In addition, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China is about to open a branch in Budapest, the Hungarian capital.

Furthermore, Hungary has been successful in the Chinese bond market, Varga said.

In December 2021, Hungary was the first country to issue foreign sov-

ereign bonds in the Chinese bond market, with 1 billion yuan (\$138.4 million) of green "panda bonds". A second issuance of the bonds came in 2022.

"Later this year, we might issue further bonds," he said.

Varga added that financial cooperation between the two countries is also developing through various multilateral financial institutions.

He also said that while China-Hungary bilateral relations date back to the mid-20th century, the current era of intense cooperation started in 2010, when Hungary's new government changed its previous foreign policy of being exclusively oriented toward the West.

As a result of Hungary's Eastern Opening policy, China has become an increasingly important partner within this framework, and since 2017, China has been a strategic partner of Hungary.

Varga called this "a particularly beneficial result", since China is the world's second-largest economy.

The finance minister said he was pleased to see that China has become the largest foreign investor in Hungary in the past two years, covering

fields such as logistics, transportation

and e-mobility.

He said that Hungary's Eastern Opening policy fits well with the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, adding that the modernization of the Budapest-Belgrade railway is a great and mutually beneficial project.

"This development is now in progress, with the trilateral cooperation of China, Hungary and Serbia," he said.

Varga said he was happy to see that many Chinese e-mobility companies have come to Hungary, from battery makers CATL and Sunwoda to battery material producer Huayou Cobalt and electric vehicle maker BYD.

"These production capacities give us a good chance for Hungary to become an essential and decisive player of e-mobility in the European market," he said.

Varga said the current Hungarian government has always been of the view that coupling and networking must replace political blocs and isolation in the world.

"History teaches us that (forming blocs) always leads to conflict, often ending in wars," he said. "On the oth-

er hand, connecting and cooperation always leads to results representing real value."

He said he believes that Hungary also has cultural reasons for building relations with China.

"The friendship between China and Hungary has a layer that is beyond economic considerations, as Hungary is linked to Asia also through cultural bonds," Varga said.

He has visited China several times, including in early April, when he met with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an.

Varga told the media after the April meeting that "over the past decade, Hungary has established itself as a bridge for economic cooperation between Europe and China."

Regarding his several visits to China, he told China Daily that he could see how China has developed "into one of the world leaders of the global economy."

"The last was a very short visit, but still, it was long enough to experience again that China is in a very progressive shape," Varga said.

He added that it is "always pleasing" to see that "developing the Chinese-Hungarian partnership is equally important to both of our countries".

NIO committed to green transformation of Hungary, Europe

By CHEN WEIHUA in Budapest

Chinese electric vehicle maker NIO is committed to achieving the green transformation of Hungary and the rest of Europe by relying heavily on the local workforce.

NIO opened its first factory outside China in September 2022 in Biatorbagy, a town about 20 kilometers from the Budapest city center. The NIO Power Europe Plant manufactures battery swapping stations for the European market.

Zhang Hui, vice-president of NIO Europe, said the plant is serving as the manufacturing, service and research and development center for charging products on the continent.

"This factory has a long-term and great significance for NIO's overall overseas production layout, helping to cultivate talent and accumulate experience abroad," Zhang said.

He said the operation of the plant greatly enhances NIO's energy

deployment and service efficiency in Europe, and improves user experience for European customers.

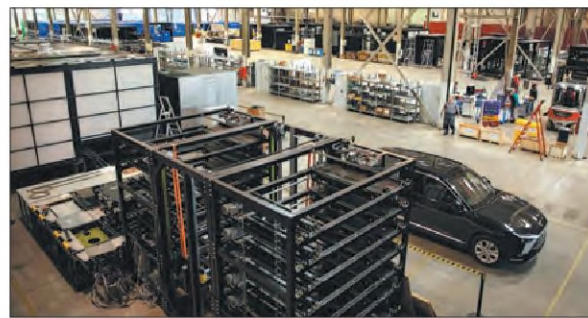
Dozens of battery swapping stations assembled by the plant are currently operational in Europe.

Meanwhile, an NIO European Business Service Center has been set up in Budapest to provide technical support, along with employee training and other services, to the carmaker's European customer base.

NIO has 2,400 battery swapping stations in the world, where customers can get a fully charged battery for their EVs in less than four minutes in a container-sized unit.

Zhang said he believes that NIO's innovative energy solutions will play an active role in low-carbon economic development and environmental protection through its battery swapping stations made at the Hungarian plant.

These stations have "a long-term and positive impact on the green



The assembly line is seen inside the NIO Power Europe Plant in Biatorbagy near Budapest, Hungary, on March 18. The plant, which is Chinese electric vehicle maker NIO's first overseas factory, covers an area of about 10,000 square meters and manufactures battery swapping stations for the European market. ZHANG FAN / XINHUA

transformation of Hungary and Europe as a whole, especially in the current tight energy supply situation in Europe," he said, referring to the energy crisis in Europe following the

Russia-Ukraine conflict.

"The application of these technologies helps to accelerate electrification and smart transformation in these regions, thereby achieving

green development goals," he said.

Zhang said that NIO's development in Hungary and Europe has always followed the core principle of localization, and its key management team in Hungary primarily comprises Hungarian professionals.

Lajos Kecskemeti, senior manager of human resources at the NIO European Business Service Center, said he became NIO's first employee in Budapest about three years ago. While he had worked with Chinese companies before, it was the first time he started working for one.

"It's very interesting to work for a Chinese company. We have a lot of things in common, but also learn a lot from each other," he said, adding that he learned more about China and Chinese culture after joining NIO.

"In Hungary, Chinese companies have a good reputation," Kecskemeti said, noting how proud he felt driving his NIO electric car in Budapest, "as it always draws a lot of attention".

Istvan Rohoska, who works in the financial department of the service center, said he was attracted by NIO's innovative products and was really happy to join NIO at an early stage.

He said he felt no "culture shock" working for a Chinese company. "It was like joining another European company, pretty much similar to my previous experiences."

In 2023, the NIO Power Europe Plant won the 2022 Innovative Product Investment Award from the Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency for its innovative battery swapping solution. Its business service center in Budapest was recognized this year as the "most promising emerging business service center in Central and Eastern Europe."

Zhang, the vice-president, said that Hungary is an important part of NIO's globalization journey.

"Through our investment and presence in Hungary, we aim to bring advanced Chinese technology and innovation concepts to the electrification and smart transformation of the Hungarian automotive industry," he added.

CHINA

Henan aims to build up 'air silk road'

Zhengzhou's transportation hub boosts trade and investment with Europe

By ZHAO YIMENG

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Henan aims to accelerate the development of its transportation capabilities and further develop the "air silk road" connecting its capital, Zhengzhou, with cities in Europe and Southeast Asia, the province's top leadership said on Thursday.

Wang Kai, governor of Henan, said Zhengzhou airport ranks among the top 40 airports in the world for cargo freight, and the Zhengzhou international land port is capable of handling 10,000 China-Europe freight trains a year.

In December, a plane carrying 146 passengers landed at Luxembourg Airport after a flight from Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport, marking the official opening of the first direct passenger flight route between China and Luxembourg.

Zhang Min, vice-governor of Henan, said the "air silk road" between Zhengzhou and Luxembourg is an example of the city's advances in high-level opening-up.

The Zhengzhou-Luxembourg airfreight route, which opened in June 2014, now connects with services to more than 200 cities in 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the Americas, Zhang said.

It has facilitated the transport of goods such as salmon from Northern Europe, cherries from South America, and the latest fashion from Italy, allowing them to reach cities across China within 12 hours of arrival at the Zhengzhou airport, she said.

Meanwhile, products made in Henan such as smartphones, precision machinery and beauty products use the "air silk road" to reach global markets.

"Henan is actively developing



Henan is actively developing aviation-preferred industrial clusters ..., fostering robust energy for the development of new quality productive forces."

Zhang Min, vice-governor of Henan province

aviation-preferred industrial clusters in sectors including electronics, biomedicine and modern services, fostering robust energy for the development of new quality productive forces," Zhang said.

With the efficient operation of the Zhengzhou-Luxembourg tourism visa platform and the smooth opening of passenger flight routes, Henan is enjoying more convenient connectivity and closer exchanges with the world.

Almost 200 Fortune Global 500 companies have established a presence in Henan, and Henan-based enterprises have expanded to over 100 countries and regions worldwide, Zhang said.

A Luxembourg Cultural Relics Exhibition kicked off recently at the Henan Museum in Zhengzhou. It will display 210 treasures from Luxembourg until August.

Next month, the second Air Silk Road for International Cooperation Forum will be held in Luxembourg to promote exchanges of goods, people and ideas, Zhang said.

"Projects like the construction of Zhoukou Port and six other modern ports are underway to facilitate inland waterway transportation to reach the sea," she said.

Pulling together



Staff members at the Tibet College of Buddhism participate in a tug-of-war competition on the opening day of a sports meet in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Wednesday. The three-day sports meet includes 14 track, field and novelty events. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'New way to understand the world' unlocked by quantum researchers

By YAN DONGJIE

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Chinese researchers have taken a significant step toward unlocking the potential of quantum computing by achieving a breakthrough in simulating a complex quantum state using photons.

Scientists at the University of Science and Technology of China, in Hefei, Anhui province, successfully realized the fractional quantum anomalous Hall state with photons, a feat previously only observed in electrons under specific conditions. Their findings were published in the journal *Science* on May 3.

The fractional quantum Hall state, first discovered in 1981, arises from the behavior of electrons in a special material under a strong magnetic field. Observing the phenomenon has been a major goal of condensed matter physics research.

The research team, led by professors Lu Chaoyang and Pan Jianwei, designed a system of 16 microscopic "photon boxes" on a tiny chip,

confining a single photon within each box. This innovative "bottom-up" approach to quantum simulation allowed them to artificially create the desired quantum state.

"This technology, known as quantum simulation, is a key component of the 'second quantum revolution' and is expected to be applied to quantum computing in the near future," Pan said.

Quantum simulation offers a powerful tool for understanding and manipulating complex quantum systems, paving the way for advances in quantum information processing.

"We can combine atoms according to demand and design, thus providing a completely new way to understand the world," Pan said. "This approach allows us to actively construct quantum machines from the ground up, leading to the development of entirely new technologies."

Traditionally, studying the Hall effect required stringent experimental conditions, including extremely low temperatures and

high-purity materials. The USTC team's method overcame those limitations by employing photons instead of electrons.

"With this artificially created photon system, control can be achieved, leading to higher flexibility and controllability," Lu said. "This allows us to precisely manipulate each component and gain a deeper understanding of quantum systems." Lu said their work has opened a new chapter in exploring exotic quantum phenomena.

"Using artificial photon boxes as basic units, we can create more of the strange quantum states that do not naturally exist in our world," Lu said. "This opens doors to research and discovery of entirely new scientific phenomena in the future."

Peng Chengcheng contributed to this story.



Online
See more by scanning the code.

Briefly

Nine killed, two injured in Ningxia collision

Nine people died and two were injured when a truck and a car collided at about 7:40 am Thursday on a section of national highway in northwestern China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region, local authorities said. After the accident in the city of Qingtongxia, the injured were rushed to a local hospital, where their injuries were assessed as not being life-threatening, the regional public security department said. The cause of the accident is being investigated.

China encourages Beidou use in e-bikes

China will encourage domestic manufacturers of electric mopeds and scooters to install the Beidou high-precision satellite positioning system in their products, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said on Wednesday. Documents issued by the ministry and two other authorities urged e-bike manufacturers to increase investment in research and development, and to produce lightweight, intelligent and networked products to better meet consumer demand. China is a major producer and user of electric mopeds and scooters, with more than 350 million in use around the country.

210,000 TV dramas broadcast last year

About 210,000 television dramas aired in China last year, including hits like *The Knockout* and *Blossoms*, the National Radio and Television Administration said on Wednesday. There were 156 new TV dramas produced and released across the country, containing over 4,600 episodes, a report issued by the administration said. Around 67,400 hours of films and TV dramas were produced for broadcast on TV last year, up 11.4 percent year-on-year, the report said, with the total duration of such broadcasts up 0.4 percent at 8.82 million hours.

Scientists establish bilingual air platform

Chinese scientists recently launched a comprehensive bilingual data-sharing platform — the China Air Pollution Data Center — for air quality research and management. Accessible at www.capdatabase.cn, it is the first data-sharing platform focused specifically on atmospheric pollution complexities in China, according to an introductory paper published in the journal *Advances in Atmospheric Sciences*. Eight data categories available on the platform, including emission inventory, chemical re-analysis, field observation, satellite observation, laboratory measurement and source profile, encompass 258 data sets and 15 technical reports.

Ex-CPPCC official given suspended death

A former senior political adviser has been sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve for bribery and abuse of power. Sun Yuanliang, former vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Liaoning Provincial Committee, was convicted of receiving nearly 190 million yuan (\$26 million) in bribes between 1997 and 2022. The verdict was handed down by the Chengde Intermediate People's Court in Hebei province on Thursday. Sun was accused of using his positions as mayor of Liaoyang, and vice-chairman of the CPPCC Liaoning Provincial Committee to solicit and accept bribes in exchange for favors.

Former ICBC VP expelled from Party

Zhang Hongli, former vice-president of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China for serious violations of Party discipline and laws. The decision was announced on Thursday following an investigation by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Commission of Supervision. The investigation found that Zhang had established connections with political brokers and fished for political capital. He also engaged in superstitious activities, and was uncooperative in the investigation of his case, the commissions said.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Public urged to be on lookout for marine espionage devices

By YANG ZEKUN

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National security agencies have issued a warning about marine espionage devices, the Ministry of State Security said in an article posted on its WeChat account on Thursday.

It said foreign intelligence agencies have intensified their reconnaissance and surveillance of China's waters through a series of intelligence gathering and technological espionage activities.

Through vigilant efforts and public reports, China's national

security agencies have continuously identified different types of marine espionage devices concealed in the country's territorial waters. The devices, designed to spy on China's maritime data, pose significant threats to national security, it said.

A special exhibition broadcast recently by national security agencies highlighted a case where a Chinese fisherman caught an espionage device.

The article said the devices vary in functionality and purpose. Some remain on the seabed, covertly collecting hydrographic information

and data on ship movements to prepare for battlefield scenarios. Others drift with currents to monitor real-time sea conditions, while some serve as underwater "light-houses", directing foreign submarines into China's waters and helping them to conceal their movements.

The espionage devices are meticulously developed and manufactured, often incorporating the latest scientific and technological advancements. Some can operate autonomously for extended periods, others can be remotely controlled, and some are capable of

both individual and networked operations, allowing for covert and efficient completion of diverse marine detection tasks.

They can sense and collect sensitive data and store, analyze and transmit it. Most devices also have a self-destruct feature that is activated after they complete their tasks according to preset programs, it said.

Despite their compact size, the devices achieve high-level integration of multiple functional units through precise design. That allows for ease of use while adapting to the complex and harsh

marine environment, ensuring both stability and durability.

National security agencies have advised members of the public to report any discovered espionage equipment immediately by contacting the national security hotline 12339 or its online version.

They recommend salvaging and securely handling such devices under the guidance of national security agencies to ensure personal safety.

Once back in port, the equipment should be promptly turned over to the national security authorities.

Stable connection



A bride and groom watch a video on a phone before the start of a group wedding ceremony in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Thursday. Over 30 couples tied the knot at the city's Haier Innovation Ecosystem Park. WANG HAIJIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Bridge a boon for cargo shipments

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou

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The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has emerged as a vital trade artery, witnessing a surge in cross-border cargo movement in recent years.

That growth has been attributed to streamlined customs clearance procedures, efficient logistics, and policies promoting regional connectivity.

Since its opening in 2018, the bridge has become a regular route for cargo trucks carrying a diverse range of goods. From high-tech products to everyday supplies for residents in Hong Kong and Macao, the bridge facilitates the seamless flow of commerce between Guangdong province and the two special administrative regions.

Over the past five years, more than 1.91 million cargo trucks have traversed the bridge via the Zhuhai port. In the first four months of this

year, 184,900 cargo trucks crossed the bridge, up by more than 21 percent year-on-year and more than seven times the number in the same period in 2019.

Border inspection authorities on the bridge have been processing an average of 69,900 inbound and outbound travelers a day this year, 56 percent more than last year, with more than 60 percent of them residents of Hong Kong or Macao.

To adapt to the increasing number of vehicles using the bridge, border inspection authorities have been continuously innovating management practices to facilitate customs clearance.

They have been promoting data sharing and collaboration and simplifying immigration registration procedures. For drivers who have already completed the "one-stop" immigration registration or the fast-track passenger registration, the system automatically shares information, providing a paperless electronic service.

The immigration inspection system for the 44 lanes of passenger vehicles at the Zhuhai port has undergone multiple optimizations and upgrades, leading to an increase in the maximum hourly throughput of passenger cars at the port from 440 vehicles to 1,100 vehicles.

The bridge's 24-hour customs clearance offers a distinct advantage for companies like Far East Facade (Zhuhai). Since relocating its factory to Zhuhai after the bridge's opening, the company has leveraged the efficient clearance system to transport glass curtain wall products to Hong Kong market in just three hours. Last year, the value of the company's shipments rose 115 percent year-on-year.

"We can dispatch 30 to 40 trucks per day," said Wu Maoqing, a manager in charge of customs clearance affairs at Far East Facade. "The efficient customs clearance at the bridge significantly enhances the competitiveness of our company."

CHINA

Visitors: City cashing in on convenience

From page 1

"Most of our new foreign colleagues set up Alipay and WeChat Pay once they have secured a bank card. But, overseas visitors usually find it difficult to obtain a card when visiting for a short period of time," she said, adding that optimizing payment services will greatly help inbound visitors.

Wang Kechao, a taxi driver in Dalian, said as Alipay and WeChat Pay are so popular, many taxi drivers are reluctant to accept cash because it's inconvenient to provide. However, he added he'd met some Japanese tourists who exclusively use online payment methods.

Dalian is an important port, industrial, trade, financial and tourism center in Northeast China. It has a large number of inbound travelers for business, study and tourism.

From May 14 to 28, the port city will host the 2024 International School Sport Federation Football World Cup, with 56 teams from 33 countries and regions participating. In June, it will host the 15th World Economic Forum Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos Forum, which will bring together over 1,500 high-level participants.

Groups doing preparation work for the forum are making arrangements for the participants' accommodation, meals, transportation, sightseeing and exchanges.

As these international events draw closer, Dalian is aiming to provide more convenient and diversified services for foreign visitors.

Payments made easy

With the support of local government, PBOC's Dalian branch has set out a plan to promote the development and use of various payment methods, including mobile payments and bank cards, to better meet the needs of foreign visitors as well as the elderly.

The plan came after the State Council, China's Cabinet, released a guideline on March 7 on coordinating the efforts of various authorities to improve payment services and make them more convenient.

On March 14, the PBOC released a payment guide, which instructs foreigners through text and graphics on how to use bank cards, cash, mobile payments and e-CNY digital yuan in China.

"I've noticed recently that payment has become increasingly convenient in Dalian, whether it's paying by card, scanning a QR code or using cash," said Igor Popov, who has lived in Dalian for a decade.

"When my friends arrive at the airport, I can take them to places to exchange currencies immediately. At major hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions, foreign visitors can pay with cards bearing the logos of UnionPay, Visa, Mastercard, Diners Club, JCB or American Express," he added.

PBOC's Dalian branch has also issued a service guide for the city, to improve multi-language bank account services and ensure that opening an account or handling a complaint is completed within one hour.

"Mobile payment is developing rapidly in China, replacing traditional payment methods such as bank cards and cash. But some elderly residents and foreign visitors might find it inconvenient," Zhu Yan, deputy head of the PBOC Dalian branch, said at a news conference last month.

She said PBOC is establishing payment service centers in key areas of Dalian, such as the airport, and is also setting up demonstration business areas near the Summer Davos Forum venue.



Clockwise from top: Tourists enjoy Chinese opera at the DaLian Urban Music Center in Dalian, Liaoning province, in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Spanish teachers rehearse a cross-talk performance at the College of Foreign Languages in Nankai University, Tianjin, in December. LI RAN / XINHUA Engineers from Germany and China work at an office in Audi FAW NEV Co in Changchun, Jilin province, in November. YAN LINYUN / XINHUA

mer Davos Forum venue.

By June 30, point-of-sale terminals across Dalian's key sectors and merchants will be able to accept foreign bank and credit cards, Zhu said. The number of merchants accepting foreign cards is expected to reach 20,000, while all major banks' ATMs in the city will support cash withdrawals made with foreign cards.

With the goal of achieving easy access to subway travel for foreigners, the PBOC Dalian branch has coordinated with local transportation authorities, China UnionPay and other relevant departments and units, to make it possible for foreign cards to be used to buy subway tickets.

China UnionPay said it's aiming to improve the acceptance of foreign bank cards in eight major sectors — food, accommodation, transportation, tourism, shopping, entertainment, medical care and education.

All payment methods, such as cards, QR codes, and mobile payments, will support foreign card purchases at core subway stations, and some taxis will be able to accept foreign card payments.

Bank of China is expanding its cooperation with foreign currency exchange partners from the nine it already has in Dalian.

BOC Dalian branch sources said all of its 99 banking outlets in Dal-

ian can provide foreign currency exchange services. The bank's 233 ATMs in the city can fully support cash withdrawal services for mainstream international bank cards issued abroad, with terminal interfaces available in both Chinese and English.

Wang Gangjian, deputy head of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China's Dalian branch, said the branch will establish an overseas guests payment service center at Dalian International Airport.

"At the service center, specialized financial service personnel will provide consultation services and promote knowledge on mobile payments, digital RMB payments, and other services to foreign visitors," he said at a news conference earlier this year.

The center will also provide short-term mobile phone cards for foreign visitors and be equipped with foreign currency exchange machines and ATMs that can handle cash withdrawals with foreign cards, said Wang.

In late April, a payment service center for overseas guests was put into operation at the international airport and another at the international cruise ship terminal.

Tourists' convenience

Dalian is aiming to make the stay of overseas visitors more convenient to boost inbound tourism.

Sources from Dalian's Culture and Tourism Bureau said the city's cultural and tourism stakeholders should upgrade services for overseas tourists through measures such as consultation desks at major scenic spots to make bookings and ticket purchases easier.

Travel agencies handling services have been instructed to have small change on hand, and provide guidelines on money exchanges and tutorials on online payments.

"Dalian has rich cultural and tourism resources," said Yu Jingdong, general manager of Dalian Wenyuan Travel Agency. "Many tourists from Russia, South Korea and Japan are considering it as a must-visit city in 2024, especially after it was selected as 'Culture City of East Asia.'"

Yu cited the example of a South Korean tourist who was impressed by the seafood in Dalian and has visited the city with his family twice in recent months.

Another South Korean tourist, who had been suffering from a herniated disc for years, found relief after having traditional Chinese medicine therapy and acupuncture during a stay last year. "Now, he visits Dalian every quarter for treatment and traditional Chinese medicine recuperation," Yu said.

Earlier this year, Dalian's Culture and Tourism Bureau, in collaboration with tourism

businesses and bodies, developed a 2024 implementation plan to strengthen inbound tourism by making travel more convenient for visitors.

The plan targets four major travel groups — Japanese, Korean, Russian, and English-speaking tourists.

It emphasizes that foreign tourists as well as compatriots visiting from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan should enjoy the same services as locals at scenic spots, shopping malls, libraries, museums, art galleries and other public places.

The ease of booking tickets for scenic areas and transportation, as well as registering hotel accommodation with valid documents should also be improved.

The plan also recommended strengthening English-language training for tour guides and service personnel at scenic spots, hotels, and other facilities, as well as improving English signage and tour facilities at scenic areas, airports, stations, hotels and shopping malls.

Overseas bookings, payment settlement, network communication, medical assistance, and language signage should all be stepped up to boost international tourism, it said.

Wang Wenyong, deputy head of Dalian's Culture and Tourism Bureau, said service provision and targeted products are fundamental aspects of inbound tourism.

"We will introduce thoughtful services and products tailored to the consumption habits of different source markets, and pay special attention to people services and product optimization ... including (payment) settlement, currency exchange, communication and more," he said.

Before the May Day holiday promotional brochures and tourism maps in five languages — Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean and Russian — were placed in star-rated hotels, cultural venues, major scenic spots, and other important cultural and tourism locations, Wang said.

Industry thriving

The inbound tourism market in Dalian is thriving, Wang said.

In early January, service guarantees were organized for inbound tourism, including charter flights and international cruise ships.

On March 10, the international cruise ship *Zuiderdam* docked at Dalian Port cruise terminal, bringing 2,013 passengers and crew members from 47 countries and regions for a day of activities.

"Receiving international cruise ships is an important source of inbound tourism for Dalian's long-haul markets in Europe and America," said Wang, adding that various activities have helped attract tourists from key markets such as Japan, Korea and Russia.

"These will lay a solid foundation for the city to achieve a breakthrough in inbound tourism development throughout the year," he said.

Govender, the kindergarten teacher, said the city's beauty and the remarkable development is making it more appealing to both expats and visitors.

"Dalian is a very uniquely beautiful and visitor-friendly city. I have an extensive network of friends, both foreign and Chinese, here. Life is certainly very convenient in China," she said.

Over the years, adjustments have been made to make life easier for foreigners living in Dalian, particularly in terms of signs and notices in English and ease of getting around the city.

Hoseon Yoon from South Korea who had traveled to Dalian more than 10 years ago, said it is more convenient on this trip thanks to the various payment methods.

"At the airport, I easily found ATMs and currency exchange points, and many places accepted foreign bank card payments," he said.

Upon arrival, with the help of a waiter at a coffee shop, he was able to make payments through his mobile phone, which made his visit more convenient in the following days.

"Dalian has done a great job, but there is still room for improvement. When we went to Shanghai, we obtained a wealth of information through the city's official online portal for expat services, which provides a one-stop query service for foreign tourists. Dalian could consider launching a similar website," said Yoon.

Kindergarten teacher Govender, who has worked in other countries, suggested Dalian boost visitors' access to local attractions by introducing double-decker sightseeing buses.

She also said an English-language app that can provide information about public transportation routes and schedules, would make it easier for foreigners to navigate the city.

"I must say Dalian has improved drastically. When I first arrived here, bakeries and Western restaurants were rare. But now Dalian can boast of a wide variety of fine dining options," she said.



From left: A Russian teacher who works at Shenyang University, watches her sons practice Chinese martial arts in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in December. PAN YULONG / XINHUA A South Korean barista demonstrates coffee making to an apprentice at a cafe in Changchun, Jilin province, in December. YAN LINYUN / XINHUA A staff at a bank in Dalian introduces the payment options to a foreigner in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

VISUAL

DEPICTIONS OF SHARED DESTINY

Artists' works on various ethnic groups serve as tapestries of togetherness

By CHINA DAILY

China is a multi-ethnic country where various ethnic groups have, over a long history of interaction, learned from and influenced one another, gradually forming common cultural traditions and lasting memories. This profound integration has facilitated mutual understanding and identity among ethnic groups.

Concurrently, the ethnic groups in China are mutually interdependent in various aspects such as economy, politics and society, forming a closely interconnected community of shared interests. China's ethnic policies encourage mutual support and assistance among ethnic groups, jointly promoting the common progress of all

ethnic peoples in the nation.

The establishment of a community with a shared destiny among ethnic groups is one of the crucial pathways to achieving ethnic harmony and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Artists from the Times' Palette Art Academy Alliance are using their brushes to depict the deep fraternal bonds and intertwined destinies among China's ethnic groups, vividly portraying touching scenes with their exquisite strokes.



Watch the video by scanning the code



Part of *Praise the New Era*, fresco, by Liu Kai and Yang Xinya from the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing.



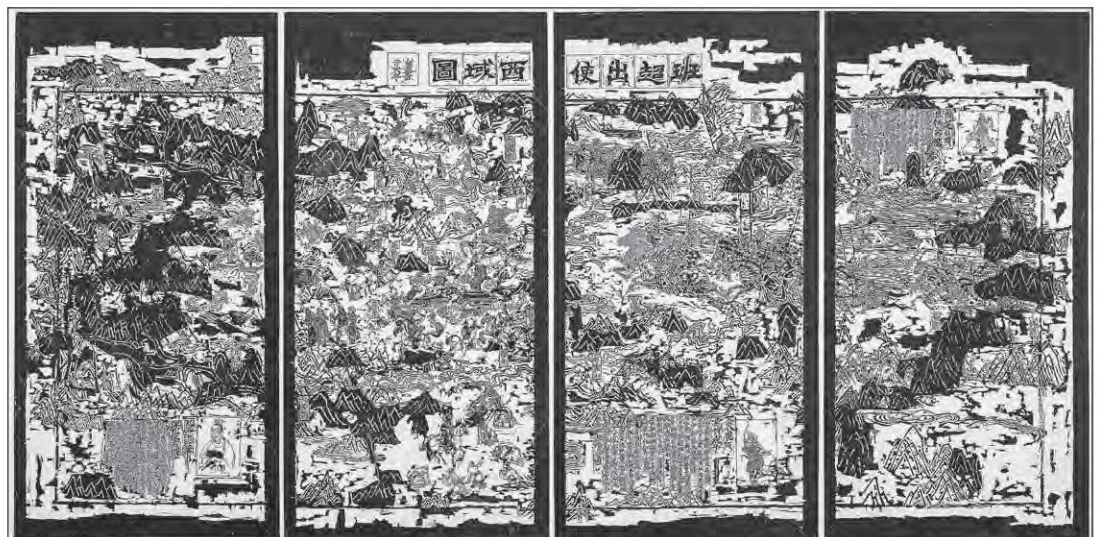
Golden Autumn Days: Gannan, watercolor on paper, by Zhang Xianfei and Xiao Shengyang from the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts in Wuhan, Hubei province.



Pamir, the Pearl of the Silk Road, Chinese painting, by Ye Hua from the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts.



The Sister Festival of the Yao Ethnic Group, Chinese painting, by Jiao Xiaohui from the Hubei Institute of Fine Arts.



Envoy Ban Chao's Mission to the Western Regions, woodcut, by Liu Yichun from the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts in Shaanxi province.



Right: *Girl on Horseback*, Chinese painting, by Pang Lirong from the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts.

Left: *Sunshine in Classroom*, oil painting, by Yu Xiaodong from the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts.

Below: *The Train Heading Towards Spring - Ningbo-Taizhou-Wen-zhou Railway is Fully Operational*, Chinese painting, by Xu Mo and Shen Xiaoming from the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.



WORLD

Envoy: China's South-South advocacy boosts trade

By MINLUZHANG
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China's ambassador to the United Nations on Thursday emphasized that the country will persist as a strong advocate for South-South cooperation and support its trade and investment for sustainable development.

"As the largest developing country, China has always been a steadfast advocate, supporter and practitioner of South-South cooperation," said Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN. "In the future, it will continue to support South-South trade, investment and capacity-building and strengthen triangular cooperation with UN agencies and other stakeholders."

An example of such support is the Chinese International Import Expo (CIIE) and Hongqiao International Economic Forum. The CIIE is the country's largest annual trade fair, drawing hundreds of leading global companies each year to display their latest products and innovations to prospective buyers. The United States sent its biggest-ever delegation to CIIE in 2023.

China is the only country in the world that specifically hosts the International Import Expo, said Fu.

"The CIIE is a window for high-level opening to the outside world and also

a platform for sharing development opportunities," he told a meeting about promoting South-South trade and investment for sustainable development at UN headquarters in New York on Thursday.

The UN defines South-South cooperation as technical cooperation among developing countries in the Global South.

The meeting shared examples of the CIIE and Hongqiao forum on promoting trade and investment for sustainable development between developing countries.

It is through the CIIE that many goods from the least developed countries can enter thousands of Chinese households with zero tariffs and then reach the global market, according to Fu.

"This drives corresponding investment and industrial development, increases employment, improves people's livelihoods and helps to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," said Fu.

The Hongqiao forum "seeks solutions from an international and professional perspective around hot and difficult issues affecting sustainable development, such as technological innovation, food security, digital and energy transformation," said Fu, adding that the core content and goals of the discussions and cooperation projects are highly valued in line with



Fu Cong, Chinese ambassador to the United Nations, speaks at a meeting promoting South-South trade and investment for sustainable development at United Nations headquarters in New York on Thursday. LIAO PAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

the development agenda of the UN.

Dima Al-Khatib, director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, reiterated Fu's statement that the CIIE promotes international trade, especially among developing countries.

South-South trade has emerged as a powerful tool for bolstering the economic resilience, diversification and competitiveness of the often fragile developing economy, said Al-Khatib, adding that the increase in world trade during the last decade was largely driven by the rise of trade between developing countries.

"It is important to underpin that trade facilitation, promotion of

investment as well as information and knowledge sharing through South-South and triangular cooperation plays a unique role," said Al-Khatib.

To demonstrate its commitment to multilateralism, China has implemented significant initiatives aligned to the UN Development Agenda, such as the Global Development Initiative, or GDI, she said.

The CIIE is another example of international trade promotion and facilitation, she said. The CIIE provides a platform for small- and medium-sized enterprises from developing countries to showcase their products, thus stimulating local economic development, Al-Khatib said.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises are the "backbone of economic roles" in most of the developing countries, Al-Khatib said, emphasizing that the CIIE, along with the Hongqiao forum, serve as a public stage aimed at promoting an open world economy, bolstering the multilateral trading system and enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation.

The CIIE and the Hongqiao forum have also received a significant response from international enterprises.

PepsiCo, an American multinational food and beverage company that owns brands such as Lay's, Doritos and Cheetos, entered the Chinese market in 1981 and has been an active participant in the CIIE since 2018.

"CIIE brings together high-quality products and services from various countries. Facilitating the creation of an all-round, multilevel and wide-field, international cooperation network," said Caroline Berson, vice-president of Global Public Policy and Government Affairs at PepsiCo, said at a promotional event Wednesday in New York, attended by more than 100 American companies and agencies.

"CIIE not only facilitates international trade, exchanges and cooperation, but also contributes to the recovery and growth of the global economy," she said.

"Since its launch in 2018, CIIE has consistently been an important avenue of international collaboration, and we are proud to be part of it," said Jane Lauder, executive vice-president, enterprise marketing and chief data officer at Estee Lauder, an American cosmetics company.

"Based on our learnings over the past three decades, we believe that we can all benefit from Chinese innovation and expertise. I want to develop products not just in China, for China, but also in China for the world," Lauder said.

"We are continually impressed by the sophistication, openness and enthusiasm of Chinese consumers, and CIIE is an important way for us to demonstrate our strong, long-term commitment to serving this consumer base," she said.

Neeraj Sahai, president of Dun & Bradstreet International, an American company that provides commercial analysis for businesses, said CIIE is now a key platform for introducing new products and solutions.

"We witnessed, participated in and contributed to China's remarkable journey of reform and opening-up. In turn, we have reaped the benefits from China's thriving economic development," Sahai said.

Judy Xie in New York contributed to the story.

Case made for bilateral 'climate-smart' farming

By ZHAO HUANXIN
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US-China cooperation on climate-smart agriculture is in the national interests of both countries and the world and should proceed with promoting sustainable agricultural production in water-stressed areas and working together on standards gauging climate impacts of the sector, a group of experts have said.

In *The Case for US-China Cooperation on Climate-Smart Agriculture*, an analysis two Washington-based think tanks published on Tuesday, the experts noted that growing populations around the world will require more food while climate change and other pressures are limiting agricultural production, including in the US and China.

The article coincided with China's envoy on climate Liu Zhenmin's arrival in Washington for talks with his US counterpart John Podesta.

They met on Wednesday and Thursday for a meeting of the bilateral Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s, aimed at accelerating concrete climate actions this decade, according to a statement by the US State Department.

The American and Chinese experts, convened in March by the Brookings Institution and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), discussed areas that pose threats to food security and agricultural interests that they believed the two countries would be willing to jointly address and on which the global community would stand to benefit from US-China cooperation.

The majority of ideas agreed upon by experts concerned climate-smart agriculture, according to the article.

Climate-smart agriculture is a set of agricultural practices and technologies that simultaneously boost productivity, enhance resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to a World Bank release.

The world is facing surging food

demand as its population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2025. That goes along with the fact that today the global agri-food system emits one-third of all emissions, according to the global lender.

A major consensus reached in the CSIS-Brookings-led discussions is for the two countries to promote sustainable agricultural production in water-stressed areas.

The US and China are grappling with similar challenges, testing solutions that could be mutually beneficial and that could benefit agricultural production elsewhere, including food-insecure countries for which water insecurity is set to worsen with climate change, according to the experts.

Another area of consensus was reducing food loss and waste, which would deliver strong climate benefits by reducing emissions of methane and other greenhouse gases from food waste in landfills.

"Exchanges on best practices for approaches to reduce food loss and waste could benefit each country's efforts to achieve both food waste and climate goals. Extending these practices to third countries could have additional benefits for improving global nutrition," the article wrote.

The US-China cooperation on climate-smart agriculture could also fill a glaring gap in global standards of measurement for the climate impacts of agriculture.

There are no globally agreed-upon standards for greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, nor a board to set such codes, according to the article.

It suggests that cooperation between US and Chinese technical experts could result in formalized, evidence-based standards to which both countries agree.

Agreement on standards by both countries would benefit global trade and global climate change efforts and reduce the risk of "disparate, overlapping standards" that could increase market costs, inhibit trade and confuse efforts to meet global climate goals, the experts wrote.

US Navy airman killed by police



Chantimekdi Fortson, mother of Roger Fortson, a US Navy airman, holds a photo of her son during a news conference with Attorney Ben Crump, on Thursday in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Fortson was shot and killed by police in his apartment on May 3. GERALD HERBERT / AP

Food delivery apps in Chinese look to expand

By BELINDA ROBINSON
in New York
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The largest food delivery apps aimed at Chinese-speaking customers are positioning themselves to capture a broader slice of the market in the United States and worldwide as the Asian populations grows.

Several years ago, food delivery apps such as Fantuan, Chowbus and HungryPanda were created to help customers who are more comfortable ordering in Chinese. Today, the apps have millions of users and could be set to grow more.

Crystal Li, PR director at Fantuan told China Daily: "With the US market offering huge potential, our focus remains on expanding our reach and penetration even further."

"Fantuan has over 3.6 million users in four countries, the US, Canada, Australia and the UK ... including immigrants, international students, local Asians (for example American born Chinese/Canadian born Chinese), tourists, and whoever enjoys authentic Asian cuisine."

There are around 120,000 Asian restaurants in the United States. Around 71 percent offer Chinese food, the Pew Research Center found.

More than half of the restaurants

are located in five states where there is a significant Asian population: California, New York, Texas, New Jersey and Washington, Pew found.

Asian restaurants were hard hit amid the COVID-19 pandemic amid anti-Asian sentiment in the US. In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, Asian restaurants lost \$7.4 billion in revenue, according to a 2023 study by researchers from Boston College, the University of Michigan and Microsoft Research.

As businesses and restaurants in the US and North America attempt to claw back customers post pandemic, many of the food delivery apps are now increasingly being used by restaurants in cities like San Jose, California, Houston and Minneapolis, The New York Times reported.

"They [the customers] seek comfort in the flavors of their hometowns, even while far from home. ... Unlike mainstream apps, our platform is finely tuned to their preferences, offering authentic Asian selections that cannot be found on those apps and also Chinese language support," Li said.

Amid a venture capital-backed push for growth, Fantuan, based in Vancouver, closed a \$40 million Series C funding round in December. It was done specifically to get into the Asian food delivery market and provide services

for its global customers. Meanwhile, HungryPanda, a UK-based app, raised \$220 million in capital since 2019.

There are approximately 40 million Asians in the countries where Fantuan operates, with a market size of over \$36 billion.

With an estimated 2.38 million Chinese in the US alone, the population has grown rapidly from 2010, when there were 1.8 million. Analysts suggest that this market will generate a huge customer base for all kinds of businesses.

"The Asian [population is] certainly increasing in size," Professor Richard D. Alba, an American sociologist, a distinguished professor emeritus at the City University of New York and at the sociology department at the University of Albany SUNY told China Daily.

Additionally, the largest number of overseas students — 300,000 — who are studying at American universities were from China as of 2022, according to US State Department figures.

To cater to this demographic further, the apps are making key moves to position themselves to not only tap into the Asian food market but also generic US restaurants in the future.

In January, Fantuan acquired Chowbus' delivery business. Li said that the acquisition "will solidify

Fantuan's leading position in the US Asian delivery market by bolstering our market share."

Fantuan is also offering online grocery delivery and errands services in a few major cities, the company said.

Meanwhile, Chowbus, which offers delivery services to more than 20 cities in the country, ventured into providing restaurant management software and has 1,000 restaurants as clients. Since 2022, it has raised \$40 million.

Linxin Wen, founder and CEO of Chowbus, said in a statement that the company's main goal was to assist North American restaurants, "especially those owned by newcomers to the country, who generally need help with technology and marketing."

Li said that another key aim from the acquisition of Chowbus was to "collaborate with even more mom-and-pop restaurants and businesses and provide a more comprehensive back of house solution for merchants".

It wants to be like an "overseas Meituan", Li said.

Across the pond, HungryPanda is the largest overseas Asian food delivery platform; it works with 60,000 merchants and serves more than 3.5 million users worldwide.

HungryPanda operates in more than 80 cities in 10 countries with room to grow.

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BUSINESS

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HIGHER GROUND

Exports seen rising on upgrades, e-commerce

Jan-April two-way trade in goods up 5.7% year-on-year to 13.81 trillion yuan

By ZHONG NAN in Shenzhen, Guangdong and WANG KEJU in Beijing

Chinese manufacturers' ongoing green transformation and industrial upgrade will bolster export growth this year despite numerous challenges in the global economic climate, said government officials and exporters on Thursday.

They said that many domestic firms are focusing on developing and exporting technologically sophisticated, eco-friendly and high-value products. These efforts, along with bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, will help maintain a healthy growth trajectory through the second half of the year.

China's two-way trade in goods expanded 5.7 percent year-on-year to 13.81 trillion yuan (\$1.91 trillion) in the first four months, while its exports rose 4.9 percent to 7.81 trillion yuan, said the General Administration of Customs.

Since the beginning of the year, positive factors in the area of foreign trade have been steadily improving, and the momentum has continued to strengthen, said Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis.

Lyu said the growth rate of imports and exports in the first four months has accelerated compared to the first quarter of this year, and the scale has reached a new historical high for the period.

Chinese manufacturers exported 4.62 trillion yuan worth of mechanical and electrical products such as electric vehicles, integrated circuits and smartphones between January and April, up 6.9 percent year-on-year, accounting for 59.2 percent of the country's total export value, according to Customs data.

From the perspective of new drivers of export growth, the rapid increase in exports of tech-intensive green products like lithium batteries and photovoltaic products, along with the acceleration of new forms of foreign trade represented by cross-border e-commerce, are the main factors currently driving China's exports, said Wang Xiaosong, a professor at the Renmin University of China's School of Economics in Beijing.

Sharing similar views, Cui Fan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said these products are not only in line

with global efforts to combat climate change, but also cater to the increasing demand for eco-friendly alternatives worldwide.

The significance of China's efforts to promote new energy imports and exports has been highlighted, as current global production capacity in the new energy sector is far from sufficient to satisfy potential market demand, said Cui.

Apart from focusing on enhancing their innovation capabilities, many Chinese companies have been strengthening cooperation with trading partners in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, said Edward Kieswetter, chairman of the Brussels-based World Customs Organization.

As the tourism and food delivery markets continue to boom in many parts of the world, Nanjing Vmoto Manufacturing Co — a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based motorcycle manufacturer — has developed several types of products to seize market share abroad since last year.

"These motorcycles feature long battery life and a heavy-duty rear seat delivery box," said Xie Xiangjing, the company's director of sales.

"We also introduced lightweight, durable 'shared e-motorcycles' with easily detachable and replaceable parts to meet rental demand in overseas tourism markets."

In addition to establishing overseas repair stations in key markets, Nanjing Vmoto has expanded into 64 countries and regions, including Greece, Brazil, Malaysia and France. Its total export value of motorcycles and parts surged 267 percent year-on-year in the first quarter.

To create more favorable conditions for its exporters, China signed Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) mutual recognition agreements with Burundi and Iceland in Shenzhen, Guangdong province on Thursday.

AEO mutual recognition deals allow Customs authorities to recognize certified AEO companies for streamlined Customs clearance, aiming to enhance cooperation between Customs, businesses and other government departments.

As of Thursday, China had signed AEO mutual recognition agreements with 28 economies, covering 54 countries and regions.

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Shoppers try out Huawei's Pura 70 series smartphones at a store in Jinhua, Zhejiang province. SHI BUFA / FOR CHINA DAILY

Experts flay fresh US chip curbs

By MASI and ZHU WENQIAN

The United States' restrictions on exports of purely civilian semiconductor products to China, and its move to cut off supplies to specific Chinese companies, smack of economic coercion — and such measures not only violate rules of the World Trade Organization but also seriously harm the interests of US companies, Chinese officials and experts said on Thursday.

The comments came after foreign media quoted anonymous sources as saying that the US government has revoked licenses that allowed companies like Intel and Qualcomm to ship chips used in laptops and handsets to Chinese tech company Huawei Technologies.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Wednesday night that the reported US measures seriously contradict the country's commitment that it will not seek decoupling from China nor impede China's development. They also contradict the US claim of "precisely defining national security".

China will take all necessary measures to firmly defend the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, the spokesperson said.

Wei Jianguo, former vice-minister of commerce, said: "Despite Washington's shift in rhetoric from decoupling to de-risking in key supply chains, the US government continues to tighten its controls over chip exports to China."

"The move is the latest evidence that to contain China's technological rise, the US government is leveraging all means, regardless of

how much pain it will cause to US companies."

Intel said in a financial filing that it expected the new restrictions on exports to China to affect its revenue in the next quarter. Specifically, Intel said its revenue for the second quarter of this year will still fall within the original range of \$12.5 billion to \$13.5 billion it had outlined, but below the midpoint.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China, said the US chip restrictions will accelerate Chinese companies' efforts to achieve technological breakthroughs.

For instance, Huawei's AI processors became highly sought-after products in China after restrictions were imposed on the export of US company Nvidia's most advanced AI chips to China, Xiang said.

Meanwhile, despite Washington's prolonged curbs on Huawei, the Chinese tech company has managed to significantly grow its revenue and profit in the first quarter of this year.

Huawei's revenue for the quarter to March rose 37 percent year-on-year to 178.5 billion yuan (\$24.7 billion), while its net profit surged 564 percent to 19.65 billion yuan.

Though the company did not disclose the reason behind the high jump, analysts said that was partly driven by its strong comeback in the domestic smartphone market.

After 13 quarters, Huawei returned to the top position in the Chinese smartphone market in the January-March period, capturing a

17 percent market share, driven by the success of its Mate and Nova series, according to market research company Canalysis.

In the first quarter, Huawei has already shipped 11.7 million smartphones, up a remarkable 70 percent year-on-year. This resurgence is notable, given the challenges the company endured due to US sanctions, which led to a major reorganization of its phone business, Canalysis said.

What is more, Huawei is returning to the international smartphone market in a low-key manner. The Chinese company's latest Pura 70 series made their global debut in Malaysia earlier this month. The Pura 70 series smartphones are now available for pre-sales in a few European countries such as Germany.

Analysts said Huawei will ramp up its push to regain its share in overseas markets this year, as long as its production capacity of smartphones can be guaranteed.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Commerce also criticized the US practice of sanctioning over 300 entities and individuals, including over 20 Chinese mainland and Hong Kong companies, on the grounds of alleged support for Russian military and energy development.

He Yadong, a spokesman for the Ministry of Commerce, told a news conference that the US sanctions against Chinese companies under the pretext of involvement with Russia reek of unilateral hegemonic action and economic coercion.

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Briefly

Xuzhou-Mingguang road work advances

A new highway project under construction connecting Xuzhou in Jiangsu province and Mingguang, a county-level city in Anhui province, reached a milestone on Wednesday, said China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp, a State builder participating in the project. Work on prefabricating the first box girder reached completion. Prefabrication

is key to the box girder installation progress. The highway is expected to facilitate the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region, CR24 said.

Mastercard's JV starts bank card clearing biz

Mastercard's joint venture in China announced the official commencement of its bank card clearing operations on Thursday, issuing

Mastercard-branded cards with its member institutions for domestic and international use. Mastercard Nets Union Information Technology (Beijing), a joint venture of Mastercard and NetsUnion Clearing Corp, received formal approval from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, in November last year for bank card clearing business in the country.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Data usage to broaden to more industries

By FAN FEIFEI fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn

China will ratchet up resources to expand application scenarios for data elements in various industries and bolster the supply and circulation of data as part of a broader push to fully unleash the value of its massive data resources and develop new quality productive forces, according to the country's top data governance regulator.

Liu Liehong, head of the National Data Administration, said as a new type of production factor, data is playing a vital role in promoting the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, improving total factor productivity and giving birth to new industries, new models and new growth drivers.

Liu made the remarks at the launch ceremony of a competition related to data elements held in Hefei, Anhui province, on Thursday, while emphasizing the significance of data in empowering social and economic development.

As enhanced utilization of data elements is still in its initial stages, Liu urged efforts to create more abundant applications in a wider range of sectors, improve the quality of data and give full play to its multiplier effects.

The scale of China's data resources ranks second worldwide, Liu said, adding that local authorities are actively exploring the authorization and operation of public data resources, while data merchants have played a crucial part in promoting the innovative development of data resources.

According to a guideline released by the NDA and 16 other government departments in January, more efforts will be made to advance the application of data elements in 12 key fields, such as industrial manufacturing, modern agriculture, trade circulation, transportation, financial services, technological innovation, culture and tourism.

The country will create more than 300 typical application scenarios for data elements, double the scale of data transactions, and nurture a batch of data merchants with strong innovation capacities and third-party professional service organizations, the guideline said.

"Expanding the application scenarios of data is a prerequisite for giving full play to the multiplier effect of data elements," said Ouyang Rihui, assistant dean of the China Center for Internet Economy Research at the Central University of Finance and Economics.

Ouyang also underlined the importance of accelerating the building of a unified domestic data elements market, promoting the confirmation of data-related rights, and exploring a data pricing mechanism and value assessment system in order to build basic systems for data and put data resources to better use.

Moreover, the in-depth integration of data with traditional industries will improve production efficiency, optimize the allocation of resources, and create novel business models and new social value, he added.

Market lauds realty policy easing in Hangzhou, Xi'an

By WANG YING in Shanghai wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

By taking the lead among major cities in scrapping all restrictions on homebuying, Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang province, and Xi'an of Shaanxi province have set the tone in terms of effecting measures that boost market confidence and help the market to stabilize, property experts said on Thursday.

All the previous limits on home purchases in Hangzhou were canceled on Thursday. Non-locals who own residential properties in the city can apply for permanent resident status, said a seven-item notice

published on the website of the local bureau of housing security and real estate management on Thursday.

"Hangzhou is the first Chinese city to lift all existing curbs posed on homebuying after April 30, when the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee held a tone-setting conference calling for measures to digest housing inventories and optimize new supplies," said Yan Yuejin, director of Shanghai-based E-house China Research and Development Institution.

"Behind the easing policies are visible home price drops and withered transactions," said Li Yujia, chief researcher at the Guangdong

Planning Institute's residential policy research center.

"All of the city's 10 districts reported declines on their average trading prices of pre-owned homes in April, ranging from 2 percent to 21 percent," said Li, citing data from the Beike Research Institute in Hangzhou.

Data from the China Index Academy showed a transaction downturn in the new homes market, suggesting similar measures are needed to activate potential demand.

Hangzhou's bold move may inspire easing in other cities or their districts, especially second-tier cities, that have tight restrictions on home purchases, said Gao Yuansheng, executive vice-

president of the China Index Academy's East China region.

Citing data from the China Index Academy, Gao said strict limits are still in place in housing markets across cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen of Guangdong province as well as some core districts of cities like Guangzhou of Guangdong province, Tianjin.

Like Hangzhou, Xi'an lifted all its homebuying requirements on Thursday afternoon. The new policy is expected to ease pressure on the city in Northwest China to destock its housing inventories, said Zhang Hongwei, founder of Jingjian Consulting.



A view of a property project under construction in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS



Employees work on a BMW assembly line in Shenyang, Liaoning province, PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

BMW Brilliance rides auto production boom in China

JV in Shenyang rolls out its 6 millionth car as total investment exceeds \$14.5b

By **WU YONG** in Shenyang and **ZHONG NAN** in Shenzhen, Guangdong

Riding the boom in China's automobile production, BMW Brilliance Automotive, a joint venture of Germany's BMW Group and Brilliance China Automotive Holdings, rolled out its 6 millionth car off the production line at its plant in Shenyang, Northeast China's Liaoning province, on Thursday.

With the BMW Group's long-term commitment to being "At Home in China", the cumulative investment in the BMW Shenyang production base has now reached 105 billion yuan (\$14.53 billion) since 2010.

BMW recently said it will increase its investment in China by 20 billion yuan to upgrade and innovate its Shenyang production base.

This reflects a new level of steady development, said Milan Nedeljkovic, a member of BMW's board of management. By leveraging well-known manufacturing concepts, production systems and processes, the group will continue to deliver benchmark, premium-quality

“The Chinese market is dynamic and resilient. There is a significant opportunity for investments by foreign companies, which creates a win-win situation for both China and the investors.”

Franz Decker, CEO of BMW Brilliance Automotive

ty products to customers in both China and abroad.

“The Chinese market is dynamic and resilient. There is a significant opportunity for investments by foreign companies, which creates a win-win situation for both China and the investors,” said Franz Decker, president and CEO of BMW Brilliance Automotive.

The Shenyang production base is the largest one of its kind in BMW Group worldwide. AI and digital technologies are extensively used and nearly 100 AI applications have been actively deployed. AI is instrumental in elevating the standard of quality control and consistency, facilitating real-time process monitoring and instantaneous data analysis, the company said.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of BMW Group's entry into China and the 20th anniversary of the official start of production at BMW Brilliance's plant in Shenyang's Dadong district, said Li Gang, Shenyang's vice-mayor.

Since entering the Chinese market, BMW has been committed to a localization strategy, producing products that meet the needs of domestic consumers. Its high-quality development philosophy runs through the entire value chain, ensuring high quality of its vehicles, said Wang Yan, a professor of economics at the Shenyang Academy of Governance.

At the same time, the Chinese government's efforts in supporting global businesses and optimizing the business environment have provided solid assurance that facilitates BMW Brilliance's development, said Wang.

“The planned investment underlines not only our confidence in China's long-term economic prospects, but also in the innovation capabilities of our Chinese partners,” said Oliver Zipse, chairman of BMW's board of management.

Liaoning has experienced notable growth in attracting investment this year. The investment flow in the province grew by 8.2 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, statistics from Liaoning's provincial department of commerce showed.

The actual domestic investment in Liaoning soared 10.6 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, and actual use of foreign capital reached \$1 billion, according to government data.

In 2026, the first Neue Klasse models, a completely new generation of BMW models that combines all the company's innovations in the areas of electrification, digitalization and circular economy, will roll off the production line in Shenyang.

BMW Group delivered more than 820,000 BMW and Mini vehicles in the Chinese market last year.

Ye Xinnan contributed to this story. Contact the writers at zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

Dunhill eyeing refined menswear biz in nation

By **ZHU WENQIAN** zhuwenqian@chinadaily.com.cn

British luxury menswear brand Dunhill said it sees broad opportunities in China, and will continue to expand its footprint in the country, fueled by growing demand from discerning and style-conscious young consumers with masculine tastes.

In China, Beijing stands as the largest market for Dunhill, which is owned by Swiss group Richemont. Sales in Guangdong province's Shenzhen — a hub of entrepreneurship and innovation in China — have experienced quite significant growth, Dunhill said.

Last year, Dunhill saw the most robust sales growth in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Chengdu, Sichuan province. The company operates key stores in each of the four cities.

“I think there is a fascination among the younger generation for something that is referred to as 'old money' style. There are a few different names for it, depending on where you are from. There is demand for more proper menswear, or manly menswear,” said Simon Holloway, creative director of Dunhill, who joined the brand last year.

With a well-established clientele in China, Dunhill is trying to reach more connoisseur-savvy consumer groups, as sales of custom-made outfits have been on the rise. Pieces in limited editions have been growing every season and every year, in addition to the growth of ready-to-wear clothing, Holloway said.

The British brand said it also sees great opportunities in footwear, and it expects quick sales growth of its knitwear and outerwear in China. In addition, sales of hard products such as writing instruments, lighters and pipes have been robust in the country.

In the next few years, the company plans to promote certain products, especially custom-made, outerwear and knitwear items. The growth is expected to come from more clients who appreciate British craftsmanship and timeless classism.

“We definitely see a large opportunity in footwear in China. There are different moods where you can be more dressed up and tailored, or more casually elegant. We see opportunities on both sides of the Dunhill man, the more casual expression, and also the more formal part,” Holloway said.

After China optimized its COVID-19 response measures, the country's luxury market experienced a strong rebound in 2023, when it saw a 12 percent yearly increase. The market recovered from the previous year's decline due to the impact of the pandemic, but it was still slightly below 2021's record level, according to consultancy Bain & Co.

“While China's long-term fundamentals for luxury consumption remain robust, there are uncertainties in the near term regarding the speed of consumer confidence recovery and the growth of luxury shopping overseas,” said Xing Weiwei, partner of Bain & Co.

It is expected that most of the trends witnessed in 2023 will continue or amplify, leading to a mid-single-digit growth rate in China's luxury market in 2024, Xing added.

Meanwhile, like many other international luxury brands, driven by the huge consumption market in China, Dunhill said it has continuously debuted special products tailored for the Chinese market ahead of the Lunar New Year, China's most important holiday.

“We have always been doing the Chinese New Year capsules, which we take very seriously. That can be anything from an evening slipper to a lighter to a special piece of outerwear. We always do these kinds of packages,” Holloway said.



Simon Holloway



A Dunhill store is seen at a shopping center in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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BUSINESS FOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE



Consumers browse secondhand luxury products at a shopping mall in Shanghai in October. WANG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Used luxury goods hot online

By ZHU WENQIAN

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China's secondhand luxury goods market is expected to embrace the most intense competition this year after nearly a decade of development, and online platforms have increasingly become important shopping channels for consumers, a new report said.

Fueled by the rapid growth of short video platforms and livestreaming sessions, competition in the pre-owned luxury goods market in China has become increasingly fierce, said an industry report released in April by the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing and the China Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Association.

China's turnover rate for secondhand luxury products follows rates in the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom and France. The turnover rate in the US was higher than 30 percent in 2021, tops globally, the report said.

"With continued willingness to spend from high-income individuals, and the pursuit of consumption upgrade by middle-income consumers, the luxury market in China has maintained a strong growth momentum," said Wang Lixiang, an official of the luxury professional committee at the association.

Chinese consumers aged between 29 and 41 have become the core demographic for pre-owned luxury product purchases, supported by their ample spending appetites and capability.

In addition, there has been growing demand from Gen Z consumers — those born between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s — and they are more likely to purchase vintage products or those with unique designs or limited editions, the report said.

Melissa Liu, a 31-year-old office employee in Beijing, bought a secondhand Chloe bag recently from a store for less than 3,000 yuan (\$415). She said it was significantly cheaper than a brand-new bag and the condition of the bag was quite good.

With frequent interactions on social media platforms and short-video platforms by young consumers, it has become easier for people to find different styles and make purchases, the report said.

China's luxury market experienced a strong rebound in 2023 after the country optimized its COVID-19 response measures, and it is projected that China's luxury market will experience mid-single-digit growth this year, although it's not yet back to the highs of 2021, said consultancy Bain & Co.

The fundamentals of luxury consumption in China remain strong

Buyers, sellers of premier brand secondhand merchandise embrace e-commerce wave



A luxury appraiser shares professional knowledge via livestreaming in Changchun, Jilin province, in March 2023.

ZHANG YAO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Circular consumption is more in line with the consumption mindset of the younger generation, and it is increasingly becoming the new consumption trend."

Xu Wei, founder and CEO of Hongbulin

over the long run, although there are uncertainties in the near term, such as the speed of consumer confidence recovery and the growth of luxury shopping overseas, Bain & Co said.

For luxury products purchases, 53 percent of consumers made purchases from domestic brick-and-mortar stores, while 42 percent of the total transactions were made online, and 5 percent of consumers conducted such shopping overseas, said the UIBE report.

A strong luxury market has fueled the growth of China's secondhand luxury goods market, and it has grown to such a size that the potential value of all the products that could be traded could exceed 3 trillion yuan, said the Yao Institute, a market research firm.

Zhang Zhigang, former vice-minister of the Ministry of Commerce, said the government, research institutions and the business community should utilize their respective strengths and specialties to lead the standardized development and healthy growth of the secondhand luxury goods market in China.

"If conditions mature, we hope the sector can integrate with the Chinese national high-end consumer goods market and contribute to the growth and circular develop-

ment of Chinese high-end brands," Zhang said.

He added that China should foster more talent focused on secondhand luxury goods identification, improve the scientific and data-driven features of the identification process, and pay attention to the setting of standards.

In the pre-owned luxury goods market, concerns about authenticity remain the biggest issue affecting consumers' decisions, given the high unit price of luxury products. The healthy development of appraisal institutions has a crucial impact on the growth of the secondhand trading market, the report said.

In 2023, the number of secondhand luxury goods appraised by different institutions in China reached 10 million pieces, up 35 percent year-on-year, the report found.

"Louis Vuitton was the brand that recorded the highest number of identification demand in the handbag category last year, the most frequently transacted category, and Rolex tops the identification demand among watches," said Zhang Mengxia, director of Luxury China at the UIBE.

"During holidays such as Valentine's Day, Christmas and New Year, sales far exceed ordinary time, indi-

cating that consumers would like to spend for emotional value. Retailers usually make good use of holidays for promotions and achieve significant business growth," Zhang said.

Last year, the trading volume of handbags accounted for half of the total secondhand luxury goods trading market, given their various styles and practical functions. It was followed by jewelry, clothing and footwear, which made up 17 percent and 14 percent of the total, respectively, the report said.

For secondhand luxury goods trading in China, total consumption volume was highest in Beijing last year. It was followed by Shanghai; Shenzhen, Guangdong province; Chengdu, Sichuan province; and Guangzhou, Guangdong, the report found.

Secondhand luxury consumers who live in first-tier cities accounted for more than 35 percent of the total nationwide, as they have a high recognition of secondhand luxury products and strong purchasing power.

Encouraged by the increasing development of online secondhand luxury trading platforms, smaller cities also become markets where platforms are seeking future growth. With a large population base, smaller Chinese cities boast growth potential in secondhand luxury products trading in the future, the report said.

Despite the fast growth of the secondhand luxury trading market in China, the penetration rate of the market is lower than 10 percent and still in its early stage of development. The figure is far below that of the US, Japan and Europe, though young Chinese consumers have shown an increasing appreciation for secondhand products.

Secondhand luxury trading platform Hongbulin said more than 70 percent of its users are both buyers and sellers at the same time. The business performance of the company last year was significantly better than expected, and both supply and demand of products showed continued growth.

"In this era of material development, people have been thinking about increasing the rate of recycling. Circular consumption is more in line with the consumption mindset of the younger generation, and it is increasingly becoming the new consumption trend," said Xu Wei, founder and CEO of Hongbulin.

"By leveraging advanced internet technologies, we would like to provide standardized services, manage the life cycle of products, and help consumers to shape more environmentally friendly consumption habits," Xu said.

Brands team up with Mandopop king Chou

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

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From French luxury brand Dior to German luggage name Rimowa and Estee Lauder's high-end La Mer skincare products from the United States, a single thread now binds these luxury brands — the appointment of Jay Chou, singer and actor, as their global ambassador.

Chou, renowned for his work in music, cinema and television, boasts global album sales of over 30 million and commands an audience topping 50 million on Kuaishou, a popular social platform in China.

Chou is recognized internationally for his roles in Hollywood productions like *The Green Hornet*.

Amid a landscape in which brands often enlist Gen-Z pop sensations in their marketing strategies, Chou's seasoned career — spanning over two decades — offers a bridge to a broader group of consumers, most importantly, one with the purchasing power to indulge in luxury shopping, said an industry insider.

According to Dior, Chou "embodies the spirit and singularity of Dior style, a modernity with a timeless signature".

For Rimowa, it is a historic collaboration with a Chinese artist. Hugues Bonnet-Masimbert, CEO of Rimowa, said, "Jay Chou not only embodies these values, but also commands global admiration for his artistic impact."

Despite his global and domestic influence, Chou's ties to the luxury realm have been relatively modest.

While he served as the face of Tudor and visited the shows of Chanel and Balenciaga, further collaborations have been scarce.

The turning point began in 2022, when the music video for his latest single, filmed at La Samaritaine department store — owned by LVMH — captivated global audiences, signaling a potential deepening of his connection to the luxury industry.

What impressed luxury brands more was that after the COVID-19 pandemic, China's live concert ticket sales have experienced a rebound, fueled by the surge in demand for experience-driven entertainment.

In 2023, the concert market in China reached a peak, soaring to a staggering 73.9 billion yuan (\$10.2 billion), said the China Association of Performing Arts.

Chou's tour emerged as a standout, capturing the hearts of audiences with its nostalgic style and enduring fan loyalty spanning generations. Chou's recent tour in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, featured four concerts between April 18-21, drawing record audiences of 200,000 fans and generating associated spending totaling 1.31 billion yuan.

Yao Yao, a sportswear store operator in her late 30s based in Beijing, learned of Chou's concert in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, and purchased two tickets totaling 6,600 yuan.

Accompanied by her husband, they took a train to Taiyuan.

Yao recalled: "My husband thought I overpaid the ticket dealer." However, upon arriving at the concert venue, they were astonished that a couple standing nearby had paid double the price of their tickets.

Yao spent the remainder of the year hoping to secure tickets for Chou's concerts nationwide, yet failed.

"I am still waiting for another chance to attend his concert this year," she said.

Analysts have observed that Chou's fan base predominantly comprises those aged 25 to 44, who have the most consumption power. This was evident when Chou's concert ticket prices soared to over 30,000 yuan, yet fans continued to look for tickets.

In the face of ongoing challenges within the luxury industry, brands like Dior, La Mer and Rimowa are redefining their strategies, emphasizing inclusivity and selecting spokespersons who resonate with a broader audience, thereby optimizing their investments for long-term success, said an industry insider.

Mia Kong, a fashion editor and global influencer based in Shanghai, said luxury brands often opt for major celebrities to maintain consistent branding and storytelling.

Jay Chou not only embodies these values, but also commands global admiration for his artistic impact."

Hugues Bonnet-Masimbert, CEO of Rimowa

"Luxury brands have grown weary of engaging with what we once called 'young heartthrobs' with large fan bases, as some of these collaborations have proven difficult to sustain," Kong said.

The long-term collaboration and sustainable reputation between celebrities and brands have become more crucial as luxury brands in the first quarter of this year posted very polarizing results.

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton recorded revenue of 20.7 billion euros (\$22.2 billion) in the first quarter, a rise of 3 percent year-on-year. The group said the rest of Asia reflected the strong growth in spending by Chinese customers in Europe and Japan. Kering, which owns luxury brands including Gucci and Bottega Veneta, saw its first quarter revenue down 11 percent to 4.5 billion euros.

The big picture of the luxury sector in the Chinese market is still promising. According to a Bain & Co report in 2023, while China's long-term fundamentals for luxury consumption remain robust, there are near-term uncertainties. It is projected that China's luxury market will experience mid-single-digit growth in 2024, said the report.

Chou has tapped into his star power by collaborating with sportswear brands. His fashion label, Phantaci, has worked with Nike to release its limited edition Air Max 1 "Grand Piano" series in April.

Influencer Kong said that Chou's fan base has shown an enduring commitment to supporting his music and the image he embodies.

Speaking during an encounter with Chou at a Balenciaga after-party event, Kong vividly recalled, "When my agent inquired about Chou's status in Chinese showbiz, I likened him to the Michael Jackson of our world."



Visitors check out a show by German luggage brand Rimowa in Shanghai in January. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Editorials

Hungary and China working together to raise their 'homecoming' relations to new heights

The "welcome home" greeting Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban extended to visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping upon his arrival at Budapest Airport on Wednesday night highlights the friendly relations between the two nations.

In his signed article published on Wednesday in the Hungarian newspaper Magyar Nemzet, President Xi wrote: "Our bilateral relationship is at its best in history, and has embarked on a golden voyage."

That China and Hungary are good friends and good partners with deep mutual trust is not incidental. Hungary was one of the first countries to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with China in 1949. Together, the two countries have set a fine example of building a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. The bilateral relationship has since been developing steadily with tangible results, and was elevated to a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2017.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of diplomatic ties between the two countries. It is expected that Xi's visit, the second in 15 years, will not only witness the deepening of the traditional friendship toward a bilateral community with a shared future, with a series of economic and trade cooperation projects and cultural exchange programs to be unveiled under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and other mechanisms.

Hungary is a top investment destination for Chinese investment in the European Union, as well as its important trading partner in Central and East-

ern Europe, with their bilateral cooperation being strong, fruitful and dynamic.

China is pursuing high-quality development and promoting high-standard opening-up. Hungary on its part is also making every effort to advance its development. To further tap into their complementarity, the two countries need to forge greater synergy between their development strategies and strive to make new achievements in practical cooperation so as to accelerate the construction of the Budapest-Belgrade railway link and other significant cooperation projects. The two countries have great potential and space to strengthen their cooperation in clean energy, artificial intelligence, the digital economy, green development and other areas.

China highly appreciates Hungary upholding its strategic autonomy on the world stage as well as within the EU. Sound China-Hungary ties are conducive to keeping the relationship between China and Central and Eastern Europe as well as the overall China-Europe ties advancing in the right direction.

China and Hungary have similar views and positions on international and regional situations. By remaining committed to solidarity and collaboration, Beijing and Budapest can jointly champion true multilateralism and promote peace and development. The two countries should advocate for an equal and orderly multipolar world and inclusive economic globalization that benefits all.

It is to be hoped that no matter how the international landscape evolves, China and Hungary will always view and approach the bilateral relationship from a broad perspective and with a long-term view.

Chip coercion further undermines trust

The United States is intensifying its tech war against China. In yet another act of "economic coercion" targeting Chinese companies, the US has revoked export licenses that allowed tech giants such as Qualcomm and Intel to supply chips to Chinese telecommunications equipment company Huawei, which Washington has already put on a trade restriction "Entity List" since 2019 on the grounds that it poses national security risks to the US.

The move comes after the Chinese company unveiled its first AI-enabled laptop last month, and announced that its first-quarter profits surged more than fivefold year-on-year, prompting some China hawks in Washington to complain that previous US crackdowns on the Chinese company have not yielded the intended results. They have pushed for the US administration to further tighten the screws on the company.

Speaking before the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo made no bones about Washington's abuse of export controls. "I tell semiconductor companies that they can't sell their chips to China," she told the panel.

The sanctions will certainly undermine the smooth development of Sino-US relations, which the two sides have managed to stabilize since last year through a series of high-level visits. The latest move not only runs counter to the World Trade Organization rules, but also belies the commitment the US has repeatedly

made to China that it does not seek to "decouple" from the country or to contain its development.

The fact that the latest US restrictions are targeted at purely civilian consumer chip products exported to China also makes the promise that US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen made during her visits to China that US national security actions in the economic sphere are narrowly scoped and based on clearly defined national security concerns sound hollow.

There is increasing evidence that the US is trying to erect a technological "iron curtain" to isolate China from the rest of the world in the realm of high technologies.

Unveiling the US International Cyberspace and Digital Policy Strategy at a major tech forum in San Francisco on Monday, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken declared that the US intends to enhance international technology collaborations — or "digital solidarity" — with its allies and partners in technological advancements ranging from artificial intelligence to quantum computing, which obviously is aimed at countering China's progress in these fields.

"Today's revolutions in technology are at the heart of our competition with geopolitical rivals. They pose a real test to our security," he said, adding "it is critical that we work with trusted vendors and exclude untrustworthy ones from the ecosystem". The US has not achieved its goal of impeding China's technological advances with its sweeping technology restrictions in the past. It will not do so in the future.

Nations: Principles relevant even now

From page 1

In 1945, the United Nations was created by 51 countries, most of which were European and Latin American. Several African and Asian nations were still under colonial rule. Today, the United Nations has 193 nations as members, giving developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America significant weight in the global governance body.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence become even more relevant when faced with contemporary challenges, such as the wars in Ukraine and Palestine. The world based on the rules defined by the UN Charter is in check, mainly because the country that claims to defend these rules has systematically circumvented them, such as the various attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations to change regimes, the invasion of countries without approval from the Security Council, the systematic veto of UN General Assembly resolutions that seek to guarantee the rights of Palestinians, the imposition of sanctions and boycotts, the use of the dollar as a political weapon, the creation of alliances to embarrass third countries such as the AUKUS or QUAD ... the list is too long.

Fortunately, the international order is being rebuilt based on South-South Cooperation, in which the principles of noninterference in internal affairs, cooperation with shared gains, and the defense of peaceful and negotiated solutions are gaining ground. In this sense, China's diplomacy is essential for articulation with other developing countries, such as the BRICS, FOCCAC, and Forum China-CELAC. Also worth highlighting is the role played by the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Belt and Road Initiative as an update to those principles postulated at the beginning of the rebirth of the Chinese nation, in the 1950s.

Finally, a critical reflection is necessary. Seventy years ago, China was a country in reconstruction, with incipient industrialization, with a low level of education and scientific and technological development that brought it in many aspects closer to other

Today, China is a country with immense industrial and technological capacity for investment. ... China continues to be a partner that doesn't impose conditionalities, does not seek to impose its government system, still seeks cooperation with shared gains, and positions itself as a political force against hegemonism.

nations that had emerged from colonialism and faced similar problems. But today, China is a country with immense industrial and technological capacity for investment. This new status could suggest that the country seeks a prominent place among the rich, far from the former "third world". But not! China continues to be a partner that doesn't impose conditionalities, does not seek to impose its government system, still seeks cooperation with shared gains, and positions itself as a political force against hegemonism.

In this sense, it is worth recalling late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's words in the first speech by a Chinese leader at the UN in 1974. He said that China is not a superpower, nor will it ever seek to be one. If one day China should change its color and turn into a superpower, and if it too should play the tyrant in the world and everywhere subject others to its bullying, aggression, and exploitation, the people of the world should identify it as social imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.

The author is a professor of international political economy at Sao Paulo State University in Brazil. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Cao Yi



Opinion Line

Spirit of Red Cross still shines in the country after 120 years

The Red Cross Society of China marked the 120th anniversary of its founding at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday.

The society has made important contributions to protecting the life and health of the Chinese people over the past 120 years, carrying forward the humanitarian spirit, safeguarding human dignity and promoting social peace and progress.

The Red Cross Society of China has, from the very start, focused on carrying forward the humanitarian spirit and promoting peace and progress, which is an important reason why it has won wide respect. From organizing rescue and disaster relief work, to organizing emergency rescue training, from participating in the promotion of unpaid blood donation, body and human organ donation, to organizing Red Cross volunteer services, every responsibility undertaken by the society is closely

related to the public.

The more detailed the work, the better image the society can cultivate, and the more trust it can win from the public.

Since 2012, the national Red Cross system has closely focused on the central tasks of the Party and the State to promote the accelerated development of the cause of the Red Cross, making historical achievements. It has established a regional cooperation mechanism for emergency rescue and actively integrated into the country's overall emergency response system.

It participated in major disaster relief work during the heavy rainstorm in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in 2021, flood prevention and relief work in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region in 2023, and disaster relief and aid efforts following an earthquake in Jishishan county, Gansu province, in December 2023. It also participated in the offering of

air medical support for the Beijing Winter Olympics, and volunteer services for the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games, achieving full coverage of automated external defibrillator services for competition venues in Olympic history for the first time.

What the Red Cross holds high is not only a spirit, but also a flag. According to the previous plan, the number of grassroots organizations of the society will reach 150,000 by 2024, with 20 million staff members and 2 million registered volunteers, all of whom are shaping the society's image, undertakings, mission and responsibility.

With the implementation of the newly revised Law on the Red Cross Society, the development of China's Red Cross cause has increasingly entered the track of legalization and institutionalization, and its responsibilities, property and supervision will be subject to the framework of a more sound legal system.

—THEPAPER.CN

Gist of applied mathematics speech lost in chaos

After two rounds of selection by two committees, 85 mathematical essays written in the past five years were selected for the first session of the International Congress of Basic Science held in Beijing last July. Only six of those essays were authored or co-authored by domestic mathematicians.

In comparison, more than 70 of the award-winning essays were authored or co-authored by professors from the United States. There is no reason to suspect any "bias" against Chinese mathematicians, as all the related discussions and academic meetings were conducted by Chinese mathematicians, with open, free, unguided discussions.

That's a key part of the controversy-stirring speech Shing-tung Yau, a Chinese-American mathematician, who is the director of the Yau Mathematical Sciences Center at Tsinghua University and Professor

Emeritus at Harvard University, made at Huazhong University of Science and Technology on April 30. His lament at the poor number of Chinese mathematicians getting major international awards was clearly misunderstood.

Particularly, when he said "China's mathematical research level today has not even caught up with the United States in the 1940s", he meant China was lagging far behind in international academic influences, innovative capability, as well as talents dedicated to studying maths as a basic science, but unfortunately many just picked on the "1940s" and slammed him for it.

Public opinion today can easily be manipulated using social media platforms. Yau is being blamed for "bashing China", a charge anyone who has the patience to listen to his speech in its entirety will disagree with. Actually, Yau even said that

the Chinese suffer from a Western blockade and vowed to build China into a technological power. He listed the problems hindering the path to growth in order to solve them.

While it's unfair to pick up few sentences from a speech and make it viral without giving context, it's necessary to realize that China has been doing quite well in the field of applied mathematics. As early as 2021, Zhang Pingwen, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Science, who is also the president of the China Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, explained in an interview how Huawei spent 10 years on making its 5G technological standard on the basis of polar coding research by Professor Erdal Arifkan of Turkey. China's contribution in the field of applied mathematics should never be underestimated.

—ZHANG ZHOULIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Companies need to consider changed context

The PR chief of Baidu, China's largest search engine, apologized on Thursday for a series of video clips she uploaded on social media.

Reportedly, opening personal accounts on social media platforms is a new assignment for members of her department, and the purpose is to try and enlarge their personal influence in cyberspace for the benefit of the company in case they are needed.

The department head had apparently succeeded in that assignment as her account garnered nearly 1 million followers within several days of its launch. However, in portraying herself as a tough-as-nails executive who only cares about the

company's welfare rather than her subordinates' personal well-being she has unintentionally caused a PR crisis for the company, whose value in the stock market fell 2.17 percent on Tuesday.

Her remarks would not have caused such a strong vortex of opinion were they only aired in the company's office, where her subordinates must be familiar with her management philosophy.

The mistake she made is going public with her views on social media where the netizens can interpret them out of context.

It should be remembered that due to the post-pandemic economic situation, life has become more dif-

icult for many families. Against that backdrop, people hope for a more considerate, humane management style. It is therefore natural that her remarks have instantly prompted the people to question the corporate culture of the internet giant she works for.

As a veteran PR manager, the woman, who has worked as a reporter for years before, should have known the importance of speaking the right things to the right audience at the right time. A miscalculation in any of the three might cause undesirable consequences, as she found out to the cost of her company.

—LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Tomoo Marukawa

Much ado about industrial overcapacity

During her trip to China last month, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen raised concerns over China's overcapacity in electric vehicles (EVs), solar panels and rechargeable batteries, claiming that it is putting pressure on the economies of the US and other countries.

In a static sense, Chinese industries may have overcapacity in these sectors, as the capacity utilization rate in China's EV sector is reportedly about 50 percent. China's solar panel production capacity is much higher than the current global demand. In a dynamic sense, however, it is possible that the overcapacity problem will be solved by the growing global demand.

Global EV sales have increased by 67 percent per year between 2021 and 2023, with the International Energy Agency, in its latest report, forecasting that global EV sales are expected to increase by three times from 2023 to 2030. Another IEA report said that in 2023, the installation of solar panels worldwide increased by about 80 percent year-on-year. And it is highly likely that global demand for solar panels will keep growing on the back of advanced economies' pledge to halve their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and realize net zero emissions by 2050.

China is the world's largest market both for EVs and solar panels. It had around 60 percent share of the global EV market and 58 percent of the solar panel market in 2023. And since both the domestic and global demands for EVs and solar panels are expected to grow, Chinese manufacturers are understandably expanding their productive capacity.

In such circumstances, would it make economic sense for the government to warn the manufacturers against overcapacity and discourage them from increasing production? Yet the United States and the European Union are considering imposing special (punitive) tariffs on EV and solar panel imports from China. By doing so, however, the US and the EU would only increase the prices of these products, undermining global efforts to achieve green economic transformation.

The overcapacity problem has different impacts on standardized and differentiated products. In the case of standardized products such as steel and basic chemicals, overcapacity will harm all manufacturers in similar ways. If it's difficult for manufacturers to outcompete the others in productivity, overcapacity will become a chronic problem. Therefore, it will be beneficial for the manufacturers to share market



To curb global warming, the world will need even more capacity to produce inexpensive and more efficient EVs, solar panels and batteries.

information with the help of the government and avoid creating overcapacity.

In the case of differentiated products, however, overcapacity will affect manufacturers differently. While uncompetitive manufacturers may suffer due to overcapacity, competitive ones may find their productive capacity insufficient to meet the demand. Hence, to solve the overcapacity problem in the differentiated product market, market forces should be allowed to weed out the uncompetitive manufacturers and products.

EVs are differentiated products, and all EV manufacturers are exploring advanced technologies and a host of designs to find a niche in the global market. So it would be unfair to accuse some manufacturers, such as Chinese manufacturers, of creating overcapacity, because it is difficult to know in advance which manufacturers will succeed in the competition. And that's exactly what Yellen did — blame Chinese manufacturers for overcapacity — in April.

However, US-based Tesla announced later that it would downsize its global workforce by 10 percent, revealing that it, too, has overcapacity, which Yellen failed to point out.

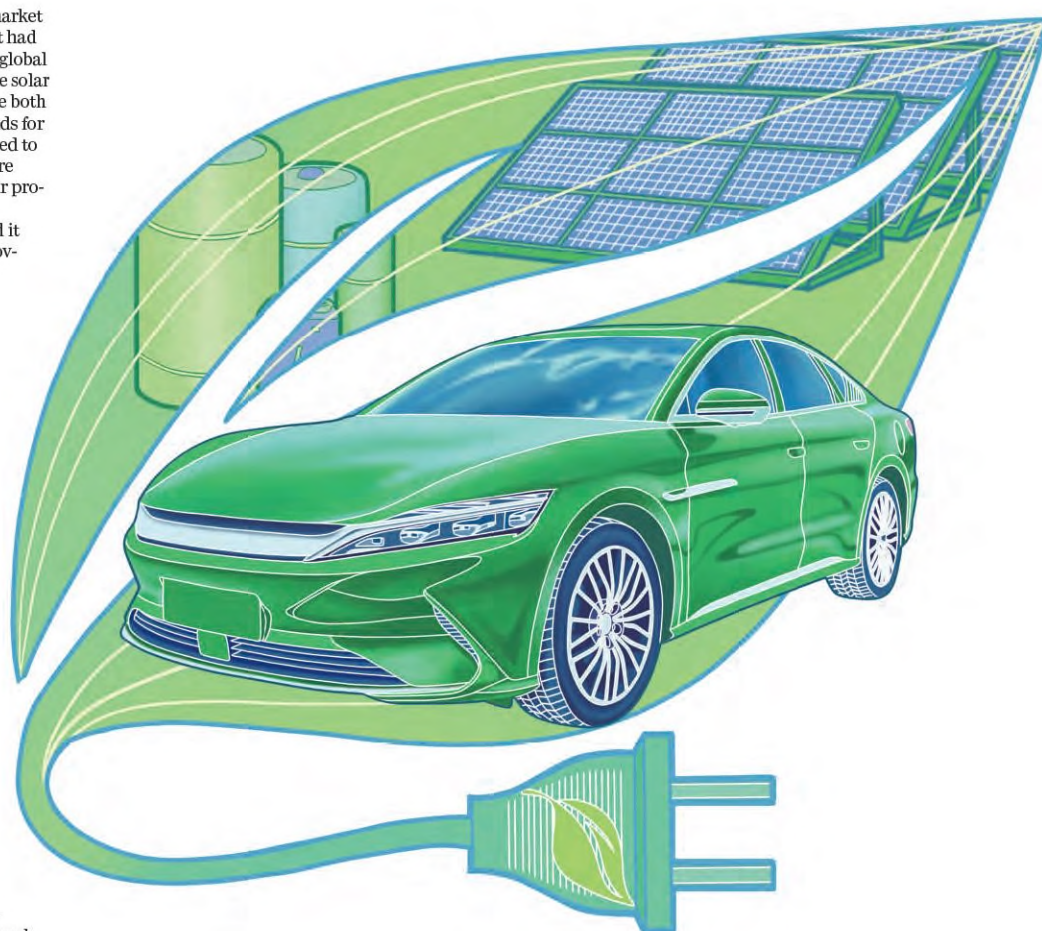
Solar panels, too, are differentiated products as far as their production technology is concerned. The competition between manufacturers using different technologies and products, from crystalline silicon to various thin-film cells and perovskite cells, will lead to higher efficiency and lower production costs, which in turn will make it easier for economies to transition from conventional energy sources such as thermal, hydro and nuclear power, to renewable energy. On the other hand, excessive tariffs and other forms of protectionist

actions will weaken competition and thus hamper the shift from conventional energy to renewable energy.

EVs, solar panels and rechargeable batteries are useful tools to mitigate climate change. To curb global warming, the world will need even more capacity to produce inexpensive and more efficient EVs, solar panels and batteries.

The uneven geographic distribution of productive capacity, which is concentrated in China, may be a problem. But this problem cannot be solved by imposing protective tariffs on Chinese-made EVs, solar panels and rechargeable batteries. It can be solved by helping redistribute the productive forces worldwide through foreign direct investment. The emergence of more competitive manufacturers in advanced countries, which are the main markets of these products, will also contribute to the development of these products. Hopefully, Yellen, as a prominent economist, will understand that protectionism is not the way to address the overcapacity problem.

The author is a professor at the Institute of Social Science, the University of Tokyo. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Chen Siyang

Europe can only seek peace from within

It is no surprise that during the ongoing visit of the top Chinese leader to Europe, certain Western media outlets are playing up the Russia-Ukraine conflict in their effort to shift the blame for the Ukraine crisis onto China. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has indeed cast a shadow of war over Europe. Yet it is essential that Europe seeks peace from within, not from external sources. The European Union, in particular, should abandon its holier-than-thou attitude and veneer of infallibility, and instead indulge in some introspection to resolve the Ukraine crisis.

China has been engaged in mediating peace between Moscow and Kyiv, by urging them to return to the negotiation table. But one should remember that China is not a participant in the conflict nor did it trigger it.

Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945, brought to an end World War II in Europe. Since then May 8 has been celebrated as Victory in Europe Day by many European countries to express their love for peace. Russia celebrates VE Day on May 9, because by the time all combat in Europe ended, it was already May 9 in the Soviet Union.

Following five years of reflection and deliberations since the end of World War II, then French foreign minister Robert Schuman proposed the Schuman Declaration — creating a European

The best way for EU to step out of the geopolitical vortex is to strengthen its own common security and collective defense, by adhering to a foreign policy free of US interference and influence.

Coal and Steel Community under the control of a common High Authority — on May 9, 1950, in the hope of ending the conflict between France and Germany and preventing another war in Europe. That formed the embryo of what we know as the European Union today — and since then, the day has been observed as Europe Day, to remind future generations to learn from history and cherish peace.

Now, 79 years later, Europe once again faces the specter of an armed conflict.

To maintain peace in Europe, the EU should distance itself from the US-led NATO's military maneuverings and instead work toward reconciliation with Russia. The root cause of the Ukraine crisis can be traced to NATO's incessant eastward expansion despite Russia's warning that, by doing so, NATO was

threatening its national security.

China, too, has been a victim of NATO's military adventurism. In 1999, the United States-led NATO launched air strikes on a sovereign state, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, without the approval of the UN Security Council, and bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, killing three Chinese journalists and injuring dozens of Chinese nationals.

The EU itself, should address the root cause of the Ukraine crisis and do more to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. More than 30,000 people have been killed or wounded in the Ukraine conflict, and thousands of refugees have entered the EU via Poland and other Eastern European countries, causing one of the largest refugee waves in European history and plunging the EU into a humanitarian crisis that has become an immense burden on its social welfare system, and a risk to its social stability.

Additionally, the economic sanctions the EU has imposed on Russia have backfired — the EU registered a 0.4 percent GDP growth in 2023, with zero growth in the last quarter. Now that Russia and Ukraine, which used to be important energy and agricultural product suppliers for Europe, are unable to provide a stable supply of goods for the EU, the prices of many essentials have reached historic highs, aggravating

inflation in Europe and dealing a serious blow to poor families.

The best way for EU to step out of the geopolitical vortex is to strengthen its own common security and collective defense, by adhering to a foreign policy free of US interference and influence. In March, the EU released its defense industrial strategy and industrial program, in a bid to better cope with geopolitical threats and reduce its dependency on the US for military equipment manufacturing.

Yet Europe is divided on having a collective defense and security policy. Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, French President Emmanuel Macron has been accusing German Chancellor Olaf Scholz of over-relying on the US and doing nothing to advance the EU's common security and defense policy. This shows intra-EU differences on security and defense are far from being resolved.

As such, the EU should first try to devise independent security and defense policy, rather than blame others for its woes, and look inward and correct its faults in order to maintain peace on the continent.

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Chen Weihua

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Visits showcase good examples of international relations

A week-long visit to Hungary was like a breath of fresh air to me, not only because Hungary, notably its capital Budapest, is beautiful but also because the officials, businesspeople, academics, teachers and students I talked with in the country made so much more sense than those ideologues in Washington and Brussels, where I have been based for the past decade.

That's why I'm not surprised to see China-Hungary relations getting better by the day. And that's what I heard from multiple people including Balazs Orban, political director for Prime Minister Viktor Orban, and Gyorgy Matolcsy, governor of the Magyar Nemzeti Bank, Hungary's central bank.

They were not trying to please a Chinese journalist, because, as they said, improving relations with China is in Hungary's national interest. For example, Hungary's "Eastern Opening" policy has been described by several experts as being very similar to the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative: both want to improve connectivity and expand cooperation, rather than building walls, forming political blocs and sowing discord as the United States has been doing.

The fact that Chinese enterprises and investors including the CATL, BYD and Huawei have been warmly welcomed in Hungary explains why China is the top source of foreign direct investment in the Central European country. The fearmongering about Chinese companies, a common phenomenon in Washington and Brussels, does not exist in Hungary.

Many of the global problems are caused by the lack of mutual understanding, and learning another language or about another country clears misunderstandings.

Contrary to Western disinformation, about 80 percent of the staff, including senior executives, in the CATL and NIO Inc. offices I visited in Budapest comprised local people.

In fact, it was fun to talk to teachers and students at the Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual School, the only public school in Central and Eastern Europe where learning Chinese is mandatory; it's the same as learning one's mother language.

"Learning Chinese is hard", some students told me teasingly, stressing Chinese and Hungarian are the two most difficult languages to learn. But learning another language is also learning about another culture, another country's or region's history and traditions. Many of the global problems are caused by the lack of mutual understanding, and learning another language or about another country clears misunderstandings.

That's why it's shocking to see some US and European politicians claiming that they know China, even though they spent less than a week or, in many cases, just a couple of days in the country. It is in this context that China's short-stay visa-exemption policy for citizens of 12 countries, mostly European countries, which earlier this week was extended till the end of 2025, is good news. It will allow more people to visit China and see for themselves its achievements in different fields and the rapid transformation it is undergoing.

It's also good news for tourists and the tourism industry, for it will facilitate the return of Chinese tourists to Europe after the three-year-long COVID-19 pandemic. I overheard many people speaking Chinese on the streets of Budapest and Paris, which I visited last month, and Brussels, where I'm posted.

The China-Hungary relationship is an excellent example of how international relations should be conducted despite the differences in two countries' cultures, histories, territories and political systems. Sino-Hungarian ties are also about mutual respect, mutual exchanges, and practical and win-win cooperation which benefit both countries and their peoples.

The same is true for China-Serbia relations, as well as China-France relations. And the bonds between China and France, Serbia and Hungary will further strengthen after the Chinese leader's visit to the three European countries this week.

While China-Serbia relations are ironclad, China-France ties are strong given the \$79 billion Sino-French trade last year and the strong people-to-people exchanges. Unlike some Western countries, France is known for its independent foreign policy since the days of General Charles de Gaulle, while incumbent President Emmanuel Macron is against the European Union becoming a US vassal and forming political blocs.

Macron is opposed to such geopolitical games because, he knows, they will lead to a brutal new Cold War, which would be a disaster for future generations considering what our generation and our parents' generation suffered during the Cold War.

GLOBAL VIEWS



Editor's note: The world has undergone many changes and shocks in recent years. Enhanced dialogue between scholars from China and overseas is needed to build mutual understanding on many problems the world faces. For this purpose, the China Watch Institute of China Daily and the National Institute for Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, jointly present this special column: The Global Strategy Dialogue, in which experts from China and abroad will offer insightful views, analysis and fresh perspectives on long-term strategic issues of global importance.

ZHANG YUNLING

Neighborhood harmony

China is working hard to ensure its relations with neighboring countries are peaceful and mutually prosperous

This year is an election year for many countries around the world. Some countries' domestic and foreign policies are likely to witness changes following the elections. The international community is particularly concerned that the United States' foreign policy after the presidential election will adversely affect relations between countries and upset regional and global stability.



The sound environment China seeks in its surrounding areas will likely face new changes.

Over the past more than 10 years, China has proposed the concept of building a neighborhood community with a shared future, based on amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, and it has promoted jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity.

Upholding the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, China has been building a secure environment in its neighborhood with concrete actions, such as jointly managing hotspot issues with its neighbors and promoting consultation and dialogue to maintain peace.

For instance, in the face of escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, China has proposed the "dual-track approach" of denuclearizing the peninsula on the one hand and establishing a peace mechanism on the other. It has also proposed a "double suspension" to defuse the tensions on the Korean Peninsula — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea may suspend its nuclear and missile activities in exchange for the suspension of large-scale US-Republic of Korea military exercises. China has also demonstrated its strong commitment to easing tensions through talks.

Following the withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan, China has been vigorously building coordination and cooperative mechanisms for Afghanistan's neighboring countries to support Afghanistan's stability and develop-

ment. China has proposed the Tuxi Initiative of the Neighboring Countries of Afghanistan on Supporting Economic Reconstruction and Practical Cooperation With Afghanistan. China has also chaired the Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the Afghan Issue among the Neighboring Countries of Afghanistan, the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue and the "Neighboring Countries of Afghanistan Plus Afghanistan" Foreign Ministers' Dialogue.

Meanwhile, China has made the utmost of all sorts of cooperative mechanisms to strengthen the building of a secure neighborhood environment.

For instance, to maintain stability in the South China Sea, China has been promoting the implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and encouraging the completion of negotiations on a Code of Conduct for the waters.

China is also urging the building of a Shanghai Cooperation Organization community with a shared future, in which a multi-layer cooperative mechanism on security issues is to be established and "Peace Mission" anti-terrorism drills are to be held annually.

As the world's second-largest economy, China has given new impetus to the development of its neighborhood area. China's comprehensive strength has risen alongside China's economic strength.

China has reiterated on numerous occasions that it is committed to a path of peaceful development. However, certain countries are concerned and wary about the rapid rise of China's comprehensive strength. They choose not to participate in China's proposals or try to compete with China's proposals; worse still, they adopt hostile policies against China, resulting in negative perceptions toward China among their public and "close but not intimate" relations.

The US is the biggest external force obstructing China and its neighboring countries from constructing a sound neighborhood environment. The US has the very specific strategic goal of suppress-

ing the rise of China's comprehensive strength and influence so that it can maintain its advantageous position and influence in the regional order.

Both the Democrats and Republicans, when in office, have imposed restrictions and containment measures and sanctions against China and established anti-China mechanisms in China's surrounding areas in a variety of ways.

In the Asia Pacific region, the US has been expanding and strengthening its "Indo-Pacific" strategy to suppress and contain China. It is roping in its allies to take part in such mechanisms as the Australia-United Kingdom-United States trilateral security alliance, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the US-Japan-ROK partnership and the "Indo-Pacific" economic framework.

Most of China's neighboring countries choose to take part in projects but choose not to take sides. They maintain and develop relations with the US and participate in initiatives and projects proposed and promoted by the US while doing the same with China. Even the US' military allies are trying their best to avoid "decoupling" from China or confrontation with China.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been unwaveringly upholding the centrality of ASEAN in the region as the primary driving force in its relations and cooperation with the outside world. While some ASEAN member states have participated in US-led mechanisms, ASEAN as a whole maintains a cooperative relationship with China and chooses not to participate in the US' strategic competition with China.

In the wake of the release of the "Indo-Pacific" strategy by the US, ASEAN unveiled the ASEAN Outlook on the "Indo-Pacific", which seeks to avoid the deepening of mistrust, miscalculation, and patterns of behavior based on a zero-sum game, maintain ASEAN's central role in the evolving regional architecture in Southeast Asia and its surrounding regions and create a "Indo-Pacific" region of dialogue and cooperation instead of rivalry.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. China has always attached great importance to the five principles in its relations with its neighbors.

Different from the US, China's policies have always been inclusive and cooperation-oriented, in an attempt to build an open, development-oriented and peaceful neighborhood environment.

First, China takes all neighboring countries as partners, rather than excluding certain countries from dialogue and cooperation because they have participated in mechanisms proposed or promoted by the US. Second, China is actively proposing initiatives and cooperation projects that welcome the participation of all neighboring countries, rather than trying to exclude or compete with the US. Third, China maintains communication and dialogue with the US to have a controllable relationship with the US.

These will help prevent neighboring countries from splitting into two opposing camps and lessen the impact of the US comprehensive strategic competition with China in China's neighborhood. Meanwhile, these moves have provided more options for China's neighboring countries and prevented the so-called China-US strategic competition from becoming the theme of China's relations with its neighboring countries, thus creating favorable conditions for building a sound neighborhood environment.

The author is dean of the Institute of International Studies at Shandong University and a member of the Faculty of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

JAN OBERG

Unity in diversity, not conformity

Chinese and Western ways of thinking are complementary not mutually exclusive

We learn about other cultures mostly through the media and through books, films, travels and personal encounters. All news reports are micro glimpses of a time and place.

This challenges us in at least two ways: how do we get a more accurate and holistic perspective of the world, and how can we learn to understand each other across cultural diversity.



One way to understand societies is to look for similarities and differences in the ways people think. Or, what is in their general attitude to "others" — are they perceived as a danger, potential friends, "barbaric", or as someone to be curious about, explore and learn from?

Next, do the citizens think in terms of either/or, or both/and? Exclusivity or inclusivity?

Different behaviors come from who we are and what ways of thinking we were brought up to think of as being the most "natural".

The Western way of thinking is very different from that of the Eastern way, but I would argue they are also, in principle, complementary.

Regrettably, the present Western Cold War-like policy against China is rooted in at least two things: in the denial of its own decline and coming fall and in its cosmology, which tends to prevent it from learning and integrating elements of other cultures. The Western system is based on the tradition of teaching others, not learning from others. Thus, the Westerners have the idea of a civilizational mission and making others look and behave like themselves.

In contrast, China has learned and eclectically integrated Western cosmological elements. It's learned negatively from Western interference, occupation and colonialism, which has caused it to emphasize defense in a wide sense and "doing it my way" (maximizing self-reliance), the hard way without shortcuts.

So, while modernizing impress-

ively, China has kept dear its traditional thinking of collectivism/the group/family, Confucianism, Taoism, harmony, Yin and Yang, meritocracy and maintaining face.

Simultaneously — and positively — China has imported and adapted elements of Western ideas: Marxism, the idea of political parties, capitalism, science and technology and so on.

Furthermore, China today knows the West better than the other way around. Chinese media focus much more on the West and not only negatively, while Western mainstream media focus very little and always negatively on China. And many more Chinese speak English than people in the West speak Chinese.

Inclusivity, adaptation, openness to others and a steadfast sense of one's own cultural rootedness seem to me to be one important "deep" key to understanding China's recent — and amazing — development. It's also the key to the Belt and Road Initiative's future. Indeed, the BRI could add more intercultural dialogue and serve as a peace accelerator.

In recent years, with China's ever-larger global reach, it has produced a series of valuable and visionary documents and initiatives, such as "A Global Community of Shared Future: China's Proposals and Actions" issued in September 2023, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative. They all refer back to the brilliant philosophy in the 1955 Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that are embedded in China's Constitution.

These trend-setting initiatives should be studied in all corners of the world. We need to discuss concepts and principles before we make action plans, and think long term. They are constructive but also contain diplomatic criticism of the dominating, confrontational West.

All other countries should present their matching documents and promote constructive dialogue. But sadly, what was once called future studies in the West — reports such as Limits to Growth and What Now? — seem to have been outmaneuvered by almost daily reports about impending doom and gloom.

The United Nations system is

built on Article 1 of the UN Charter that peace shall be established by peaceful means. That fits well with the concept, which China has also integrated, namely "common security" advocated by the Swedish Olof Palme Commission Report in 1982 as the foundation for all security policies.

One could easily add the thinking of Sun Tzu — and then features of the present-world community — offensive weapons including nuclear weapons and offensive deterrence — would have to be abolished. Security has to be aligned with rational analyses of civil and military threats, and all military-industrial-media-academic complexes have to be dismantled because they produce only war and profits to their elites, never peace and security.

Instead, the global community would share a future with a huge reduction in all kinds of violence and invest in intelligent civilian conflict resolution, mediation, violence prevention and peace-building. Non-violence would be a basic, cherished norm replacing armament and militarism.

This is not idealism; it is realism.

A global community and unity in respect for diversity should guide us in the struggles for a shared future of peaceful coexistence. In contrast, confrontation, militarist offensive thinking, nuclear weapons and mass-destructive warfare will lead, sooner or later, to a dead end for humanity.

Interestingly, the recent meeting between President Xi Jinping and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken illustrated what we have discussed here. President Xi emphasized global norms, non-interference in the affairs of another country, unity in diversity and humanity's overarching common interests. Blinken presented a series of complaints and accusations, without any global future ideas, based on a mission to change China and promote unity in conformity to the US.

The author is director of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, TFF, Sweden. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

CULTURAL JOURNEY



Embroidering a fashionable career

Designer uses inspiration from culture to stitch together strands of creativity, **Lin Qi** reports.



Born into several generations of embroiderers, fashion designer Lan Yu remembers that her first piece of Su embroidery was a bib made for her by her mother Lan Tanghua, for use as a child at kindergarten.

"It was embroidered with red and yellow flowers and leaves, which encircled five characters in the center that read 'for little friend Lan Yu,' which my mom wrote out on paper before she stitched them," recalls the designer, now in her 30s. "The other children wore plain white bibs, with no patterns. My bib made me feel special, because I had a mother who was so skillful. It showed her deep love for me."

Su embroidery is ranked among the four most celebrated kinds of Chinese embroidery. Originating in Suzhou — after which it is named — and spreading to surrounding areas in Jiangsu province, Su embroidery requires delicate workmanship, as exemplified by its variety of stitches and strong sense of color. For a long time, this form of artistry was passed down through women in the same family.

As she studied fashion design, both in China and abroad, Lan Yu has been attempting to blaze new trails for Chinese embroidery and her family heritage, to give the tradition a fresh look more in line with the tastes of the younger generation of customers from around the world.

She and her mother are currently sharing the fruits of their explorations at *Poetic Charm of Splendid Attire*, an exhibition that runs until Monday at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. On show are dozens of recent designs inspired by classical Chinese poetry and paintings, as well as brocade pieces Lan Yu worked on with her mother, which create chemistry between the past and the present.

"The pieces translate the spiritual world of ancient intellectuals into the context of fashion design, illustrating the lifestyle enriched by natural beauty and contemplation pursued in the poems of Tao Yuanming in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), and the optimism in the verses of Li Bai in the Tang Dynasty (618-907)," says Jia Ronglin, dean of the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.

"They usher the audience into a space



Above: Fashion designer Lan Yu. **Top and sides:** Her work is on display at an ongoing exhibition, *Poetic Charm of Splendid Attire*, at the National Art Museum of China. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

of artistic pleasures, arising from the beauty of Chinese poetry, painting and brocade."

Growing up in the world of needlework, as a young teenager, Lan Yu did not think of taking on the family business. Her mother owned an embroidery atelier at the time, but having studied dance for years, Lan Yu hoped to become a dancer. However, injuries forced her to reconsider becoming either a dancer or a dance teacher. Still hoping to engage with art, she enrolled at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.

"My mother half-jokingly asked, 'Will you be a tailor? For the rest of your life?' At the time, I felt that fashion design would allow me to imagine as freely as dancing on the stage, while also being a career for life," Lan Yu says.

During college, she was introduced to different styles of traditional embroidery from around the country, and came to understand the cultural accumulation behind the techniques, including her mother's, and began to feel her generation should take responsibility for keeping these traditions alive by incorporating elements of modern design.

"I felt that the sleeping part deep in me, the commitment of a craftsman, had been awakened," she says.

For a long time, Su embroidery has enjoyed the reputation of being a kind of three-dimensional painting on silk, as its artisans have invented a variety of stitches to capture the details of real life and of paintings. Lan Yu has stepped to one side of this figurative tradition, and focuses on combining modern aesthetics with the introspective temperament of Chinese culture.

"My needle and thread no longer work together to copy a thing seen in reality, but rather to express structural beauty, a sense of space and of a spiritual haven," she says.

One of the new areas she has been exploring is interpreting the tranquility, extensiveness and room for imagination found in the pondering of Chinese poetry and landscape paintings.

"It's like I'm using stitches to achieve the same sense of *liubai* ('leaving blank spaces') in Chinese painting, and to provoke thoughts of culture and of the luminous figures in history who contributed to it."

Lan Yu also blends other forms of handicraft into her work, including the *duijin* ("accumulated patterns") style of Shanxi province in which decorative motifs are made separately from silk, paper and cotton, and then assembled to create a relief painting.

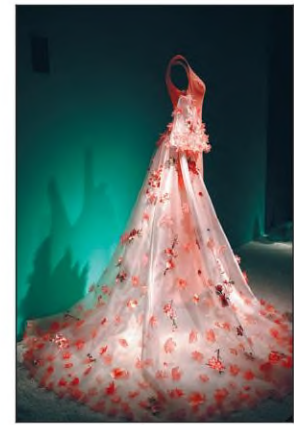
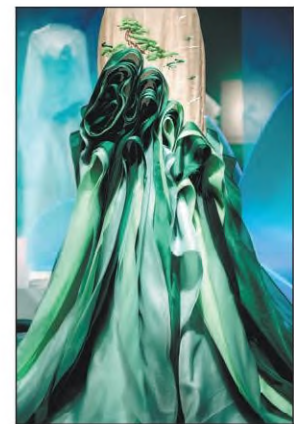
She also used the craft to make the dozens of Yulan magnolia flowers applied to one of the dresses on display, which she calls *Mantingfang* ("a courtyard full of fragrance") after a tune pattern from classical *ci* poetry.

Wu Weishan, director of the National Art Museum of China and a sculptor in his own right, says that every look on show "can also be appreciated as a sculpture, formed of smooth lines, graceful colors and fine structures".

"They stand as vivid, thought-provoking examples of how the spirit of Chinese tradition may live on in the modern world," he says.

Lan Yu says she plans to take her work on tour internationally to places with booming fashion scenes, such as Singapore, New York, Toronto and Tokyo.

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What's on

Dunhuang blossoms



A decade ago, Chang Shana, an esteemed scholar of Dunhuang art, started a touring exhibition called *Everlasting Beauty of Dunhuang*, which shows her drawings of the murals and statues inside the Dunhuang caves in Gansu province and designs in which she incorporates motifs from Dunhuang. Chang,

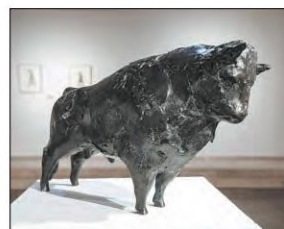
who's 93 years old, is also a former head of the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University. She spent her early teenage years in Dunhuang with her father, Chang Shuhong, the first director of the Dunhuang Academy. She was fascinated by the cave art and made copies of it.

Since then, the exhibition has traveled to many cities across the country to ignite people's interest in Dunhuang's art and how to carry on this heritage. It has come to the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum, where it will run until Oct 27. It navigates eight decades in which Chang Shana has lived up to her father's words and has blazed a trail to keep alive the artistry of Dunhuang. That is, by employing those patterns that have been impressed in her mind since her teens and which she has seen on designs in architecture, State gifts, costumes and other decorative items. She says *Everlasting Beauty of Dunhuang* is one of her ways to fulfill the wishes of her father to protect Dunhuang's heri-

itage and show its importance to as many people as possible, and to nourish their hearts and minds. *9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 16 Hujing Donglu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-8799-1766/1866.*

Eternal classics

Late French sculptor Jean Cardot left an oeuvre that graces both museum spaces and public places, including a statue of Charles de Gaulle seated on the Champs-Élysées in Paris and *Bull Under the Sun* as part of a long-term display of sculptures in the compound of the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. In his work, Cardot continued to celebrate the diverse beauty of forms. By presenting the uniqueness of texture, he created an intriguing atmosphere surrounding the works and the audience. The work and research into the world of art of Cardot is introduced at *The Eternal Classic*, an exhibition running through May 19 at Qingdao



Sculpture Art Museum in the coastal city in Shandong province. On show are 81 works and drawings, as well as the tools of sculpture, books, photos, cameras and radios that re-enact the scenes of life and work of Cardot in his studios in Paris and southern France. Several works featuring bull motifs are on display. Cardot revisited the images of bulls — ready to jump, in stillness and on the battleground — and a decline in details renders in his works the beauty of simplicity. *9:30 am-4 pm, closed on Mondays. 66 Songhai Donglu, Laoshan district, Qingdao, Shandong province. 0532-6886-8777.*

Uncommon flowers

In the work of Swiss-born artist Lucienne Fontannaz, floral bouquets are not depicted as the still-life subjects as they are portrayed in classical paintings. Rather, they express her feelings of the changing landscapes, issues concerning women, the relations between human history and mythology, and the universe. Her current exhibition in Beijing, *The Symbolism of Bouquets*, shares her explorations of adding philosophical and humanitarian dimensions to the depictions of flowers. Her method is similar to that of a collage painting, in which she puts together the images of floral bouquets, scenes of great artworks in history and even elements of Chinese landscape paintings, inspired by her trips to the country in recent years. By doing so, she has created semi-real, semi-surreal scenes to present curiosity, uncertainty, fear and benevolence. For her, the bouquets serve as a



channel to bring the audience back to the past and to the future. Her paintings are on show at the Ici Labas gallery through to May 26. *10:30 am-6 pm, closed on Mondays. D10, 798 Dongjie, Jiuxianqiao Lu, 798 Art Zone, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 130-0117-0598.*

LIFESHANGHAI

Displaying Spain's splendor

Prize pictures from Madrid's Prado are largest exhibition by the museum in China to date, **Zhang Kun** reports.



In the collection of Madrid's Museo Nacional del Prado, there is a fine copy of one of the most famous paintings of all time, Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. It is believed to be the work of students of the Renaissance master, painted in his studio during his lifetime, and includes details and changes that mirror those of the original, which is on permanent display at the Louvre in Paris.

It is one of the paintings on display at *Ages of Splendor: A History of Spain in the Museo del Prado*, an exhibition running at Shanghai's Museum of Art Pudong from April 23 to Sept 1.

The exhibition features 70 masterpieces from the Prado's collection, among which 16 have never been exhibited outside of Spain, nine have never been lent out by the museum, and over half are being shown in Asia for the first time.

Curated by Pedro J Martinez Plaza of the Prado's 19th Century Painting Conservation Area, *Ages of Splendor* has been tailor-made for the Pudong museum and will only be shown in Shanghai. It is the largest exhibition of the Spanish museum's collection ever held in China.

The Prado's copy of the *Mona Lisa* is extremely popular, and many visitors come to the museum just to admire it, Miguel Falomir Faus, director of the Prado, told China Daily before the opening ceremony on April 22.

The painting became part of the Spanish royal collection in the 17th century, and joined the permanent collection of the Museo del Prado when it was founded in 1819.

The last time it left Spain was in

2012, when it was lent to the Louvre in Paris for the temporary exhibition *Leonardo's Last Masterpiece: The Sainte Anne*.

The Museo del Prado spent a year restoring the painting for the Louvre exhibition, recovering the landscape in the background by removing a black repaint believed to have been done 200 years after the painting was finished.

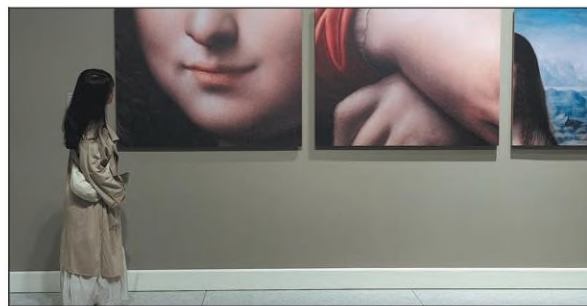
During the restoration process, infrared reflectography and radiography showed that the Prado's *Mona Lisa* contained the same underlying sketches and corrections as the original, though done in a slightly different style, proving that it was made in the same workshop and at the same time as the original *Mona Lisa* was painted, says Ma Jue, head of the Pudong museum's exhibition department.

The exhibition in Shanghai dedicates a whole section to the story of the Prado's *Mona Lisa*. On the ground floor, the In Focus section presents the way it has been exhibited over the centuries, and how studies revealed its origins, and highlights the stylistic difference with the original.

"In this way, we have provided an in-depth interpretation of the Prado's *Mona Lisa*," says Li Minkun, chairperson of the Pudong museum.

"Visitors can watch a documentary to understand how the studios of Renaissance artists worked, and we also have a special reproduction for the sight impaired to touch and feel. We believe it is a good way to tell the stories behind the artwork, and an interesting journey of discovery for visitors," she tells China Daily.

The rest of the exhibition, located



IF YOU GO

Ages of Splendor: A History of Spain in the Museo del Prado

10 am-9 pm (last admission at 8 pm), April 23-Sept 1
Museum of Art Pudong, 1F & 3F,
2777 Binjiang Avenue, Pudong New Area, Shanghai

Visitors are enthralled by the *Ages of Splendor: A History of Spain in the Museo del Prado* at the Museum of Art Pudong in Shanghai.

PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG

on the third floor of the museum, consists of 10 complementary themes, including The Celebrations in the Spanish Court, The Nobility, the Bourgeoisie and the Royalty in the Spanish Territories, Thought and Spirituality, Sacred Images as Everyday Images and The Beauty of Everyday Objects: The Still Life.

Spanning the 16th to 20th centuries, *Ages of Splendor* displays masterpieces by 50 remarkable artists from the history of European art, including Titian, Verones, El Greco, Rubens, Zurbaran, Velazquez, Murillo, Ribera, Goya, Fortuny and Sorolla.

"The exhibition has been a great occasion to present both great masterpieces, and also explain the history of Spain," says Falomir Faus. "If you look at Spain on the map, it is a tiny country, but in the 16th and 17th

centuries, it was one of the most powerful countries in the world, and spanned four different continents. In some of the paintings, we find objects from different parts of the world, such as porcelain from China in the still life paintings."

The Prado mounted an exhibition in Beijing and Shanghai in 2007, he says, but the current exhibition is bigger and much more ambitious. "Maybe in the future we will visit other Chinese cities," he adds.

As one of the finest art institutions in the world, the Museo del Prado is Spain's national art museum. Located in central Madrid, it was built in the 18th century for use as the Royal Museum of Paintings and Sculptures to display the Spanish Crown's art collection. Today, the museum is home to the best and most comprehensive collection of Spanish art.

"At the opening of the Museum of Art Pudong, we reached out to the Prado for collaborations," says Li. "After more than two years of preparation, we have managed to bring some of the paintings best known and loved by the Chinese audience."

One of the most important Spanish artists, and the one most extensively represented at the Museo del Prado, Francisco Goya (1746-1828) has eight masterpieces on show in Shanghai.

In the entrance hallway, the Pudong museum has displayed a chronological table on the wall listing important events in Spanish and Chinese history during the period reflected in the exhibition.

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By HE QI

heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

Hamza al-Sal is grateful to Shanghai for the opportunities and experiences it has provided him, as well as the hope of realizing his dream of becoming a professional actor.

The 24-year-old Yemeni student at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, shot to fame for his portrayal of Alexander, a foreign tenant in the hit film *B for Busy* (2021), in which his remarkable performance, toned physique, and fluent Shanghai dialect captivated audiences.

"I have a passion for acting. I want to continue doing what I like," he tells China Daily. "I hope to create my own opportunities in Shanghai, and shoot my own movie."

Al-Sal moved to China in 2000 as a toddler when his father, Mudhar al-Sal, seeking to take advantage of reform and opening-up, moved his family to the bustling, globalized commercial hub of Yiwu in Zhejiang province, where he gradually developed a trade in daily necessities. In fact, Mudhar al-Sal's connection to China dates back to 1990 when he studied Chinese at the Beijing Language and Culture University before pursuing a degree in civil

Yemeni actor dreams of star role in the city

engineering at Shanghai's Tongji University.

"My father suggested that I study finance and economics in Shanghai so I might continue to develop the family business," he says. Hamza al-Sal moved to Shanghai when he was 19 and started a course in Investment Studies.

Thanks to his father's stories of Shanghai, he found the city familiar and the time he has spent there is very important to him, as he finds it a source of inspiration and endless possibility.

"I have made many friends, and most of them are from Shanghai. Much of my experience, including meeting people in the film industry, is right here in Shanghai."

Hamza al-Sal had his first taste of the spotlight at 14 when he landed a role in the Jackie Chan film *Dragon Blade*, which ignited his passion for acting and led to a number of small roles in TV dramas and commercials. While studying at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, he uses his spare time to audition, taking on minor roles as



Hamza al-Sal during his interview with China Daily.

PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Al-Sal had his first taste of the spotlight in the Jackie Chan film *Dragon Blade*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



an extra or an assistant whenever given the opportunity, simply out of a desire to learn.

In 2021, his dedication finally won him the coveted role of Alexander in

B for Busy, a Shanghai-flavored film that features a talented cast of local stars all speaking in the Shanghai dialect.

Faced with the formidable task of

mastering the dialect quickly and delivering a nuanced performance that humorously comments on the intricate romantic lives of the main characters, he doubled down on his efforts, seeking guidance from veteran actors and fellow students, tirelessly rehearsing and memorizing his lines.

The release of *B for Busy* at the end of 2021 propelled the young Yemeni to stardom. The hit movie pulled in over 250 million yuan (\$34.5 million) at the box office in just one month, and made a stir on social platforms.

Now a familiar face, he is often recognized in coffee shops and on city streets with the query, "Aren't you Alexander?" Riding the wave of his character's popularity, he subsequently starred in plays including *Baoxing Alley*, as well as a theatrical adaptation of *B for Busy*. Meanwhile, new film and stage opportunities continue to present themselves.

In terms of his future, he says he will definitely finish university and get a degree before forging his own

path in the performance industry.

"As a stage actor in Shanghai, there are a lot of opportunities, because theater here is developing very well," he says.

"But as a foreign actor, it is also difficult. I hope the film and acting industry will offer more opportunities for foreign actors because if China really wants to make it big in films, it has to think that way."

Hamza Al-Sal knows that his father hopes the sons will help him with the family business, but the father has never forced him to give up his desire to act. "Young people need to struggle for their dreams even if they end up in failure," he says. "I believe I will succeed. If I haven't made it by the time I'm 35, I might go back home and help my father with the family business."

Looking ahead, he envisions directing a film that explores the experiences of foreigners living in China, while continuing to pursue his acting dreams.

"Shanghai is an international city. I want to incorporate international elements into my film that represent the life of a foreigner in China. I want to be the first to make that kind of movie here."

Wang Biye contributed to this story.

CULTURE



“I have a vivid memory of Beijing from the 1950s to '80s ... My own experience enabled me to portray the scenes of old Beijing.”

Liu Jinyun, scriptwriter



“This new play, blending tradition with innovation, highlights the evolving nature of Beijing-themed drama.”

Feng Yuanzheng, president, Beijing People's Art Theatre

Past performance

The Beijing People's Art Theatre's latest production depicts stories set in the capital during three decades of New China's early history, **Chen Nan** reports.

Yongdingmen Li, the Beijing People's Art Theatre's latest stage production, premiered on May 1, with shows running until Sunday.

The play, which is set against the backdrop of the early days following New China's 1949 founding, features a pair of protagonists — Xiao Dali, a local police chief, played by Yang Mingxin, and Feng Jingbo, a teacher whose true identity is a Kuomintang secret agent, played by Miao Chi. The play sweeps audiences into a whirl of intrigue, rivalry and transformation, spanning more than three decades of Beijing's history.

It's written by Liu Jinyun and directed by Tang Ye. Besides the two lead actors, the supporting cast, including Yuan Yu, who plays a famous Peking Opera singer, and Zhou Jiayu as Xiao's wife, also won applause for their performances.

The set design is a standout feature of the show, meticulously re-creating an authentic Beijing courtyard with lifelike details. The revolving stage, layered and dynamic, mirrors the passage of time and emotional complexities, while the lighting captures the characters' inner turmoil.

The Beijing People's Art Theatre, which was founded in 1952 and is considered a flag bearer of Chinese drama, is known for staging plays about Beijing. From *Teahouse*, a masterpiece written by luminary novelist and dramatist Lao She (1899-1966), to *Wotou Compound*, written by Liu Heng and directed by Lin Zhaoxia, the theater has won a large fan base with its vivid portrayals of the city's cultural landscapes and people.

Yongdingmen Li is no exception, and has a distinctly Beijing flavor.

The play's opening scenes feature a silhouette of Yongdingmen, or Yongding Gate. Known as the “gate of eternal stability”, and originally built in 1553 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it signifies that the nation remains stable and safe. It was rebuilt in 2004 and serves as a landmark sitting at the southernmost point of Beijing's 7.8-kilometer-long central axis — the line running through the middle of the capital.

In Chinese, *yongdingmen li* refers to the area inside the gate, where people used to live in courtyards tucked away in *hutong*, or narrow alleys — layouts distinctively vernacular to old Beijing.

The characters' backgrounds and dialogues are rooted in Beijing's real-life history, adding depth and authenticity to the storytelling. These historical touches, along with the play's nuanced characterizations, create a rich tapestry of the city's past. Scenes featuring old Beijing life, the



Scenes from *Yongdingmen Li*, a new stage production by the Beijing People's Art Theatre, which is being presented at the Capital Theatre from May 1 to 12, featuring Miao Chi and Yang Mingxin in the lead roles. It tells a story that's deeply rooted in Beijing's culture and history. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Creative team members, including scriptwriter Liu Jinyun (middle in the second row) and director Tang Ye (second from left in the second row), at the Capital Theatre on April 24.

local dialect and musical elements such as Peking Opera — a 200-year-old art form popular in the capital — appear in the play.

The scriptwriter, Liu Jinyun, says he started to write *Yongdingmen Li* over a decade ago. That was after he was commissioned by the Beijing People's Art Theatre to adapt Zhang Ce's suspense novel, *No Regrets*, into a play. Liu is known for plays including *Uncle Doggie's Nirvana*, which was codirected by Lin and premiered in 1986, and *Ruan Lingyu*, also directed by Lin and Ren Ming (1960-2022).

“I have a vivid memory of Beijing from the 1950s to '80s — the 30 years that the novel portrays,” says Liu, 86, who graduated from Peking University with a major in Chinese language and worked as a Chinese teacher before he joined the Beijing People's Art Theatre in 1982 as a scriptwriter.

“My own experience enabled me to portray the scenes of old Beijing. I was also intrigued by the two lead characters, whose lives changed with each decision they made.”

However, plans to bring the play to the stage were dropped for more than 10 years, until veteran actor Feng Yuanzheng became the fifth president of the Beijing People's Art Theatre in 2022. Feng decided to ask Liu and the theater's director, Tang, to stage the play.

“We all called him ‘Uncle Jinyun’ when he was the president of the theater,” says Tang, who is also director of the play.

“He is warmhearted and loves working with young people. When I came to him with the idea of turning *Yongdingmen Li* into a play, he agreed and started to revise the script. We made lots of changes, deleting some plot points while adding new ones. He is very patient and works with us to make the characters and the lines appealing to today's audiences.”

One of the most challenging parts of presenting the play was training young performers to speak Beijing dialect, Feng Yuanzheng adds.

He also says that the theater is going through a period when its older generation of actors are retiring and new performers are joining.

“This new play, blending tradition with innovation, highlights the evolving nature of Beijing-themed drama, and explores new ways to portray the city's culture. The production not only tells a compelling story but also serves as a platform for young talent to shine, ensuring that the theater's legacy continues to thrive in modern times,” Feng Yuanzheng says.

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Continuing a classical festive feel with new twists

By CHEN NAN

Renowned violinist Lyu Siqing, who regularly tours the world, says his schedule becomes even more hectic every May due to the NCPA May Festival, an annual event promoting chamber music.

As the event's artistic director, Lyu not only plans the programs by inviting international musicians but also plays onstage.

From May 1 to 25, the NCPA May Festival is staging 24 concerts over 26 days, under the theme of Brighter Future in Music. This year, in addition to the National Centre for the Performing Arts, the festival is also taking place at the newly built Beijing Performing Arts Centre in Tongzhou district.

The festival kicked off with a concert featuring violinist Chen Xi and seven other musicians

from China and abroad performing pieces such as Mendelssohn's *Octet for Strings in E-flat Major, Op 20*, for four violins, two violas and two cellos.

Lyu and pianist Sun Yingdi performed Kreisler's *Liebesfreud (Love's Joy)* and *Tambourin Chinois (Chinese Drum)*. Lyu's group, Major Trio, featuring Sun and cellist Li-Wei Qin, played Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio No 1, Op 49*.

“Every year, we try to present a diversity of programs to display the beauty of chamber music,” says Lyu.

Musicians from around the world are also taking part in the event, including Concerto Copenhagen, which is celebrated as one of the most innovative baroque orchestras from Denmark; the Wiener Cello Ensemble 5+1, a cello ensemble of five men and one woman of different generations;



Violinist Lyu Siqing (left), pianist Sun Yingdi (second from left) and cellist Li-Wei Qin (front, right) performing at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on May 1. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

and the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra, which is dedicated to performing works by Haydn.

“Each musician we invited has a successful career as a soloist. However, when they play together as chamber music ensembles, they create a very pleasant and unique sound, which cannot be compared with the sound they produce as soloists,” Lyu says. “Chamber music is our way of communication.”

Lyu, a junior prizewinner in the inaugural Menuhin Competition for Young Violinists, was invited in 1980 by Yehudi Menuhin to study violin in London at age 11. In 1987, he became the first Asian violinist to win a top prize at Italy's prestigious Premio Paganini International Violin Competition, which propelled him to stardom.

On May 24 and 25, the celebrat-

ed violinist Ning Feng, who has been named as artist-in-residence during the 2023-24 season of the China NCPA Orchestra — the resident orchestra of the NCPA — will close the festival with two concerts with musicians of the China NCPA Orchestra. He will play music by Mozart, including *Violin Concerto No 4 in D Major, K 218*, and *Violin Concerto No 2 in D Major, K 211*.

According to Wang Luli, deputy director of the NCPA's Program Management Department, the NCPA initiated the chamber music festival in 2009, and it has since gained a large fan base.

“Every year, we have old friends return to the festival and new ones join us,” says Wang, adding that this year, musicians from the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra are taking part in the festival for the first time. “They make our programs colorful and creative.”