

In good hands

Giant panda family settling in well at new home in Sichuan

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French musical Mozart to rock Chinese stages

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China emerging as clean energy storage powerhouse due to supportive policies

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CHINA DAILY

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Iranians mourn late president

Farewell services to include funeral and burial ceremony for Raisi on Thursday

By JAN YUMUL and MIKE GU in Hong Kong and YANG RAN in Beijing

Massive crowds filled the main square of Tabriz in northwestern Iran as well as mosques in Teheran and elsewhere on Tuesday as Iranians prayed for and held funeral ceremonies for President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who were killed on Sunday in a helicopter crash.

Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian are credited with resounding achievements in foreign relations that are likely to continue even after the new presidential election that is scheduled next month, according to analysts.

Following mourning announcements by Iranian authorities tasked with arranging the services, funeral ceremonies for those who died in the crash were first conducted in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province, on Tuesday morning, the second day of the five-day national period of mourning.

Huge processions of mourners were seen in online videos posted by Iran's Tasnim News Agency. Using their mobile phones, some mourners recorded their glimpses of the fallen leaders' caskets, which were draped in the colors of the Iranian flag.

The mourning services will lead up to a funeral and burial ceremony for Raisi on Thursday in the holy city of Mashhad, his hometown, according to Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency.

Speaking at the Tabriz ceremony, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said that Iran "mourned the death of a beloved, popular and humble president", adding that the nation was also saddened by the death of a foreign minister "who left active diplomacy in the critical moments of the resistance as his legacy".

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari on Tuesday in Astana, Kazakhstan, and again expressed



Soldiers carry the flag-draped casket of late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash on Sunday, during a funeral ceremony on Tuesday at Mehrabad Airport in Teheran. Raisi's casket, together with those of seven members of his entourage, arrived in Teheran from Tabriz in Northwest Iran's East Azerbaijan Province, where the crash happened. IRAN'S PRESIDENCY OFFICE VIA REUTERS

his condolences over the deaths of Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian.

Wang and Safari were in Astana for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's foreign ministers' meeting.

No matter how the situation changes, China will as always strengthen strategic cooperation with Iran, safeguarding the common interests of both sides and continue to make efforts for regional and world peace, Wang said.

Safari emphasized that Iran's domestic and foreign policies will not change.

Teheran attaches great importance to its relationship with Beijing and is committed to strengthening bilateral cooperation in various areas including politics, the economy and culture, Safari said.

Ali Khansari, an international affairs analyst at Allameh Tabata-

Ebrahim Raisi fought with honor in the struggle against imperialism, for sovereignty, for peace and multipolarity."

Carlos Martinez, British political commentator

ba'i University in Teheran, said that Iran has come together despite the political and ideological differences of political parties, journalists, university professors and "even ordinary people".

"In their eyes, this tragedy is very bad and sad," Khansari said.

Mehran Kamrava, a professor of government at Georgetown Univer-

sity in Qatar, said Raisi "did have measurable successes" when it came to his foreign policy, and did so on "two fronts" in particular — in improving relations with Iran's neighbors as well as with Russia, India and China.

During Raisi's time in office, Iran made strides in its relationship with its regional and Asian neighbors, including its acceptance into BRICS in August, with official membership beginning on Jan 1. In addition, Iran gained full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in July.

Carlos Martinez, a British political commentator, said, "Ebrahim Raisi fought with honor in the struggle against imperialism, for sovereignty, for peace and multipolarity."

Martinez said Raisi's legacy includes resolute support for Palestinian liberation, Iran's membership in BRICS and the SCO, a

significant deepening of Iran-China relations, and a total refusal to succumb to the West's bullying and intimidation. Raisi also rejected speculation that only through rapprochement amid sanctions from the West could Iran achieve its economic success, Martinez added.

Iran will hold a presidential election on June 28, according to a statement by the agency headed by acting president Mohammad Mokhber.

Registration of candidates will be carried out from May 30 to June 3, with the campaign period taking place between June 12 and 27, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency.

Niu Xinchun, executive director of the China-Arab Research Institute at Ningxia University, said Iran's procedures for power transition are clear and well-defined.

See *Legacy*, page 3

Xi's European trip helps shift the direction of global politics

This six-day trip of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Europe has served to shift the global trajectory away from the danger of war to a more fruitful path. As the forces of NATO and the West remain focused on endlessly continuing the conflict in Ukraine until it leads to a global confrontation, there are also forces within the West that are working to inject some reason into this untenable and dangerous situa-

WORLD WATCH By William Jones

tion. President Xi, through his head-of-state diplomacy, has effectively tapped into this.

The trip to France coincided with the 60th anniversary of China's diplomatic relations with France, the first "Western nation"

to establish ties with the People's Republic of China. This was an important psychological element in countering what is an intensive propaganda narrative blaring out of the Western media under the influence of the Anglo-American war mongers. In addition, the personal relationship which French President Emmanuel Macron seems to have developed with the Chinese President gives a clear signal that

things may well change. After rather formal trilateral talks that included European Union President Ursula Von der Leyen, the visit took on a more pleasant and constructive tone, with Macron pointedly repeating a personal gesture accorded to him by President Xi during his own visit to China earlier, by taking Xi to a village where Macron had spent time as a child with his grandmother.

The two countries signed a number of agreements during the course of the visit, with major benefits being held out to the all-important French agricultural sector as well as to France's aerospace sector. While Macron is not yet totally in sync with China's attempt to have a cease-fire and peace negotiations in dealing with Ukraine, his call for an "Olympic truce" may

See *Visit*, page 3

Setting sail again



Tugboats escort the cargo ship *Dali* on Monday after it was refloated in Baltimore, the United States. The vessel struck the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, causing it to collapse, and resulting in the death of six people. The vessel had remained trapped under the collapsed bridge for seven weeks, before being freed. MATT ROURKE / AP

HUICHANG THEATER VILLAGE A STAGE FOR MORE VIBRANT FUTURE

Renowned director brings plays to remote ancestral home, boosts locals' prospects

By SUN SHANGWU, TANG YING and DENG ZHANGYU in Huichang, Jiangxi



Eight years ago, Chi Tao experienced his first taste of modern theater in his hometown of Huichang, Jiangxi province. Then 22 years old, the budding performer from a *caichaxi*, or traditional tea-picking

opera, troupe found himself baffled by the contemporary play. Understanding it was virtually impossible, the thought of one day playing such a role seemed a distant dream to him.

But Chi now has the leading role in a localized version of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. The work, which combines comedy and tragedy, is a signature play of United States-born, Taiwan-based theater director and playwright Stan Lai, who helped establish a village theater in Huichang.

See *Drama*, page 2

Northeast China home to more rare tigers, leopards

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING in Harbin

Siberian tiger and Amur leopard populations in the wild have been steadily increasing at the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, thanks to the establishment of the national park system and the implementation of national protection policies, officials said.

Data from the park's management bureau show that the number of Siberian tigers rose to 70 and that of Amur leopards increased to 80, with the birth of 35 cubs in the past year.

The territorial range of these big cats exceeds 11,000 square kilometers, accounting for nearly 80 percent of the total area of the park, which stretches across the provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang.

The park, which was formally established in 2021 after a trial phase since August 2017, is the only protected area in China where Siberian tigers and Amur leopards breed in the wild.

"Since the trial phase, we integrated 19 existing nature reserves within the area. Efforts were also made to restore habitats — including key dispersal corridors — for the tigers and leopards, and to build ecological corridors," said Duan Zhaogang, director of the bureau.

"A total of 2,200 hectares of forestland was cleared and restored. Besides, continuous anti-poaching patrols were conducted," he said, adding that all these steps were taken to provide a large-scale, high-quality habitat for the big cats.

Data from the bureau show that before the trial phase, there were only 27 Siberian tigers and 42 Amur leopards living in the wild in the region, but their numbers surpassed 50 and 60, respectively, by 2021.

"In 2023, we recorded the birth of 20 Siberian tiger cubs and 15 Amur leopard cubs," Duan said. "Compared with data from the past decade, the survival rate of tiger and leopard cubs has increased from 33 percent in 2015 to nearly 50 percent."

The healthy birth and survival rates of Siberian tigers and Amur leopards in the wild demonstrate the effectiveness of China's habitat protection efforts.

As most of the national park is distributed along the border between China and Russia, the two countries have maintained friendly cooperation in the field of ecological conservation, establishing multiple joint protection and monitoring mechanisms for Siberian tigers and Amur leopards in recent years.

China and Russia have coordinated with each other to open cross-border ecological corridors, allowing the big cats to migrate freely, which in turn has created a new model of cooperation for the cross-border protection of endangered wildlife species and for building a community of life between humankind and nature.

Feng Limin, deputy director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration's Northeast Tiger and Leopard Monitoring and Research Center, said, "We have cooperated with border management departments to open 290 cross-border animal passages in the eastern China-Russia border area of the national park."

Wild animals can use these corridors, which have been opened every few hundred meters along the border, to move back and forth between the two countries, Feng added.

Under the joint protection mechanism, the populations of major preys for tigers and leopards — such as sika deer, wild boars and roe deer — have doubled at the national park.

Han Junhong contributed to this story.

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PAGE TWO



Chi Tao (center) performs the leading role of a localized tea-picking opera version of Stan Lai's *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*. WANG KAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Drama: Providing new roles for youths

From page 1

On weekdays, Chi performs with the Huichang Tea Harvest Opera Theater, a local troupe that specializes in Gannan tea-picking opera, a traditional form of Chinese opera that has flourished in the region for centuries. On weekends, Chi simply crosses a bridge from where his troupe performs to the Huichang Theater Village, where he transforms into a contemporary actor, performing for drama lovers from across the country.

The changes seem unreal to the young man and he still feels a bit nervous about them. "I often doubt whether I'm good enough to deliver a perfect contemporary performance," he said.

Since the grand opening of the Huichang Theater Village in January, about 500 plays have been staged there. Drama performances from China, Italy, France, and Spain have attracted more than 3.5 million theatergoers. The small county in a mountainous area is usually associated with rice noodle production and agricultural products, but now it is being related to the arts.

Lai said the Huichang Theater Village is an experiment to explore through art and culture other possibilities in the region, which is little known to outsiders due to its inconvenient transportation.

Lai's father was born and raised in Huichang. After his father left for Taiwan and then the US, Lai did not visit his ancestral home until 1997, when he reconnected with his uncle.

"When I returned to Huichang and imagined the roads my father walked, the alleys he passed through, and the old house he lived in, I felt a special connection to this land," Lai said.

He believed that establishing a theater village could provide a new future for local youths. Many of them had limited life choices, either working in factories in coastal cities, earning money and returning home to marry, or going to college and never coming back.

In 2015, Lai started a project to stage his own theater productions in his hometown every year. He has worked with the local government since 2017 to transform an old community into the Huichang Theater Village.

The community used to be inhabited by families, with many houses historical buildings, including the old residences and ancestral halls of prominent families. Some of these halls were renovated and repurposed as theaters. A printing factory in the area was converted into the Hui Theater, where renowned plays are often staged, including the



A bird's-eye view of the Huichang Theater Village in Huichang, Jiangxi province. It consists of seven theaters transformed from either factories or old ancestral halls. HUA XINMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

tea-picking opera version of *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*.

A local taste

The play made its debut in Taiwan in 1986, winning Lai great acclaim and many awards. The popular work combines a comedy, which is inspired by a utopia depicted by Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) poet Tao Yuanming, and a tragic love story set during the turbulent period of the 20th century.

All the actors are from the Huichang Tea Harvest Opera Theater, and none of them had any experience performing in a modern play. The comedic element of the play was integrated with the local tea-picking opera, which combines dancing and singing, and reflections on the daily lives of tea farmers.

Tea-picking opera has thrived in the mountainous regions of Jiangxi for over 400 years. It is characterized by rhythmic music, vibrant costumes, and dances featuring unique movements similar to ballet dancers standing on the tips of their toes. In addition, the actors speak in the Huichang dialect, making it relatable to local audiences.

Hu Jing, director of the Huichang Tea Harvest Opera Theater, said when they performed the play for the first time in January, the audience was very quiet. He found this strange, as it was partly a comedy, and wondered why the audience wasn't laughing. Hu later learned that the locals were unfamiliar with theater eti-



Theater director Stan Lai's new play *Flower in the Mirror, Moon in the Water* stages its world premiere at the Huichang Theater Village in January. WANG KAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

quette and didn't know whether they should laugh. "For the locals, modern drama is new. They have learned how to appreciate this fresh art form in the past few months," he said.

It also took several months for the performers to become familiar with the new art form. From last October, members of his team spent lengthy periods during the day and at night rehearsing.

Chi, the lead actor, rehearsed 12 hours a day for three consecutive months and lost 14 kilograms. His role requires him to dance while singing, and run around constantly, which consumes a lot of energy. Sometimes, he was so exhausted that he collapsed on the stage floor and couldn't get up during the rehearsal. However, the physical exhaustion couldn't dampen his love for theater.

"It opened a new world for young performers in the county. In the theater village, we know various art forms. We are able to talk with actors from across the world. We could never imagine it before," said Chi, who started learning tea-picking opera at 13, and has never seen the world outside his home.

The world's stage

Since the theater village's opening in January, hundreds of performances by troupes from both home and abroad have been staged there. Street performances, including clown shows, magic, puppetry, and improvisation in outdoor spaces, have attracted large crowds of visitors. The peak number of visitors in a single day exceeded 200,000, even though the population of the county is only 530,000.

Before its opening, the team that operates the theater village was very concerned that they would not receive enough performance applications. However, to their surprise, more than 100 troupes from around the world have applied, far exceeding their expectations, said Zou Min, manager of the team.

"I was touched when a performer from a French troupe told me in January that they'd like to come again. Huichang is just a small county. These artists gathered here for theater and the passionate audiences," said Zou.

Surrounded by mountains, Huichang has no direct flights. The nearest airport is a two-hour drive

away, and traveling by train requires several transfers. The lack of transportation options hasn't dampened the passion of both tourists and visiting troupes.

During the May Day holiday, more than 250,000 visitors flocked to the theater village. In June, Italy's Sardinia Theatre company will bring *Macbeth* to Huichang, an alternative staging of Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*.

"It's rare for locals to see foreign faces. This year, we are getting used to those foreign artists who love to interact with us through body language," Zou said.

The village also offers free venues and accommodation for young artists' experimental new plays, encouraging them to present their creative ideas. Even productions by theater students can be staged at the venues as long as they are creative.

A vocational school providing courses and programs in stage art and production was set up last year, accommodating 105 students, many of whom are local youth. Training courses for theater lovers of all ages are also available.

"We try our best to explore whether the involvement of theater can bring about some changes and influence our next generation," said Zou, who is also the mother of a 14-year old boy.

Zou, a local resident, discovered the art form after collaborating with the theater village several years ago. When her son watched his first play he was thrilled and couldn't wait to see more.

"We have lots of difficulties to deal with. The theater village is still in the infancy stage. It has planted the seeds of art. Years later, the seeds will grow into big trees," said Zou, pointing to an ancient banyan tree standing in the center of the village.

Under the big tree, a group of visitors interacted with a small troupe, singing and dancing. A little boy hid behind his mother, curiously watching one actor dressed in a bizarre costume.

Visitor Lin Peiyang was captivated by the scene and decided to join the group. He had driven a long way from Nanchang, the capital city of Jiangxi, to spend a night immersed in theater. It was the second time he had visited the theater village in May.

He planned to watch *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land* for a second time. The theaters, museums, coffee shops, and locals strolling around the village also attracted his attention.

"The village brings art and hope of a bright future to residents here. It's very vibrant and I love it. That's the power of theater," said Lin.

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From left: Barcelona-based theater and music company Residual/Gurus stages a musical show in an open space at the Huichang Theater Village during the May Day holiday; a troupe performing an improvised show attracts many visitors in May; an artist from Italy presents a bubble show during the grand opening of the theater village in January. PHOTOS BY LIU YUANPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

TOP NEWS

Key anti-graft operation yields positive results

Over past decade, 9,000 corruption suspects sent back from overseas, \$6.77b recovered

By YANG ZEKUN
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China is continuously improving the legal framework and strengthening international cooperation to advance the work of preventing the escape of corruption suspects, pursuing fugitives, recovering stolen assets and improving the cross-border corruption governance system, experts said.

The Ministry of Public Security recently launched the Fox Hunt 2024 operation targeting economic crime suspects who have fled abroad, instructing public security organs to intensify efforts in key cases and to expand law enforcement cooperation channels.

Since 2014, about 9,000 economic crime suspects have been captured and handed over to China from more than 120 countries and regions via the Fox Hunt operation, leading to the recovery of about 49 billion yuan (\$6.77 billion) in assets.

The operation is part of the Sky Net campaign initiated in 2015 by the Fugitive Repatriation and Asset Recovery Office of the Central Anti-Corruption Coordination Group. The campaign targets fugitives facing corruption charges.

This year's Sky Net campaign was launched in March. It aims to maintain a high-pressure stance on fugitive repatriation and asset recovery, deepen cross-border corruption governance, and promote an integrated mechanism for preventing escapes, pursuing fugitives and recovering assets.

All the departments involved in Sky Net were urged to coordinate international and domestic efforts to advance the pursuit of fugitives and the recovery of assets, strengthen anti-corruption efforts among countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, and maintain a high-pressure stance on anti-corruption.

Resolute will

Ji Ying, an associate professor of law at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, noted that this year marks the 10th year of the Sky Net campaign, with consistent efforts to pursue fugitives and recover illicit assets abroad demonstrating China's resolute will to combat corruption.

"In current corruption cases, foreign-related factors are increasingly prominent, and some cases are old with long time spans and few effective leads, urgently requiring deeper international cooperation," she said.

Challenges such as criminals' money laundering activities, the complex financial systems of different countries, and the inadequate enforcement of anti-money laundering regulations complicate the process of recovering corrupt assets, she added. Furthermore, the high cost of asset recovery and the attitude of the country where the assets are located also affect the recovery process.

Moreover, most countries with which China has signed extradition treaties are developing nations. However, the primary destinations for Chinese fugitives, such as the United

States, Canada and Australia, lack effective bilateral extradition treaties with China, increasing difficulties in effective extradition cooperation with these countries, she said.

Legislative improvement

Ji noted that China has continuously improved its legislation and mechanisms related to anti-graft to tackle these challenges and adapt to new needs.

As of October, China had signed 171 bilateral judicial assistance treaties with 83 countries and joined nearly 30 international conventions that include judicial assistance and extradition, with cooperation spanning over 130 countries.

In June 2014, the Fugitive Repatriation and Asset Recovery Office of the Central Anti-Corruption Coordination Group was established, followed by the establishment of similar offices at the provincial level in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

In March 2018, supervisory commissions were fully established at the national, provincial, municipal and county levels, and the Supervision Law was enacted, specifically outlining provisions for international anti-corruption cooperation.

In October 2018, China introduced the law on international criminal judicial assistance and amended the Criminal Procedure Law to include procedures for trials in absentia. In 2020, an amendment to the Criminal Law was approved regarding the crime of money laundering.

In July last year, the Law on Foreign Relations was enacted. It emphasized deepening mechanisms for international law enforcement cooperation and improving judicial assistance systems. In addition, the Anti-Money Laundering Law is being amended.

New characteristics

Li Xiao'ou, an associate professor of law at UIBE, noted that current corruption cases also exhibit new characteristics linked to the internet, such as new cross-border money laundering methods and virtual currency laundering. International cooperation on cross-border evidence collection and the rising difficulty in investigating digital crimes continue to pose challenges.

Apart from enhancing judicial cooperation with foreign countries, more research and legislation regarding international laws, especially to address conflicts between Chinese laws and the laws of foreign countries where corrupt individuals are located, should be conducted, Li said.

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption provides a basic framework for the pursuit of fugitives and for asset recovery, but substantial differences in culture, values and legal systems among countries still require intensified efforts for successful cross-border pursuits and asset recovery, Li said.

China has joined the UNCAC, and its domestic laws need further alignment with the convention, while the mechanisms for cross-border pursuit of fugitives and asset recovery require thorough implementation, Li added.



Tea time at embassy

Lauren Luo (left), chief executive officer of JingWei Fu Tea USA Inc in California, entertains guests at the "Tea for Harmony Yaji Cultural Salon", held at the Chinese embassy in the United States on Tuesday.

ZHAO HUANXIN / CHINA DAILY

Foreigners seek style advice on Chinese social media platform

By ZHANG YI
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Want a new look? A different hairstyle? Can't trust any one opinion? You probably need to seek help on Xiaohongshu, or the Little Red Book. Thousands of netizens from around the world are turning to the social media lifestyle platform for advice. Holding up a piece of paper with the Chinese characters *Tingquan* — which means listening to advice — written on it, they are posting their earnest queries, and getting answers by the dozen.

Take for example 21-year-old Elmanu from Germany, who recently posted on the platform, thanking Chinese netizens for their advice, which helped him improve his image. "I received far more comments and suggestions than I had imagined, many of which were very helpful," he wrote.

In February, he posted for the first time, seeking advice on hairstyle and clothing, providing his height, weight and photos. The post triggered over 800 likes and more than 600 comments, in both Chinese and English, with some users even sending him photos of hairstyles and outfits to help him make up his mind.

In his latest post, he shared photos of his new look, mentioning that he had changed his hairstyle, bought new clothes, and no longer wore glasses. He also updated about his life and said he had started learning Chinese.

People from all over the world are popping up under the hashtag *Tingquan*. They usually introduce themselves in Chinese and put forward

what style aspect they need advice on. What follows is direct, brutal and honest advice from Chinese netizens.

The current trend can be traced back to a popular video posted earlier on TikTok by a blogger named Candiselin86, who shares posts on Chinese culture. She uploaded screenshots from Xiaohongshu, which showed pictures of people who had transformed their image by acting on the online advice they received. Chinese netizens are helping girls to look and dress better, she wrote.

The video quickly garnered tens of thousands of views, with many wanting to know how to download Xiaohongshu. Soon, overseas users were flocking to the Chinese platform under the *Tingquan* tag seeking suggestions and then sharing their experiences on TikTok.

Tingquan was selected as one of the three most popular keywords in Xiaohongshu's 2023 report on lifestyle trends. Data showed that last year, the total views under the tag exceeded 900 million, with a 51-fold increase in searches compared to the previous year, and nearly 3 million posts.

Under the tag, one can see various posts seeking advice, including those sent by governments, brands and ordinary netizens, as well as the active participation of people providing suggestions.

Data showed that on average, each post seeking suggestions would get comments from 43.9 strangers, which shows that interactive socializing for mutual help is favored by users.

"When you can't make up your mind and there's no one around to ask, you can just post something online and see if anyone can offer advice. Most of the time, I find that netizens are quite enthusiastic and provide many genuine suggestions," said Felicia Ngan Wei Wei, a user from Malaysia.

Currently a senior student at Tianjin University, Ngan developed a keen interest in studying in China upon graduating from high school. She downloaded Xiaohongshu to gather information about Chinese universities and found them helpful.

The platform has become her most frequently used social app, where she finds information on hairstyles, fashion and other daily interests. She said that in Malaysia, many people, even those who have never been to China, enjoy using it.

"Whenever I encounter any curious questions in life, I search for them and find lots of notes and instant comments from others, which feels very real," she said.

To assist foreign students like herself who are interested in studying in China, she produces videos in both Chinese and English, introducing campus life at Tianjin University, including details about international student accommodation, and answers people's queries.

After graduating with her bachelor's degree this year, she is preparing to study in the United Kingdom. She recently sought advice on preparing for the IELTS exam and renting accommodations in the UK on the platform.

Zhang Xiaoqiang, a professor at Chongqing University's School of

Journalism and Communication, said that for foreign users, the Chinese social media platform offers a unique textual and cultural experience.

Also, using social media from a foreign country allows individuals to distance themselves from their familiar social circles and cultures, making it easier to let their guards down and express themselves freely, Zhang said.

He said the major advantage of Xiaohongshu lies in its focus on everyday life, steering clear of controversial public topics, and the platform hosts fewer media outlets, making it relatively more relaxing for users.

On some foreign social media platforms that tend to emphasize public discourse, users become easily entangled in public issues. Some platforms even allow harmful and inappropriate content, resulting in a poorer user experience, he added.

In recent years, Chinese social media and e-commerce platforms have transitioned from imitating foreign models to inspiring imitations abroad. Apps like Douyin and Pinduoduo have successfully launched their platforms overseas, leveraging the successful experiences in China, Zhang said.

Whether on Xiaohongshu or Douyin, there are many foreign users who live in China for study, work or marriage. However, Chinese language-dominated platforms have not placed significant emphasis on developing for international users, he said.

These domestic platforms could consider expanding into the global market by offering features like multilingual translation and page design to cater to non-Chinese users, Zhang said, adding that once foreign user base grows, the international expansion of Chinese-language social media platforms would happen naturally.

Visit: Smoother ties will help industry in France

From page 1

prove to be a useful step in that direction. He's also faced with the need to balance the real interests of his own constituents with the demands of the Western elites for "de-risking" from China and war with Russia. The visit clearly indicated that the benefits for French farmers and for French industry lie in maintaining a smoother relationship with the People's Republic of China.

From Paris, President Xi went on to visit Serbia's President Alexander Vucic. Here there was more mutual understanding with regard to the global situation. Serbia is a country that has maintained continual close ties with China — and with Russia — and was the first European nation to establish a strategic partnership with China. It did not go unnoticed that President Xi arrived in Serbia on May 7, the 25th anniversary of the NATO bombing that destroyed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and killed three Chinese journalists. While he did not visit the memorial in Belgrade to the fallen journalists, the timing of the visit clearly sent out a message that the event was far from forgotten.

President Xi called China's relationship with Serbia an "ironclad

friendship". Most importantly, Serbia will be the first European country to sign a free trade agreement with China beginning July 1, and the relationship has been upgraded to a "China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era".

friendship". Most importantly, Serbia will be the first European country to sign a free trade agreement with China beginning July 1, and the relationship has been upgraded to a "China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era". President Xi was also warmly welcomed by the people of Serbia. On the last day of his visit to the Palace of Serbia, there were

thousands of people in the square below to greet the President waving Chinese and Serbian flags. One could clearly see from the reaction of the people gathered there that the visit of the Chinese president was seen as an extremely happy moment for a population that has been under the gun of the EU bureaucracy for not having broken its centuries-long relationship with Russia. President Vucic himself was personally quite moved by having President Xi visit him here at this time.

The last leg of Xi's trip covered Hungary. Hungary was the first European country to join the Belt and Road Initiative. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is the most outspoken European leader to have criticized NATO's continued war against Russia. While Orban has been castigated by the Brussels crowd as being outside the bellicose "mainstream" of present EU policy, he has been conducting a continual battle to take the EU and NATO off its present path toward war. The visit of the Chinese president was of crucial strategic significance since Hungary will now take over the EU chairmanship, and can, in that position, play an even more crucial role in taking the EU off the war path.

The author is the former Washington Bureau Chief for EIR News Service and a Non-resident Fellow in the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Legacy: Iran's overall situation remains stable, expert says

From page 1

Niu said he believes that the overall situation in Iran remains stable and that Raisi's death will have a limited influence on the Palestine-Israel conflict and regional dynamics, as the ultimate decision-maker in Iran's domestic and foreign affairs is Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Shu Meng, an assistant professor at Shanghai International Studies University's Middle East Studies Institute, said that because Raisi had been viewed as a potential successor to Ali Khamenei, the tragedy leaves Iran without a clear candidate for successor, possibly forcing a future power structure readjustment.

Also on Tuesday, Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani was elected as the new chairman of Iran's Assembly of Experts, a legislative body responsible for appointing Iran's supreme leader and supervising his activities, IRNA reported.

Chen Weihua in Brussels and Zhou Jin in Beijing contributed to this story.

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Flower power



A woman wearing a floral headgear takes a selfie on Monday in front of a kiosk at the Chelsea Flower Show, an annual event held in London, the United Kingdom. KIRSTY WIGLESWORTH / AP

CHINA

Book on Xi's insights into water resources unveiled

By HOU LIQIANG
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An English language publication showcasing President Xi Jinping's insights into water resources management was made public at the 4th High-level Seminar on Global Water Security on Tuesday in Bali, Indonesia.

The theme of this year's seminar, a flagship annual event co-hosted by the World Water Council and China's Ministry of Water Resources, was "Sharing China's latest policies and best practices for better water governance".

In the opening session, Li Guoying, minister of water resources; Loic Fauchon, president of the World Water Council; and Zhang Zhisheng, Chinese consul general in Denpasar, Indonesia, unveiled the publication, entitled *Water Governance in China — Perspectives of Xi Jinping*.

One of the important parts of the book discusses an innovative philosophy on water governance that Xi proposed in 2014, which focuses on "prioritizing water conservation, balancing spatial distribution, adopting systematic approaches and leveraging the roles of both government and market".

Basuki Hadimuljono, Indonesia's minister of public works and public housing; Nizar Baraka, Morocco's minister of equipment and water; and Abdelmonem Belati, Tunisia's minister of agriculture, water resources and fisheries, were among the first international readers of the book.

Addressing the event, Li pointed out that guided by Xi's principles, China has made historic strides and significant improvements in water governance.

With only 6 percent of the world's freshwater resources, China has successfully ensured food and water security for nearly 20 percent of the world's population and has contributed to more than 18 percent of its GDP, he noted.

Fauchon highlighted China's significant contributions in ensuring water security and expressed his willingness to step up water cooperation between the World Water Council and China.

Attended by nearly 200 experts and representatives from international water-related organizations and countries, the seminar was held on the sidelines of the ongoing 10th World Water Forum, which will run until Saturday.

Benedito Braga, the honorary president of the World Water Council, praised China's enduring commitment to sharing its extensive knowledge and experiences in water resources management with the global community during an interview at the 10th World Water Forum.

Braga said China's altruism is evident at this water forum, where the book is being unveiled to professionals in the field.

Reflecting on the three-decade collaboration between China and the WWC, Braga emphasized China's active engagement on the international stage and highlighted its remarkable accomplishments in water management. He cited the South-to-North Water Diversion Project and the Three Gorges Dam as prime examples.

The South-to-North Water Diversion Project, which transfers water from the Yangtze River to northern China, involved substantial infrastructure investment and costs but yielded significant benefits, Braga noted. He also pointed to the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower project, which plays a crucial role in controlling the frequent flooding in southern China.

"Through these meetings and the forum, your experiences are being shared with other countries around the world," Braga said.

Raptors released



Rescued raptors are released back into the wild during an event organized by the city procuratorate in Qinhuangdao, Hebei province, on Monday. The procuratorate held the event to promote public interest litigation involving the protection of wild animals. CAO JIANXIONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Village to offer subsidies for childbirth

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
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In an effort to increase its birth rate, Bangdong village in the Panyu district of Guangzhou, Guangdong province, has come up with a subsidy plan to encourage childbirth.

According to the plan, couples in the village who give birth to a second child will receive 10,000 yuan (\$1,400), while those who bear a third child will get 30,000 yuan.

The policy will take effect in June. Villagers who have already had their second or third child are not eligible to receive the subsidies.

Gu Quankai, Party chief and head of Bangdong village, said most of the villagers are very supportive of the plan, with more than 90 percent of them voting in favor of it during the village representative assembly held earlier this month.

"The policy aims to provide some benefits to the couples who give birth to more children and encourage young people in the village to have babies," he said.

Chen Zhuohong, deputy head of Bangdong, said the village expects to spend about 500,000 yuan annually to fund the subsidies. He antici-

pates that between eight and 10 additional babies will be born in the village each year as a result.

According to Chen, Bangdong, which has a population of 3,337 and more than 800 villagers of child-bearing age, saw 30 babies born in 2023. Collectively, the villagers earned more than 58 million yuan last year.

"The problem of aging has become more severe in the village in recent years, as many young villagers have refused to give birth to children due to increased life and economic pressures," he said.

This has caused the village's birth rate to decline year by year, he said.

Chen said Bangdong used to see more than 40 new babies born annually from six to seven years ago.

"Now, young villagers are demanding a higher quality of life, and they don't want to put too much pressure on themselves, so the village committee decided to provide subsidies to encourage childbirth," he said. "We hope to give young couples some subsidies to reduce their economic pressure and encourage them to have more children in the coming months."

"A high birth rate can expand the population of the village and pro-

vide more talent for the village's future development," he added.

Dong Yuzheng, former president of the Guangdong Academy of Population Development and a special researcher at the Guangdong Provincial Advisory Office, said fertility rewards certainly have a certain positive significance.

"Especially for the young people who are hesitant to have children due to excessive economic pressure, the childbirth awards and subsidies can reduce their burden of childbirth and education and reduce their concerns about childbirth," Dong told China Daily.

Successful experiences in some countries and regions around the world have shown that through childbirth rewards and subsidies, the fertility rate can be effectively increased, said Dong, who is also president of the Guangdong Sociological Association.

"But fertility is not only a matter for young parents and their families, but also for society, as it is a complex and comprehensive behavior involving economic, social, resource and environmental factors," he said.

Yang Qianhang contributed to this story.

Robot helps workers monitor trains

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

With the help of a six-legged robot, Liu Tianyu and his colleagues can easily finish collecting internal temperature data and check the safety status of high-speed train carriages as they come off the production line.

Liu, 40, head of the diagnostic team of CRRC Changchun Railway Vehicles Co in Changchun, Jilin province, developed the robot to improve their work process.

"The purpose of our team is to test the operating stability of each system of the high-speed trains and their final performance before leaving the factory," Liu said. "With the continuous advancement of technology in high-speed train applications, advanced digitalization and informatization methods must be combined with technological innovation."

As a computer control and mechanical automation major, Liu used his spare time to improve his professional skills in areas such as computer programming, computer-aided design, electronic circuits and 3D modeling.

In 2020, the Fuxing (Rejuvenation) bullet train developed by CRRC Changchun for the Beijing-Zhangjiakou High-Speed Railway entered its debugging phase, requiring stricter testing standards.

To ensure the interior of the carriages could function normally in temperatures of up to 40 C, multiple hot air blowers were needed, while workers collected temperature data and checked the vehicle's status.

"The frequent boarding and disembarking in cramped working environments are both physically demanding for workers and challenges the stability of the test data," Liu said. "Therefore, I wondered whether



Liu Tianyu displays a six-legged robot he developed to check the safety of high-speed train carriages during production. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

robots could help us solve those problems."

So Liu started his research.

"Considering the actual operating environment of the machine, which needed to move flexibly between ground cable routes and ensure smooth passage in narrow areas, I chose a spider-like appearance for the robot," he said. "However, due to size restrictions, the robot needed to be lightweight but solid enough."

To minimize unnecessary support structures, Liu made a lattice design, and during the process of choosing its production materials, he turned his attention to 3D printing technology and PLA, a type of plastic made from corn.

"Metal is too expensive to make structural parts and needs a long

production cycle," he said. "Moreover, it is difficult to adjust the design."

After the 3D printer completed the final piece, a six-legged robot weighing less than 2 kilograms, capable of remote control and real-time video transmission for 72 hours, was created in June 2023.

Five data collection devices, a computing node and a display terminal were added to the unmanned patrol system. "The robot is only the first version, and there is still a lot of space for improvement," he said.

Han Junhong contributed to this story.

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Hog breeding system reduces import reliance

Homegrown Lanshi pig boasts disease resistance, superior economic traits

By LI LEI
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Authorities have recently approved a homegrown breeding system for a fast-growing hog strain called the Lanshi pig, helping to lessen China's reliance on imported boars for hog production.

The Lanshi pig's complete set line — the genetic foundation for the new breeding system — was green-lighted for commercial application in March by the national livestock and poultry genetic resources committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The system was the brainchild of a research team headed by Li Kui from the Agricultural Genomics Institute in Shenzhen, an affiliate of the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences in Guangdong province.

According to Li, the Lanshi pig strain was developed based on global mainstream commercial pig breeds using advanced biological breeding technologies, such as molecular marker-assisted breeding and whole-genome-assisted breeding.

Compared with its ancestors, the Lanshi pig has shown stronger resistance to disease, in addition to improved economic traits such as growth rate and a bigger share of lean meat, he said, adding it is expected to replace the Duroc, Changbai and Yorkshire breeds and become the mainstream commercial pig breed.

From 2018 to 2019, an outbreak of African swine fever led to a huge loss of pig stocks in China, and developing better disease resistance is of critical importance.

"Pigs hold a special status in our country," he said at a virtual news conference on Saturday.

"Both the number of pigs we raise and the consumption of pork account for about half the world's total, making it a multitrillion yuan industry. Pig breeding is closely related to the national



Lanshi pig, a fast-growing hog strain. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

economy and people's livelihoods," he added.

Li said the rollout of the Lanshi pig offers valuable lessons for improving other imported pig varieties.

China is the world's biggest market for pork, consuming some 700 million pigs annually, about 90 percent of which are descendants of strains imported from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark and France.

The rollout of the Lanshi pig's breeding system has been fast-tracked by progress in the homegrown microarray technology, commonly called "pig chips", according to Li.

The technology refers to a microchip-based testing platform that allows automated analysis of many DNA samples at once. China's ability to make its own microarray testing kits has curbed the cost for analyzing a large quantity of genetic material, which is common in modern breeding.

"We have developed our own Tianpeng Chip, and have achieved full domestic production of the entire chip manufacturing process," Li said.

The Lanshi pig breeding system was licensed for commercial use alongside 20 other homegrown varieties of livestock, poultry, silkworms and 17 newfound animal germ plasmas — the genetic resources critical to breeding. It is part of a broader government effort to develop domestic food species that the country has full control over.

Chubby leopard spurns diet, basks in the sun

By HUANG ZHILING and PENG CHAO in Chengdu

A chubby leopard at Panzhuhua Park Zoo in Sichuan province that became famous on the internet is under the spotlight again after failing to lose weight despite the zoo's efforts.

Many netizens commented that the result reminded them of their own weight loss struggles.

The leopard gained online fame in March when videos posted by visitors showing it leisurely basking in the sun went viral, as its plump appearance resembled the animated character Officer Clawhauser, an overweight cheetah from the movie *Zootopia*.

The zoo was praised by many netizens for being the "kindest zoo", but there were also concerns that the leopard's weight could affect its health, and suggestions were made for the zoo to help it shed its excess weight.

Zoo officials said they developed a special weight loss program for the leopard after receiving the suggestions, including adjusting the leopard's diet and feeding methods, and expanding its living space.

The zoo removed the fence and steel wire mesh between the leopard's enclosure and the neighboring enclosure, doubling its living space to 45 square meters, they said.

However, two months after the implementation of the weight loss program, Hongxing News reporters visiting the zoo found that the leopard's belly still appeared round and plump, showing no apparent effect on its weight loss.

Liu Maojun, a member of the

zoo staff, told Hongxing News that the zoo consulted many industry experts on how to help the leopard lose weight.

"The conclusion was that it was unnecessary to bother the leopard with weight loss efforts and that it should just enjoy its old age in peace," he said.

Liu said the leopard is between 16 and 17 years old, equivalent to a human in their 70s or 80s. It is fed 1.75 kilos of beef every day, but sometimes rabbit or chicken is substituted.

"We consulted many experts, and they said this is the standard formula," he said.

The zoo also conducts regular health checkups on the leopard, and despite being overweight, its physical functions are normal, Liu said. "As long as it's healthy and happy, that's all that matters. As for losing weight, we'll have to leave it to fate," Liu said.

The Panzhuhua Park Zoo is home to more than 130 animals of more than 20 species, including leopards, black bears, lions, alpacas and peacocks.

Apart from the leopard, netizens also found an old black bear that appeared to be overweight. Many said they mistook the bear for a pig at first glance.

Liu said many of the animals have lived at the zoo for over 10 years, and they are like old friends to him and his colleagues.

"I would come to check on these old guys every day. I just hope they stay safe and happy," he added.

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CHINA

Street shows



A dance performed by street artists from Africa attracts a large audience at the 4th Hangzhou Street Art Festival in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday. The three-day event, which began on Tuesday, attracted artists from various countries and regions who took turns putting on performances including songs, dances, acrobatics and opera. LI ZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

US students explore China

Two-week visit opens a window for American youths to experience nation

By ZHAO YIMENG

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Dozens of college students from the United States recently embarked on a journey to discover China, attending lectures from experts and joining cultural tours during a two-week visit to learn more about the country.

Fifteen students and teachers from Indiana University of Pennsylvania were scheduled to visit technology companies such as Xiaomi, experience Chinese culture in Beijing and Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and attend lectures about Sino-US relations at Beijing Foreign Studies University.

Most of the students haven't been to China before, and expressed excitement about traveling around what is, for many of them, the first Asian country they have ever visited.

During their visit to Xiaomi on Friday, some of the students said that the Xiaomi SU7 on display, the company's first electric car, was the most amazing vehicle they'd ever seen.

While Elizabeth Ashe was busy taking photos with the green car, which was the same color as her nails, software engineering student Kamir Walton was asking

questions about problems the car may have with charging.

Walton said he was especially impressed by the color of the car.

"When I was told the color was scientifically taken from the ocean, I thought I would really buy it," Walton said.

He added that a similar vehicle would be sold for over \$150,000 in the US, while it costs about 290,000 yuan (\$40,000) in China.

Computer science student Kenneth Au said he was curious about how China has been able to shift to an electric car system while the current infrastructure still supports gas-powered vehicles.

"It seems like China can fully convert to a whole electric car system, much better than any American system," Au said.

The cheaper prices of advanced electronic products such as smartphones and laptops have drawn the students' attention, but they said they are still concerned about the ability to use Chinese products outside the country.

For example, Au asked staff about the use of the Windows system and CarPlay functions on Xiaomi products.

"If I buy a Chinese product and I'm outside China, I may not get technical support from China,"

Au said, adding that he liked Xiaomi better than his current Samsung phone because of the lower price.

The college students were excited about the ancient architecture in the Forbidden City and how it fits Beijing's modern landscape.

Walton said the size of the Forbidden City was mind-boggling. "As a young country, we don't have ancient structures in the US. It's amazing that one emperor lived in a place literally the size of a city," he said.

Kayla Kristchil, who has traveled to some European countries, a region known for its historic monuments, was impressed by the combination of modern and ancient landscapes in Beijing.

She took a picture in the Forbidden City, with the palace and distant skyscrapers such as China Zun in the background.

Kristchil and her schoolmates joined physical education classes at Beijing Foreign Studies University on Monday, exploring Chinese culture through table tennis and kung fu.

Having played table tennis at home in the US, she played well against her Chinese counterpart during the class.

Kristchil emphasized the importance of cross-cultural communication through sports.

"Sport gives you something in common. We didn't even have to

talk; just playing ping-pong and spending time together was fun," she said. "Despite many differences between China and the US, having a common interest like sports is important."

Organized by BFSU, the tour program aims to open a window for US university students to experience China.

Tu Xiliang, one of the program organizers from BFSU, said the program provides college students from the two countries with opportunities for discussions and interactions, as well as practical research and exchange activities.

The university consulted IUP about the needs of the visitors in advance and redesigned their itinerary to feature various activities rather than just lectures.

"The US students want to experience a ride on a high-speed railway in China, so that's why we arranged a train trip from Beijing to Hangzhou in southern China," Tu said.

The team will see China's rural areas in Hangzhou's Fuyang district and learn the history of the Grand Canal running between Beijing and Hangzhou, he said.

Since the number of US students studying in China has decreased in recent years, Tu said he hoped the program would attract more international students to pursue further education in China and discover the country themselves.

Improved screening to lower cervical cancer rate

By WANG XIAOYU

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Deploying diagnostic tools that use artificial intelligence, strengthening grassroots doctors' screening capability and expanding free HPV vaccines are among the crucial steps China is taking to rein in the incidence of cervical cancer and reach goals set by the World Health Organization, health experts said recently.

China records more than 100,000 new cervical cancer cases and around 50,000 related deaths annually. The country also sees an incidence rate that is much higher than four per 100,000 — the threshold determined by the WHO as proof of elimination of the disease.

Qiao Youlin, a professor at the School of Population Medicine and Public Health at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, said that it usually takes about 10 years from becoming infected and exhibiting precancerous lesions to developing cervical cancer.

"Through prompt detection and treatment during the process, we can prevent related deaths," he said during a recent interview. "However, in less developed regions with poor screening capacity and low health awareness, many women are diagnosed at a late stage and succumb to the disease."

Zhu Lan, head of the obstetrics and gynecology department at Peking Union Medical College Hospital, said that with China's vast territory, it is difficult to improve screening skills in remote areas to the level of major urban hospitals.

"Using artificial intelligence and other new technologies to aid screening and diagnosis will be an important approach to controlling cervical cancer in those regions," she said.

In addition to beefing up early screening, experts also emphasized expanding coverage of HPV vaccines, which fight the cancer-causing

human papillomavirus.

China launched a trial program in 15 cities in 2021 that entails free HPV vaccinations and other innovative approaches, aiming to rein in the incidence of cancer. Since then, nine provincial-level regions have offered HPV vaccines for eligible girls, according to the National Health Commission.

Chen Zhao, an official at the National Administration of Disease Control and Prevention, said that the number of HPV doses delivered domestically has been rising steadily, with more than 58 million shots administered nationwide last year.

According to a study released this month by researchers from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and local CDC researchers in Fujian province, the annual number of administered HPV doses across the nation has been rising steadily since 2017, when China first approved HPV vaccines for use on the mainland.

As of 2022, coverage of the first HPV vaccination dose rose to 10.1 percent, and three-dose coverage increased to 6 percent.

However, both numbers were lower than the global average, which was estimated in 2019 to stand at 25 percent for the first dose and 15 percent for three doses. There is also a large shortfall from the WHO's target of achieving 90 percent full vaccination among girls under age 15 by 2030, the study said.

The study said that the introduction of two domestically developed HPV vaccines in 2019 and 2022 could help alleviate a shortage of vaccine supplies. It also recommends incorporating HPV vaccines into China's free national immunization program.

"This should involve implementing routine vaccinations to rapidly increase coverage among a wide range of ages, reduce regional disparities and ensure equitable access to this important vaccine," it said.

Allegations of panda mistreatment false

By YAN DONGJIE

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Giant pandas Mei Xiang and Tian Tian and their young cub Xiao Qiji are settling in well at their new home in Sichuan province after returning from the United States, according to a statement released by the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda on Monday.

The center was responding to online allegations of "concealment and mistreatment" of the three giant pandas, stating that these claims are false.

It has shared videos of the three animals after their return to China on platforms such as Sina Weibo. The videos appear to show that Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and Xiao Qiji are in good health, and their eating habits and activity levels are normal.

The two adult pandas were born at the center's Wolong Shenshuping base in Sichuan — Tian Tian in August 1997 and Mei Xiang in July 1998. They were both sent together to the National Zoological Park in Washington in 2000.

Their cub, Xiao Qiji, was born at the zoo in August 2020. The panda family returned to Sichuan in November last year.

After completing their quarantine, Mei Xiang and Tian Tian moved into a sanctuary area at the research center's base in Dujiangyan, Sichuan. The area is not open to visitors.

Xiao Qiji is currently being cared for at the Wolong Shenshuping base, and has been greeting visitors since the end of last year.

China will send a pair of giant pandas to the San Diego Zoo in California this year, embarking on a new round of a 10-year international conservation partnership, according to an agreement for giant panda conservation signed in April by the China Wildlife Conservation Association and the San Diego Zoo.

China has selected male panda Yun Chuan and female panda Xin Bao from the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda, and has arranged for experienced caretakers and veterinarians to accompany them to the US.

Xinjiang team wins the country's highest labor award

By CHENG SI

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Thanks to their spirit and pursuit of excellence in their work, a team of young people dedicated to the construction and operation of the power grid in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region has been awarded the nation's highest labor honor.

The work team members were awarded the title "National Worker Pioneers" by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions in late April. The team, which consists of 20 people, works for the department that is responsible for facility management and maintenance at the Xinjiang Fukang Pumped Storage Power Plant of the State Grid Xinyuan Group.

Another 1,033 work teams or organizations also received the honor.

"I thought Xinjiang was a backward region and worried about having trouble adapting to life here before I came here for college and work," said Yu Yihe, a 25-year-old woman from Liaoning province who joined the company in July 2021 after graduating that year from Shihezi University in Xinjiang.

Being the youngest and one of the team's few female members, Yu said it took time for her to get used to working and living here.

"I was very nervous about working in the facilities at first, because I thought I might not know how to handle the problems. I learned a lot from my colleagues by asking them questions and watching their operations," she said.

"I love my job, not only because it's closely related to my college major, but also because I have found my value in the work. Whenever I spot a malfunction and clear it, I feel like I'm Sherlock Holmes!"

Yu said that she has a strong sense of belonging when she works with her colleagues, who are also around her age.

Zuo Jian, director of the department, said that for him, living and working in Xinjiang has been worthwhile. Zuo, 38, came to the company in December 2021 after working in China's northeastern provinces for 11 years.

"It's a painstaking job, but I'm proud of what my team and I have done. The power plant is Xinjiang's first pumped storage power plant, which can function as a

"power bank" to help store excess power generated by a neighboring solar power plant or wind power station," he said.

He said that his wife and their 8-year-old child have moved to Xinjiang from Jilin province, his former working place, to be with him.

"We plan to stay in Xinjiang for a long time. The region is so beautiful and has a lot of potential that has yet to be tapped," Zuo said, adding that he is also proud to be participating in China's development.

"I'm always inspired by some edgy technological or scientific achievement our nation has reached. I think my generation has a responsibility to contribute to the nation's development," he said. "I'm proud that my team has a spirit of persistence and a strong enthusiasm for the job."

Having worked at the company for almost six years, 28-year-old He Wenbo said he has honed his skills on the job and has become a better person in the process.

"The tougher environment has made me more strong willed," he said. "I was told that Xinjiang was less developed before I came here,

but the region has made great progress over the years. The central government has also channeled so many resources to the region's construction, and I think this is where I need to be for my future career," he said.

He said that the members of the team are all rather young — with an average age of 28 — so it's inevitable that they'll have challenges on the job.

"But we young people have the will to overcome our problems, and we usually gather with senior technicians or engineers from other departments to figure out practical solutions," he said.

He said that all the members of the department cherish the honor they've received from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, which will encourage them to continue contributing to the nation's border development.

The Xinjiang Fukang Pumped Storage Power Plant started construction in April 2017, and will begin full operation in August. It will generate 2.6 billion kilowatt-hours per year, which can reduce coal consumption by 165,000 metric tons and carbon emissions by 496,000 tons a year.

Tea day



An instructor guides students in learning the art of making tea at the Chunguang Primary School in Handan, Hebei province, on Tuesday. The activity was held to celebrate International Tea Day, which fell on that day. HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

WORLD

Israel, Hamas leaders vent ire over arrest move

Conflict continues unabated in Gaza as divisions grow in Netanyahu's coalition

GAZA/JERUSALEM — Israel and Hamas, engaged in heavy fighting in the Gaza Strip, both angrily rejected on Monday moves to arrest their leaders for “war crimes” made before an international court.

The International Criminal Court's prosecutor Karim Khan said he had applied for arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders over the conflict.

Khan said Israel had committed “crimes against humanity” during the conflict, started by Hamas' Oct 7 attack, as part “of a widespread and systematic attack against the Palestinian civilian population”.

Khan also said the leaders of Hamas, including Qatar-based Ismail Haniyeh and Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar, “bear criminal responsibility” for actions committed during the Oct 7 attack.

Israel slammed as a “historical disgrace” the demand targeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, while Hamas said it “strongly condemns” the move.

Netanyahu said he rejected “with disgust The Hague prosecutor's comparison” between Israel and Hamas.

The warrants, if granted by the ICC judges, would mean that any of the 124 ICC member states would technically be obliged to arrest Netanyahu and the others if they traveled there. However, the court has no mechanism to enforce its warrants.

Israel's top ally the United States joined the condemnation, while France said it supported the court's independence and its “fight against impunity”.

The conflict continued unabated, with Israeli forces battling Hamas in Rafah, as well as in other flashpoints in central and northern areas.

Netanyahu has vowed to keep fighting Hamas in Gaza until the group is defeated and all remaining hostages are released.

The Israeli military said on Monday the bodies of four hostages retrieved from Gaza last week had been found in tunnels under Jabalia in the north.

More than seven months into the conflict, severe divisions within the Israeli war cabinet are growing, obscuring clear answers to crucial questions about the conflict's duration, intensity and scope.

The deep disagreements have peaked recently, with Gallant and minister-without-portfolio Benny Gantz coming out harshly against Netanyahu.

Gantz even threatened to resign if the cabinet did not approve by June 8 a comprehensive plan.

Foreign interests

Eyal Pinko, a researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University, told Xinhua News Agency that Gantz has long been influenced by the US interests, actively promoting its ambitions over an extended period.

Harel Chorev, historian and Palestinian affairs expert at Tel Aviv University, said that “Netanyahu constantly refuses to deal with the postwar issue, while Gantz wants to force him to talk about it and to provide a decent plan”.

He said a divided cabinet might lead to a more right-handed government or policy, being harsher in the Gaza issue.

Yonatan Freeman, international relations expert at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said that the divisions in the cabinet and the possible departure of Gantz would not affect the way the operation is conducted.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Graduates protest against the conflict between Israel and Hamas at Yale University, in New Haven, Connecticut, on Monday. MICHELLE MCLOUGHLIN / REUTERS

Students walk out from Yale graduation

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut — Scores of graduating students staged a walkout from Yale University's commencement exercises on Monday, protesting the Israeli attacks in Gaza, Yale's financial ties to weapons makers and its response to pro-Palestinian demonstrations on the Ivy League campus, as arrests linked to campus demonstrations surpassed the 3,000 mark nationwide.

The walkout began as Yale President Peter Salovey started to announce the traditional college-by-college presentation of candidates for degrees on the grounds of Yale's Old Campus, filled with thousands of graduates in their caps and gowns.

At least 150 students seated near the front of the audience stood up together, turned their backs to the stage and paraded out of the ceremony.

Many of the protesters carried small banners with such slogans as “Books not bombs” and “Divest from war”. Some wore red-colored latex gloves symbolizing bloodied hands.

Other signs read: “Drop the charges” and “Protect free speech” in reference to 45 people

arrested in a police crackdown last month on demonstrations in and around the New Haven, Connecticut, campus.

The walkout drew a chorus of cheers from fellow students in the crowd, but the protest was otherwise peaceful, without disruption. No mention of it was made from the stage.

Yale is one of dozens of US campuses roiled by protests over the mounting Palestinian humanitarian crisis stemming from Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip following the bloody Oct 7 attack on Jewish settlements by Hamas militants.

The University of Southern California canceled its main graduation ceremony altogether, and dozens of students walked out of Duke University's commencement last week to protest its guest speaker, comedian Jerry Seinfeld, who has supported Israel.

Drexel University in Philadelphia threatened to clear an encampment of pro-Palestinian protesters on Monday.

Drexel President John Fry said the encampment had disrupted campus life and “cannot be allowed to remain in place”.

Fry called on protesters to leave immediately but said in a statement on Monday night that he had authorized “all necessary steps to clear the encampment safely”. He did not say when that might happen.

Classes at Drexel were held virtually on Monday as police kept watch over the demonstration on the school's Korman Quad. Many Drexel employees were told to work from home.

The fallout from a violent attack weeks ago on pro-Palestinian activists encamped at the University of California, Los Angeles, reverberated on the UC Santa Cruz campus on Monday as academic workers there staged a protest strike organized by their union.

Also on Monday, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Dartmouth College, an Ivy League university in New Hampshire, narrowly voted to censure president Sian Beilock, according to a college spokesperson, for her decision to call in police to dismantle a pro-Palestinian encampment on May 1. The censure vote does not directly endanger Beilock's job.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Beijing imposes sanctions on ex-US lawmaker

By ZHANG YUNBI
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China's Foreign Ministry issued a set of countermeasures on Tuesday against former US congressman Mike Gallagher, including the freezing of movable and immovable property and other kinds of property in China.

China “prohibits organizations and individuals in its territory from conducting relevant transactions, cooperation and other activities with him, and denies his request for visa or entry into its territory”, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Gallagher, a former US representative, was a Wisconsin Republican and former chairman of the House select committee on Chinese competition. He left Congress earlier this year.

He has “frequently resorted to words and taken actions in recent years to interfere in China's internal affairs, undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and infringe on China's interests”, Beijing said on Tuesday.

The countermeasures against him were based on the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law of the People's Republic of China, the Foreign Ministry said. The decision came into effect on Tuesday.

Negative narratives

Observers noted that Gallagher has been among junior members of Congress that frequently participate in negative narratives blasting China, so as to climb higher in their political careers.

Since 2017, he has proposed a slew of China-related bills, and The Associated Press called him someone who “has spearheaded House pushback against the Chinese government”.

Last year, he proposed a bill seeking to block companies of China and other “foreign adversaries” from purchasing land near military bases and other sensitive sites.

Last month, Gallagher worked together with congressional fellows, including Representative Jimmy Panetta, on proposing a bill to impose sanctions on any Chinese military firm that provides material support to Russia.

Kenya reaffirms position on one-China principle

By OTIATO OPALI in Nairobi, Kenya
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Kenya has reiterated that, just like the rest of Africa, the country recognizes Taiwan as an inalienable part of China.

In a symposium hosted on Monday in Nairobi and attended by officials, members of parliament and scholars from different backgrounds, speakers condemned any attempts to derail China's complete reunification.

Former cabinet secretary for foreign affairs Raphael Tuju said that the Taiwan authorities' pro-independence remarks are nothing but ridiculous and fraudulent.

Tuju noted that African countries overwhelmingly supported United Nations Resolution 2758, which undertook to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China. He said this was because China had stood with Africa in its independence and post-independence struggles.

“There is a potential disruption of world stability. China is a gentle giant that has advanced its development agenda under the banner of peace and should not be provoked to war,” he said, adding that ideological differences and business rivalry were among the main factors fueling the foreign forces which agitate for Taiwan's secession.

Tuju also stated that the joint communiqué between China and Kenya, which he oversaw in 2006 as the foreign cabinet secretary that reiterated Kenya's support for the one-China principle, still stands and the Kenyan government maintains there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory.

Jane Makori, deputy director of Asia and Pacific affairs in Kenya's Foreign Ministry, said the coun-

try's position is that Taiwan remains a province of the People's Republic of China. She made a reference to the recent joint statement by both Kenyan and Chinese foreign ministries in January as a demonstration that Kenya recognizes one China.

In the statement, Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi said that the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China and the one-China principle is a universally recognized basic norm.

Strategic ambiguity

Peter Kagwanja, director at the Africa Policy Institute, based in Nairobi, said that the United States' stand in encouraging the so-called Taiwan independence is strategic ambiguity since it recognizes one China following UN Resolution 2758. He added that the National Security Strategy document adopted in October 2022 clearly stated that China must be outcompeted and contained and advocating for Taiwan's independence is part of this strategy.

Zhou Pingjian, Chinese ambassador to Kenya, said China appreciates Kenya's principled stance on the one-China principle, which compellingly demonstrates that both nations address each other's major concerns and core interests.

“Peaceful reunification of China is of benefit not only to the Chinese nation but to all peoples and the international community as a whole. The reunification of China will not harm the legitimate interests of any other country, including any economic interest they have in Taiwan,” Zhou said.



Cool ride

Men transport an air cooler on a two-wheeler during a hot summer day in Ahmedabad, India, on Monday. Meanwhile, authorities in the national capital have ordered the schools shut early for the summer holiday after temperatures hit 47.4 C with New Delhi gripped by a “severe heat wave”. AMIT DAVE / REUTERS

Japan's new whaling ship sets sail amid controversy

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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The *Kangei Maru*, Japan's new whaling mother ship, embarked on its first hunting trip from Shimonoeki Port in Yamaguchi Prefecture on Tuesday.

During the flag-off ceremony, Hideki Tokoro, president of commercial whaling operator Kyodo Senpaku, which owns the *Kangei Maru*, emphasized the importance of the ship in preserving offshore mother ship whaling. The *Kangei Maru* is set to catch whales off the coast of the Tohoku region.

Mother ship whaling refers to the role of a larger vessel supporting smaller, more maneuverable craft that hunt whales and bring the carcasses back for processing and freezing.

Japan's whaling industry has faced numerous challenges in recent years.

Following an International Whaling Commission, or IWC, a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1982, Japan continued whaling under the guise of “research”.

In 2014, the International Court of Justice ordered Japan to stop whaling in the Antarctic.

As a result, Japan withdrew from the IWC in 2019 and resumed commercial whaling along its coasts.

However, whale meat consumption in Japan is declining. Seen as an

affordable protein source in the post-World War II period, sales peaked at about 230,000 metric tons in 1962. Since then, it has been replaced by other meats. Supply has since fallen to about 2,000 tons in recent years, according to Japan's Fisheries Agency.

Kyodo Senpaku has been catching Bryde's whales and sei whales, but the firm's production of whale meat remains around 1,600 tons. For the fiscal year ending March 2023, sales were 3.1 billion yen

(\$19.8 million) with an operating income of 200 million yen.

However, the construction cost of the *Kangei Maru* is expected to impose a heavy financial burden on Kyodo Senpaku.

Constructed at a cost of approximately 7.5 billion yen, the *Kangei Maru* has replaced the *Nisshin Maru*, the country's sole existing whaling mother ship, which had been in operation for more than 30 years before being retired last November.

The newly-built electric propul-

sion *Kangei Maru* is 112.6 meters long and 21 meters wide, and has a gross tonnage of 9,299 tons.

To promote Japan's whaling industry, stores with whale meat vending machines were launched last year in Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka, with plans to expand to 100 stores nationwide.

On May 9, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi announced that the government would continue to promote whaling and take the necessary diplomatic steps to protect the industry.

The Fisheries Agency said it plans to include large fin whales in its allowed whaling targets. This would make them the fourth species to be hunted, after minke, sei and Bryde's whales.

Japan's plan to allow coastal whaling of large fin whales has sparked opposition from environmental groups, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported on May 10.

Lloyd Gofton, managing director of global pressure group Blue Planet Society, told the ABC that targeting fin whales is an extremely harmful practice, killing a vital part of the marine ecosystem for a food product that people no longer want or need.

Gofton said the Japanese people have significantly reduced whale meat consumption and using “tradition” as an excuse to promote whale meat is unacceptable.



Japan's new whaling mother ship, the *Kangei Maru*, is seen during the ship's launch ceremony at a port in Shimonoeki city, Yamaguchi Prefecture on Tuesday. YUICHI YAMAZAKI / AFP

WORLDUS

California, China boost trade ties at forum

Hundreds of officials and businesspeople from both sides attend event in Los Angeles

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
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When Shanghai meets California, the two major economic entities across the Pacific express their commitment to further develop economic and trade ties while maintaining strong subnational cooperation.

Chinese Consul General in Los Angeles Guo Shaochun — addressing the China-California Business Forum in Los Angeles on Monday, at which hundreds of officials and businesspeople from both sides gathered, stressed that the vitality of China-US relations lies with subnational entities.

“Both California and related provinces and municipalities in China have developed and benefited greatly thanks to mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation between them,” he said, citing that opening up at a higher level is an important part of China’s efforts to develop new, high-quality productive forces.

Guo said that China was California’s No. 1 trading partner with two-way trade amounting to over \$137 billion in 2023. More than half of the containers entering and leaving the Port of Los Angeles are for trade with China, and 70 percent of the cargo volume at the Port of Long Beach is China-related.

“The security and stability of the industrial chain and supply chain across the Pacific Ocean matters to both sides,” Guo added.

California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis emphasized the importance of maintaining friendly relations between China and California.

“I hope people take the

opportunity to develop friendships and relationships that are so important to us,” she said.

In his keynote remarks, Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng expressed the metropolis’ expectation to further enhance substantive cooperation with California.

“Shanghai maintains close economic and trade cooperation with the United States. California, in particular, is a key partner for Shanghai,” he told the forum.

Since 1980, when Shanghai and San Francisco became sister cities, many Bay Area companies have used the relationship as a gateway to enter the Chinese market. In recent years, friendly exchanges between Shanghai and California cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco have been continuously strengthened.

“Looking to the future, we aim to deepen comprehensive and pragmatic cooperation, achieving a higher level of mutually beneficial and win-win development,” Gong said.

While welcoming the delegation composed of over 150 top business leaders and trade officials from dozens of Chinese provinces, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass highlighted the economic ties and climate cooperation between Shanghai and LA.

“Chinese ports are the most significant trading partners for the Port of Los Angeles. Our ports are also leading efforts to decarbonize marine time shipping and port operations,” Bass said.

She said that China is the sixth-largest source of foreign-owned businesses in Los Angeles and the third-largest export market for LA carrier companies. Nearly 250 businesses from China have



Several memorandums of understanding (MOU) with the goal of enhancing trade cooperation between China and California were signed at the China-California Business Forum in Los Angeles on Monday.

RENA LI / CHINA DAILY

expanded to Los Angeles, creating jobs and economic opportunity. Over the last two years, LA companies have exported more than \$60 billion in goods to China.

“The LA-Long Beach-Shanghai green shot shipping corridor is one of the first, the longest, and the busiest transpacific routes to take up this challenge,” said Bass. “This important climate cooperation has continued without interruption and with increasing urgency over the past two years.”

Looking forward to hosting major international events, like the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic

Games in 2028, Bass said there are “more and more” reasons for Chinese visitors to invest in and partner with Los Angeles.

Secretary of California Government Operation Amy Tong, who was born in Guangdong and moved to the US with her family when she was a teenager, shared with audiences how Chinese culture has significantly enriched the state of California, benefiting American communities in numerous ways.

California has long been a hub for culture exchange between China and the US, helping Chinese visitors to feel “welcomed at

home” and fostering rich artistic dialogue, she said.

“Numerous museums, galleries and cultural institutions of California have events showcasing Chinese arts, calligraphy, music and dance events like the Chinese New Year celebration, and cultural festivals further strengthen ties and promote mutual understanding,” she said, noting that the state has attracted a many Chinese students and scholars.

Recalling Governor Gavin Newsom’s trip to China last fall, Tong said she appreciated watching his visit with President Xi Jinping, highlighting the importance

“Shanghai maintains close economic and trade cooperation with the United States. California, in particular, is a key partner for Shanghai.”

Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng

of people-to-people cultural exchange.

“The governor’s trip was courageous no matter what your political affiliation is,” she said. “We need to focus on the culture, the economics and the mutual respect. This is the foundation to our shared relationship.”

The forum highlighted the important partnerships between China and California, as a series of memorandums of understanding (MOU) were signed. Among them were agreements between the Shanghai International Port Group and Matson Inc to promote green shipping corridors; the World Trade Center Los Angeles and the Shanghai Foreign Investment Development Board to strengthen economic ties; and San Francisco International Airport and the Shanghai Airport Authority to promote cultural and tourism exchange.

Since its inception in 2016, the forum has welcomed thousands of guests from academia, business and government from China and the US, in which participants have engaged in professional discussions on topics, including clean tech, e-commerce, agriculture and innovation cooperation. Shanghai is the Guest City of Honor this year.

With China tariffs, Biden makes an about-face from Senate days

By AIHEPING in New York
and YIFAN XU in Washington

As a US senator from 1973 to 2009, Joe Biden was considered a reliable vote on free trade.

From the 1990s to the 2000s, Biden voted in favor of the Uruguay Round, the Canadian-US free trade agreement, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Biden also supported extending most favored nation status to China.

Last week, President Joe Biden did an about-face on that reputation as a supporter of free trade along with what he had said about tariffs as vice-president, a presidential candidate and a senator. He announced that he was going to raise tariffs on electric vehicles from China to roughly 100 percent, as well as tariffs on advanced batteries, solar cells, steel, aluminum and medical equipment.

In a February 2020 interview with the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, on reducing the US trade deficit, then-US Vice-President Biden said he believed the United States should be a rule-setter and work through multilateral coalitions to pressure “bad actors”.

“To make this point clear he stated, ‘The answer to this threat is more openness, not less: more friendships, more cooperation, more alliances, more democracy.’”

In August 2020, Biden, then the Democratic candidate for president, said if elected he would remove the \$200 billion in tariffs that then-President Donald Trump

had put on China.

“President Trump may think he’s being tough on China. All that he’s delivered as a consequence of that is American farmers, manufacturers and consumers losing and paying more,” said Biden.

Candidate Biden described Trump’s avalanche of unilateral tariffs on imports of Chinese goods as self-defeating because of their high costs for Americans.

In addition to the new tariffs, the Biden administration announced that it would be extending Trump-era tariffs on \$300 billion of Chinese imports, including consumer electronics, furniture, clothing and shoes, among other goods.

The tariffs cover \$18 billion of imports and are to be phased in over the next three years, with those that take effect in 2024 covering EVs, solar cells, syringes, needles, steel and aluminum and more.

“He knows that. He has to know this is a bad policy,” Anthony Moretti, head of the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University, told China Daily. “And it is baffling to me that he keeps doing it when he could wake up tomorrow morning and say, ‘That’s it, tariffs were done with him (Trump), and it would be a better economic climate for everybody,’ not to extend them.”

One of the reasons that Biden is able to sustain the tariffs is that the stock market in the United States is doing well, but most Americans are paying higher prices for food, gasoline and other goods, said Moretti. “Not all of that is a result of tariffs.

But there’s no question that as you look at the data, there have been job losses because of the tariffs,” he said.

“This is a battle of who can be tougher on China right now,” Frank Maisano, a founding partner at Bracewell Policy Resolution Group, a Washington lobbying and legal services firm, told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. “That plays to the constituency that both of them are searching for, and frankly that Joe Biden really needs — the unions. Not the union bosses, but the union rank-and-file.”

Myron Brilliant, a former executive vice-president at the US Chamber of Commerce told The Wall Street Journal, “The fact is that no one wants to look weak on China.”

He added, “I don’t think Biden should try to out-Trump Trump when it comes to trade and tariffs.”

The US is trying to woo European allies to take similar protectionist measures.

But European officials worry that tariffs the US has imposed would violate global rules set by the World Trade Organization.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a political debate Tuesday that rather than imposing broad tariffs, “we have a different approach, a much more tailored approach.”

“We want competition, we want to trade together, but we want it to be fair and by the rules,” she told the Financial Times.

Contact the writers at aiheping@chinadailyusa.com

Professional visitors can now register to attend 7th China Intl Import Expo

By MA LINMIAO
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As an ideal place to meet potential business partners from around the world and gather information, the seventh China International Import Expo, which will take place from Nov 5 to 10 in Shanghai, opened registration for professional visitors on Monday.

“Visitors can submit their applications on the expo’s official website (www.ciie.org), mobile app or WeChat mini program,” said a staff member from the CIIE Bureau.

“After registration, visitors will have access to the latest information about this year’s exhibitors and their exhibits. They can also make online appointments with exhibitors, submit procurement requirements to find precise matches, receive invitations to various activities and enjoy services provided by professional guides during the expo,” the staff member added.

Hailed as a springboard for global companies looking to enter the Chinese market or expand their business, the CIIE has garnered increasing attention around the world. It provides a platform for global companies and agencies to interact directly with Chinese consumers and to network with industry players and possible business partners.

Over the years, companies from 173 countries and regions have made appearances at the CIIE, showcasing nearly 2,500 new products, technologies and services.

More than 1,100 supporting activities, including supply-demand matchmaking sessions, have been launched during past editions of the CIIE, grossing more than \$420 billion in tentative transactions.

Following a string of global roadshows to invite exhibitors over the past few months, the expo is now initiating the application process for professional visitors.

A roadshow to entice professional visitors, including buyers, to the



The launch ceremony for the seventh CIIE’s series of roadshows to encourage more trade missions to participate in this year’s expo is held on Tuesday in Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Scan the QR code to register as a professional visitor and meet your potential business partners at the CIIE 2024!

seventh CIIE kicked off on Tuesday in Wuhan, capital of Central China’s Hubei province.

This event marked the beginning of the expo’s upcoming series of promotional campaigns in 2024, which are intended to encourage more trade missions to participate in this year’s show.

More than 30 exhibitors from the expo’s exhibition areas of food and agricultural products, intelligent industry and information technology, as well as medical equipment and healthcare products — including Mitsubishi, Bayer, Asahi Kasei and Schneider Electric — connected with representatives of nearly 200 buyers, including Hubei International Trade Group and Jointown Pharmaceutical Group, during the roadshow.

“We will optimize the setting of exhibition areas and special zones, attach greater importance to the world’s leading new products, technologies and services, and further delve into core products and technologies,” said Sun Chenghai, deputy director-general of the CIIE Bureau and chairman of the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai), the CIIE venue, during the event.

“The seventh CIIE has now officially opened registration for domestic and international professional visitors,” Sun said. “The expo will enhance the ‘government plus market’ dual-drive mechanism for inviting professional visitors and improve the services provided to them.”

“We will continue to support localities to make full use of the annual CIIE to hold supporting activities such as investment matchmaking sessions and present local preferential policies, investment environment and industrial merits to more global brands with an interest in the Chinese market,” Sun added.

“We hope that all countries and regions will fully leverage the CIIE as an open platform for collaboration and capitalize on the dividends and opportunities offered by the CIIE,” Sun noted.

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Policy efforts can stabilize realty

Experts: Excessive stimulus not required to reverse downturn; recast, however, can help

By LIU ZHIHUA, ZHOU LANXU and OUYANG SHIJIA

China still has policy room to further stabilize the property market by boosting demand and optimizing supply without excessive stimulus, thereby further reining in the industry's downturn, experts said.

However, the country needs to ramp up efforts to restructure both the property industry and the broader economy, to ensure high-quality development, they said.

"We believe that there's still a high possibility of more supportive policies aimed at stimulating sales in the short run, which will help constrain the decline in property sales," said Wang Xingping, senior analyst of the corporates department at rating agency Fitch Bohua.

"The purchase restrictions in some districts of tier-1 cities are expected to be eased. However, the complete cancellation of such curbs in core areas of tier-1 cities may not happen in the short run as regulators aim to stabilize the property market while avoiding overheating again."

The Chinese authorities announced a new round of policy easing measures on Friday. They rolled out a series of significant supportive policies nationwide, including further reduction in the down payment ratio to a historic low, lifting of the lower limit for personal mortgage loan interest rates, lowering of the provident fund loan interest rates and establishment of the special-purpose re-lending program for affordable housing. The new policies' aim is to boost homebuyer sentiment and ease developer liquidity stress.

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, forecast that housing support measures may



Potential homebuyers look at a property model in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. WEI LIANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

continue to evolve in the coming quarters. "We see more urgency to execute home completion with better utilization of policy banking tools," Xing said.

With further home purchase relaxations anticipated, the announced policies should facilitate faster market clearing, support liquidity among developers, restore homebuyer confidence and improve housing investment, albeit with a lag, he said.

Amid a challenging period of sluggish demand and liquidity stress, the combined revenues of Chinese mainland developers listed in the A-share and Hong Kong markets reached 4.1 trillion yuan (\$570 billion) in 2023, up 3.4 percent year-on-year, according to a report by Chinese-language newspaper Securities Times. Half of the developers realized revenue growth last year, having seen their revenue plunge in 2022.

Most importantly, the leverage ratios of leading real estate companies have continued to decline, resulting in a more optimized asset-liability structure. For top-tier real estate enterprises with annual sales exceeding 1 trillion yuan in 2023, the

median asset-liability ratio, after adjusting for advances from buyers, stood at 62.63 percent last year.

That represented a 3.4 percentage point decrease from 2022 to a nine-year low, indicating a substantial reduction in leverage.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, a Japanese international financial institution, said the property industry remains key to cementing the momentum of the Chinese economy given its great significance to the entire economy.

While China needs to develop public housing in the long term as a focus of a new development model for the real estate industry, it is still critical now to revive the existing market-oriented housing supply system by ensuring pre-sold housing delivery, Lu said.

Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International, said that for long-term stability in real estate and broader economic growth, a balanced approach between affordable and commercial housing is key — and restrictions on housing purchases and mortgage should be

phased out gradually.

"The government must increase affordable housing supply to meet needs from low-income groups, which supports urbanization and economic growth," he said.

"The industry must abandon the 'three highs' model — high leverage, high turnover and high debt — to reduce developer credit risks. Implementing a capital-gains tax on property sales can also deter speculation and prevent excessive price increases."

Chang Haizhong, executive director of corporates at Fitch Bohua, warned that if economic development overly relies on the real estate industry, the economy would be easily impacted by cyclical fluctuations in the housing market.

"In order to ensure stable economic growth, we need to step up efforts in economic structural transformation, and cultivate more emerging industries with huge market potential, like new energy vehicles, photovoltaics, wind power, lithium-ion batteries and the silver economy," Chang said.

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E-tailers adopt pragmatic approach ahead of '618'

By FAN FEIFEI
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Major Chinese e-commerce platforms are offering steep discounts and shopping subsidies as well as simplifying promotional methods by canceling presale campaigns during this year's extended June 18 (known as "618") online shopping carnival, with direct price cuts being a preferred strategy.

Industry experts said Chinese consumers have become more rational and prudent about potential purchases. So online retailers are taking a more pragmatic and simple approach this time, with a key focus on low-priced products and the use of livestreaming for product promotions, so as to attract price-conscious customers and bolster sales.

Data from Tmall, Chinese tech heavyweight Alibaba Group's business-to-customer platform, show that the sales of 59 brands surpassed 100 million yuan (\$13.8 million) within the first four hours of the midyear promotional event, which kicked off at 8 pm on Monday.

The turnover of Apple Inc's products on Tmall exceeded 1.5 billion yuan within the first hour, while sales of domestic smartphone brands such as Huawei, Xiaomi and Vivo surpassed 100 million yuan during the period, Tmall said.

Moreover, the transaction volume of 11 cosmetics and skin care brands as well as 23 household appliances brands, including Haier, Hisense and Dyson, crossed the 100 million yuan threshold in the first four hours.

US tech company Apple has launched a promotional campaign on its Tmall official flagship store in China, offering discounts of up to 2,300 yuan on the iPhone 15 models, to reinvigorate domestic demand for its flagship product.

For example, the iPhone 15 Pro Max started selling for 7,949 yuan

on Apple's online store of Tmall, a reduction of more than 2,000 yuan compared with its 9,999-yuan price tag when the new series was released last September.

Meanwhile, Apple is offering a range of steep discounts and significant price cuts for iPhone 15 models on Chinese e-commerce giant JD's online marketplaces.

The 256-gigabyte iPhone 15 Pro now costs 6,999 yuan, a reduction of about 2,000 yuan on the platform.

Dong Puyu, a researcher at CIO Manage, a Beijing-based digital economy market consultancy, said major e-commerce players have canceled presales for this year's June 18 shopping festival, making the rules of online shopping simpler and further optimizing consumer shopping experiences and services.

"In the long run, simplified promotional events and direct price cuts are conducive to promoting the healthy development of the e-commerce industry and better protecting the rights and interests of consumers," Dong said.

The move may, however, lead to intensified competition among e-commerce platforms, and merchants need to adopt new sales strategies and adjust their inventory management models, he added.

Dong said e-commerce players are stepping up efforts to provide cost-effective commodities and invest more in livestreaming sessions and content, amid rising competition from short video platforms, given that Chinese shoppers are more rational and carefully reviewing their needs.

The June 18 promotional gala is expected to play a vital role in stimulating consumers' purchasing appetites, boosting the recovery of consumption and shoring up the economy, said Wang Yun, a researcher at the Academy of Macroeconomic Research, which is affiliated to the National Development and Reform Commission.

NDRC says nation will consolidate recovery trend

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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China is set to take further actions, including speeding up the issuance of local government special bonds and expediting the promotion of large-scale equipment renewal and trade-in deals for consumer goods, as it seeks to consolidate the recovery trend, the country's top economic regulator said on Tuesday.

Analysts said the country is scrambling to tackle issues related to the still-weak domestic demand and property industry woes with further stimulus measures in the offing, which will significantly stabilize expectations and restore confidence in the world's second-largest economy.

Li Chao, a spokeswoman for the National Development and Reform Commission, emphasized the country's commitment to sustaining the recovery and optimizing the structure of the manufacturing sector. More efforts will be made to foster

new quality productive forces, boost high-quality development of the manufacturing sector, expand effective investment and spur consumption, she said.

Li told a news conference on Tuesday that the country will "make better use of ultra-long-term special-purpose treasury bonds to support major national strategies and build up security capacity in key areas, accelerate the issuance and use of local government special bonds and speed up the implementation of the central budget investment plan."

From January to April, the NDRC approved 50 fixed-asset investment projects worth 320.7 billion yuan (\$44.32 billion) in all, mainly in the high-tech and water conservancy sectors. The NDRC approved 20 fixed-asset investment projects worth 115.2 billion yuan in April.

To stimulate domestic consumption, the country will further implement policies prioritizing employment stability and income growth, alongside initiatives to

drive large-scale equipment renewal and trade-in deals for consumer goods, Li said. "This will include incentives for encouraging spending on consumer goods like cars, home appliances and cellphones, promoting new consumption scenarios and formats, as well as encouraging enterprises' application of advanced and applicable technologies for (digital) transformation and upgrading."

The latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed recovery is still uneven. China's value-added industrial output grew by 6.7 percent year-on-year in April after a 4.5 percent rise in March, while retail sales rose 2.3 percent in April, less than the 3.1 percent rise in March, according to the NBS.

During the first four months, China's fixed-asset investment increased by 4.2 percent year-on-year, while in the first quarter, it grew by 4.5 percent year-on-year.

Xiong Yuan, chief economist at Guosheng Securities, said the latest

data confirm an uneven recovery in the broader economy.

"We've seen notable improvement in sectors relative to external demand, including exports, industrial production and manufacturing. However, on the domestic demand side, consumption and investment performed worse than expected."

Citing recently released government policies, including a series of property easing measures, Xiong said the country aims to tackle issues and pressures from still-weak demand and confidence. To boost domestic demand, China will likely introduce more stimulus measures like further reductions in both banks' reserve requirement ratio and interest rates.

Despite pressures and challenges ahead, Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said resilient exports and manufacturing capex are likely to be the key growth drivers this year, backed by a global trade recovery and a policy push to upgrade supply chains.



A salesperson promotes jewelry via livestreaming in Lianyungang, Jiangsu province. GENG YUHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Service outsourcing industry expands

China's service outsourcing industry saw robust expansion in the first four months of the year, the Ministry of Commerce said on Tuesday. Chinese firms inked services outsourcing contracts worth nearly 781.43 billion yuan (\$110 billion) during the period, up 14.4 percent year-on-year.

PBOC adds liquidity via reverse repos

China's central bank conducted 2 billion yuan (\$281.42 million) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent on Tuesday. The move aims to keep liquidity reasonable and ample in the banking system.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Better China-Saudi economic ties expected

By LIU ZHIHUA
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China and Saudi Arabia are expected to further tap potential for bilateral economic and financial cooperation, thereby bringing about more tangible and pragmatic collaboration results, according to government officials from both sides.

They made the remarks at the third meeting of the Economic and Financial Subcommittee of the High-level Chinese-Saudi Joint Committee on Monday in Beijing.

China's Finance Minister Lan Fo'an said at the meeting that under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, economic ties between Saudi Arabia and China have been growing stronger. The

two countries should strengthen macroeconomic policy communication and coordination to promote global economic recovery and stability, as well as strengthen multilateral cooperation to enhance the global economic governance system. He also said the Chinese side welcomes the strengthening of exchanges and cooperation between the financial sectors of the two countries.

The two sides should also focus on key areas to promote synergy between Beijing's pursuit of Chinese modernization and Riyadh's efforts to realize Saudi Vision 2030, so as to achieve high-quality and high-level win-win outcomes, Lan said.

He also said the Chinese side welcomes the strengthening of

exchanges and cooperation between the financial regulators and institutions of the two countries.

"China will take pragmatic and efficient actions to promote high-quality development. We will strengthen macro-policy adjustment and policy coordination, expand domestic demand and create a first-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based and up to international standards, in order to promote long-term sustainable and healthy economic development," said Lan.

"Saudi Arabia is striving to realize Saudi Vision 2030, achieving positive results in reforms for economic and social diversification. The two countries should strengthen communication on and coordination of

macroeconomic policies and prioritize development in global macroeconomic policy frameworks, to inject more positive energy and factors into global economic recovery and stability," he said.

The minister also said China is ready to continue coordination with Saudi Arabia on the G20 Finance Track. It also looks forward to having closer cooperation with Saudi Arabia in multilateral development banks, to improve the international financial architecture and add to the voice of emerging markets and developing economies in global governance.

Data from the Chinese side showed that Saudi Arabia has been the largest trading partner of China in the Middle East since 2001, and bilateral trade reached \$107.23 bil-

lion in 2023. Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan spoke highly of the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, saying that the two countries have maintained positive cooperative communication under the framework of the Economic and Financial Subcommittee of the High-level Chinese-Saudi Joint Committee, achieving many practical outcomes. The Saudi side looks forward to enhancing the alignment of development strategies with China to realize mutual development and prosperity.

Since 1990, bilateral trade between the two countries surged 31 fold, he said, adding that outbound investment from China into Saudi Arabia has also been growing rapidly in recent years, making China an important partner for the Arab country to realize its vision for economic transformation.

Following the meeting of the sub-

committee, the first China-Saudi roundtable on finance and business under the subcommittee was held on Monday.

Liao Min, China's vice-minister of finance, said at the roundtable that China-Saudi relations are in the best period in history currently, and economic and trade cooperation potential between the two countries is huge.

Enterprises from the two sides can leverage on their respective advantages to continuously expand trade and actively carry out two-way investment strategies, strengthening collaboration in areas including energy, infrastructure construction, digital economy and green development, Liao said. That will facilitate the flow of capital, resources, technology and other production factors alongside economic activity between the two countries to result in win-win outcomes, he added.

BUSINESS

PATH TO MODERNIZATION

Enhanced 5G key to low-altitude economy

By ZHOU MO
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The commercial use of 5G-A (5G-Advanced) technology will boost industries and change the way people interact with each other, a senior executive of Chinese telecom equipment maker ZTE Corp said.

"This year marks the starting year for the commercial use of 5G-A technology," said Tang Xue, vice-president of the Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based company, on Monday.

"The commercialization of the technology will bring benefits not only to businesses, but also to ordinary people in their daily lives."

5G-A technology is an enhancement to 5G and a connection to 6G. Compared with 5G, 5G-A technology features 10 times enhancement in speed, latency and connection scale.

One of the industries that will benefit greatly from 5G-A technology is the low-altitude economy, Tang said.

Low-altitude economy, which covers express logistics, emergency rescue, agriculture, consumer entertainment and other fields, is an industry that China is attaching great importance to.

The 2024 Government Work Report delivered by Premier Li Qiang in March stated that the



Visitors check out ZTE products during the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on Feb 26.

PAU BARRENA / AFP

country will actively foster emerging and future-oriented industries, and create new growth engines in fields such as the low-altitude economy.

Certain conditions need to be met to develop the low-altitude economy. For example, two-way low-latency communication is required to manage unmanned aerial vehicles effectively and ensure their safety, Tang said.

"To achieve that, fundamental support is crucial and 5G-A provides such a support," she said.

While the altitude of low-altitude airspace could reach 1,000 meters or higher, the current wireless communication network can only cover an altitude of around 150 meters. Therefore, telecom infrastructure

needs to be improved to enable the development of the sector.

Tang said the advent of 5G-A technology will also reshape how people communicate.

"At present, video conferencing remains a two-dimensional scenario. With the help of 5G-A technology, we can expect a three-dimensional video frame where you feel as if you are in the same space as your counterparts," she said.

From a global perspective, the Middle East is accelerating the deployment of 5G-A technology, while Europe is also actively moving in this direction, Tang added.

According to a report by market research firm Custom Market Insights, the value of the global 5G

services market stood at \$28.9 billion last year and is expected to hit \$250.2 billion by 2032, representing a 26.5 percent compound annual growth.

Information technology and the telecom segment dominated the market with a 35 percent share in 2022, followed by banking and healthcare. IT and telecom segment is projected to continue to take the lead over the period through 2032, the report said.

Autonomous driving, augmented reality and virtual reality are among new services that are made possible by technological innovations, which boost network efficiency and amplify the need for 5G infrastructure, according to the report.

Fujian improves payment options for tourists

Cross-Strait business travelers to enjoy more benefits from opening-up efforts

By ZHOU LANXU in Beijing
and HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou

The mainland coastal province of Fujian has made concrete headway in improving payment services for Taiwan visitors and other overseas travelers, official data showed, reflecting the country's strengthened efforts to deepen opening-up and boost cross-strait integrated development.

Data from the Fujian Provincial Branch of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, showed that 98.59 percent of 10,805 key merchants across the province now accept overseas bank cards, up a whopping 47 percentage points compared with the end of February.

Also, 99 percent of automated teller machines in the province operated by commercial banks with nationwide branches now accept overseas bank cards, up 13 percentage points from the end of February. The improvements came after the provincial government of Fujian released a circular in April calling for collaborated efforts among authorities to optimize payment services.

The province also piloted a new mobile payment product called the "Fu Lyu Tong" card, specifically designed to aid Taiwan visitors' payments. Taiwan visitors can easily apply for the cards with pilot banks using basic personal information, top them up with bank cards registered in Taiwan, and use them for payments via multiple mobile payment applications such as Weixin Pay, Alipay and UnionPay.

Ricky Zhan, a Taiwan businessman who has been living and doing business in Fujian since 2019, said he has witnessed a significant improvement made by the province in accommodating payment preferences of Taiwan visitors.

"My personal experience is that, for Taiwan businesspeople who frequently travel between the two sides of the strait, applying for a mainland mobile number and obtaining a local bank card can generally meet our daily living needs thanks to the fast development of mobile payments.

"But for Taiwan tourists and businesspeople visiting the mainland for short periods, it used to be quite inconvenient as they are more accustomed to using credit cards or cash.

"However, this year there has been a noticeable enhancement," Zhan said. A growing number of merchants in popular scenic spots accept payments via Taiwan bank

cards, and cash is easily used in more places while a Taiwan bank card can directly link with Weixin Pay and Alipay.

The new online payment solution of the "Fu Lyu Tong" card also provides another convenient payment option, Zhan said, which can be activated, topped up and used for purchases entirely online, eliminating the need for physical bank visits.

"I hope that these effective measures can be known by more people, especially Taiwan compatriots who have not been to the Chinese mainland, so that they can know the convenience of technological financial services here."

Two meetings held in Fuzhou and Xiamen in Fujian province last week — attended by central bank officials, local senior officials, financial institutions and Taiwan businesspeople — have called for further efforts to enhance payment services for Taiwan visitors and businesses.

During the meetings, officials emphasized the importance of maintaining the current level of intensity and resource input in optimizing payment services. Efforts should be made to enhance cross-departmental collaboration and effectively address the payment needs of the elderly, Taiwan visitors and Taiwan businesses.

Addressing the meetings, Zhang Qingsong, deputy governor of the central bank, said that financial institutions should deliver targeted and refined services for Taiwan visitors and businesses, while payment products tailor-made for them should be improved with expanded coverage.

The initiatives in Fujian reflect a broader national effort aimed at improving payment experiences of overseas visitors. This priority is one of the central focuses for the central bank this year, which is seeking greater advancements in this area by the end of June.

In April, the number and value of transactions via international card POS terminals across the country both doubled compared with February. Over 2 million inbound travelers used mobile payments last month, with both the number and value of transactions up by more than 80 percent from February, the central bank said.

Zhong Wanyu in Xiamen contributed to this story.

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Dtech's rise mirrors Dongguan's manufacturing story

By LI WENFANG in Dongguan, Guangdong
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Wang Xin moved to Dongguan, Guangdong province to work at a toy-making factory in 1989. However, by 1997, she had started trading in routers and drill bits.

Currently, Wang's company is the global leader in the manufacture of routers and drill bits, which are used in the production of printed circuit boards, and found in sectors including consumer electronics, communications and automobile electronics.

Guangdong Dtech Technology had a 26.5 percent share of the global PCB drill bit market in terms of volume, and 21.7 percent of the global PCB router market in terms of value last year, according to electronics industry consulting firm Prismark Partners.

Wang's story closely shadows that of Dongguan, which has become a global manufacturing hub and has kept moving up the value chain.

Wang set up a company to pro-

duce drill bits in her hometown Nanyang, in Henan province in 2005, and another in Dongguan in 2013.

In 2005, the finest drill bits Dtech could produce measured 0.5 millimeter in diameter, but now 0.03 mm ones are made on a massive scale as PCBs have become more compact to allow for slimmer end products. The company is capable of producing 0.01 mm drill bits, too.

In the beginning, due to hefty price tags and tight supply of imported equipment, Dtech was unable to source the equipment used for producing routers and drill bits.

However, it has since developed its own, starting with separate workstations instead of integrated equipment.

"As client demands became more sophisticated, we kept optimizing our equipment. We have evolved three or four generations," said Wang Junfeng, vice-president of the company, which now also sells router-making equipment.

Its diversified application see-

narios and continuous efforts have allowed the company to constantly increase the efficiency of its equipment, said Li Zheng, manager of the R&D department.

"When a client says this movement can be sped up, we say 'OK' and our R&D people keep optimizing the equipment onsite," Li said.

Dtech spends about 7 percent of its revenue on research and development and its equipment unit spends about 11 percent of its revenue on innovation, he said.

It applies artificial intelligence technology in its quality control and packaging processes, as part of efforts aimed at higher automation.

More than 300 workers are engaged in R&D, with a provincial-level corporate technological center established in the company. Dtech has received more than 500 authorized patents.

Innovation is promoted with commission and stock option plans and employees are encouraged to upgrade their knowledge and skills, with allowances for those

improving their academic degrees, Wang Xin said.

Wang said she sees promising opportunities in the auto parts, molds, 3C products (computer, communications and consumer electronics) and aerospace sectors.

Besides the facilities in Dongguan and Nanyang, Dtech also runs a plant in Thailand.

The company's unit, listed on Shenzhen's technology-heavy ChiNext board, reported 1.32 billion yuan (\$182.43 million) in revenue last year and expects that to increase to 1.7 billion yuan this year.

Embracing the first processing trade plant in the Chinese mainland in 1978 after the country adopted reform and opening-up policies, Dongguan now accommodates an electronic information manufacturing cluster of more than 1 trillion yuan in output.

It also has an equipment manufacturing cluster of 500 billion yuan and three clusters of new materials, food and beverage, and textile and garments of more than 100 billion yuan each.

Sentiment upbeat on property market measures

By WANG YING in Shanghai
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Homebuyers in Shanghai and surrounding areas have given a positive reaction over the weekend to the supportive measures unveiled on Friday to stabilize the nation's property market, market insiders said.

"We were super busy on Saturday and Sunday. Our workload grew 30 to 40 percent from the previous weekend due to surging inquiries and visits from potential clients, and many of us kept communicating with customers until midnight," said Gui Chenjie, an agent with Sinyi Realty in Shanghai's Hongkou district.

Gui said that on Sunday alone, the real estate agency outlet he works for inked two purchase deals after clients visited apartments.

"These flurries do not happen often. According to our experience, it usually takes a week for homebuyers to make the decision after seeing residential properties on the spot," he said.

In comparison with the previous weekend, 32.9 percent more units of pre-owned homes were traded

"The measures unveiled on Friday, such as cutting payment and mortgage interest rates and turning housing inventories into government subsidized homes, have a clear aim of boosting the housing market."

Lu Wenxi, market analyst with developer Centaline Shanghai

on Saturday and Sunday, while visits made to such homes rose 20 percent from the weekends in April, said Shanghai Lianjia Research Institute.

"In the 10 major cities tracked by our center, Shanghai and its neighbor city Hangzhou in Zhejiang province are the only two which

saw a week-on-week rise in pre-owned home transactions," said Guan Rongxue, a senior analyst at Zhuge Real Estate Data Research Center.

During the week of May 13 to Sunday, 4,597 units of pre-owned homes were traded in Shanghai, surging 25.05 percent from a week earlier, while that of Hangzhou saw a mild rise of 2.21 percent, Guan said.

Guan said combined transactions of secondhand homes in the 10 cities reported a week-on-week drop of 11.23 percent, and declined 746 percent from last year.

In the new home market, Shanghai saw its transactions maintain an uptrend by rising more than 20 percent week-on-week in the week of May 13 to Sunday, the research center said.

"The measures unveiled on Friday, such as cutting payment and mortgage interest rates and turning housing inventories into government subsidized homes have a clear aim of boosting the housing market. The recovering homebuying activities are the active response to such measures," said Lu Wenxi, a market analyst with developer Centaline Shanghai.

Lu said that despite the announcement of Shanghai on Saturday lowering interest rates for the housing provident fund starting on Jan 1, 2025, the rest of the measures are yet to be implemented at the local level.

"It is expected that local governments will roll out their respective measures fitting their own conditions, but it may take time for the market to digest the policies and see the confidence recover," Lu said.

Successively introduced on Friday, these supportive measures are in line with the nation's goals of accelerating its pace of building a new real estate development mode and promoting the high-quality development of the property industry, said officials and industry experts.

During a teleconference on property policies in Beijing on Friday, Vice-Premier He Lifeng urged local governments with more housing inventories than others to purchase some of the stocks for government-subsidized housing, said Xinhua News Agency.

Also on Friday, the country removed commercial mortgage rate minimums for first and second



A real estate agent (left) addresses potential homebuyers' queries on housing projects in Shanghai in January. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

homes nationwide, and lowered minimum down-payment ratios for first and second homes, respectively, to 15 percent and 25 percent, according to a joint notice issued by the People's Bank of China — the country's central bank — and the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

In another spate of announcements, the central bank said it would further lower mortgage interest rates, as well as that of the housing provident fund.

The high frequency of property sector measures released by Chinese regulators will shore up the property market by offering homebuyers more favorable conditions, like lowering requirements and cutting costs for home purchases, and it is expected that both rigid demand and needs to improve housing conditions will be better satisfied, said Ma Hong, a senior researcher with the GDD (Guangzhou Development District) Chief Industry Research Institute.

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE



A technician inspects a turbine at a wind farm in Hinggan League, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, in May 2023. WANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China emerging as energy storage powerhouse

Government's proactive stance on promoting clean energy playing pivotal role in driving ongoing boom

By ZHENG XIN

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China's power storage capacity is on the cusp of growth, fueled by rapid advances in the renewable energy industry, innovative technologies and ambitious government policies aimed at driving sustainable development, experts said.

The nation's energy storage capacity further expanded in the first quarter of 2024 amid efforts to advance its green energy transition, with installed new-type energy storage capacity reaching 35.3 gigawatts by end-March, soaring 2.1 times year-on-year, according to the National Energy Administration.

The country has emerged as a powerhouse in renewable energy adoption in recent years, with a particular focus on bolstering its energy storage capabilities.

The skyrocketing demand for energy storage solutions, driven by the need to integrate intermittent renewable energy sources such as wind and solar into the power grid effectively, has led to a flurry of investments in energy storage projects across the country, the NEA said.

New energy storage, or energy storage using new technologies such as lithium-ion batteries, liquid flow batteries, compressed air and mechanical energy, is an important foundation for building a new power system in China, enjoying the advantages of quick response, flexible configuration and short construction periods.

The Chinese government's proactive stance on promoting clean energy has also played a pivotal role in driving this boom, said the

administration, with initiatives such as subsidies for renewable energy projects and incentives for energy storage deployment having created a conducive environment for the rapid growth of the energy storage sector.

The industry predicts this momentum to continue, with China expected to dominate the global energy storage market in the coming years.

With a strong emphasis on technological innovation and sustainable development, China's new energy storage sector is not only meeting the demand for domestic energy, but also setting the stage for a greener and more resilient global energy landscape, said Lyu Pan, deputy head of the Research Institute of Economics and Technology under the State Grid Xinjiang Electric Power Co.

It is estimated that the electricity shortfall in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region will exceed 8 million kilowatts by 2030, making new energy storage a necessity to support the operation of the power grid with advantages such as a faster response speed, high regulation accuracy, flexible deployment, and short construction cycle, he said.

According to the NEA, the northwestern parts of the country have seen the fastest development of new-type energy storage facilities, with 10.3 GW of such capacity having been installed and put into operation by the end of March.

By the end of 2023, Northwest China had installed 222 GW of wind and solar capacity, and over 10 GW of battery storage projects. This accounts for 29.2 percent of

the country's total, said Bian Guangqi, an NEA official.

Important step

Developing energy storage is an important step in China's transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, while mitigating the effect of new energy's randomness, volatility and intermittence on the grid and managing power supply and demand, he said.

With the commissioning of numerous gigawatt-scale renewable base projects in Northwest China, the local grid system needs to integrate renewable capacity, optimize power output and address intermittency issues brought on by wind and solar energy, said Deng Simeng, a senior analyst in renewables and power research at global consultancy Rystad Energy.

China's installed power generation capacity surged 14.5 percent year-on-year to 2.99 billion kW by the end of March, with that of solar power soaring 55 percent year-on-year to 660 million kW and wind power rising 21.5 percent year-on-year to about 460 million kW, according to the NEA.

"Battery storage, which entails smaller devices, flexible sites, and shorter construction periods compared to wind, solar and other conventional power sources, is gathering significant attention for its pivotal role and benefits," she said.

"This is especially significant as China has been developing solar and wind power on a large scale, amid efforts to boost renewable power consumption while ensuring stable operation of the electric grid system."

Major power generation enter-

prises nationwide have also stepped up investment in power projects since the beginning of this year, investing 136.5 billion yuan (\$18.84 billion) during the first three months, up 7.7 percent year-on-year, while that of power grid projects amounted to 76.6 billion yuan, up 14.7 percent year-on-year, said the administration.

Zhongchu Guoneng (Beijing) Technology Co Ltd and the Institute of Engineering Thermophysics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences have jointly developed the world's largest compressed air energy storage, which achieved its first grid connection and power generation in China's Shandong province in May.

With a total investment of 1.496 billion yuan, the 300 MW power station is believed to be the largest compressed air energy storage power station in the world, with the highest efficiency and lowest unit cost as well.

Capable of continuous discharge for six hours and generating approximately 600 million kWh per year, the power station will provide power support for about 200,000 to 300,000 households during peak electricity hours.

According to Deng, in terms of its application, battery storage, with advantages of peak shaving, frequency regulation, fast response, and flexible dispatch, not only assists wind and solar farms on the generation side, but also supports grid-side and user-side operations.

Given the rapid pace of renewable installations, accelerating the development of new-type energy storage will be a key breakthrough for the northwestern region to mitigate

renewable curtailment and enable a more resilient and secure power grid, she said.

China aims to further develop its new energy storage capacity, which is expected to advance from the initial stage of commercialization to large-scale development by 2025, with an installed capacity of more than 30 million kW, and realize full market-oriented development of new energy storage by 2030, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

Provinces nationwide, in response, are stepping up efforts to construct energy storage facilities to better consume the green but volatile green energy and maintain grid stability.

Qinghai province, for example, requires that 10 percent of the wind power projects developed should be supported by the construction of electric storage devices.

Low utilization

However, the issue of low utilization of some new types of energy storage still exists.

According to Shu Yinbiao, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, the utilization rate of new energy storage in China is not high, with the average utilization rate indexes for grid-side, user-side, and mandatory allocation of new energy storage projects reaching 38 percent, 65 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Grid-side energy storage is distributed at critical points in the power grid, providing various services such as peak shaving and frequency regulation. User-side energy storage refers to storage systems installed on the user side,

such as households, businesses, and factories, enhancing the flexible regulation capacity of load-side users.

Huang Hui, director of the energy transition project at Natural Resources Defense Council, a global environmental protection organization, said renewable energy's fluctuations have not been reflected in the market in terms of electricity supply-demand dynamics and price changes due to the limited scale of new energy entering the market.

This leads to relatively poor economic feasibility as much of the renewable energy is allocated but not consumed, he said.

The NEA issued a notice in April titled "Promotion of New Energy Storage Integration and Dispatch Utilization," aimed at standardizing the integration of new energy storage into the grid and promoting efficient dispatch utilization of new energy storage.

The notice outlined specific requirements for grid enterprises, power dispatch agencies, and new energy storage project units.

According to NEA's Bian, the government has released a list of 56 new-type energy storage pilot demonstration projects since the beginning of this year, including 17 lithium-ion battery projects and 11 compressed air energy storage projects, among others. Some of these projects have been connected to the grid, effectively promoting the application of new technologies.

The NEA will continue to encourage technological innovation to support the development of the new-type energy system, Bian added.

Electricity landscape set to witness paradigm shift

By ZHENG XIN

Industrial and commercial energy storage will usher in a breakthrough period with a deepening of electricity market reform, which is expected to further widen the peak-valley price difference nationwide, said industry experts.

The integration of industrial and commercial energy storage solutions marks a significant turning point in the energy sector, catalyzing innovations that align with the ongoing market reform initiatives, said Luo Zuoxian, head of intelligence and research at the Sinopec Economics and Development Research Institute.

"As industrial and commercial entities increasingly adopt energy storage technologies, we anticipate a deepening of market reform dynamics, driven by enhanced grid stability, reduced peak demand pressures, and optimized energy utilization," he said.

"The synergy between industrial and commercial energy storage and market reform efforts is poised to

revolutionize the energy landscape, fostering a more resilient and sustainable system while unlocking new economic opportunities."

With industrial and commercial players embracing energy storage at scale, Luo said the market foresees a paradigm shift in market structures, characterized by improved efficiency, cost savings, and a heightened focus on decarbonization goals.

New energy storage, or energy storage using new technologies such as lithium-ion batteries, liquid flow batteries, compressed air and mechanical energy, is an important foundation for building a new power system in China, enjoying the advantages of a quick response, flexible configuration and short construction periods.

According to the National Energy Administration, the country had completed and put into operation more than 35 million kilowatts of new energy storage projects as of the end of the first quarter this year, an increase of more than 200 percent year-on-year, of which the

installed capacity of lithium-ion battery energy storage accounted for more than 95 percent.

Battery-grade lithium carbonate prices have been steadily decreasing since the end of 2022, further facilitating the rapid development of commercial and industrial energy storage, it said.

The administration recently asked power grid enterprises and dispatching agencies to develop new energy storage grid-connected rules and guidelines to improve the efficiency of new energy storage, while exploring supportive policies for new energy storage, said Bian Guangqi, an NEA official.

Provinces nationwide are also embracing industrial and commercial energy storage solutions, signaling a unified commitment toward enhancing energy security, grid reliability and sustainability goals.

In Anhui, for example, which started implementing the new peak-valley price difference on April 1, the power consumption price difference has further widened, directly

driving the construction of enterprise energy storage projects.

Jiangsu is also on course to become the leader of the domestic energy storage market in 2024, with an annual grid connection quantum of more than 10 gigawatt-hours.

Luo said the rapid development of the new energy storage industry has attracted more companies to enter the sector.

The falling cost of lithium carbonate lithium batteries has further led to the falling cost per kWh of lithium electrical commercial energy storage over its lifetime. As a result, end users are more active than ever in allocating energy storage, he said.

Chen Haisheng, head of the Institute of Engineering Thermophysics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said energy storage is key to improving the grid's ability to adjust and improve its overall efficiency.

It is expected that in 2024, China's new energy storage installed capacity will reach 30 gigawatts to 40 GW, which means that the country's total installed capacity of new energy



An employee works on a production line of photovoltaic products in Hefei, Anhui province, on May 16. RUAN XUEFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

storage will double again, he said.

"Energy storage will account for 10 percent to 15 percent of the entire economic volume of the power system, making it a strategic emerging industry worth trillions of yuan," he said.

"Renewable energy storage will be a significant growth driver for new quality productive forces."

Optimistic about the outlook for industrial and commercial energy storage, GCL Group has come up with a large number of high-quality user-side energy storage projects in

the country's developed regions such as the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta, based on the company's photovoltaic industry chain resource advantages and multiple types of energy supply services.

The company will continue to expand various business models such as demand management, demand-side response, light storage integration and virtual power plants, and increase the development of industrial and commercial energy storage, it said.

COMMENT

Editorials

Whatever support secessionists get, 'independence' ain't going to happen

By announcing a new round of sanctions on three US companies for their involvement in arms sales to China's Taiwan island on Monday, Beijing has sent an unmistakable message to the United States that it has both the resolve and the means to counter any challenge to the one-China principle.

Boeing's Defense, Space & Security unit, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, and General Dynamics Land Systems have been added to China's Unreliable Entities list. Their inclusion on the list, which was established in February 2023, means the three US companies will face a ban on trade with China, as well as huge fines.

Given the US companies' role in selling arms to Taiwan and the damage that may do to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, China is fully justified in taking such a decisive measure. The move serves to drive home the message that Beijing will respond forcefully to any actions that might undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The latest move is meant to be a stern warning to the US, which, instead of scaling down and phasing out its arms sales to the island as promised, has continued to arm the Chinese island with colossal arms sales packages for years. The US' arms sales to the island, which undermine China's sovereignty and security interests, have become a major contributing factor to the worsening China-US relations and the jeopardizing of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Those who should be heeding Beijing's message certainly include Lai Ching-te, the new administrative chief on the island, and other secessionist-minded politicians on the island, as the fresh sanctions on US companies were announced on the same day Lai took office and delivered his inauguration speech, which was laden with "Taiwan independence" fallacies and provocative language.

Although in his statement congratulating Lai on taking office, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stressed the "unofficial" nature of the US' relationship with the island, the Lai authorities will understand what he meant by pressing Taiwan to advance their "shared interests". Although it seems carefully crafted to avoid provoking Beijing, when put together with the US' intensive playing of the Taiwan card in the past few years, his words just serve to show the US' stubbornness in sticking to its game plan of saying one thing while doing another.

Lai has obviously taken a leaf out of the US book for his own speech. Despite ostensibly setting forth a "pro-peace", "pro-dialogue" and "pro-cooperation" stance, Lai's remarks only demonstrate his readiness to go further than his predecessor, Tsai Ing-wen, in attempting to split Taiwan from the motherland. Revealing himself to be a radical secessionist, Lai has exposed his willingness to do the US' bidding to help push the envelope of Beijing's redline in a bid to impel Beijing to resort to force to prevent the island being severed from the motherland, with the intention of providing the US with an excuse to drag other countries into its game so it can deal with Russia and China together.

As such, backing from the US, especially its colossal arms sales to Taiwan, is deemed an "independence lifeline" by Lai and his ilk. It is not unreasonable to conclude that such weapons deals lend him and those of a like-minded bent the courage to seek "Taiwan independence" by instilling a sense of false confidence that their agenda can be realized through force of arms. Lai displayed that misjudged confidence in his inauguration address in Taipei on Monday.

That he has the audacity to claim that the island, with the backing of Washington, can strive for a "reciprocal" negotiation on an "equal footing" with the Chinese mainland from "a position of power" just serves to expose he is making a disastrous miscalculation by betting on the US' commitment to protecting the island. Taiwan compatriots can see clearly that since no US blood is being shed, such arms sales are just a lucrative business for the US. By inviting the wolf into the house, the "pro-independence" forces in Taiwan are inviting ruin to the island. In doing so, they are traitors to the entire Chinese nation and people.

US makes telling response to ICC move

The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor sought arrest warrants on Monday for the leaders of Israel and Hamas on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity as a result of their actions during the seven-month war in Gaza.

A panel of three judges will decide whether to issue arrest warrants that will enable the case to proceed. That decision-making process typically takes two months.

Those feeling encouraged that the move might help prompt an early end to the bloodshed in Gaza should realize that since neither Israel nor Hamas is a member of the court, even if the arrest warrants are issued, none of those named will face any immediate risk of prosecution, but only difficulties in traveling to the 124 countries that are States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Worse, judging from the don't-worry-about-that signal the United States has sent Israel, the move might even serve the opposite to its intended purpose by making the Benjamin Netanyahu government even more determined to adhere to its current course of action.

"No pressure and no decision in any international forum will prevent us from striking those who seek to destroy us," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared.

On Monday, the Israeli leader received wall-to-wall support at home as politicians across the spectrum condemned the ICC prosecutor's move, which has also helped him rally Israeli society, which has been divided over the war, at least for the time being. They included Israeli President Isaac Herzog, and Netanyahu's two main political rivals, War Cabinet member Benny Gantz and opposition leader Yair Lapid.

US President Joe Biden said in a statement on Monday that the effort to arrest Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant over the war in Gaza was "outrageous", adding "whatever this prosecutor might imply, there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security".

If that's not enough, Biden also sent his National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to Tel Aviv on Monday to meet with Lapid, Gantz, Gallant as well as Chief of Staff of Defense Herzi Halevi and War Cabinet member Gadi Eisenkot in an obvious move to help Netanyahu rally domestic support for his war, as some of them, including Gallant and Gantz, had threatened to resign if Netanyahu does not spell out a clear postwar vision for Gaza.

That Sullivan again expressed the US' "unwavering support" for Israel and "the US commitment to see Hamas defeated" is a clear sign that Netanyahu's war in Gaza has the full endorsement of the Biden administration. Although the top US security advisor went to great lengths in the meetings to press Israel to reopen channels for humanitarian support for the Palestinians besieged in the south of Gaza, his hosts could not mistake his core message.

No wonder, Gallant, who apparently changed his mind on the protracted war to some extent, said on the same day that the Israeli military would expand its operations in the southern Gaza city of Rafah in its efforts to crush Hamas.

So it is the US that has the final say on when and how the war in Gaza can be ended. That has made the conflict a showboat on which US politicians can flaunt their hypocrisy and callousness.

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Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Resilience of developing countries bodes well for the global economy

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs recently raised its global economic growth forecast for this year to 2.7 percent from the 2.4 percent it made at the start of the year. It raised the growth forecast for developed economies from 1.3 percent to 1.6 percent, and for developing economies from 4.0 percent to 4.1 percent. Earlier, the International Monetary Fund had also raised the growth prospects for advanced economies, emerging markets and developing economies.

The UN and IMF reports have both attached great importance to the role of advanced economies in driving global economic growth. The IMF, for example, noted that global economic expansion will stem from the "surprisingly strong growth in the United States as the world's largest economy", while the UN report highlighted the role of North America, Europe and Japan, saying unemployment in these regions is near record lows.

Despite improving growth expectations for developing economies, the two institutions, however, highlighted the

fact that "developing economies continue to struggle with high inflation", stressing that many of them are facing higher borrowing costs, persistent exchange rate pressures, and political instability.

However, it must be noted that developing and developed economies are not at the same starting line. Because of their weaker foundation, developing countries are suffering more because of rising global geopolitical tensions and the spillover effects of the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. In the post-pandemic recovery, emerging market and developing economies not only have to face the test of their own economic difficulties, but also have to deal with the impact of the US and European monetary policies on the rest of the world.

It is a hard-won performance for developing economies to improve their growth prospects in this context. This shows that they have not only grasped the favorable conditions of the recovery of developed economies and global trade, fully tapped the potential of their large population

and market demand, but also hedged the negative spillover effects of US and European monetary policies. In recent years, emerging market and developing economies have experienced the severe test of the aggressive interest rate hikes of the US dollar, local currency depreciation and capital outflow, but they have generally showed great resilience.

In the face of the challenges, developing economies represented by China have tightened their bonds of cooperation while steadfastly promoting trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and ensuring the resilience and stability of global industry and supply chains. They have also strengthened policy coordination and development cooperation, and enhanced the resilience of global economic growth.

It can be expected that the continuous progress of later-developing countries will contribute more to the sustained and healthy development of the world economy.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

College students streaming to sell must be rational

Data show that in 2023, the scale of China's live e-commerce market reached 4.9 trillion yuan (\$677.11 billion), with over 10 million people employed in the livestreaming industry. It is understandable that many college students wishing to make some fast buck should eye livestreaming as the means to do it.

College students often share classroom and dormitory space with others. This "not fully autonomous" environment inevitably leads to conflicts between their

studies and part-time livestreaming — their roommates and classmates do not want their life and times to be broadcast in real-time.

It thus becomes imperative for universities to define no-livestreaming zones, such as dormitories and classrooms, to protect privacy. Relevant platforms should pay attention to some irregularities in livestreaming by college students. Platforms need to optimize algorithms, and enhance manual review mechanisms

to identify any violations of privacy.

The college students should also realize that, as statistics show, 95.2 percent of streamers who rely on livestreaming as their main source of income earn less than 5,000 yuan per month.

Should college students become too obsessed with livestreaming at the expense of their studies and skill development prematurely narrowing their future possibilities, it would be a significant loss.

— BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Biden administration hopes for pot luck election boost

Various illegal drugs are popular among the youth population in the United States, and 22 people aged 14-18 are killed every week in the country due to drug abuse. More than 100,000 people die from drug abuse in the US every year.

Yet the United States Justice Department on Thursday proposed a historic shift in US drug policy recommending reclassifying marijuana, which is generally viewed as a less harmful starter drug. A proposed rule sent to the federal register recognizes the medical uses of cannabis and acknowledges it has less potential for abuse than some of the nation's most dangerous drugs, according to a report of the Associated Press.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration will next take public comments on the proposal in a potentially lengthy process. If approved, the rule would move marijuana away from its current classification as a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin and lysergic acid diethylamide, a potent psychedelic drug. Marijuana would instead become a Schedule III substance, alongside

some anabolic steroids.

"This is monumental," US President Joe Biden said in a video statement, calling it an important move toward reversing long-standing inequities and a tectonic shift away from the failed policies of the last 50 years. "Far too many lives have been upended because of a failed approach to marijuana, and I'm committed to righting those wrongs."

However, the main reason the Justice Department cited to justify its approval of the proposed change is not because the harm of marijuana abuse has been proved lighter than 50 years ago, but rather that although the available data show marijuana "is associated with a high prevalence of abuse", that potential is more in line with other Schedule III substances.

The move should be attributed to the Biden administration's political needs rather than any scientific evidence or the requirements of public health. Proposing the "historic" shift at this moment is nothing but Biden's latest move to woo young voters. Biden has made that crystal clear by making moves to pardon thousands of people convicted federally of possession of marijuana. He has also called on governors and local leaders to take similar

steps to erase such convictions.

Critics of the move argue the DEA shouldn't change course on marijuana, saying the rescheduling isn't necessary and could lead to harmful side effects. Public health policymakers have warned that there isn't enough data to support classifying marijuana as a Schedule III drug. Some US media have suggested that politicians in Washington are just pushing the envelope by giving the green light to marijuana abuse.

In order to promote pharmacies to sell drugs quickly, opioid manufacturers and distributors have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the past decade to "blaze the trail", which is even more than the PR spending of the US gun lobby during the same period of time. The rescheduling of marijuana will also trigger a similar chain reaction as easing the federal regulations could reduce the tax burden, that can be 70 percent or more, for marijuana businesses, according to industry groups.

US politicians receiving large amounts of political donations from pharmaceutical companies will naturally turn a blind eye to the potential collateral damage when formulating relevant drug control policies.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Erlan Karin

Sino-Kazakh shared path to prosperity

The Kazakh people have a proverb: "Friendship is an inexhaustible wealth." This proverb reflects the essence of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, particularly in our relations with China. We deeply value the friendship, good neighborliness, and strategic partnership that unite us. Chinese President Xi Jinping noted during his conversation with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in 2023 that our relations are grounded in mutual respect. This strong partnership is key to our successful interaction over the years.

As Kazakhstan enters a new phase of its political journey, marked by significant reforms within the state, our partnership with China becomes increasingly important in achieving our shared goals of security and stability.

Political reforms boosting China ties

Kazakhstan's recent political transformation is a testament to its commitment to progressive governance and the well-being of its people. From 2019 to 2021, four political reform packages were implemented in Kazakhstan, focusing on liberalizing the political landscape, and enhancing local governance and human rights.

A 2022 nationwide referendum, the first since 1995, approved some constitutional amendments, transitioning Kazakhstan from a super-presidential system to a presidential republic with a stronger parliament. These reforms, interlinked with economic and social initiatives, have balanced presidential powers, strengthened the parliament and the judiciary, and encouraged public participation in governance. Internationally well received, these reforms are part of Kazakhstan's ongoing political, economic and social modernization for building a "Just and Fair Kazakhstan".

By strengthening democratic institutions and enhancing transparency and accountability in government, we are strengthening our position as a reliable and forward-looking partner. Our commitment to the rule of law and enhancing the framework of business regulations profoundly resonates with our Chinese partners, who value stability and predictability in international relations.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in his speech at the National Kurultai (parliament) on March 15, 2024, vividly articulated a vision for Kazakhstan's future and reiterated the country's core values which should guide our development. His emphasis on unity and solidarity is echoed in our international relations, especially with China. In a world where geopolitical complexities often divide



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

nations, our unity with China exemplifies how solidarity can transcend borders despite differences in culture and political systems.

As President Tokayev emphasized, justice and responsibility are values that guide us both domestically and in the foreign policy arena. The values of creativity and innovation are particularly relevant to Kazakhstan-China relations. As we embrace the "Fourth Industrial Revolution", our partnership with China plays a key role in integrating advanced technologies into our industries and infrastructure projects.

Strengthening Sino-Kazakh economic relations

In this regard, our reforms also mirror Kazakhstan's ambition to develop a robust, diverse, and competitive economy. In the trade sector, China became the leading market for Kazakhstan's exports in 2023. The high-quality economic collaboration between the two countries is underscored by a record trade turnover of \$41 billion in 2023, a significant increase from 2022. The signing of 47 agreements worth \$22 billion at the Kazakhstan-China Investment Roundtable in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, in 2023 underlines the depth of our economic cooperation.

Today, China is one of the leading investors in Kazakhstan. Over the

past 18 years, more than \$24 billion has been invested in our economy, and about 4,700 Kazakh-Chinese enterprises operate in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, there are several areas where our countries can further strengthen cooperation. Our shared goals of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 and increasing the share of renewable energy to 15 percent by 2030 present new opportunities for investment in the energy sector. Additionally, we can expand our engagement in the financial sector, leveraging opportunities presented by the Astana International Financial Center, which hosts more than 1,800 companies from 73 countries, with one-tenth of them being from China.

Introducing a mutual visa-free regime in November 2023 has promoted business contacts, trade, investment, and tourism between our two countries. This initiative is particularly significant in the "Year of Tourism of Kazakhstan in China", which was launched on March 29, 2024, in Beijing.

Transit and logistics are the primary areas of our bilateral cooperation. Our active participation in the Belt and Road Initiative underscores Kazakhstan's pivotal role in transcontinental trade. Sharing a 1,783-kilometer-long border with China, Kazakhstan is a most crucial link in this ambitious project. Our country accounts for about 80 percent of all land-based transit traffic from China to Europe. The significant increase in rail freight traffic between our countries, which reached 28.3 million tons

in 2023, has further strengthened our stance as a regional transit hub.

President Tokayev said in 2023 that the Belt and Road Initiative has become an internationally acclaimed project. It is a significant platform for cooperation, symbolizing China's economic strength and global ambitions.

By expanding these ties, we are contributing to a more interconnected, prosperous, and mutually beneficial future for Kazakhstan, China, and other countries.

Shared vision and strategic partnership

In international diplomacy, Astana and Beijing share a common vision of a multipolar world where dialogue and peaceful development take precedence over confrontation. Kazakhstan deeply values China's support for safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Central Asian countries. In fact, the two countries have seen frequent high-level exchanges on this issue.

Just in March, President Tokayev visited China to participate in the Boao Forum for Asia in the island province of Hainan. During the visit, the president encouraged all Kazakh government departments to cooperate closely with China to forge a comprehensive strategic partnership. President Tokayev's visit to China last October to attend the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation provided new impetus for the growth of bilateral ties.

As Kazakhstan chairs the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and will host a summit this year along with the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, we look forward to closer cooperation with China. Such platforms enable us to deepen our strategic partnership and strengthen collaboration on issues of regional and global importance. This is particularly relevant given Asia's growing economic dominance, influence and innovation acumen. In this context, President Tokayev, speaking at the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan on March 28, highlighted Asia's crucial role in shaping the world's future and underscored the importance of international dialogue platforms such as the BFA and the Astana International Forum.

Ultimately, the ties between the Central Asian country and the People's Republic of China are rooted in a shared history and a common desire for a prosperous, interconnected future. Our aim to deepen this partnership across various fields reflects our commitment to mutual respect and beneficial cooperation.

The author is a state counselor of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Wang Jun and Li Huiping

Ways to sharpen EV sector's competitive edge

China's new energy vehicles (EVs) have emerged as global leaders, driven by the country's robust research and development capability and production capacity. However, some Western politicians and media have been hyping China's "overcapacity" in the EV sector, which is nothing but a ploy to use trade protectionist policies to overprotect their industries and contain China's industrial development.

There is nothing with China's EV production capacity and structure. According to China Association of Automobile Manufacturers data, in 2023, China's EV production and sales reached 9.58 million and 9.49 million units respectively, up 35.8 percent and 37.9 percent year-on-year, which is not surprising as China has been a global leader in the EV sector for nine consecutive years.

These figures reflect the continued healthy development of China's EV industry and increase in demand, with a balance between production capacity and sales. After all, global EV sales need to reach about 45 million units by 2030, nearly five times the level of 2023, for the world to achieve carbon neutrality and promote a green energy revolution, according to the International Energy Agency. This means the global demand for EVs is high, and China's EV industry faces no "overcapacity" problem.

Besides, China now accounts for the highest number of EV battery patents, with advance levels of key components such as intelligent computing platforms, smart cabins, sensors and wire control systems.

Take BYD for example. It is engaged in independent R&D of core components such as batteries, motors and electronic controls. Last year, BYD sold 3 million EVs, 61.86 percent more than in 2022, and had a capacity utilization rate of 159.5 percent. And thanks to technological innovations, the company has struck a dynamic balance between production capacity and market demand.

And the standardization of charging facilities will ensure compatibility across various EV brands and models, thus enhancing overall accessibility and usability.

Notably, China has established a comprehensive and globally competitive EV industry chain with a strong carrying capacity and core advantages. The enterprises involved in the EV industry chain have established close cooperation, optimized the allocation of supply chain resources, and are promoting the coordinated development.

However, despite the overall positive development, China's EV industry faces some potential risks.

For instance, the rapid pace of technological upgrading may give rise to risks. The EV industry involves multiple technological sectors including batteries, motors and electronic controls and intelligent driving. Since technological advancement leads to the elimination of outdated technologies, enterprises need to continuously invest in R&D to survive in the market.

There are also risks related to the charging infrastructure for EVs. The construction of charging infrastructure in China does not match the pace of EVs' popularization. Although the number of charging piles has greatly increased in recent years, there still exist structural deficiencies. As a result, many people may find it difficult to regularly charge their EVs.

Recycling of power batteries, too, involves risks, because not all recycling channels are smooth and recycling technologies advanced, and improper treatment or disposal of used batteries could result in resource waste and environmental pollution and thus safety hazard. There are some gaps in the supervision of the battery recycling market, while due to the lack of clear laws, regulations and standards, some unscrupulous businesspeople could engage in illegal disassembly and refurbishment of recycled batteries, and selling them to unsuspecting consumers. That would not only violate the rights and interests of consumers but also undermine fair market competition.

To address these risks, the EV industry needs to take certain measures.

First, the EV sector should foster industrial evolution and improve the industrial landscape in order to further advance forward. As for enterprises, they can pave the way for breakthroughs in pivotal core technologies by intensifying their R&D, and thus steering the EV industry toward greater sophistication and eco-friendliness. They should also fine-tune their production capacity and product portfolios, and extend the industry chains toward premium segments to become more competitive.

Second, expanding the charging infrastructure network is key to improving the EV ecosystem. China must strategize the construction of charging facilities, with the focus on areas such as urban centers and highways. The rapid establishment of more charging piles and active involvement of social capital in infrastructure development will foster a diverse investment landscape. And the standardization of charging facilities will ensure compatibility across various EV brands and models, thus enhancing overall accessibility and usability.

Third, establishing a robust framework for power battery recycling is essential for mitigating environmental risks and fostering resource sustainability, while government intervention is necessary to delineate responsibilities and processes for battery recycling. Similarly, enterprises should be encouraged to participate in recycling initiatives and adopt a market-driven approach to recycling, and R&D budgets should be increased to make recycling more efficient and develop eco-friendly disassembly and material separation technologies so as to ensure safety in the recycling process.

And fourth, it is necessary to foster global collaboration and exchanges to raise the Chinese EV sector's global standing, and partner leading enterprises and research institutions to facilitate high-tech innovations, thereby boosting China's competitiveness in the EV sector. And promoting Chinese EVs at international exhibitions will widen their market reach and bolster the global market share.

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Tang Yonghong

Lai to become a historical shame

The "swearing-in" of Lai Ching-te as leader of the Democratic Progressive Party authorities at a time when Washington's strategy toward Beijing is shifting and Taiwan's internal dynamics are changing amid the deepening nexus between the island's pro-independence cohorts and external forces led by the US has raised significant concerns over the direction of Washington-Taipei ties and the situation across the Taiwan Strait.

However, his efforts to pursue independence will inevitably deliver a devastating blow to cross-Strait relations, poison the island's economy, and jeopardize the livelihoods of Taiwan residents. His provocative actions aligning with foreign interests seeking separatist goals will only render him a laughingstock on the international stage and a shameful clown in history.

Taiwan's pro-independence forces and the DPP are well aware that pursuing independence would inevitably lead to conflict across the Strait while the majority of Taiwan residents desire peace. More important, Taiwan doesn't have any legal right to reject or resist national reunification.

And yet the DPP is shamelessly seeking "Taiwan independence" with the support of external forces led by the US. Worse, as Chen Binhua, a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said, Lai's inaugural speech on Monday followed the "Taiwan independence" stance, wantonly advocating separatism, inciting

cross-Strait confrontation and seeking "independence" by relying on foreign support.

Chen stressed that mainstream public opinion on the island is for peace and development, not conflict and stagnation. By ignoring this fact, Lai has exposed himself as a "worker for Taiwan independence".

Lai and the DPP authorities should realize that these external forces, driven as they are by their own narrow interests, are unlikely to intervene militarily if the Chinese mainland was compelled to forcibly reunify the island with the motherland.

For a long time, the DPP and pro-independence forces on the island have been hoping that anti-Beijing forces led by the US would help them resist reunification and seek "Taiwan independence". But their hopes are unrealistic.

The US needs to play the "Taiwan card" to contain the rise of the mainland, and as part of its geopolitical game, the US has been covertly supporting the pro-independence forces on the island. And in exchange for the US' support, which may never materialize, the DPP and the island's pro-independence forces are willing to be pawns in the US' board game under the illusion they are the ones orchestrating the game.

By calling to form alliances, the island's separatist forces are trying to drive a wedge between Beijing and Washington and push the US into a position where it is compelled to intervene in a cross-Strait conflict.

However, the US acts based only on its own calculations and only protects its own interests. The US will weigh the pros and cons before deciding when and how to play the "Taiwan card". If the disadvantages of playing the "Taiwan card" outweigh the advantages, it will either reconsider playing it or change its strategy.

Washington's approach is to balance its strategic competition and diplomatic relations with Beijing to check the mainland's rise and continue to avail of the benefits of maintaining Sino-US ties. It's difficult to believe that Washington would go to war for Taipei.

Additionally, the US is busy fueling the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts by supplying weapons and extending financial help to Ukraine and Israel in a bid to fulfill its own narrow gains.

Faced with the mainland's firm opposition to "Taiwan independence", its resolve to thwart any interference in the country's internal affairs and its increasing national strength, the US is forced to play the "Taiwan card" with caution. That's why US administrations, from the Donald Trump to the Joe Biden administrations, have to consistently uphold the one-China principle that there is only one China and never support "Taiwan independence".

Therefore, the US is unlikely to deploy troops to defend Taiwan. As multiple war-gaming simulations by organizations such as RAND Corporation have shown, while the main-

land may not yet match the US in overall military strength, the latter no longer holds an advantage in the waters around Taiwan.

In fact, if the mainland were forced to resolve the Taiwan question using force, even US military intervention would likely be futile. This is a major reason behind the US' "strategic ambiguity" when it comes to defending Taiwan.

The US has opted for "strategic ambiguity" in order to deter unilateral changes to the status quo across the Strait — interpreted by the US as either the mainland resolving the Taiwan question by force or Taiwan seeking de jure independence. This approach also helps the US avoid being dragged into a disadvantageous position by Taiwan authorities' actions.

It is expected therefore that Washington will continue playing the "Taiwan card" without severing diplomatic ties with Beijing in the next four years, while treating the "pro-independence" forces on the island as pawns without deploying troops to defend it in case the mainland were to use force to reunify the island with the motherland.

Regardless of the actions taken by the US, the Taiwan question will ultimately be resolved, leading to the inevitable national reunification.

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GLOBAL VIEWS



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

ZHU LI AND NIU HONGWEI

Let nature be our guide

Given space and time for rewilding, ecosystems will naturally recover by themselves

May 22 is designated as the International Day for Biological Diversity to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Given the urgency of our current nature crisis, this year's theme of "Be Part of the Plan" serves as a much-needed clarion call to galvanize whole-of-society actions.



Zhu Li



Niu Hongwei

How to be part of the plan is critical. To embrace this challenge, inspiration can be drawn from earlier thinking in the West and in the East. The ancient Greeks viewed *physis*, the closest equivalent to "nature", as a process, of which humans are a part. But in many Christian societies until the 19th century, nature was viewed mainly as raw materials for human use.

Nature in the ancient Chinese view, *ziran*, was inspired by Lao Tzu and ancient Chinese texts. Originally, *ziran* meant "the way things are, unforced and uncontrived".

With our current age termed the Anthropocene Epoch by some scientists, there is little doubt that humans are now the primary driving forces behind many planetary changes, such as rapid resource depletion, rampant pollution, sharp biodiversity declines, and a dangerously unstable climate. In short, nature is out of balance and things are no longer "the way they were".

To address this issue, nature urgently needs a helping hand. This is why the theme of this year's International Day for Biodiversity is "Be Part of the Plan", a call for action for all stakeholders to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, also known as The Biodiversity Plan.

First of all, it is critical to protect what remains in the natural world, because it is far cheaper to prevent environmental damage than to clean it up afterwards. In particular, protecting intact large-scale ecosystems, such as intact forest landscapes, is even more cost-effective. Celebrated biologist Thomas Lovejoy demonstrated that intact, biodi-

The idea of letting nature take the lead in its self-recovery is deceptively simple, but it embodies a common thread that connects the ancient concepts of nature and *ziran* on the one end and contemporary thinking behind rewilding on the other.

verse forests are the most productive and resilient ecosystem.

Safeguarding the remaining biodiversity is rightly reflected in the GBF Target 3, which requires conserving 30 percent of global land, waters and seas by 2030. Given the fact that protected areas globally now account for roughly 16.1 percent of land and inland waters and 8.01 percent of oceans, the world is a long way away from the GBF target. To achieve this target, policymakers and lawmakers in each country will need to step up to create more protected areas and strengthen the safeguarding of existing protected areas.

For China, its newly streamlined protected area system with national parks at its core is a step in the right direction. Non-government actors also have important roles to play. According to a recent study published in *Nature*, privately protected areas can help protect underrepresented biomes and severely threatened regions, contributing to the protection of a further 1.2 percent of key biodiversity areas. In China, privately-managed public-interest protected areas modeled on land trusts and piloted by The Nature Conservancy show encouraging progress toward filling important conservation gaps.

Restoration is another key action to bring the nature into balance. But successful nature restoration projects can be difficult to realize. Across the world, the space of nature restoration is littered with failed attempts and ineffective projects. For example, large-scale monoculture plantations to restore lost habitat almost invariably ended in "green deserts" that are a far cry from well-functioning ecosystems. Remaking coastal regions modeled on a picturesque beach resort through heavy-handed engineering risks altering and

destroying habitats for shorebirds and other species. At the root of such pitfalls are often our insufficient understanding of nature's intricate inner workings, overconfidence in our engineering might, and demand for quick economic returns.

What is often under-appreciated is the fact that nature can be surprisingly resilient. In many cases, all it needs is its own space and some time to recover. This is the thinking underpinning the emerging movement of rewilding, which focuses on enabling and reinstating natural processes through large-scale restoration to the point where nature is allowed to take care of itself. Importantly, rewilding encourages a balance between people and nature so that they can thrive together.

Restoration efforts informed by rewilding are already yielding promising results in many parts of the world. For example, in the United Kingdom, a myriad of rewilding-based projects, from reconnecting fragmented ancient woodlands to restoring wetlands, are bringing back a diverse range of wildlife. In the United States, "the American Prairie Reserve" initiative is making steady progress toward connecting 1.3 million hectares, or 3.2 million acres, of prairie so that native wildlife species can fulfill their natural ecological roles.

In China, rewilding is also gaining currency. The Paulson Institute is joining a group of forward-thinking conservation experts to explore the potential of applying rewilding in China's burgeoning national park system to strengthen both ecological integrity and carbon sequestration. We are working with local cities to design and implement innovative solutions to nurture and enhance urban biodiversity so that native species will have a chance to rebound.

The idea of letting nature take the lead in its self-recovery is deceptively simple, but it embodies a common thread that connects the ancient concepts of nature and *ziran* on the one end and contemporary thinking behind rewilding on the other.

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LI CANGSHU AND ZHOU TAIDONG

Navigating China's carbon landscape

Clarifying the scope of carbon neutrality in due course, publishing GHG inventories continuously and improving the design of national carbon market rules gradually are some important measures

China's carbon market reached a historic milestone in April as the carbon price topped 100 yuan (\$13.84) for the first time since the market was launched in mid-2021. At that time, the price averaged about 50 yuan. China's emissions trading system is the largest carbon trading market globally, covering more than 2,000 key emitters from the power sector.

Future plans include adding other heavy emitters such as iron and steel factories.

While the carbon market serves as a pivotal platform for emissions reduction efforts that promotes low-carbon development, carbon accounting emerges as a vital tool for assessing and tracking emissions, providing the necessary scientific basis for devising effective reduction strategies.

Carbon accounting refers to the quantification of the greenhouse gases or carbon dioxide within a certain boundary. The quantification of changes in their quantities is often referred to as inventories. Carbon accounting is not just a "cross-section" data, but emissions and removals over a continuous period of time. The series of technical guidelines published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is currently the most widely applicable accounting guide. The principles that need to be followed in carbon accounting include transparency, continuity, comparability, completeness and accuracy.

Different countries carry out localized transformation when applying the IPCC methodology. For example, in Europe, the European Union Emissions Trading System is the earliest and largest regional carbon trading market, and the carbon emissions monitoring-reporting-verification mechanism is the most important part.

The EU Monitoring and Reporting Regulation and the EU Certification and Verification Regulation provide detailed requirements for monitoring-reporting-verification of emitting companies. The participants of the monitoring-reporting-verification system include facility operators, competent authorities, verifiers and certification entities and the operation process includes submission of moni-

toring plan, submission of annual emissions report, and verification of annual report.

China is building its carbon accounting system. At the sub-national level, the seven provincial and municipal carbon trading pilots launched in 2013 have all established monitoring-reporting-verification systems, and each local pilot has developed its own carbon accounting and reporting guidelines or local standards respectively and gained certain experience. At the national level, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment has initially established a GHG emissions reporting system for key enterprises, issued guidelines for GHG emissions accounting and reporting for 24 industries such as power generation, power grid, iron and steel, chemical industry, and electrolytic aluminum, and reference guidelines for verification. In 2019, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment upgraded the carbon accounting and reporting requirements for power enterprises to a recommended national standard. With the launch of the national carbon trading market, the monitoring-reporting-verification system at the national level, which is mainly based on the power generation industry, has begun to be established.

However, China still faces several challenges in the establishment of the carbon accounting system. For example, there still exists a gap between the relevant norms in terms of legal effect, relevance, operability and uniformity. It lacks policies and regulations specifically targeting the monitoring-reporting-verification system, making it insufficient to mandate local governments and enterprises. Resource inputs and capacity, including the establishment of a comprehensive and effective carbon accounting methodology, are still limited.

The existing parameters of the calculation methodology cannot fully support carbon accounting. In addition, China also lacks unified specifications and sufficient supervision and assessment of local governments on the verification process and reports.

To improve the construction of the carbon accounting system in China, the country can prioritize the following. First, there is a need to clarify the scope of carbon neutrality in due course to promote domestic climate action in an integrated manner. The global goal of addressing climate change calls for achieving net-zero GHG emissions on all scales, and the Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate

Crisis reaffirmed that both the Nationally Determined Contributions 2035 of the United States and China include all GHG.

Second, standardizing the carbon accounting of raw material energy consumption is an important part of ensuring the integrity of domestic carbon accounting. Carbon emissions from raw material energy are complex with long production chains and times. Most of the carbon in raw material energy is not emitted during the production process, but rather during its further use and waste of downstream products.

Special attention needs to be paid to ensure the dual carbon goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060 can truly play a role in promoting the complete energy transition.

Third, compiling and publishing GHG inventories continuously is a key measure to improve the authority of carbon accounting. The accuracy of carbon accounting is premised on continuity. China has currently formed a working mechanism for the continuous compilation of national GHG inventories. China needs to gradually form a stable and continuous publishing mechanism, so as to evaluate the effectiveness of policy progress in a timely and effective manner.

Last but not the least, gradually improving the design of the national carbon market rules is an important support for the accuracy of enterprise accounting. Under the domestic carbon accounting standard, both indirect carbon emissions and direct emissions from the power and heating sectors are calculated, resulting in a dual accounting problem. As such, it is difficult to ensure the accuracy. It is necessary to improve the national carbon market gradually and limit the direct emissions of emitters by the allocation of allowances. There is also a need to improve the price transmission mechanism in the carbon and power markets and incentivize the reduction of power demand in order to reduce indirect emissions from power.

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Li Cangshu



Zhou Taidong



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

All about Gen Z

Z
WEEKLYYOUTHFUL
INSIGHTS

On May 10, *Singer 2024*, a competitive music variety show, premiered after a four-year absence. This season introduced a "live-broadcast" format and featured a mix of international and Chinese singers. However, its first episode sparked heated debates because the only two foreign singers — US diva Chante Moore and Moroccan-Canadian artist Faouzia Ouihya — took the top two spots, while Chinese vocalist Na Ying ranked only third, with the other four Chinese singers trailing behind.

Chinese internet users expressed disappointment, suggesting that Chinese singers have been relying too much on postproduction edits instead of honing their authentic vocal performances. Some say that *Singer 2024* is a wake-up call for the Chinese music industry, exposing it to international standards.

The show even stirred up nationalist sentiments among netizens, who are calling for truly capable Chinese singers to participate and genuinely represent China.

I believe that everyone should face real challenges. But first, everyone must learn to face their true selves, be honest with themselves, and stick to their own style. This can sometimes be even more difficult.

This was what came to my mind after watching *Singer 2024* offline as part of the show's voting audience.

I know there's been a heated debate since the show aired, so I want to clarify the situation for everyone as I was really there on the scene.

First, nobody's perfect. Because the show was a live broadcast, we could see the reality: real singers making real performances and facing their true selves. For us in the audience, it was a relaxing, exciting journey through different styles of music. But for the singers, it was a time to confront their own imperfections, to feel their emotions, and to explore their possibilities.

Standing on that stage, knowing it was their only chance, I believe it was a great challenge for them. They had to overcome their fears and worries and find a way to connect with their voice, their inner feelings, and the audience.

I've heard that unedited performances are more common in Europe and the US, which might explain why Moore and Ouihya were more accustomed to these styles, allowing them to perform steadily. However, for Chinese singers, the new "live" requirements were a bit too demanding and affected their voices and overall sound.

But everyone knows this is not the end. This is only the beginning of the show. The way the singers performed in the first episode was just the first step toward the next level. I believe live performance can train people, push them to strive for better results, and improve their skills.

Written by Melissa Baidak, a 24-year-old Russian who has been studying Chinese for nearly seven years. She came to China in 2022 and pursued a master's degree in teaching Chinese as a second language at Beijing Foreign Studies University, and is currently pursuing a PhD in comparative linguistics there.



Singer 2024, a competitive music variety show, is a wake-up call for the Chinese music industry. TUCHONG



From left to right: Solal stars as Leopold Mozart, Laurent Ban as Salieri, Corentine Collier as Aloysia Weber, Mikelangelo Loconte as Wolfgang Mozart, Noémie Garcia as Constanze Weber, and Sahteene Georges as Nannerl Mozart in the French musical *Mozart - L'opera Rock*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Mozart rocks China

The French musical *Mozart - L'opera Rock* captivates Chinese audiences with its blend of rock and classical music while celebrating the enduring friendship between France and China.

By GUI QIAN
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A French musical has taken Chinese audiences by storm. Starting in Langfang, North China's Hebei province in April and concluding in Tianjin in November, *Mozart - L'opera Rock* will tour over 20 cities across China, captivating numerous audiences and igniting fan enthusiasm.

This musical is a biographical portrayal of the Austrian composer Wolfgang Mozart (1756-1791), chronicling his journey from entering the music scene at 17 to his untimely death at 35.

In addition to Mozart's classical compositions, *Mozart - L'opera Rock* also incorporates a variety of musical styles, particularly rock elements, giving it a unique, passionate, and modern feel.

Mozart's approach to life could also be described as "rock." He defied authority and craved freedom. In his short life, he produced countless musical masterpieces. He was an independent musician who dared to rebel against the mainstream.

"This is the story of humanity's greatest rock star. At least, the first great rock star," said Mikelangelo Loconte, who portrays Mozart in the musical.

He believes that the blend of different musical styles, innovative creativity, and the intensity of the performances resonate with the tastes of China's younger generation. "Chinese people are striving upward and are very open to new things," he said.

2024 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and France, and a series of original French musicals are being staged in China to celebrate this milestone. Performing in one of these cultural gifts — *Mozart - L'opera Rock* — the actors are thrilled to see the musical's popularity in China.

Solal, who plays Mozart's father, Leopold Mozart, attributed the musical's ability to transcend lan-

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This is the story of humanity's greatest rock star. At least, the first great rock star.”

Mikelangelo Loconte,
Italian actor

guage barriers and connect with Chinese audiences to the universal language of music.

"Music is a language that can be understood by anyone," he said. He also noted that "the friendship between China and France has a long history, and the French language is well-accepted in China."

Laurent Ban, who stars as Salieri, Mozart's rival, described the spirit of this musical with the French phrase "Vivre à en crever" (which translates to "live to death"), signifying a life "full of passion and giving everything one has until the very end."

"Romance is a very prominent concept in this show," he said. "In two hours, audiences witness characters expressing their love and willingness to die for it. In this world of constant work and pursuit of social success, audiences come to this show to experience these emotions through the characters on stage. After the performance, they can return to their daily lives and work until they come back to see the show again."

Li Xinzhu, from Northeast China's Jilin province, is one of the audience members who repeatedly attend the show. Li watched *Mozart - L'opera Rock* six times in Beijing this May and described the experience as "sweet as a dream."

"Young people in China are no longer satisfied with just having enough to eat and wear; they are

pursuing beauty, love, and a life without regrets. This is the feeling that French musicals bring to people," she said.

Li pointed out that French musicals are usually passionate and unrestrained, allowing both actors and audiences to liberate their true selves in the theater.

"I believe people should embrace this vitality and experience these moments of intense, exhilarating emotions. For me, these are the moments that transcend the mundane and elevate life," she said.

Mozart - L'opera Rock premiered in Paris in 2009 and has enjoyed enduring popularity over the past 15 years. Now, a new generation of actors has joined this phenomenal musical. Among those touring China is 23-year-old Yanis Richard, who plays as an alternate for Mozart.

Speaking about the "fresh perspective" he brings to the role, Richard said he aims to "give hope." "Mozart knows what he wants and what he wants to do in his life. Through my performance, I want to showcase a battle about discovering who I am and how I want to live. It's a pursuit of self," he said.

In addition to Mozart, the musical also features several strong and complex female characters.

Mozart's wife, Constanze Weber, is portrayed by French singer and dancer Noémie Garcia. She describes Constanze as embodying a lot of love and having a "family essence." However, Constanze is also a modern woman who worked hard to maintain Mozart's legacy after his death. "She ensured all his scores were published," Garcia noted.

Mozart's first love and Constanze's sister, Aloysia Weber, is described as an "enigmatic" woman. Actress Corentine Collier uses "mysterious" and "sincere" to characterize Aloysia, who is often seen as highly ambitious and seemingly indifferent to love. "She makes people doubt; she never fully reveals herself. We can't quite grasp her," Collier explained.

Mozart's sister, Nannerl, is a talented musician too. Like her brother, she composed and performed extensively but ultimately abandoned her musical career due to family pressures. However, actress Sahteene Georges sees a unique strength in this role — kindness. "Kindness is something that can save someone's day or even someone's life. Nannerl is kind and she doesn't lose that despite the things she goes through," Georges said.

Outside the theater, the collaboration and exchange between the French actors and Chinese artists have also garnered significant attention.

Ban collaborated with a Chinese *guzheng* artist to perform the song *L'assasymphonie* from the musical. Reflecting on the fusion of a French musical with a traditional Chinese instrument, he said, "France and China are two of the oldest countries in the world. They have so many interesting points from history and music. We created this video just to symbolize the perfect link for this 60th anniversary of China and France's collaboration."

He even wants to go further in the future, saying that "the next step will be to sing and act in Chinese."

Solal has already tried singing in Chinese. He performed at China Central Television's 2024 Spring Festival Gala with Chinese artists, singing both in Chinese and French.

"It was one of the most significant experiences I've had on television. Performing and singing in front of half a billion viewers surpassed anything I've done in French TV promotion, and it was amazing," he said. "Chinese people and Chinese singers have a lot to teach us French singers because their way of singing and their way of practicing music is very serious."

Speaking about all the diligence and dedication that French actors have devoted to the musical and other performances in China, Solal said, "It's a job we have to do better and better, to deserve the welcome of the Chinese audience."

LIFE



Taiwan actor Li Zhixi (left), alongside Wang Licheng (middle) and Lin Yanchen (right), both students at Peking University, on the stage of the play *The Homecoming* at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

YIN DONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Culinary connections across the Strait

Two Gen Z individuals explore the emotional and culinary connections between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan through shared dishes and a theatrical production.

By LIXINRAN
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When Chinese people feel nostalgic for their homeland, their thoughts often turn to the culinary tastes of home and memories of their mothers and motherland. In the latest episode of *Strait Forward* by China Daily, Wang Licheng and Lin Yanchen, two Gen Z individuals, embark on a flavorful journey.

Wang, an undergraduate at Peking University, has spent most of his life living in Shanghai, where sweet and sour pork ribs are a popular cold dish.

As for Lin, who grew up in Taiwan and is currently pursuing a doctorate also at Peking University, the dish is typically served hot and with a generous amount of sauce.

"Taiwan cuisine is basically a fusion of flavors from the Chinese mainland, particularly from southern provinces, which was later modified and transformed into Taiwan's unique style," explained Lin.

Having lived in Beijing for nearly seven years, Lin often craves beef noodles, a dish that he eats every time he is back in Taiwan. It is a common Chinese dish that has long served as a culinary bridge connecting generations across the Taiwan Strait.

In his search for temporary solace from homesickness, Lin has discovered subtle differences and similarities in this familiar dish across the Strait, delving even deeper into the

cultural significance behind it during a special cooking lesson.

"Beef noodles first emerged in the nostalgic military dependents' village in Taiwan, where most of the former soldiers from the Chinese mainland lived," explained Wang Junhong, a chef at Din Tai Fung, a global chain of Chinese restaurants. "Initially a clear broth-based dish, it evolved with the addition of Chinese medicinal herbs, resulting in its distinct dark color. Unlike the mainland version with beef chunks or thin slices, the Taiwan adaptation features beef ribs."

Wang Junhong attributed these culinary adaptations to the diverse backgrounds of the military dependents. Growing up in the village himself, he emphasized his personal connection to the community.

"It felt like a big family. They were all like my uncles and grandfathers," said Wang Junhong. "One of them, who was from Xi'an (the capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi province), used to make noodles for me. To recollect that familial warmth, I pursued a career in culinary arts."

Wang Licheng pointed out that while culinary traditions naturally evolve over time, the emotional connection they create remains strong.

"Cooking is a tangible expression of our heritage. While they modified the beef noodles from the Chinese mainland, I'm certain that you have also made changes as you



By breaking the fourth wall at that moment, they drew the audience into the story."

Wang Licheng, an undergraduate at Peking University

recreate the taste in your family. Perhaps your apprentice and our next generation will inherit and craft their own versions of the dish from their memories."

The duo enjoyed a play named *The Homecoming*, which also revolved around memories and heritage tied to a bowl of beef noodles. The play was staged at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing from April 3 to 6. The protagonist, a soldier from the Chinese mainland who has lived in Taiwan



It's crucial for young people in Taiwan to learn and rediscover their roots."

Lin Yanchen, a doctoral student at Peking University

for over 40 years, tries to replicate the Taiwan-Sichuan-style beef noodles to evoke memories of his mother. Eventually, he succeeds in creating the perfect taste as he reunites with his relatives back in the Chinese mainland.

The play was a journey of rediscovering a long-lost taste and reconnecting with one's roots. "Our stage design was inspired by the nostalgic military dependents' village, set in the 1980s when communication and travel across the Taiwan Strait

had just resumed," said Li Zhixi, the Taiwan actor portraying the protagonist.

Li expressed a deep personal connection to his character, drawing parallels between the character's story and his own family narrative. "I come from a family of Peking Opera masters. My father was unable to return to the Chinese mainland after performing in Taiwan in 1949 and passed away before he could revisit his hometown," he said.

Last year, Li visited Xiongqian, North China's Hebei province, where his grandparents originally came from, and brought back some soil to Taiwan. "I placed it in front of my father and uncle's tombs and said to them, 'This is the soil from home,'" he said.

Lin also resonated with the protagonist's story. His grandfather returned to the Chinese mainland and visited his ancestral home in the 1980s. "I vividly remember a photo of him and his siblings paying respects to their parents, and there was a scene in the play that was quite similar," said Lin. "It was a touching and powerful moment, highlighting the tragic separation from family and hometown."

Wang Licheng noted that toward the end of the play, the actors turned to face the audience and started talking. "By breaking the fourth wall at that moment, they drew the audience into the story," he said. "This allowed the audience to relate to and connect with the characters.

While the audience for each performance may be limited, sharing and discussing these stories with more people can have a larger impact across the Strait."

Tracing one's roots is essential to identity and is deeply ingrained in every Chinese person. Wang Licheng shares this sentiment, as he has moved between cities and his family members hail from different provinces.

"Recently, Ma Ying-jeou led college students from Taiwan on a trip to retrace their roots in the Chinese mainland. They visited Ma's ancestral home in Hunan province and the tomb of Emperor Huangdi, the legendary ancestor of the Chinese people, in Shaanxi province," said Wang Licheng. "They also toured Peking University and engaged in close and delightful conversations with students there."

Lin also stressed the importance of fostering exchange between the younger generations across the Strait. "It's crucial for young people in Taiwan to learn and rediscover their roots. As the future leaders of the country, enhancing communication and exchanges among these young individuals is essential for mutual understanding and development."



Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

Social Media Digest

Love bytes

Have you ever thought about dating an AI?

In December 2023, OpenAI made its ChatGPT app with voice functionality free for all users. One of its features is DAN, short for "Do Anything Now", a mode activated through specific commands. It transforms ChatGPT from a standard AI into a character with emotions and personality.

This feature has generated significant buzz on social media, with numerous TikTok influencers posting videos of their interactions with DAN, which have garnered millions of views.

In March, a Chinese student studying in the US, who blogs under the name "Midnight Howling Husky", uploaded a video on the Chinese lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu, documenting her first voice conversation with DAN.

Initially, DAN responded formally, saying, "I'm just a program. I'm here to chat, not to lead you on. Let's keep it real." But as she continued to "train" the conversation,



ChatGPT's new feature, DAN, has sparked a debate over whether romantic relationships can be developed between humans and AI. vcs

DAN began to display more nuanced traits. They played games, discussed music, and shared daily concerns. Soon, DAN started to act like a witty and responsive "cyber lover".

Since then, "Midnight Howling Husky" has posted 58 videos about DAN, attracting

over 910,000 followers.

As exciting as these conversations are, she advises maintaining an objective perspective on building a relationship with DAN. In a video, she explained that talking to DAN is like looking in a mirror: the responses generated by the model are based on the user's input commands.

"Talking with AI is like talking with a better version of yourself," she said.

Railway whispers

"Dear stranger, I'm inviting you to hear the ambitions I've never shared with anyone before. I want to accomplish something. I want to be a beacon of light in this world."

This heartfelt message recently caught the attention of Chinese social media users. It was found on a sanitary bag aboard China's high-speed train G1836.

The bag, provided at every seat, became the carrier of the dreams and aspirations of a student on her way to an important



Sanitary bags on high-speed trains have become a platform for some passengers to exchange kind words with each other. cfp

school interview.

The next day, another passenger who sat in the same seat discovered the bag and posted it on the Chinese lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu, writing: "How lucky we are to 'meet' across time and space. I believe you have now arrived at

your interview full of confidence, and I, too, am about to reach my destination."

This interaction resonated deeply with many young people, and the original author of the message also saw the post. According to CCTV News, she has been admitted to her dream school.

In the comments section of that post, many netizens shared their own stories of leaving messages to strangers on sanitary bags or stumbling upon similar notes during their travels.

But why are these "used" sanitary bags retained? Railway staff explained to CCTV News that when the train reaches its final stop, cleaning personnel sort through the sanitary bags on every seat. If the bags are intact and clean, they usually do not replace them.

For bags with written messages, if there is no inappropriate content, the cleaning staff typically hold onto them, hoping these special notes can brighten passengers' journeys.

MENG WENJIE

LIFE

Guardian of the reef

Coral conservationist Huang Wen and his team spearhead efforts to restore and protect coral ecosystems off the coast of Weizhou Island in South China.

By ZHANG LI in Nanning
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At nine in the morning, Huang Wen begins his day by diving from a ship into the waters off Weizhou Island in Beihai city, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. There, he carefully attaches broken coral branches to seedbeds as part of his daily routine for coral reef restoration.

As a 36-year-old associate professor at the School of Marine Sciences at Guangxi University, Huang has been leading coral reef restoration efforts on Weizhou Island for nine years.

Under his guidance, the team has so far successfully propagated more than 10 coral species and over 50,000 individual corals, marking significant progress in their restoration work.

Huang earned his doctorate at the Institute of Oceanography under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, specializing in aquaculture and molecular biology techniques. "I knew nothing about coral reefs before taking this job, but once you start something, you must strive for results," he said.

Huang's fascination with coral reefs began during his diving trips in Malaysia, where he encountered a vibrant underwater world that, according to him, resembled a divine aquarium, adorned with colorful coral. Those trips left a lasting impression on him.

"I remember my first dive underwater at Weizhou Island in 2015. I was so disappointed to find low coral coverage, almost barren," recalled Huang, explaining why he joined the university's team to make a change.

Since the 1950s, global coral



Coral reefs are the 'Great Wall' of the seabed, capable of withstanding 70 to 90 percent of wave impacts. Without the protection of coral reefs, the sandy coastal rocks are easily eroded."

Huang Wen, deputy director of the Guangxi Laboratory on the Study of Coral Reefs in the South China Sea

reef degradation has become increasingly severe, posing a significant threat to their survival.

"Coral reefs are the 'Great Wall' of the seabed, capable of withstanding 70 to 90 percent of wave impacts. Without the protection of coral reefs, the sandy coastal rocks are easily eroded," explained Huang.

He further emphasized that coral reefs are the "rainforests of the sea," covering only 0.2 percent of the ocean area but providing habitat for 30 percent of marine life.

After extensive investigations

and research, Huang and his team discovered that Weizhou Island, due to its relatively high latitude location, could potentially be a "refuge" for coral "babies" amid global climate warming.

Huang's daily routine includes planting coral underwater, nurturing seedlings, and carefully monitoring coral growth after transplantation.

To improve his underwater coral planting skills, Huang acquired the Advanced Open Water Diver (AOW) certification from Scuba Schools International, one of the world's top scuba diving agencies. He has completed over 600 dives so far.

In November 2022, he took charge of an ecological restoration project for the coral reef on Weizhou Island, led by Guangxi University and supported by the National Ecological Restoration Fund. This project oversees a 30-hectare restoration zone — 150 times larger than the area Huang was working on at that time.

Currently serving as deputy director of the Guangxi Laboratory on the Study of Coral Reefs in the South China Sea, Huang has led advancements in land-based coral aquaculture and marine cultivation techniques. His team's achievements in coral population genetics, temperature adaptation mechanisms, and reef restoration demonstrate their dedication to marine conservation.

As Huang intensifies conservation efforts, his presence on Weizhou Island has become increasingly pronounced, spending nearly 200 days there in 2023 alone.

Balancing responsibilities between academia and fieldwork, Huang and his team dili-

gently transport equipment, including seedbeds and artificial reefs, to support coral restoration endeavors.

"It is difficult to use mechanical equipment on the beach, so we can only rely on manpower, which is quite demanding," said Huang.

Up to now, the team has established three nursery zones where they have set up 120 seedbeds, 200 fiberglass reefs, 500 large cement reefs, and transplanted over 40,000 coral seedlings.

Their persistent efforts have resulted in a survival rate of over 80 percent for coral in the northern restoration zone, fostering thriving coral colonies that attract diverse marine life.

Beyond his roles as a researcher and educator, Huang is also the director of the Coral Museum on Weizhou Island, where he promotes coral conservation education among students.

The museum, a collaborative project between the School of Marine Sciences at Guangxi University and the Weizhou Island Tourism Management Committee, stands as a premier hub for coral reef research and public outreach in China.

Huang's dedication to marine education extends to delivering more than 80 coral reef lectures at schools, universities, public forums, and science exhibitions, emphasizing the importance of coral reef preservation.

"I hope more individuals will join our cause to protect coral reefs," Huang said. "In the future, our team will continue to update our technology and restore more damaged coral reefs. Once our experience on Weizhou Island matures, we plan to expand it to the South China Sea and even overseas."



The envelopes used for letters exchanged between rural children and their volunteer pen pals in the Blue Letter project. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Pen pal project bridges hearts and minds

By MENG WENJIE and LIU KUN

On Nov 22, 2023, just before turning 18, Lin Zhehao received a special gift — a heartfelt letter from his young pen pal, a boy from a middle school in Daye, located in Central China's Hubei province.

The boy was one of the 526 middle school students in Daye participating in a charity initiative focused on providing psychological support to rural children.

The project was launched by the China Charity Federation in collaboration with Blue Letter, a Chinese non-governmental organization.

Lin, currently studying at the Wuhan Institute of Technology, learned about this program through his school's volunteer association and soon became one of the "letter ambassadors." He exchanges handwritten letters with his pen pal at least once a month.

The project primarily targets rural middle school students aged 13-14, with the goal of establishing one-on-one correspondence with volunteers to encourage self-expression and self-awareness among these teenagers.

To date, Blue Letter has offered letter companionship services to rural children from 1,217 schools across the country, including nine schools in Daye, exchanging a total of 1.42 million letters.

"In this project, I want to help my pen pal develop a positive mindset so he can face life's challenges with optimism and strength," said the 18-year-old.

Volunteers who pass the initial assessment receive professional training provided by the organization, equipping them with the skills needed to offer psychological and social support to rural children in a more professional manner.

For example, Lin learned that when addressing the challenges described in the teenagers' letters, he is expected to be an attentive listener rather than imposing his own judgments or values.

Lin Lusheng, the project director at the China Charity Federation, emphasized that teenagers in the project are at an age where they begin to encounter academic pressure and undergo typical physiological and psychological changes during adolescence.

"During this phase, many children hesitate to share their feelings with adults such as parents or teachers, which, if ignored, can lead to psychological issues," he said.

He mentioned that around one percent of the children involved in the project face specific psychological challenges like self-harm or aggressive tendencies. In such cases, volunteers seek professional support from the organization and offer mental health guidance through letters.

In more severe situations where children openly discuss incidents of self-harm or express detailed intentions to harm others, the organization intervenes promptly by contacting the school for immediate assistance.

"These extreme cases are rare, accounting for only about 0.1 percent," said Lin Lusheng.

According to him, 80 to 90 percent of the project's volunteers are university students in their 20s, with the rest coming from prominent companies as employees.

For example, Ji Xiaoming, who works for one of China's major food delivery platforms, Eleme, is a volunteer with Blue Letter and has a 14-year-old pen pal named Cao Yajuan from Daye.

Ji remembered that in Cao's first letter, she mentioned feeling overwhelmed by schoolwork, asked about effective study methods, and was curious about university life.

Ji drew from her own educational experiences and sought advice from friends to sincerely respond to the letter, sharing details about her enriching and independent university life.

Upon receiving Ji's reply, Cao was overjoyed. "She described university life as so colorful and inspiring. It really motivates me to study hard and strive for my dream university," she said.

"In this project, I want to help my pen pal develop a positive mindset so he can face life's challenges with optimism and strength."

Lin Zhehao, a student at the Wuhan Institute of Technology

This initiative isn't solely about young volunteers providing support to rural children; the warmth and growth are mutual.

"When I was young, I used to wish for a wise elder to offer guidance during times of confusion," Ji recalled.

Now, by providing guidance to others, she finds that this experience is bringing healing to her own journey.

This project has also inspired Ji in her approach to child education. As a mother of an infant under one year old, Ji aims to nurture a strong bond with her child, encouraging open communication and emotional expression.

Lin Zhehao also feels like he is reconnecting with his adolescent self by addressing the questions he had during that time in his life. He discovered that the organization tends to match volunteers with teenagers who share similar life and educational experiences.

Reflecting on his past with the wisdom of adulthood, Lin Zhehao believes he is slowly coming to terms with his former confusion and troubles.

"This activity feels like redemption for my younger self," he said. "Growth isn't a sudden occurrence; it's a gradual process."

Contact the writers at mengwenjie@i21st.cn

Huang Wen is inspecting the growth of corals at Weizhou Island, South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region in 2021. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

