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China's Village Super League
gathers soccer lovers in Africa
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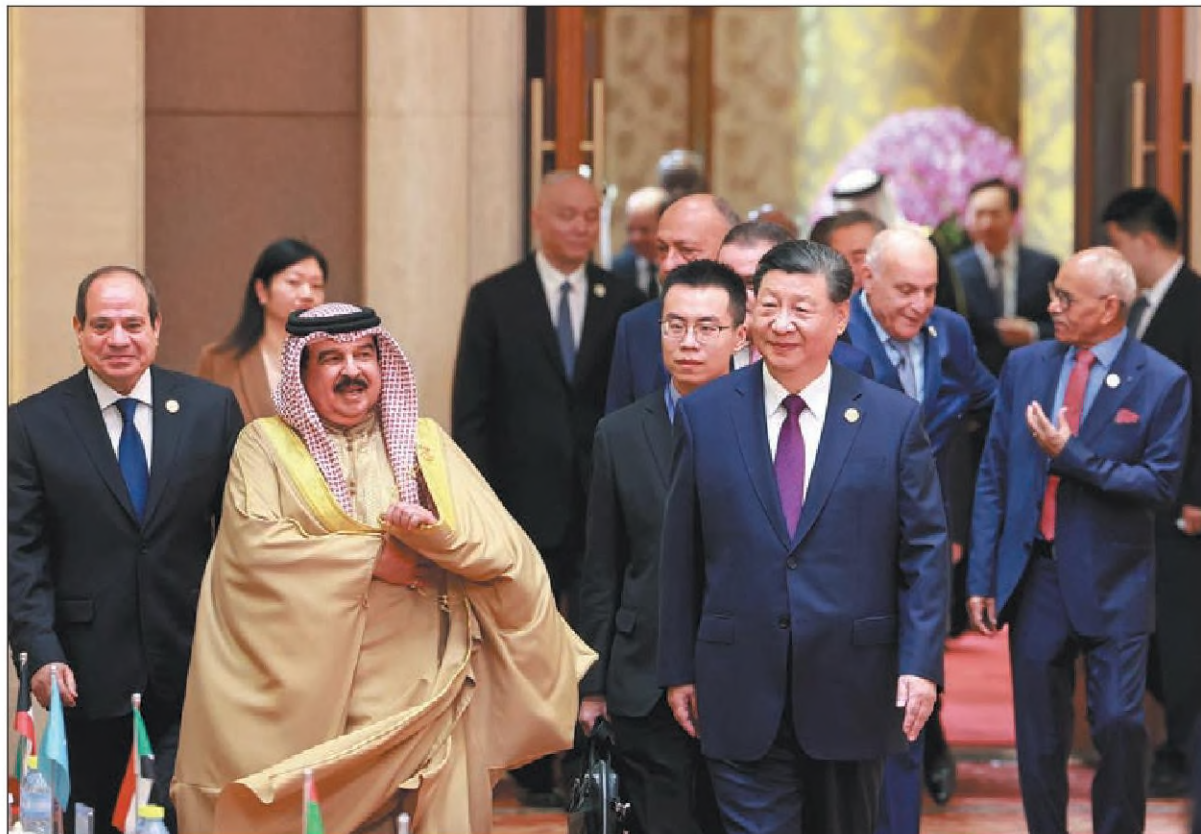
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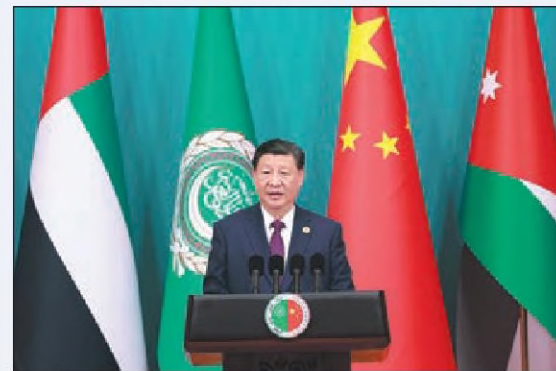
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CHINA DAILY

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President Xi Jinping attends the opening ceremony on Thursday of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech on Thursday at the opening of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Highlights of Xi's speech

The friendship between the Chinese and Arab peoples is deeply rooted in our friendly exchanges along the ancient Silk Road, in our joint struggles for national liberation and in our win-win cooperation in promoting national development.

In a world of growing diversity, more dialogue means less confrontation and more inclusiveness means less estrangement.

Building a China-Arab community with a shared future is a strong statement of our common desire for a new era of China-Arab relations and a better future for the world.

War should not continue indefinitely. Justice should not be absent forever.

Commitment to the two-state solution should not be wavered at will.

Xi: World must work for two-state solution

President backs broad-based international meet to resolve Gaza conflict

By MO JINGXI
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President Xi Jinping appealed to the global community on Thursday to unwaveringly commit itself to the two-state solution to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict, while pledging Beijing's support for a more broad-based, authoritative and effective international peace conference.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing, Xi decried the "tremendous sufferings" caused by the ongoing conflict, saying that China firmly supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"War should not continue indefinitely. Justice should not be absent forever. Commitment to the two-state solution should not be wavered at will," he told a roomful of guests including the heads of state of Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as foreign ministers from other Arab League nations.

Xi also announced that China will host the second China-Arab States Summit in 2026, which he said will

Soundbites



Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, king of Bahrain
We appreciate China's efforts in easing the sufferings of the people in Gaza as well as its support for the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State of Palestine. We look forward to continued cooperation between China and the Arab world and to growing relations between China and Arab states.



Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, president of Egypt
The forum is committed to realizing a series of core goals in political and economic areas, building a more fair and equitable international order, stepping up scientific and technological cooperation, and also working closer on international governance, technological transfer and water security, among others. This requires that we work closer, find greater potential and foster greater synergy between friendly countries.



Kais Saied, president of Tunisia
We look forward to more opportunities in the future together with our Chinese friends. We hope that this conference will deliver the outcomes that every one of us expects, from Tunisia to China. We believe that the pathway between our two countries is not only the Silk Road, but also a path where our minds meet.



Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates
We strongly believe that the China-Arab cooperation is an example of how countries can best engage with each other. The UAE is ready to work with the rest of the Arab states to move the China-Arab relationship and cooperation forward and further deepen it, so that we can meet the aspirations of our peoples.



Ahmed About Gheit, secretary-general of the Arab League
I would like to express my high appreciation of the Belt and Road Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping. This initiative has brought opportunities for cooperation in various fields such as infrastructure, trade and investment.

China and Arab countries have witnessed leapfrog development in practical cooperation with win-win results over the past two decades since the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum was established in 2004 as a formal dialogue mechanism between China and Arab states.

Over many years, China has been the biggest trading partner of Arab states, with bilateral trade increasing nearly tenfold from \$36.7 billion in 2004 to a staggering \$398 billion in 2023. China has signed Belt and Road cooperation documents with all 22 Arab states and the Arab League, and more than 200 large-scale projects have been implemented under the Belt and Road Initiative.

To step up the building of a China-Arab community with a shared future, Xi proposed five frameworks for boosting win-win cooperation with Arab nations in terms of innovation, investment and finance, energy, trade and economy, and people-to-people exchanges.

He said that China will enhance cooperation with the Arab side on artificial intelligence to make it empower the real economy and to promote a broad-based global governance system on AI.

be another milestone in China-Arab relations. The first such summit was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in December 2022.

"We will, together with the Arab side, respect the purposes and princi-

ples of the UN Charter, the independent choice of every nation and the reality formed in history, and strive together for solutions to hot spot issues that uphold fairness and justice and sustain peace and security," he said.

To help ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and support post-conflict reconstruction, Xi announced that China will provide another 500 million yuan (\$69 million) of humanitarian assistance, on top of the

previous 100 million yuan. In addition, China will donate \$3 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in support of its emergency humanitarian assistance to Gaza, he said.

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Malaysia-China relations: An exemplar for ASEAN countries

WORLD WATCH
By Koh King Kee

As Malaysia and China commemorate the golden anniversary of their diplomatic relations, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the journey of this enduring relationship.

Malaysia's second prime minister, Tun Abdul Razak, made a historic visit to China in May 1974 amid the Cold War. He signed a communique with premier Zhou Enlai on May 31, 1974, formally establishing diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China, making Malaysia the first ASEAN mem-

ber nation to do so. Despite occasional challenges, over the past five decades, the Malaysia-China relationship has evolved into a mature and resilient partnership characterized by mutual respect, robust economic collaboration and vibrant cultural exchanges.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China in 1974 was a groundbreaking event in Southeast Asian diplomacy, setting a precedent for other nations in the region. However,

Malaysia's relationship with China during the first decade after the establishment of ties remained cautious due to the prevailing Cold War. Ordinary Malaysian citizens were not allowed to visit China without government approval.

Travel restrictions were only lifted after then Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's first visit to China in November 1985, which was indeed a game changer.

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MOUNTAIN RESCUE TEAM REACHES FOR PEAK EFFICIENCY

Firefighters on Beijing's northern outskirts strive to keep outdoor enthusiasts out of harm's way

By XIN WEN
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At 9:01 am on May 19, Wang Qiong received a phone call asking for help from a watchtower at a remote section of the Great Wall. The caller said that five people had been struck by lightning and one man was unconscious.

Wang reacted quickly, asking: "Where are you exactly? Were you climbing the mountain from the

east side of a village, where a parking lot is located? Did you turn left after reaching the peak?" After multiple questions, Wang was sure of where the incident had happened and took seven team members with him to rescue the hikers who were trapped

in a dangerously steep section of the Great Wall.

After an hour of hiking and climbing, the team arrived on the scene with rescue equipment. The injured man was weak but conscious, with a slow heart-beat.

The other four people were in reasonable condition, a video posted by the Beijing Fire Rescue Corps showed.

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The firefighters used a torso-protecting air bag to immobilize the injured man and spent two more hours transferring him to the foot of the mountain. He was placed in an ambulance at 12:34 pm.

"It was my mission to rescue them," said Wang, deputy director of a squad of Beijing Mountain Rescue Team. "I felt very relieved that the task could be completed because of me."

It is the 11th year that 29-year-old Wang has participated in professional mountain rescue operations in Huairou district on Beijing's northern outskirts. The district is home to 24 mountains with elevation above 2,000 meters, and 90 percent of its terrain is mountainous.

The hilly landscape, along with steep hiking routes, attracts a large number of visitors throughout the year. In 2018, the local firefighting department set up the Beijing Mountain Rescue Team, consisting of six squads, to deal with accidents and searches.

"Huairou has about 60 to 70 outdoor accidents every year," said Wang. "The incidents are not limited to the summer or winter months, but occur across all four seasons."

Spring has a high number of outdoor incidents. The day before Wang received the call for help, his colleague, Li Yong, director of another of the Huairou squads, and his team spent more than three hours rescuing an injured hiker near Xiangshui Lake scenic spot.

Difficult terrain

Li, 36, who has almost two decades of experience rescuing tourists in the mountains, said the steep terrain does not have typical hiking routes. It takes longer to rescue injured people even though they might only be a short distance away, he said.

"It was only about 300 meters (from the foot of the mountain to where the injured person was)," he said of the May 18 rescue. "We worked in relays to carry the stretcher down the mountain with a pathfinder checking the route, which took about two hours," Li said.

It's also difficult to assess the extent of a person's injuries on the spot. When his team arrived at the scene, the injured person's ankle had stopped bleeding and the firefighters thought his injury might not be too serious.

"We also hadn't brought our first-aid kit to the scene, and we couldn't determine whether the ankle was OK or not due to the (injured person's) waterproof rubber climbing boots," Li said. "But when I attempted to have the injured person moved to the stretcher and asked him if his right toe could touch the ground, I noticed something was wrong."



A firefighter rescues a boy trapped on a mountain in Huairou district, Beijing, in May.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"When his right foot moved slightly, the entire foot drooped, indicating that his right ankle was badly broken and that the injured person didn't know that yet."

"I guess that the hiker tried to ascend the steep hill by stepping onto a crack in a rock, slipped, and lost his grip, resulting in a serious ankle injury."

The two incidents on one weekend are an indication of the growing need for such rescue services as outdoor sports undergo rapid growth across the country. China's outdoor enthusiast population has reached 130 million, a report released by the General Administration of Sport last October showed. Orders for goods related to outdoor sports rose by 79 percent year-on-year during the first half of last year, an increase of 221 percent compared with the same period in 2019.

"The most common reason for a rescue occurs when people take an outdoor adventure beyond their capabilities, in regard to either their experience or physical strength," said Wang.

"This includes lacking the skills to know what to bring or how to prepare, deviating from established scheduled routes, and getting injured," he said.

Most of the rescue calls are made at sunset, around 6 or 7 pm, or after 10 pm, Wang said.

"Sometimes experienced hikers think they might be able to descend a mountain on their own and they begin searching for alternative routes by themselves. However, when it gets close to 10 o'clock at night, the hikers who have lost their way turn to us for help," he said.

Exact location

Locating people in need of rescue



Firefighters from the Beijing Mountain Rescue Team in Huairou carry an injured tourist on a stretcher in September. The tourist had injured his waist and legs when picking chestnuts on the mountain.

Rescue: Navigating challenges to save lives



Wang Zhenjiang (left) and Wang Haolong (right), both firefighters from the Beijing Mountain Rescue Team, engage in rope technique training.

The most common reason for a rescue occurs when people take an outdoor adventure beyond their capabilities, in regard to either their experience or physical strength."

Wang Qiong, firefighter of Beijing Mountain Rescue Team

takes time and effort. Wang said this is the most important part of an outdoor rescue.

Before a rescue team starts a mission, Wang said the first part of the procedure is to talk to the person seeking help and establish what their injuries are, and whether they can walk.

"When someone needs to be rescued, knowing their exact condition is a necessary requirement because the number of rescuers dispatched and the equipment carried will depend on that information," Wang said.

The location function on WeChat or snapshots of routes taken from hiking Apps, play vital roles in rescue teams quickly locating a per-

son. However, in most cases this is complicated by the mountainous terrain or the depletion of the cell-phone battery. This results in rescues in such terrain often exceeding 10 hours, he said.

"We have established a mechanism to cope with prolonged rescue missions," Wang said.

"Another team of six firefighters, serving as a backup rescue force, will be deployed if the initial team has been searching for more than 10 hours. The team on the mountain will schedule rotations, and descend to rest and eat. The next team takes over the search operations, using cellphones and beepers as communication tools."

The Beijing Mountain Rescue



Firefighters rescue an injured hiker from a steep mountain in Huairou, Beijing, in May.

Team carries out searches and rescues at the request of the police, and almost the entire operation is government-funded.

Paying the price

Today, all rescue operations are free, but more than a decade ago firefighting teams sometimes needed the help of a paid local guide to locate a person lost or injured in remote terrain.

This sometimes led to disputes and negotiations over payment of the guide, Li said.

A native of Chuxiong Yi autonomous prefecture, Yunnan province, Li has worked as a firefighter in Beijing's Huairou district since 2008.

"But in my earliest days as a mountain search and rescuer, I was not familiar with the mountain environment and relied on local guides to find routes for search and rescue operations," he said.

Paying for a local guide could be a complicated issue, and payment disputes between the rescue team and the person needing rescue sometimes arose.

Li said when a tourist or hiker was trapped and told that a paid guide was needed to locate them, they usually agreed to the arrangement.

However, Li said since 2010 he has been able to find the mountain routes independently to conduct rescues and searches. "In the area within the jurisdiction of my squad, I have climbed almost every mountain," he said.

For firefighters, saving people's lives is their top priority. But the opposite side of the coin is a feeling of powerlessness when a rescue is unsuccessful. "If you can't save a life, you'll definitely feel disappointed," Li said.

In mountainous areas with scattered stones and rocks, the chances of accidents occurring are almost inevitable.

"Stones on a mountain are

exposed to the sun every day, making them loose in summer when the sunlight is most intense," said Wang. "The constant exposure also contributes to weathering. When climbing a mountain, a hiker may suddenly step on a stone, fall down a slope, stand up, and take a few steps with fractured bones."

"If there are no trees or other barriers blocking the way, the fall may continue for dozens of meters," he said.

Other dangerous situations include when fallen leaves cover the ground in autumn and a hiker slips or steps on weathered stones and injures an ankle, he said.

Reducing risks

If a person is rescued or injured in an unsafe outdoor environment, they are usually lectured by police on the risks as a way to deter any future harm or danger.

"Most of the time, it's simply verbal persuasion, saying that climbing an off-limits mountain is illegal. But the hikers face no further penalties," Wang said.

Educating outdoor enthusiasts and promoting legislation related to mountain entry are appropriate ways to reduce risks, said Zhang Hongquan, deputy director of the Beijing Mountaineering Association.

Zhang, an outdoor enthusiast himself, learned outdoor rescue skills, such as rope-tying and emergency medical care, on his own. In the early 2000s, he established a civilian mountain rescue team in Beijing, which has more than 40 volunteers.

Learning survival knowledge and wilderness skills are essential for outdoor enthusiasts to remain safe, he said.

"If someone knows that drinking lightly salted water is beneficial, but is unaware that it can help save strength over a period of strenuous longtime exercise, they might be missing a helpful strategy," Zhang said.

Lectures on safety tips by experienced outdoor enthusiasts, as well as social media influencers, could be effective in raising awareness about the issue, he said.

"But to better prevent a group of people from serious injuries when they enter a mountain area, the development of an early warning system could be more effective," he said.

"Prior to entering a mountain, people could register through a program that tracks their location if they do not exit within a specified time period."

"The system will automatically sound an alarm and contact the person directly," he said. "It is a rescue method that saves time in locating people in need of help and reduces cost."

Zhang said implementing such a system will need a legal basis as well as coordination and cooperation between multiple government departments.



Firefighters from the Beijing Mountain Rescue Team participate in rescue training in Beijing.



Left: Firefighters from Beijing's Huairou district rescue a hiker from an animal trap in March. Right: Firefighters rescue an injured hiker in December who was unable to walk.



China-Arab States Cooperation Forum

Xi: China-UAE ties a role model

President calls for enhancing collaboration on trade, high tech

By CAO DESHENG
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China and the United Arab Emirates have inked multiple agreements on bilateral cooperation in the fields of investment, joint construction of the Belt and Road, science and technology, peaceful use of nuclear energy and more, as part of efforts to boost their ties.

President Xi Jinping and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan witnessed the signing of the agreements on Thursday in Beijing following their talks at the Great Hall of the People.

The UAE leader is on a state visit to China. He also attended the opening ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, which was held in Beijing on Thursday.

During their talks, both presidents emphasized the need to enhance bilateral ties, and they also exchanged views on the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Xi noted that the UAE is an important comprehensive strategic partner of China, and the robust development of bilateral ties has set a good example for China-Arab state relations in the new era.

China supports the UAE in pursuing an independent development path and safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests, Xi said, and it is willing to consolidate political mutual trust with the UAE, enhance cooperation and work together to build a China-UAE community with a shared future.

He expressed China's readiness to continue promoting high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road with the UAE, strengthen the alignment of the countries' development strategies, and seize the opportunity to establish a high-level committee for two-way investment cooperation to deliver more outcomes from their cooperation.

Xi underlined the need for both countries to enhance collaboration in the fields of trade, energy and infrastructure, and expand cooperation in high-tech fields such as information technology, artificial intelligence, the digital economy and new energy. He also called for enhancing law enforcement and security cooperation.

Noting that Middle East countries are an important part of developing countries and a significant force in



President Xi Jinping and President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan attend a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

the multipolar world, Xi said that China supports them in continuing on a development path that suits their national conditions, upholding unity, self-improvement, peace and reconciliation, resolving differences through communication and consultations, and holding their destiny in their own hands.

The UAE president described China as his second home and said that the UAE-China relationship is built on mutual trust, mutual respect and common interests, with cooperation in various fields reaching an extraordinary level.

The UAE places high importance on developing its relationship with

China, prioritizing China in its foreign affairs relations and considering China as a long-term, reliable strategic partner, he said, adding that the UAE government firmly adheres to the one-China principle, opposes any form of "Taiwan independence", and supports China's efforts to achieve national reunification.

The UAE leader said the continuous deepening of Arab-China relations and Gulf Cooperation Council-China relations conforms to the common aspirations and fundamental interests of the peoples of Arab and Gulf countries. The UAE is willing to work with China to better promote Arab-China and GCC-China

relations to deliver more benefits to their peoples, he added.

On the Palestine-Israel conflict, Xi emphasized that the immediate priority is a comprehensive ceasefire and alleviation of the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. China and Arab countries share a common position on the question of Palestine and should work together to promote a comprehensive, just and sustainable solution to the question, he said.

On Thursday, the UAE president also met with Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislative body.

Chinese, Arab leaders urge cease-fire in Gaza

By ZHOU JIN
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China and Arab countries made a strong call on Thursday for a cease-fire in Gaza and reiterated support for the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people as well as the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

The call was made in a joint statement between the two sides on the issue of Palestine, which was one of the three outcome documents of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum held in Beijing.

The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Mauritanian Foreign Minister Mohamed Salem Ould Merzouk and Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

The statement expressed China's and Arab states' concern over the humanitarian crisis caused by the prolonged Gaza conflict, and stressed their consensus on ending hostilities, ensuring humanitarian aid and opposing the forced relocation of Palestinian people.

The statement also expressed firm support for Palestine's full membership in the United Nations and promoting the early settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the two-state solution.

Calling the Palestinian question the core of the issues in the Middle East, Wang said that China will continue to stand with Arab nations to uphold justice and work toward a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question at an early date.

This round of Palestine-Israel conflict has lasted for eight months, with more than 100,000 civilians killed or injured and millions of people struggling to survive.

Merzouk, the Mauritanian foreign minister, said at a joint news conference with Wang and Gheit that the Arab states and China agreed to work together to ease the suffering of people living in Gaza.

"We also feel the sincerity and seriousness of China in restoring peace and security in the region," he added.

Gheit expressed appreciation for China's position on the Palestinian issue, saying that the Arab world hopes China will continue its support for Palestine.

He also thanked China for its support for the United Nations

"We also feel the sincerity and seriousness of China in restoring peace and security in the region."

Mohamed Salem Ould Merzouk, Mauritanian Foreign Minister

3,400 people

The number of professionals from Arab countries who have been trained by China.

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as the multiple shipments of humanitarian aid that China has sent to the region.

In addition to the hot spot issue, the two sides also discussed issues including economic and social development, and expressed willingness to strengthen the institutional construction of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, including on infrastructure, energy, agriculture, tourism and human resources.

China and the Arab states pledged at the ministerial meeting to upgrade and accelerate the construction of a China-Arab community with a shared future to make it a benchmark of win-win cooperation, Wang told reporters.

The two sides will continuously expand the flow of technology, capital, products and personnel in order to bring together people from the two sides, he said.

China has granted zero-tariff treatment to 98 percent of taxable products from the least-developed Arab states, and has provided training in various fields for more than 3,400 professionals from Arab countries, he added.

During the ministerial meeting, Wang expressed support for Arab nations in accelerating their industrialization and said China stands ready to construct more key infrastructure projects and implement more projects to benefit the Arab people.

The country is ready to deepen cooperation with Arab nations in energy, trade and investment, and high-tech industries, and to strengthen exchanges in areas including governance, public health, youth and education, he added.

Nation eyes closer relations with Egypt, Tunisia

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Building on traditional friendship, spearheading the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road, boosting cooperation in various fields and expanding cultural exchanges were key points made by Premier Li Qiang in separate meetings with Thursday with the leaders of Egypt and Tunisia.

Both foreign leaders, who are making state visits to China, attended the opening ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum on Thursday in Beijing.

In his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Beijing, Li said the two countries are good friends and partners of solidarity

and mutual assistance, and they work hand in hand for development.

Beijing is willing to work with Cairo to implement the consensus of President Xi Jinping and President El-Sisi and promote the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership to a new level.

China is also willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Egypt within multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, and make unremitting efforts to realize a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question, he said.

El-Sisi said Egypt firmly upholds the one-China principle, steadfastly supports China in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and supports its efforts to combat terrorism.

Egypt is willing to work with China to further expand cooperation in various fields within the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road to better benefit the people of the two countries, he said.

During his meeting with Tunisian President Kais Saied, Li noted that President Xi will hold talks with Saied to draw up a new blueprint for the development of bilateral relations.

China firmly opposes interference by external forces in Tunisia's internal affairs, he said.

Furthermore, Beijing is willing to work with Tunisia to implement the consensus of the two heads of state and carry forward the tradition of friendship and mutual trust, he said.

China is also willing to work with Tunisia to build a China-Arab community with a shared future,

and to promote the building of a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future, he added.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Tunisia.

Saied said Tunisia firmly adheres to the one-China principle and firmly opposes interference by external forces in China's internal affairs. Tunisia is looking forward to strengthening cooperation with China in fields such as infrastructure construction, healthcare and tourism, he added.

On Wednesday, Vice-President Han Zheng met with League of Arab States Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit in Beijing. China has a long history of friendly exchanges with Arab countries, Han noted.

Potential of Sino-Arab economic cooperation highlighted

By ZHONG NAN
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China and Arab states have substantial potential to deepen their economic and trade relations, particularly in the financial and energy sectors, boosting growth for both sides and contributing to global economic recovery, experts and business leaders said on Thursday.

Driven by the tangible growth of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and Arab states are likely to expand business ties in areas such as the digital economy, finance, new infrastructure, clean energy, trade in services and high-end manufacturing, they said.

Mohammed Al Ajlan, chairman of

the Saudi-Chinese Business Council, said that with China entering a new era of green and innovation-led growth, Arab companies are optimistic about its long-term growth potential and see abundant opportunities arising from the country's focus on the high-end manufacturing industry and the digital economy.

Li Lei, vice-president of Saudi Basic Industries Corp, said the new cooperative content between China and Arab states will not only benefit global trade, but also create more growth points for Arab companies to build their global supply chains and consumer bases in China.

Fueled by their complementary industrial structure, the BRI development and the long-term

cooperation in the energy sector, China's foreign trade with the League of Arab States soared 820.9 percent over the past two decades, from 303.8 billion yuan (\$42 billion) in 2004 to 2.8 trillion yuan in 2023, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

In the first four months of this year, China's trade with the League of Arab States reached 946 billion yuan, marking a historic high for the same period, with a year-on-year increase of 3.8 percent, accounting for 6.9 percent of China's total foreign trade value.

Lin Meng, director of the Modern Supply Chain Research Institute at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic

Cooperation, said that Arab products such as Egyptian oranges, Syrian rose essential oil, Tunisian olive oil and Saudi dates are increasingly popular among Chinese consumers, while Chinese-made new energy vehicles, home appliances and smartphones are finding their way into more Arab homes.

Ahmed Fahmy, head of the League of Arab States' China representative office, said that Chinese electric vehicles are performing exceptionally well in many Arab countries, thanks to their technological prowess and economy of scale.

This success positions Chinese companies as potential partners with Arab states in driving energy transformation, he said.

From page 1

China supports closer cooperation between financial institutions from the two sides and welcomes Arab banks to join the Cross-border Interbank Payment System, Xi said.

To foster a more multifaceted framework for energy cooperation, Xi said China will further enhance strategic cooperation with the Arab side on oil and gas, and integrate supply security with market security.

"We will support Chinese energy companies and financial institutions in participating in renewable energy projects in Arab states with total installed capacity of over 3 million kilowatts," he said.

Xi said that China stands ready to accelerate negotiations on bilateral

and regional free trade agreements with Arab countries and advance the dialogue mechanism for e-commerce cooperation.

He also announced that China plans to work with the Arab side to achieve the goal of 10 million two-way visits of tourists in the next five years.

Lebanese Ambassador to China Milia Jabbour, who attended the opening ceremony, said that China-Arab cooperation "is developing and reaching new horizons of interest to both sides and has important implications for the development of the Arab countries and China, which is mutually beneficial."

Jabbour added that China's position on the Palestinian question is historical, consistent and principled, and conforms with international law.



Foreign Minister Wang Yi (center) and representatives of Arab countries attend the opening ceremony of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing on Thursday.

WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Exchanges: Five frameworks proposed to boost collaboration

From page 1

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Xi said that China stands ready to accelerate negotiations on bilateral

TOP NEWS

Women power

Academician Yan Ning (second from left) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences celebrates on Tuesday after receiving the 2024 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Award at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Every year the award honors five eminent women scientists from five regions of the world. XINHUA



XI'S VISION | ECONOMIC STRUCTURAL REFORMS

China's reform efforts hailed by execs, experts

Nation's policy focus on key strategic sectors helps develop new quality productive forces

By OUYANG SHIJIA and ZHONG NAN

China's recent move to deepen economic structural reforms is an attempt to cultivate new quality productive forces and foster high-quality development for the long run, offering increasing growth opportunities for stakeholders both at home and abroad, said experts and entrepreneurs.

They said China's pro-reform efforts will mainly focus on key areas including technological innovation and industrial upgrading, which will help resolve its economic woes, create new growth drivers and inject strong impetus into the world's second-largest economy.

Their comments came after President Xi Jinping said on Thursday that reform must originate from real needs and address the most urgent issues to improve the socialist market economy, calling for efforts to deepen theoretical innovation and promote institutional innovation during the process of solving practical problems.

"Deepening reforms, particularly institutional reforms, will help remove obstacles and difficulties hindering the development of new quality productive forces and promote optimal allocation and free flow of production factors including capital, technology and labor," said Liu Qianhong, director of the industrial and technological research institute of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research.

"China's economy is currently grappling with still-weak demand confidence, prompting calls for further economic structural reforms," said Liu Dian, a researcher at the China Institute of Fudan University. "The imperative for such reforms lies in igniting internal dynamics through institutional innovation, breaking barriers to economic circulation, and restoring market confidence."

He noted that China is facing bottlenecks in its path to high-quality development, such as slow progress in industrial upgrading and overcapacity in some sectors alongside inadequate high-end supply. "The market vitality is hampered by financing difficulties faced by small and medium-sized enterprises coupled with high operational costs," he said. "There's a pressing need to enhance innovation capabilities and streamline the technology transfer process, amid a complex external environment impacting domestic circulation and industrial chain security."

In an article published recently in Qushi Journal, the flagship magazine of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the National Development and Reform Commission said the country will speed up the process of deepening reform of the economic structure and build a high-level socialist market economy system, with a key focus on fields including building of a high-standard market system, removing obstacles and difficulties in the development of

new quality productive forces and building a higher-level open economic system.

"China is racing to create a favorable institutional environment for nurturing new quality productive forces, which is conducive to advancing Chinese modernization," said Liu from the China Institute of Fudan University.

According to a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held in late April, the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee to be held in Beijing in July will focus on further deepening reforms and promoting the modernization of China amid challenges at home and complexities abroad.

"We believe the policy focus will remain on enhancing technology innovation and supply chain self-sufficiency, in terms of a push for economic reforms and a concerted focus on key strategic sectors," said Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said the government will introduce more policy measures to support the development of new productive forces, including financial subsidies, tax incentives and targeted measures to optimize the business environment.

Highlighting that the concept of new quality productive forces is fully in line with his company's growth strategy, Ye Weiguo, chief operating officer of Gyre Pharmaceuticals, a Beijing-based drug manufacturer for organ fibrosis, said the company will continue to invest in new drug development and consistently utilize emerging

technologies and new materials to boost its growth.

Gyre Pharmaceuticals, with two plants in Beijing and Cangzhou, Hebei province, invested 104 million yuan (\$14.4 million) in research and development activities in 2023, accounting for 13 percent of its annual sales revenue.

Xu Linxiao, president of Changzhou Hongbang New Energy Technology Co, a Changzhou, Jiangsu province-based electric equipment manufacturer with more than 150 employees, said the company has intensified its efforts on innovative products to address market pain points.

Changzhou Hongbang's export value reached 22.94 million yuan in the first four months of 2024, an increase of 2521.8 percent year-on-year, data from Nanjing Customs showed.

With the global trend of restructuring and upgrading value chains becoming increasingly apparent, innovation-driven growth has become the fundamental approach for Chinese exporters to gain competitiveness and secure a higher position in the world's value chain of high-tech industries, he added.

Global executives hailed China's attempts to further deepen reforms and foster new quality productive forces, saying that will create more growth opportunities and help in the transformation of the domestic economy.

Merck China President Marc Horn said, "I think China is very resilient and has shown that it can transform very rapidly and is on a good trajectory on transformation."

Zhang Ying, managing director of Dassault Systemes Greater China, said, "With an unwavering commitment to further deepen reforms and advance opening-up, China's influence in global industrial, supply, and innovation chains has notably increased, providing new opportunities for multinational corporations like Dassault Systemes to tap into its market potential."

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Domestic novel drugs R&D makes headway

By WANG XIAOYU and LIU ZHIHUA

Development of innovative drugs in China has gathered momentum in recent years thanks to ramped-up research spending and rollout of policies that facilitate international collaboration and market authorization, said experts and industry insiders.

Bi Jingquan, chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said during an event held in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, this month that China has become a key player in global drug innovation.

"From 2015 to last year, China has granted market approval for 451 types of innovative drugs, with about one-third of them developed by homegrown companies," he said.

Bi added that there are about 13,500 drugs undergoing clinical research around the globe, and about 35 percent of them have either been initiated by Chinese drugmakers or have seen their engagement.

In the past three years, the number of deals that license out domestic innovative medicine projects overseas — generally viewed as a sign of research capacity — has also increased significantly, he said.

Citing data released by the online data platform Pharmcube, Bi said that there were 96 out-licensing deals generating a total of \$42.1 billion in 2023, compared with 45 deals leading to \$14 billion in 2021.

"Since 2019, 11 domestically-developed drugs have obtained breakthrough therapy designation from the Food and Drug Administration in the United States and another 11 have obtained market approval in the US," he added.

Affordable access to innovative drugs has also become much more prompt as it now takes an average of around a year for an innovative drug to be included in the national healthcare reimbursement list, down from five years in 2018, said Bi.

Ren Jinsong, founder and chairman of Simcere Pharmaceutical Group, said during an event held in April that China has unique strengths in innovative drug development, such as high efficiency of its medium-to-high level technical personnel, its rich stocks of clinical cases and lower costs of clinical research.

Citing his own company as an example, Ren said that since 2020,

the company has created four innovative drugs and is expected to see five more obtaining market authorization in the next two years. "The company will keep dedicating 20 percent of its sales revenue to research and development," he said.

Hong Chow, executive vice-president and head of China and international businesses at Merck Healthcare, said that she sees plenty of opportunities for collaboration with domestic companies in the area of healthcare innovation.

"Last year, we closed two licensing deals with Chinese companies, one with Hengrui Pharmaceuticals and the other one with Abbisko Therapeutics," she said. "By doing that, we not only will benefit Chinese patients, but also take Chinese innovation to the global stage to benefit globalization."

Chow said that drug discovery is a high-risk project with a success rate of merely 5 percent, and one challenge confronting pharmaceuticals is the risk of their research data being rejected due to inconsistent drug regulations.

"Luckily, China became a member of the management committee of the International Council for Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use, so there's continuous harmonization with international standards," she said.

Chow added that China has progressed from making the so-called "me-too" drugs that are similar to an existing treatment to "me-better" drugs that have superior efficacy or safety, and the nation is pushing for original innovation.

Bi of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges said that many homegrown innovative drugs at present are of the follow-on or imitative kinds.

The relatively low pricing of innovative drugs and low willingness of hospitals to make procurements have hampered enthusiasm of innovative drug developers and investors, he added.

Ren said that it is important to prioritize projects that are of high quality and original innovation, as well as promoting cooperation across the private sector, research and clinical centers and universities.

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On the right track



Sun Yongcai (right), board chairman of CRRC, talks on Tuesday with Romeu Zema, governor of Minas Gerais state in Brazil. The state will buy 24 subway trains from CRRC. WANG TIANCONG / XINHUA

Bond: Relations with Malaysia boosted by removal of travel curbs

From page 1

It greatly facilitated engagements and interactions between the people of the two countries, thereby promoting people-to-people bond and solidifying the foundation for strong bilateral ties economically, culturally and politically.

Malaysia has also played a crucial role in developing China-ASEAN relations. In July 1991, then Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen was invited to attend the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting as a guest of the Malaysian government, marking the beginning of China's engagement with ASEAN. China was accorded full dialogue partner status in July 1996.

Malaysia-China relations progressed significantly following the removal of travel restrictions, especially after the Cold War. Starting 1991, annual consultations were held alternately in Malaysia and China, serving as a mechanism for both sides to

exchange views on bilateral and regional issues. It was renamed strategic consultation in 2010 to reflect the growing importance of Malaysia-China relations within the political security framework of the Asia-Pacific region. In 2013, Malaysia and China upgraded their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Malaysia's geographical proximity to China and its pragmatic foreign policy have enabled it to benefit tremendously from China's reform and opening-up. Malaysia-China trade in 2023 reached RM450.84 billion (\$96.24 billion); in fact China has been the largest trading partner of Malaysia for the past 15 consecutive years. China also ranks among the top sources of foreign direct investment in Malaysia. It is noteworthy that Malaysia's early support for China's Belt and Road Initiative majorly boosted investments from China. A Chinese-owned energy company now accounts for about 14 percent of

Malaysia's total power generation.

With a burgeoning middle class, China has become the third most important source of tourists for Malaysia. Geopolitical tension has also made Malaysia a preferred alternative destination for Chinese students seeking overseas education. There are currently about 40,000 Chinese students in Malaysia and 24,800 Chinese nationals holding Malaysia's My Second Home (MM2H) program pass, the largest among all other countries. The significant presence of Chinese nationals in Malaysia certainly could help promote China-Malaysia relations.

The mutual waiver of visa requirements between Malaysia and China, effective December 2023, marks yet another milestone with immense positive spillover effects. It provides a much-needed boost to Malaysia's tourism industry, facilitates trade and investment, fosters education and academic exchanges, thus enhancing people-

to-people bond — the foundation of strong and close relations between countries.

The relationship between Malaysia and China has generally been stable and positive over the years, although it has experienced occasional hiccups. One notable example is the suspension of the East Coast Rail Link, China's flagship BRI project in Malaysia, in 2018 due to a change in government. However, following amicable negotiations, construction resumed in 2019. The realignment of certain sections of the rail route reduced construction costs. The 640km-long rail network connecting the East Coast and West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia is now expected to be completed in 2026.

Malaysia and China have overlapping territorial claims over some islands, reefs, shoals, and atolls in the South China Sea, which could potentially disrupt their cordial relations. This situation could be exploited amid big power rivalry

or by parties with political motives. A minor incident could be exaggerated or distorted by external powers to further their geopolitical interests or politicized by local politicians seeking mileage. Such actions could lead to negative repercussions on national sentiments in both countries, thereby affecting bilateral relations.

Notwithstanding that, both countries have managed the South China Sea dispute rationally through dialogue and negotiation rather than adopting a confrontational approach. Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has stated that the South China Sea issue is not "insurmountable" and should not be "that contentious". He emphasized that while there is no easy solution to the problem, Malaysia and China should continue to engage in dialogue and consultation to seek a win-win outcome.

Over the past 50 years, Malaysia-China relations have matured

and become resilient through mutual learning and respect, resolving differences through dialogue and consultations, and seeking cooperation for win-win outcomes. Both countries have successfully collaborated in navigating regional geopolitical complexities while respecting their respective sovereignty concerns.

Anwar regards China as an important neighbor with "pivotal" ties. He emphasized that the relationship with China should be enhanced and not left as it is. Malaysia's pragmatic approach to balancing economic interests and strategic independence exemplifies how ASEAN members can engage with China in a turbulent world.

Looking forward, with the leaders of both countries committed to building a China-Malaysia community with a shared future, bilateral relations between Malaysia and China are expected to reach new heights in the near future.

The author is the president of the Centre for New Inclusive Asia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA

Egyptian mother hails TCM as miracle cure

By ZHAO RUIXUE
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Manal Samir Ayoub, the chairwoman of Flower of Liberation, a newspaper in Alexandria, Egypt, says traditional Chinese medicine has been a miracle for her family.

Her son, Samy, was bedridden for three years due to diseases that caused severe joint pain and abdominal pain, with Egyptian doctors diagnosing his condition as chronic and predicting a prolonged period of bedridden illness.

Samy, 33, has now returned to work, with his mother saying, "It's the traditional Chinese medicine that brought hope to our family."

The family's connection with TCM began in November when Ayoub turned to the Chinese Consulate-General in Alexandria to seek help for her son, eager to give TCM a try.

A delegation led by Wang Luming, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Qingdao Municipal People's Congress, was visiting Egypt at the time, and when he learned about Samy's condition he contacted a medical team at Qingdao Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which is based in the Shibei district of Qingdao, Shandong province.

The team, led by Qu Chongkun, an 82-year-old medical expert, communicated with the family online and decided to treat Samy using herbal medicine after studying his condition.

Overcoming difficulties, including distance and language barriers, with the help of staff members from Qingdao's foreign affairs office and the city's health commission, the team proceeded with the treatment.

Qingdao authorities also coordinated with companies in the city to arrange the transport of herbal medicine to Samy's family in Egypt.

Ayoub said the treatment and herbal medicine greatly benefited her son's health. Initially, she did not expect the treatment to be effective so quickly, but within several months, Samy's health improved significantly.

"My son now lives a normal life, and he has returned to work," she said on the sidelines of a cultural exchange event in Qingdao on Wednesday.

The event, featuring four people from media organizations in Alexandria, focused on experiencing TCM culture at the hospital in Qingdao.

As her son received treatment from China, Ayoub began to read extensively about TCM in newspapers and books.

"It surprised me that the effectiveness of TCM always exceeds expectations," she said, adding that she would like to see more TCM services made available in Egypt.

During the exchange event, Ayoub met Qu and presented two metal plaques to show her deep appreciation to the hospital and its medical personnel for their efforts in helping her family.

"Each plaque weighs 5 kilograms, and I brought them from Egypt to show my sincere appreciation for the help from Qingdao," she said.

Qu said Samy's health condition was not good when he first reviewed the clinical records last year, and his team did their best to offer traditional Chinese solutions to help him.

"I am happy to see the patient has recovered from his illness," he said. "Today I spoke to the mother, learned more about her son's condition and provided further health advice."

Wang said the treatment showcased the deep friendship between China and Egypt, and the way that TCM can serve as a bridge to connect people from both countries.

New pioneer



Han Tingting (left), carrying her youngest daughter, wraps a red scarf around the neck of her elder daughter Wang Wenqi, who became a Chinese Young Pioneer, at a primary school in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Thursday. Nearly 100 first-grade students at the school were admitted to the Chinese Young Pioneers, a national mass organization for children. YUAN JINGZHI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Top court backs bullied boy's right to self-defense

School attack highlighted in latest guidelines on juvenile protection

By CAO YIN
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China's Supreme People's Court has highlighted its strong stance on protecting children, including a landmark ruling recognizing a bullied student's knife attack as justifiable defense.

The court released details on Thursday of five influential cases involving minors, including an incident in Hunan province in May 2019 in which a 14-year-old student surnamed Jiang injured three classmates with a knife.

After an investigation, a court in Jishou, Hunan, found that 15 students had bullied Jiang by beating him, and he carried the knife to the washroom because he had been attacked earlier that day.

On July 6, 2020, the Jishou court

identified Jiang's behavior as justifiable defense in line with the law, announcing that he should not be held criminally liable for the injuries.

The Supreme People's Court, agreeing with the lower court's judgment, said: "The injuries occurred when Jiang suffered school bullying at the hands of 15 people. In that urgent circumstance, it could be understood that he used a knife to defend himself."

"His counterattack was against the bullying, instead of those classmates, and his means were also moderate and didn't cause serious harm to the others."

"The case responded to a hot issue — school bullying — that severely harms students' physical and mental health. It has also shown the judicial effort in the protection of children being bullied, so as to pro-

vide a sound study environment for minors."

The court also issued a 42-article guideline strengthening juvenile protection and crime prevention measures.

The guideline mandates courts to identify bullying during other child-related cases and promptly notify schools or training institutions to arrange intervention. It also calls for following up on how educational departments address the issue.

Crimes like trafficking, kidnapping, violent assault and sexual assault against minors will be met with "zero tolerance" and harsh punishments, the guideline said.

The court emphasized a balanced approach, prioritizing education over punishment for minors. "We are tolerant but not indulgent," it said. "For minors with deep malice and extremely harmful behavior, especially those refusing to correct their mistakes, we will resolutely punish them according to the law."

Academy report urges more focus on consumption side of carbon emissions

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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The Chinese Academy of Sciences unveiled its 2024 Report on Consumption-based Carbon Emissions on Wednesday, highlighting the need for a more scientific and rational global carbon accounting system that considers both production and consumption emissions.

The report sheds light on the significant impact of consumption-based carbon emissions in a globalized economy, where emissions are no longer limited to production processes. It emphasizes that understanding and addressing consumption-based emissions is crucial.

Analyzing data from 1990 to 2019, the report reveals a critical trend: developed countries tend to have higher consumption-based carbon emissions than production-based emissions, while developing countries exhibit the opposite pattern. This underscores the importance of accounting for emissions from a consumption perspective.

Focusing on the carbon emissions triggered by consumption behaviors, the report calls for a coordinated approach to accounting for both production and consumption emissions. It advocates a more scientific and equitable distribution of global carbon reduction responsibilities, stressing the need to refine methodologies, improve data quality, and enhance international cooperation.

"International trade has had a

great impact on carbon emissions of developing countries," said Wei Wei, one of the leading researchers who prepared the report and vice-president of the academy's Shanghai Advanced Research Institute. "The export of carbon-intensive products to developed countries boosted their economic growth and employment, but it also led to production-based carbon emissions generally higher than those on the consumption side."

"Consumption-based carbon accounting focuses on emissions driven by consumption behaviors, providing a comprehensive calculation of greenhouse gas emissions across different regions or industries. This approach helps clarify the carbon footprint of economic activities and better delineate the responsibilities of producers and consumers, promoting fairness and justice."

The report highlights that from 1990 to 2019, consumption-based carbon emissions in major developed countries consistently exceeded their production-based emissions. In contrast, major developing countries saw their production-based emissions outpace those from consumption. Non-OECD countries, primarily developing nations, experienced a growing gap between production and consumption-based emissions, widening from 1.47 billion metric tons in 1990 to 4.17 billion tons in 2019.

In China, consumption-based carbon emissions have consistently

been lower than production-based emissions, with the gap increasing from 700 million tons in 1990 to 1.8 billion tons in 2019.

China's export trade reduced its embodied carbon intensity by 83.3 percent between 1990 and 2019, providing more green and low-carbon products globally. In 2021, China shouldered 100 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions through the steel raw materials trade and 250 million tons through photovoltaic product exports.

Amid the pressing challenge of global climate change, the report calls for a scientific and rational distribution of carbon reduction responsibilities. It recommends strengthening research on consumption-based carbon accounting methodologies, expanding product coverage, and developing a comprehensive "top-down" and "bottom-up" carbon accounting system.

"We must coordinate production and consumption-based accounting to scientifically allocate global carbon reduction responsibilities," Wei said.

Zhang Xiliang, director of the Institute of Energy, Environment, and Economy at Tsinghua University, also called for the adoption of consumption-based methods to clarify the roles of producers and consumers in carbon emissions.

"The governance of global environmental and climate change in a united response should consider equity in addition to efficiency," Zhang said.

Shanghai showcases global appeal at salon

Expats and business leaders gathered in Shanghai on Thursday for the Shanghai's Acceleration salon, a forum aimed at promoting the city's transformation and improved business environment.

Organized by the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and China Daily, the event highlighted Shanghai's rapid development, opportunities and its commitment to attracting global talent.

The salon featured panel discussions on "Shanghai speed" and "Shanghai vibe", focusing on the city's business climate and its rise as a commercial hub. Speakers shared insights on policy changes, business success stories and personal experiences.

Opening the event, Kong Fu'an, director-general of the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, underscored the city's dramatic change over the past 35 years.

"The skyline used to be devoid of skyscrapers," Kong said, referencing the Pudong New Area. "Today, Shanghai stands as a magnificent testament to 'Shanghai speed' and 'Shanghai vibe'."

Kong emphasized Shanghai's rise in global rankings for contract enforcement and judicial efficiency, signifying a robust business environment. He described the city as "international, innovative and inclusive", striving to become a global center for finance, trade, shipping and innovation.

Chen Yanfeng, deputy director of the Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission, elaborated on the city's commitment to openness. He cited key ini-

tiatives like the establishment of the Pudong New Area and the Shanghai Free Trade Zone.

"Openness is Shanghai's greatest advantage," Chen said, highlighting streamlined procedures and supportive policies for foreign companies. Chen pointed to Tesla's rapid construction of its Gigafactory, exemplifying "Tesla speed", and the automaker's groundbreaking Megapack energy storage plant in Lin-gang Special Area as testaments to Shanghai's efficiency.

Addressing transparency concerns, Chen highlighted Shanghai's commitment to a fair and legal business environment.

"We've continuously improved legal frameworks to create a stable and transparent environment for businesses," he said.

Panelists like Pablo Machado, president of business management at Suzano Asia, commended Shanghai's role as a global innovation hub. He highlighted the city's ability to provide customized solutions for foreign enterprises.

"Shanghai offers exceptional support through solutions tailored to different districts," Machado said, citing his company's service-oriented subsidiary in Jing'an, foreign trade company in Lin-gang, and research and development operations in Zhangjiang.

Bruno Lannes, senior partner at Bain & Company, applauded the Shanghai government's efforts to foster dialogue with the business community. He expressed appreciation for platforms that facilitate communication between business leaders and government officials.

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Guests discuss urban transformation and the business environment at the Shanghai's Acceleration salon in Shanghai on Thursday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Kaka gets a kick out of Village Super League

By LI YINGXUE
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The Village Super League soccer tournament in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, captured widespread attention again this week with the arrival of former Brazilian soccer star Ricardo Kaka.

Kaka's visit was part of the Chasing Dreams girls' soccer championship charity project.

On Monday evening, at the Village Super League grounds, Kaka served as the honorary coach of a girls' soccer team for a match.

The young players, familiar with each other's strategies and skills, played an intensely competitive game, which ended in a 0:0 draw.

Kaka said he was honored to come to China to participate in the charitable event and inspire young soccer enthusiasts. He said soccer is more than just a sport because it carries the power of love and hope.

In Rongjiang, he sees a bright future for Chinese women's soccer. "I want to help these girls, these boys and the young generation here in China to achieve their goals," he said.

Regarding the development of youth soccer in Rongjiang, Kaka highlighted the importance of fostering a passion for the sport. He recommended focusing on nurturing children's enthusiasm, providing more training opportunities and improving infrastructure.

"I hope one day I can come back and have more time to see the good things from this area," he said.

The Chasing Dreams girls' soccer championship charity project was launched last July in Rong-



Kaka (left) celebrates with teammates at a charity soccer game in Rongjiang, Guizhou province, on Monday.

YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

jiang, providing local youth with long-term coaching, training equipment and support. The squad now boasts 106 players, selected from girls born in Rongjiang between 2012 and 2015.

Following the girls' soccer match, Kaka treated the fans to a display of his soccer prowess. Leading and captaining the "Kaka and his champion partners" team, they faced off against a team coached by Hong Kong television host and racehorse trainer Natalis Chan.

Both sides featured a blend of Olympic champions, former national team players, renowned figures from the arts and sports, and Village Super League players.

Kaka scored in the 36th minute of the game, evoking memories of his glory days playing for AC Milan, when he was known as the "Prince of San Siro".



With photovoltaic panels installed on its rooftops, a company in Yuanqu county supplies clean power to local grids. XUE JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Enormous potential as Shanxi embraces new three sectors

Province moves on to invest in lithium-ion power storage, EVs and photovoltaics

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The "new three sectors" has been a buzzword among Chinese officials recently, as they highlight the strong performance of photovoltaics, lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles in driving China's high-quality development. The development of the new three sectors was included in the Government Work Report during this year's two sessions of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which were held in Beijing in early March. Compared with the old three sectors of clothes, home appliances and furniture, the new three represent an upgrade of China's manufacturing power and its strength in the global manufacturing landscape. The North China province of Shanxi is also charting new efforts to boost the new three sectors for fostering new quality productive forces and grasping new development opportunities.

In recent years, electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaics have been sought-after across international markets.

The latest statistics show that China's total exports of the three categories reached 1.06 trillion yuan (\$146.28 billion) in 2023, surpassing the 1 trillion yuan benchmark for the first time.

It is worth mentioning that exports of new energy vehicles — mainly EVs — reached more than 1.2 million units in 2023, growing 77.6 percent from 2022.

China is the leading exporter of NEVs, which have accounted for one-third of China's total vehicle exports in recent years. Officials and experts believe the three strategic emerging sectors will inject vitality into China's sustainable economic development and help foster new quality productive forces in the country. The sectors also reflect China's ability to innovate and its industrial upgrading in advanced, intelligent and green directions.

Shanxi province, which used to be reliant on coal mining and other related heavy industries, is implementing a transformation campaign to diversify and strengthen its econ-

omy by cultivating emerging industries and upgrading traditional sectors.

The booming development of the new three sectors is a crucial part of this economic transformation and is creating opportunities for local business development.

Over recent years, Shanxi has formed complete industry chains for the manufacture of NEVs, photovoltaics and lithium-ion batteries.

These industry chains in Shanxi are represented by leading manufacturers of national and international repute. Geely Automobile, for instance, operates a NEV manufacturing base in the central Shanxi city of Jinzhong, which can produce about 200,000 vehicles annually. This is a comprehensive facility for electric, methanol-fueled and other vehicles. Photovoltaic manufacturers in Shanxi reported 20 billion yuan in combined business revenue in 2023. Jinery — a subsidiary of Shanxi's renowned energy company, Jinneng Holding — is one of the leading photovoltaic component producers in Shanxi. Its products are exported to dozens of countries that include Japan, South Korea and Australia.

Experts and industry insiders said

that the development of the new three sectors can play a crucial role in Shanxi's economic transformation and energy revolution campaign, helping to drive low-carbon and sustainable development in the province.

They added that the companies' focus on digitalization and smart operations can help to improve Shanxi's overall innovation.

When talking about the photovoltaic sector, Yang Liyou, general manager of Jinery, said: "The industry is technology-intensive. The key to our development lies in continuous and comprehensive innovation."

He said that the use of intelligent production and flexible manufacturing allows the company to achieve better efficiency and provide customers with optimized solutions.

For instance, the company's advanced manufacturing plant uses intelligent equipment and multisystem platforms to produce high-efficiency solar cells. Artificial intelligence is also used to ensure precise online control, achieve system automation, digitalization and intelligent coordination.

Liu Jie and Chen Lifang contributed to this story.

Battery production fully charged by town's efforts

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Shanxi is home to dozens of characteristic towns with specialty industries and a number of these have achieved global reputations.

The townships of Zhangzhuang and Longchuan, located in Pingding county in the city of Yangquan, are two such places.

What connects the towns to the world is an industry chain that covers lithium-ion batteries and components.

Lithium-ion batteries are rechargeable batteries that use lithium ions as the primary component of their electrolyte. Nowadays, they are used in a range of products like electric vehicles, electric bikes and portable electronic devices.

Pingding is famous for the production of anode material for lithium-ion batteries. Local officials said that every one out of four new energy vehicles in the world is using anode material made in the county.

In Pingding, a number of companies are using synthetic graphite to produce anode material and there are also quite a few enterprises engaged in the production of battery-related products like cathode, electrolyte and separators.

In 2022, Pingding's companies in the production of anode material realized a combined output worth 1.33 billion yuan (\$183.54 million), growing 95.4 percent from the previous year, according to local statistics. The entire new-energy battery industry chain became the third-largest pillar sector in the county.

Leveraging local advantages in this industry, the authorities of Pingding county decided to develop a battery industrial town in the two townships of Zhangzhuang and Longchuan in 2021.

Over the past three years, the battery industrial town has witnessed booming development in investment attraction, construction and production.

A number of nationally leading companies in the new-energy battery industry, like Shanxi BTR, Beijing-based Zhongxuan Technology and Shanxi Zhongye New Energy Technologies, have invested in new facilities in the battery town.

Last year, Shanxi BTR's synthetic graphite facility became operational in the Pingding. Other projects put into operation that year also



New anode material developed by Shanxi BTR. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

included a special graphite facility invested in by Shanghai-based SGL Carbon Group, and a Zhongye-funded lithium-ion battery anode material plant.

Shanxi BTR, with its headquarters in Pingding, is a nationally recognized high-tech enterprise engaged in the development and production of new-type carbon-based materials like synthetic graphite and anode material. It is vigorously expanding its business to meet rapidly growing demands.

And the production facilities in Pingding's battery town are a crucial part of its expansion, according to Zhang Shuai, deputy general manager of Shanxi BTR.

Following its synthetic graphite project, Shanxi BTR recently completed construction on a lithium-ion battery anode material plant with an annual output of 50,000 tons. Zhang said the plant's operation is expected to begin before the end of June.

Shanxi BTR's total output of synthetic graphite anode material was 280,000 tons in 2022, ranking first worldwide. Last year, its global market share reached 22 percent.

The successful development of companies like Shanxi BTR has put the Pingding battery town at the forefront of the domestic battery materials industry. In 2023, the battery town was recognized by Yangquan as a city-level characteristic town.

According to a local plan, the battery town will develop in three phases, with the first phase focusing on anode material production; the second phase extending to sectors like cathode materials, separators and electrolytes; and the third phase highlighting the production of complete sets of batteries.

Wang Qingwen contributed to this story.

Domestic automobile makers shift up a gear

By WANG JINHUI

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To cultivate a growth area, Shanxi has been promoting the development of the NEV industry chain over the past decade, enriching its product structure and core competitiveness in a broader scope.

One example is Yuncheng-based Dayun Group. At its production base, NEVs are being produced in an orderly manner, with intelligent technologies used throughout the entire production process.

Evolving from a motorcycle producer, this privately owned enterprise founded in 1987 has embarked on a path of continuous iterative industrial transformation and upgrading since it planned to tap into the NEV industry in 2017.

That year, Yuan Qinshan, chairman of Dayun, conceived of the idea to enter the new energy passenger car market. After years of research and development, in September 2020, Dayun's first pure electric small SUV and MPV models rolled off the production lines.



Dayun's high-end new energy vehicles roll off the production line in Yuncheng. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In August 2022, Dayun's high-end NEV brand, Yuanhang, made its first appearance at the Chengdu auto show. The debut attracted industry attention, marking the first step of Shanxi's automobile brand entering the high-end market.

As a leading player in the NEV sector in Shanxi, Dayun not only focuses on its own development, but also boosts the common growth of supporting enterprises in the industry chain. It has cooperated with more than 40 suppliers in the province, driving the leapfrog development of the industry chain with mutual benefits and common prosperity.

"Based on market dynamics, Dayun will adhere to the strategy of 'balanced development of commercial and passenger vehicles' in the next five years. By focusing on the core business of NEVs, building two brands of Dayun and Yuanhang and exploring both domestic and international markets, Dayun aims to build itself into a first-class R&D and manufacturing base for both commercial and passenger NEVs in the country," said Guo Jinfeng, Party secretary of Dayun Group.

Yuan said that the second half of this year will be a major turning point for the company. "Exports will increase significantly," he said, adding that there is interest from potential customers in Germany, Mexico and Myanmar, as well as many countries and regions in Southeast Asia. Similar to Dayun, methanol-powered vehicles produced by Chinese auto giant Geely also show great potential.

Geely's production base in Jinzhong city has constructed a flexible production line for electric, methanol and gasoline vehicles with an annual production capacity of 200,000 units. As of now, the NEV industry chain in Jinzhong has gathered 27 companies and more than 60 related supporting enterprises, gradually forming a competitive industrial cluster and driving the city's automotive industry output value to nearly 30 billion yuan a year.

Jinzhong will continue to accelerate its new energy passenger vehicle production capacity, improve methanol refueling system construction, expand the industry's scale and increase the influence of the city as the methanol vehicle capital, according to its government work report this year.

Liu Yudong, president of Geely Technology Group, said: "As a pioneer in methanol vehicle technology, we are actively promoting the integration of the methanol and methanol vehicle industries. Through cooperation with upstream methanol fuel suppliers, we integrate production, storage, transportation, refueling and sales into one."

"By expanding and strengthening the existing automotive industry, we are also constructing a win-win model that is beneficial for the promotion of methanol vehicles and socioeconomic development of Jinzhong."

Liu Yan contributed to this story.

Clean energy fueling exports and development of related enterprises

By WANG JINHUI

Photovoltaic products are becoming a new driving force for Shanxi to boost the development of new quality productive forces.

Shanxi, a traditionally energy-rich province, attaches great importance to the advancement of the photovoltaic industry. The province considers it an important direction to optimize the energy structure and build a characteristic modern industrial system.

At the production base of Jinery, a world-leading PV manufacturer incorporated under Jinneng Holding Group in Jinzhong city, more than 100 5G-connected smart carts are busy transporting silicon wafers to production lines of high-efficiency photovoltaic cells.

Not long ago, Jinery's TOPCon high-efficiency heterojunction solar cells were produced with a photoelectric conversion efficiency of more than 25.5 percent, one of the highest rates for the industry worldwide.

Jinery planned to develop heterojunction cells in 2016. In 2017, it began to install and test production equipment for the cells at its Jinzhong base.

As the first domestic mass production facility of heterojunction cells, there was no industrial experience it could learn from during this period, leading to many challenging technological issues.

In this context, the research and development team of Jinery conducted research, learning and equipment selection independently for heterojunction cells. In 2017, Jinery's heterojunction solar cells realized mass production.

"To further promote the low-cost application of photovoltaics, in 2019, we began to develop the more advanced TOPCon cell technology.



The production lines of photovoltaic cells by Jinery are fully automated. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"We completed the project's construction and put it into operation in three years," said Yu Shiwei, overseas sales director of Jinery.

After experiencing multiple stages of growth in the photovoltaic industry, Jinery has continuously made breakthroughs in cell technology and expanded manufacturing scale. At the same time, it has made ambitious expansions in international markets.

In 2023, Jinery's export revenue amounted to approximately 470 million yuan (\$64.83 million). It has been listed as a global first-tier component supplier by BloombergNEF for several consecutive years. Up to now, Jinery has sold products to more than 50 countries overseas, according to Liu Xia, director of the marketing center at Jinery.

Currently, the Shanxi photovoltaic industry chain has become a new driving force for local industrial development.

Data show that in 2023, the revenue of the photovoltaic manufacturing industry in Shanxi reached 20.2 billion yuan, up 49 percent year-on-year. Meanwhile, the annual production of photovoltaic cells reached 9.62 million kilowatts, a

year-on-year increase of 21 percent.

The province's photovoltaic industry chain is now led by about 20 provincially or nationally leading enterprises including Jinery and Lu'an Solar.

To achieve better results in the "new three" industries — namely new energy vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaics — Shanxi has issued policies that support such enterprises in project construction, technological innovation, revenue growth and other aspects.

The province has deployed the overall strategy of "building, extending, supplementing and strengthening" the photovoltaic industry chain, attracting key enterprises and creating a new pattern of coordinated development among large, medium and small enterprises through policy guidance, industry support, investment attraction and other means.

Shanxi is accelerating the construction of a photovoltaic industry cluster with an aim to exceed 100 billion yuan in annual industrial output value.

Zhang Xin contributed to this story.

GLOBAL LENS



From left: Children gather around a promotional board of the first African Village Super League. Dancers perform after the final game of the inaugural competition. Teams line up at the closing ceremony.



A member of team Barrage Village takes a shot during the final game of the first African Village Super League in Parakou, Benin, on Saturday. LI YAHUI / XINHUA

FIELD OF FRIENDSHIP

China's Village Super League brings soccer lovers together in Africa

While West Africa's Benin approaches its rainy season, intermittent showers and sticky hot weather have done little to dampen the enthusiasm of local villagers who gathered to watch the inaugural Benin Village Super League.

On Saturday, soccer teams from two villages in Parakou, a central city in Benin, competed in the first Village Super League final. The match took place on a soccer field adjacent to the base of the Chinese support mission for cotton production in Benin, in Belle Cite Village.

For the past decade, the China-assisted cotton technology project has been operational in Parakou, a major cotton-producing region in Benin. The long-term technical assistance has fostered strong relationships with villagers. When the project team learned that the soccer pitch where villagers played had been expropriated, they decided to build a new one using agricultural machinery and repurposed materials.

Last summer, videos of some soccer matches in Rongjiang county, Qiandongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture of Southwest China's Guizhou province, went viral and attracted tourists from around the globe. Inspired by this, the Village Super League in Parakou includes cultural performances during halftime, featuring Chinese martial arts and Beninese dance.



Players of team Park 7 and team Barrage Village vie for the ball during the final game of the first African Village Super League in Parakou.

"Locals love football and I wanted to bring this model here and establish a similar league," Shou said.

Named the Friendship Football Field, the new facility was inaugurated in March last year. It quickly became the preferred venue for soccer among villagers in Belle Cite and nearby areas, hosting regular matches, especially during agricultural downtimes.

"The goal posts were welded by us along with local employees," said Shou Xiaoyong, head of the Chinese technical team. "We also dug drainage ditches around the pitch to maintain it during the rainy season."

As the tournament progressed, its popularity soared. Villagers from surrounding areas traveled on motorcycles with their children to watch the matches. "Initially, we had 100-200 spectators on one or two sides of the field. Now, we have 700-800 people packed around the entire field," Shou said before the final match.

Yves Koba, the head of Belle Cite Village, lauded the Village Super League for fostering communication and friendship among villages. "The league has made us more united. I hope it continues and that our villagers achieve even better results next year."

XINHUA



From left: The Park 7 team in a pep talk before the final of the first African Village Super League competition. The awards ceremony after the final, won by Barrage Village.

WORLDUS

Experts: US' actions won't hinder ties of China, Africa

By EDITH MUTETHYA
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Friendly relations and cooperation between China and Africa will not be encroached upon even as the United States has tried in recent years to counter China's influence on the continent, experts have said.

Kenyan President William Ruto last week visited the White House, the first state visit by an African president since 2008, reflecting the importance of a continent that is home to 1 billion people and nurtures close trade ties with China, but ranks behind on Washington's agenda, Reuters commented.

US President Joe Biden pledged to designate Kenya as the first sub-Saharan African country to be a major non-NATO ally. The two countries also agreed on other cooperations, including supporting Kenya's semiconductor industry.

The state visit came barely two years after the US-Africa Leaders Summit held in December 2022, when Washington pledged to invest \$55 billion in Africa by 2025.

As the continent has suffered from neglect in the past, African scholars are skeptical, and wonder whether the US can fulfill its pledge.

Aly Khan Satchu, a Kenya-based analyst, said the US feels it has lagged behind China in terms of engagement with Africa, and is trying to catch up, as China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, and one of the biggest investors in the continent.

Despite the deals signed during Ruto's visit, Kenyans can only wait and see the results, said Macharia Munene, a professor of history and international relations at the United States International University in Nairobi, noting the US is "good at making promises but never delivering".

During Ruto's visit, the US agreed to start building in 2026 the 440-kilometer Nairobi-Mombasa Expressway, a badly needed road linking the two largest Kenyan cities.

But Cavince Adhere, a Kenyan scholar of international relations, said the expressway was promised by the US to former two Kenyan presidents, and that it may not be implemented even during the current Ruto administration.

"The expressway came up when the US learned that China and Kenya were planning to build the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway. This year, the SGR is celebrating seven years of operation. For the US, it is promise after promise," he said.

Adhere said the US may not compete with China on major infrastructure projects, because traditionally it has never been interested in improving the economic capabilities of African countries through infrastructure construction.



Former US president Donald Trump appears in Manhattan Criminal Court during jury deliberations in his hush money trial in New York on Thursday. STEVEN HIRSCH / NEW YORK POST VIA AP

Trump convicted on 34 counts of falsifying business records

By AIHEPING in New York
aiheping@chinadailyusa.com

A New York jury on Thursday convicted former US president Donald Trump of falsifying business records to cover up hush money paid to a porn star who said the two had sex, a verdict that could have an impact on the presumptive GOP presidential candidate's reelection bid in November.

Media reports said Trump sat in the Manhattan courtroom and gazed intently at the 12 jurors — five women and seven men — as Justice Juan Merchan polled each one on each count to confirm their decision.

Trump heard "guilty" 34 times on 34 counts of falsifying business records, making him the first former president to become a convicted felon.

Trump appeared upset, one report said, and gripped his son Eric's hand for an extended period and then walked out of the courtroom.

Jurors had deliberated for two days in the six-week trial in which prosecutors accused Trump of orchestrating an illegal conspiracy to influence the 2016 presidential election.

Sentencing was scheduled for July 11 at 10 am, four days before the beginning of the Republican National Convention.

The felony conviction calls for a sentence of up to four years in prison, but Merchan has other penalties from which to choose. Because the

crime is nonviolent and Trump has no prior convictions, Merchan could choose probation, home confinement or a mild form of supervised release. He also could impose fines or community service.

Trump is certain to appeal the verdict and it could take months or years to resolve.

The jury found that Trump had faked records to conceal the purpose of money given to his onetime fixer, Michael Cohen. The false records disguised the payments as ordinary legal expenses when Trump was reimbursing Cohen for \$130,000 he paid to silence porn star Stormy Daniels' account of a sexual liaison with Trump before the 2016 election.

With the jurors gone from the courtroom, Todd Blanche, Trump's lawyer, argued that the verdict is improper and should be tossed because it relied on Cohen's testimony.

The judge immediately denied the motion.

In a statement sent by text, Cohen said: "Today is an important day for accountability and the rule of law. While it has been a difficult journey for me and my family, the truth always matters."

The verdict ends the only one of four criminal cases against Trump that was likely to go to trial before Election Day. Trump faces two prosecutions over his alleged efforts to overturn President Joe Biden's 2020 election victory and one alleging he illegally retained

classified documents after leaving the White House.

When Trump left the courtroom, he walked up to cameras and reporters in the hallway.

"This was a disgrace," Trump said. "This was a rigged trial by a conflicted judge who was corrupt."

He reiterated previous complaints: that Merchan was biased, that Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg brought the case to keep Trump out of the White House, and that he should have gotten a venue change because of how liberal-leaning Manhattan is.

"The real verdict is going to be Nov 5, by the people," he said. "I AM A POLITICAL PRISONER!" Trump declared in a fundraising email sent moments after the verdict, although he was not jailed.

"We will fight for our Constitution. This is long from over," he said, walking away and not answering questions.

House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson said the verdict "was a purely political exercise, not a legal one".

Biden's 2024 reelection campaign said the verdict shows that "no one is above the law".

Shortly after the verdict was read in court, Biden posted a fundraising appeal on X from his campaign account: "There's only one way to keep Donald Trump out of the Oval Office: At the ballot box," Biden wrote. "Donate to our campaign today!"

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China and US aim to tackle climate issues

Building on San Francisco vision, officials upbeat on collaboration on shared threat

By LIAZHU in San Francisco
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Officials from the United States and China gathered on Wednesday in Berkeley, California, putting aside national tensions to focus on a shared challenge: climate change.

California Governor Gavin Newsom emphasized the importance of open communication and trust-building in tackling the climate crisis at the event co-hosted by the California-China Climate Institute.

"It's about sharing, it's about openness, and it's about building a framework of trust," Newsom said, noting his October visit to China where he met Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"You find those areas of cooperation and agreement and you rush to develop that framework of understanding, that capacity to partner and achieve together," Newsom told the audience, including a Chinese delegation of more than 100 provincial- and city-level officials.

"I'm committed in this relationship, particularly between China and the United States," he said. "No more important bilateral relationship in the world as it relates to the issue of climate change."

Chinese Ambassador to the United States Xie Feng delivered remarks via video at the opening ceremony.

"Over the past decade and more, China-US climate cooperation has gone through ups and downs," he said. "We worked closely to bring the international community together to adopt the milestone Paris Agreement."

"Later, though, such cooperation was stalled for reasons known to all. In recent years, climate cooperation has again resumed. If we can draw any inspiration from this, it is that China-US climate cooperation is inseparable from the overall China-US relationship," he said.

"It certainly will not work if one asks for dialogue and cooperation but keeps damaging the other side's interests at the same time, or tries to build roads on one hand but keeps digging holes on the other."

Jerry Brown, former governor of California and chair of the California-China Climate Institute, said competition will not solve the climate crisis.

"The problems we face are bigger than one country ... the most important possible partnership in the world today is China and the US," Brown said. "Pure competition without cooperation will lead to disaster."

The gathering serves as a concrete step toward fulfilling the Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis, a joint commitment made by both countries during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in San Francisco in November.

President Xi and US President Joe Biden held a summit and laid out the San Francisco vision, a road map for a sound, stable and sustainable

development of China-US relations. While speaking on the phone last month, the two presidents reaffirmed the importance of turning the vision into reality.

Since November's summit, a working group has been established between the two countries. Earlier this month, China's Special Envoy for Climate Change Liu Zhenmin visited the US and held climate talks with John Podesta, senior adviser to Biden on international climate policy.

The talks were "in-depth and productive" and focused on the priorities identified in the Sunnylands statement, ranging from energy transition and methane reduction to deforestation and subnational action, Podesta said in a video message.

"The US and China have to lead the way even as the overall relationship between our two countries has increasingly been characterized by competition," he said.

"We have an obligation to our citizens and the people of the world to communicate, cooperate and collaborate where we can to tackle the climate crisis."

He stressed the importance of subnational exchanges and collaboration, because local governments are the ones implementing national policies.

"For instance, with some localities in China having already peaked their emissions nearly a decade ago, we look forward to hearing more about how China's provinces and cities are accelerating progress toward their national climate targets," he said.

He specifically commended the cooperation between US and Chinese local leaders in recent years, such as the green shipping corridor between Los Angeles and Shanghai, and local and regional solutions to accelerate the deployment of clean energy in communities.

Rick Duke, deputy special envoy for climate at the US Department of State, applauded Chinese local governments' "strong targets", citing Shenzhen's achievement of converting entire fleets of buses and taxis to electric vehicles, and 27 Chinese provinces and cities signing the US-China Climate Leaders' Declaration that pledged early carbon peaking before 2030.

He mentioned promising areas for joint technological development, such as carbon capture, utilization and storage, as well as pilot projects for full-scale commercial application.

Zhao Chenxin, a member of the visiting delegation and vice-chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, emphasized the vast business opportunities arising from China's green transition.

"China's carbon peak and carbon neutrality goals would require investments of 80 trillion yuan (\$11 trillion) and 20 trillion yuan (\$2.8 trillion) respectively," he said.

Bay dialogue spurs cooperation on green innovation, trade

By CHANG JUN
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Policy makers and industry representatives from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the California Bay Area reaffirmed on Wednesday that both sides should continue dialogue in multiple areas to learn from each other.

Discussions also focused on leveraging markets and opportunities that will benefit all parties.

The "US-China Bay to Bay Dialogue" featured seminars and panel discussions with a Chinese delegation of more than 100 members, including Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and government officials from China's Greater Bay Area.

They engaged with counterparts from the San Francisco Bay Area in

California on various levels of governance.

Topics of discussion included building green and low-carbon Bay areas through policy and action, sharing development opportunities, and promoting people-to-people exchange for mutual understanding and friendship.

Panelists unanimously recognized the importance of mutual learning and expertise sharing in areas such as climate change, public health, academic exchanges, technology innovation, city planning and management.

Collaborations and communications between the two bay areas are continuing and productive. Toks Omishakin, secretary of California State Transportation Agency, highlighted the value of his visits to China and discussions with Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in addressing various challenges.

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan complimented the "incredible innovation and manufacturing strength of China", without which some engineering and construction projects would have been impossible "at the scale that we are now deploying them".

Bringing prosperity

The dialogue is an excellent example for business communities on both sides of the Pacific Ocean to work toward bringing prosperity, jobs and innovation to the two peoples, said Dee Dee Myers, senior adviser to the governor and director of the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

"There is no secret that there have been tensions between our two countries, (but) it is important for us to work on a subnational level to address some of the issues in every way that we can."

Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong province, said the Greater Bay Area welcomes US companies and people with the opening-up policy, its vast untapped market potential, the market-oriented ecosystem for doing business, and "the opportunities".

Citing the continuous expansions and brisk performances of US pharmaceutical company Pfizer and food company Kraft Heinz in Guangdong, Wang said US direct investment in the Greater Bay Area since last year is on the rise. "We see an even more robust surge in direct foreign investment in the first quarter."

Calling the dialogue "a very exciting time for us and the partnership (between the two bay areas)", Yana Garcia, secretary of California's Environmental Protection Agency, said the relationship between Guangdong and the Golden State over the years remains deep.



Wang Weizhong, governor of Guangdong province, speaks during the Bay to Bay Dialogue in Berkeley, California, on Wednesday. TAYFUN COSKUN VIA GETTY IMAGES

One particular area that California can learn from, she said, is China's policy on its vehicle electrification and its effect on decarbonization.

Ye Qing, chairwoman of the Shenzhen Institute of Building

Research, said combating the common threats in today's world, such as global warming, will unite humankind regardless of differences in race, culture and politics.

"We only have one world," she said.

WORLDUS

Four days after Yixing Wang moved to the United States with her parents, she found herself sitting in an empty apartment in Texas. The room had no furniture, just her *guzheng*, a zither-like traditional Chinese stringed instrument, keeping her company. She was about 13 at the time.

Moving to the US from China at that age meant she had spent enough time in China to master the language and culture. However, she also arrived when she was young enough to quickly adapt to American culture. But for a while, she struggled with her cultural identity.

The *guzheng* was like a lifeline, helping her navigate between the two cultures. "Through playing music, I was able to find personal fulfillment and foster a deeper connection with both my heritage and the wider world. I feel very proud of being Chinese American because I can appreciate other people's cultures and environments a lot more. I've learned to be flexible and understanding of everything around me," Wang tells China Daily.

Wang is an undergraduate student of the *guzheng* and math at the Bard College Conservatory of Music in New York. Around Wang in the Hudson Valley, a group of musicians is engaging in such music and culture exchanges every day. The conservatory established the US-China Music Institute in 2017 and is one of the few offering a comprehensive combination of Chinese instruments and liberal arts degree programs in the US.

"Globally, music is the most effective way to connect people. When you look at various cultures or regions, you often see conflicts. However, when you consider music, it has a way of connecting everyone," Jindong Cai, professor of music and arts and the director of the US-China Music Institute at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, tells China Daily. "For instance, music from other countries often has significant historical connections or political connotations but essentially, they are intertwined. Music naturally brings people together without the burden of political content. Good music moves people and this emotional response fosters a positive interest in that culture, the composer and their background," he says.

Cai is one of the founders of the US-China Music Institute. Reflecting on the initial motivation for creating the institute and its programs, Cai recalls the impact of US-China musical exchanges during his musical career.

In 1973, the Philadelphia Orchestra visited China, marking the first time an American orchestra performed in the country since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

"I was influenced by that event and decided to become a conductor to bridge together cultures," says Cai, who received his early musical training in China. He began his professional conducting career with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and has collaborated with numerous orchestras across North America and Asia. In 2004, he joined the Stanford University faculty as the director of orchestral studies, where he conducted the Stanford Symphony Orchestra for 11 years.

When Cai began learning music, his influences were figures such as Herbert von Karajan, Seiji Ozawa and Leonard Bernstein — Cai even studied under Bernstein. "Their inspiration for me was unimaginable," says Cai.

"Now, I've become a teacher at their age. If I can pass on what I've learned to the next generation and bring the two countries closer together through music, I believe it will be incredibly meaningful," says Cai, calling himself a member of a generation of Chinese musicians who benefited from good US-China relationships.

"Due to China's openness, more Western music has come to China. I think one of the most meaningful things we can do is introduce the elements of Chinese music to composers around the world. I hope this continues, with more non-Chinese people learning Chinese music and about the instruments," Cai says.

Kendall Griffith is a student at Bard College majoring in both the *pipa*, a four-stringed Chinese lute, and Asian studies. Born and raised in Boston, Griffith's journey into Chinese culture started



Left: Jindong Cai and The Orchestra Now, at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York. Right: Beitong Liu plays the *erhu* at *The Sound of Spring* Chinese New Year Concert at Lincoln Center, New York, in 2023. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The sound of global connections

New York's Bard College Conservatory of Music brings ancient culture and modern innovations to new audiences around the world, **Minlu Zhang** reports in New York.

nine years ago, when she began learning Chinese for its writing system and tones.

While learning Chinese, she was captivated by traditional Chinese music in a drama she was watching. Griffith did some research and discovered that the instrument she was drawn to was the *pipa*.

"I like the sound of the *pipa*, especially the techniques that are incorporated with it," Griffith says, adding that her parents and friends have been very supportive of her learning Chinese traditional music.

Griffith's father helped her discover the instrument and she found her first *pipa* teacher, who was part of the Boston Chinese Ensemble. Sometimes, after performances, people would tell her, "I've never seen a non-Chinese person play this before. That's very cool!"

Last semester, Griffith studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Learning the *pipa* in the city, where "Chinese music is happening", Griffith felt pushed beyond her comfort zone and learned more about her passion.

"There was an interesting lecture that talked about how most Chinese music emulates things in calligraphy. There's a lot of empty space, and I can now incorporate that feeling into a lot of the music I play," she says.

"Chinese music also emulates nature in a way. The sound it makes can resemble a horse; you can visualize it. There are many techniques not seen in Western instruments, such as bending the strings or using your five fingers to create a tremolo. I enjoy telling my friends about it," she says. Griffith's friends, who were amazed by her impressions, started attending more Chinese music concerts, wanting to learn more.

Diving into another culture through music makes Griffith value the art more. She said, "When you learn about a different type of music, it makes you appreciate the culture more. It makes you realize how important it is to be open-minded. I feel more open-minded about why things are the way they are."

Cai says he hopes to train a new generation of Chinese musicians with a global perspective.

"Our faculty comprises top experts in their fields, which naturally fosters interaction and collaboration. At Bard, students studying Chinese music and Western music work closely together, becoming friends and often forming duets, trios, or learning each other's instruments. This integration creates a vibrant musical community," he says.

"This concept of musical exchange and collaboration is why Western music has made significant inroads in China, turning many of us into Western-style musicians. So, why can't we do the same in reverse?"



From top: Kendall Griffith, a student at Bard College Conservatory of Music majoring in the *pipa* and Asian studies, at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, in 2023; Griffith participates in the Beijing Garden Expo Park Opera and Music Week during Mid-Autumn Festival, in 2023; and Andrew Chan plays the *suona* at the Chinese embassy in the US with the Bard East/West Ensemble in December 2023. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Many students studying Chinese folk music at Bard have introduced the music to a wider American audience.

Andrew Chan is a Hong Kong musician who plays the *suona*, a traditional Chinese double-reed woodwind instrument. While learning Chinese traditional music at Bard, he encountered many American classmates and audiences curious about the instrument.

The *suona*, different from many Western instruments, can easily mimic the human voice, making it very expressive. It has a strong emotional impact and powerful expressiveness.

It is still quite new to American musicians and audiences, says Chan. After his performances, he meets many audiences asking questions such as what the instrument is or how it is made.

"Some American musicians would suggest including the *suona* in ensembles, making it more accessible for collaboration with different instruments," says Chan.

The instrument's unique timbre and strong character make it stand out. For instance, Chan once performed *Birds Saluting the Phoenix* (Bainiao Chaofeng), where the *suona* is the main instrument and the musician mimics bird calls throughout the piece.

This artistic expression is easily understood and appreciated by people from various cultural backgrounds because they can instantly recognize the bird sounds. The feature of mimicking animal sounds broke language barriers and created communication and connections among audiences around the world.

Since the 21st century, the development of contemporary Chinese music has been strong, putting it at the forefront of the global music scene, says Cai.

Since the reform and opening-up in the 20th century, many Chinese musicians, composers and performers have studied abroad, absorbing influences from diverse cultures.

"These individuals, much like scientists, aim to create unique works that reflect their cultural identity. As a result, in the 21st century, Chinese composers are undoubtedly among the leading figures in the world of music," Cai says.

Just as Chan's classmates hope to include the *suona* in their ensembles, the exchange of Eastern and Western music provides new inspiration for each other's musical creations.

"As musicians, we constantly seek new idols and artists because the essence of being an artist lies in the originality of your ideas. The most important measure of art is your unique perspective. The uniqueness of your performance is crucial, and it depends on where your ideas originate and the foundation upon which they

are built. This individuality is a key factor in evaluating the development of art," says Cai. "Nothing excites me more than introducing a set of entirely new Chinese works."

The US-China Music Institute at the Bard College Conservatory of Music has held the China Now Music Festival and Chinese New Year Concerts at Lincoln Center in New York City for years.

Beitong Liu, a master's student of musicology at Bard, is an example of the new wave of Chinese musicians in New York. Her work demonstrates how contemporary Chinese musicians establish their cultural identity and engage on the world stage.

Liu and her partner are planning to compose music after graduation that is based on a fusion of Chinese elements with other styles.

"We focus on contemporary Chinese music, incorporating its elements with jazz, particularly emulating the jazz style that emerged in Shanghai when jazz first arrived in China. We also explore modern interpretations of Chinese pop music," says Liu. She says one highlight of her work is the emphasis on improvisation.

"Traditional Chinese music has many opportunities to be performed in the United States, but when people think of Chinese music, they often only think of the pentatonic scale," says Liu. A pentatonic scale has five notes per octave, in contrast to the heptatonic scale, which is common in Western music.

"Chinese music is much more diverse than many realize, with a variety of new elements. We aim to introduce these to American audiences and believe blending Chinese music with other styles is important. We would love to use our creative work to explore the future of Chinese music," she says.

Across different historical periods, European countries adapted classical music from Central Europe and Austria, spreading it to Norway, Finland and Russia, where it evolved into their own styles, says Cai, recalling the history of classical music. He believes the 21st century marks a new phase where Asia, especially China, is transforming symphonic music into its own art form.

"If you visit concert halls in the United States, you'll see that the audience is mostly elderly. New works rarely receive significant performances. I think this is a global issue, especially in the West. I believe we haven't reflected on how our music should represent contemporary voices," Cai says.

By establishing the Chinese music program at Bard College in New York, Cai hopes to explore Chinese music with contemporary voices.

Contact the writer at minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

WORLD

China's Vice-FM Ma:
Meet halfway on tiesBy ZHAO HUANXIN
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China expects the United States to act on the commitments made by President Joe Biden and meet each other halfway to further stabilize and develop the bilateral relations, a visiting Chinese diplomat said on Thursday.



Ma Zhaoxu

"I have made it clear to the US that China is committed to the stable development of China-US relations, while at the same time

firmly safeguarding its sovereignty, security and development interests," Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu told a briefing Thursday afternoon in Washington.

"It is not feasible to seek dialogue and cooperation while undermining China's interests, and the Chinese government and people will never accept containment, suppression and deprivation of China's legitimate right to development," Ma added.

The top Chinese diplomat made the remarks after talks with Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer in separate meetings on the first day of his four-day trip to the US.

Ma said he had an "extensive and in-depth" exchange of views with Campbell on China-US relations and international and regional issues of common concern, and the discussions were "candid and constructive".

Ma noted that it is in the interests of both countries and the expectation of the international community for China and the US to implement the important consensus reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Biden during their San Francisco meeting in November and to further stabilize and grow the bilateral relations.

China will continue to develop bilateral relations based on the three principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, as proposed by President Xi, the vice-minister said.

He said that during his talks

with Campbell, he asked the US side to honor the commitments made by President Biden.

During the November summit with Xi, Biden noted that he has always believed that the US-China relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world.

Biden reaffirmed the five commitments he made in Bali, Indonesia a year before, i.e., the United States does not seek a new Cold War, does not seek to change China's system, does not seek to revitalize its alliances against China, does not support "Taiwan independence", and has no intention to have a conflict with China, according to a Chinese readout of the summit.

At Thursday's meeting, Ma underscored that the Taiwan question is the first red line that must not be crossed in China-US relations.

"If the US really hopes for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, it should abide by the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués and honor its promise not to support 'Taiwan independence,'" Ma said.

On the Ukrainian issue, Ma said China has always maintained an objective and fair position, committed to promoting peace and dialogue, and pushing for a political solution to the crisis.

The vice-minister said China has not provided weapons to the conflicting parties and strictly controls and regulates dual-use goods.

"However, some people in the United States have made unreasonable accusations against China and shifted the blame to China," he said. "We firmly oppose this and will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard our own interests."

Ma also met with US Principal Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer, and the two sides had a candid and constructive conversation, building on the summit between the presidents in Woodside, California last November, said a readout from the White House.

The two sides discussed ongoing work to continue military-to-military communication and advance cooperation on areas in which their interests are aligned, such as counternarcotics, according to the readout.



Eruption of power

Billowing smoke and flowing lava are seen from a new fissure, during a surveillance flight above a new volcanic eruption on the outskirts of the evacuated town of Grindavik, Iceland, on Wednesday. The new volcanic eruption began on the Reykjanes Peninsula in the southwest. The lava fountains once reached 50 meters high. ICELANDIC COAST GUARD VIA AFP

Israel claims control of corridor

Battles intensify in Rafah as delivery of aid supplies in Gaza drops by two-thirds

RAFAH/JERUSALEM — Rafah residents reported intense artillery shelling and gunfire on Thursday in Gaza's far-southern city as Israel said it had seized a strategic corridor on the Palestinian territory's border with Egypt.

The Israeli military launched its assault in Rafah in early May despite international concerns over the fate of Palestinian civilians sheltering there.

A strike over the weekend that started a fire and killed dozens in a displacement camp drew a wave of fresh condemnation, including a social media campaign with the slogan "All eyes on Rafah" that has been shared by tens of millions of users.

Israel said on Wednesday its forces had taken over the 14-kilometer Philadelphia Corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border, which it suspects was used for smuggling weapons.

Military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari announced Israel had taken "operational control" of the narrow border area, where he said troops had "discovered around 20 tunnels".

Artillery and gunfire were seen in Gaza City's southern neighborhood of Zeitun, in the territory's north, where witnesses saw thick plumes of smoke rising over Jabalia refugee camp and Beit Lahia, Agence France-Presse reported.

A steady stream of civilians have fled Rafah, carrying their belongings on their shoulders, in cars or on donkey-drawn carts.

The conflict has already devastated Gaza's landscape. Before the

Rafah offensive began, the United Nations said up to 1.4 million people were sheltering there. Since then, 1 million have fled the area, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has said.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society reported late on Wednesday that two of its paramedics "were killed as a result of the Israeli occupation's direct bombing" of an ambulance near Rafah.

The United Nations, which has warned of famine in Gaza, said on Wednesday the amount of humanitarian aid entering the enclave has dropped by two-thirds since Israel began its military operation in Rafah this month.

"The amount of food and other aid entering Gaza, already insufficient to meet the soaring needs, has further shrunk since 7 May," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said.

A daily average of 58 aid trucks reached Gaza from May 7 to Tuesday, compared with a daily average of 176 aid trucks from April 1 to May 6, it said, a drop of 67 percent. It said those figures excluded private sector cargo and fuel.

Not enough assistance

The UN has long said at least 500 trucks a day of aid and commercial goods need to enter Gaza.

The weekend Israeli strike and ensuing fire, which tore through the camp for displaced Palestinians in Rafah, killed 45 people, according to



Protesters gather in Bordeaux, France, on Wednesday next to photos of children said to be victims of Israeli offensives in Gaza, during a rally in support of Palestinians. CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT / AFP

Gaza officials and has prompted two days of discussions at the UN Security Council.

In the wake of the strike, Algeria presented a draft UN resolution that "demands an immediate cease-fire respected by all parties" and the release of all hostages.

The conflict started when Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel on Oct 7, which killed about 1,200 people, according to Israeli figures.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 36,224 people in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry on Thursday.

Israel's National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi said the conflict could go on until the year's end.

Meanwhile, Brazil withdrew its ambassador to Israel on Wednesday, according to Brazil's official gazette.

Israel's foreign ministry said no official message has yet been received from the Brazilian government on the matter.

Brazil has appointed its recalled ambassador to Israel, Frederico Meyer, as the country's special representative to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

According to the federal government bulletin released on Wednesday, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed Meyer's new appointment on Tuesday.

Brazil recalled its ambassador to Israel in February after a diplomatic row erupted between the two countries due to the conflict in Gaza. Since then, the position of Brazil's ambassador to Israel has remained vacant.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Events firm probed over customer data hacking

SYDNEY — The Australian government was on Thursday investigating claims that a hacking group stole the details of 560 million customers from global events giant Ticketmaster.

The group, named ShinyHunters, said on an online forum that the stolen data included the names, addresses, phone numbers and partial credit card details of customers.

The information was available for \$500,000 in a "one-time sale", its post said.

"The National Office of Cyber Security is engaging with Ticketmaster to understand the incident," an Australian government spokesperson said in a statement.

It urged people with "specific inquiries" to contact Ticketmaster directly.

The FBI has offered assistance to Australian authorities, a US embassy spokesperson told Agence France-Presse.

ShinyHunters burst into notoriety in 2020-21 when it put up huge troves of customer records from more than 60 companies, according to the US Department of Justice.

In January, a court in Seattle jailed Sebastien Raoult, a French computer hacker who was a member of ShinyHunters.

He was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$5 million in restitution after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.

US prosecutors said the extensive hacking caused millions of dollars in losses to victim companies and "unmeasurable additional losses" to hundreds of millions of individuals whose data was sold to other criminals.

The authenticity of the dataset offered by ShinyHunters could not be immediately verified.

Hacks are impacting more people with increasingly severe consequences, University of Wollongong cybersecurity professor Katina Michael told AFP.

"The number of people hacked 'will grow, it could be up to 1 billion in the future', she said.

Governments and consumers are not doing enough to protect themselves or investing in basic protection mechanisms like two-factor authentication, Michael warned.

Ticketmaster, a California-based company, operates one of the largest online ticket sales platforms in the world.

The US Department of Justice filed a major antitrust lawsuit last week seeking to break up Ticketmaster and Live Nation's alleged monopoly in the music industry.

Ticketmaster's pricing practices, with high fees and lack of alternatives, have long been a political issue in the United States, with little done historically to open up the market to more competition.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Ex-US officials: Tariffs come with a cost

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
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Despite the challenge and the political sensitivity surrounding de-risking of economic and trade ties with China, two US former economic officers said that decoupling the two economies would be a mistake.

At a recent webinar titled "Balancing Economic Prosperity and National Security", Charlene Barshefsky, former US trade representative, and Amy Celico, a former US economic officer who worked in China, discussed the challenges of negotiating a bilateral investment treaty since 2010.

Both women, who are now directors for the National Committee on US-China Relations (NCUSCR), said the bilateral relationship is competitive, with varying degrees of tension. But it has been punctuated by intermittent cooperation and a resumption of selective dialogue.

Barshefsky, in talking about former US president Donald Trump's tariffs on China that started in 2018, said that the import duties were not strategic and affected lower-income households in particular.

"Tariffs are taxes, and they are not paid by the exporter. They're paid by the importer," she said.

However, on May 14, President Joe Biden increased tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs), lithium-ion EV batteries, battery

parts and solar cells.

EV tariffs have been quadrupled and will reach 100 percent. Tariffs on lithium-ion EV batteries and battery parts have more than tripled, increasing to 25 percent, while those on solar cells have doubled, reaching 50 percent.

Asked if the latest tariffs are necessary, Barshefsky said she is "not particularly fond of tariffs".

"I'm not a trade-barrier kind of person. I'm a fair-trade advocate who likes to see a level playing field," she said.

Barshefsky said that it was a "very hard" policy choice for the Biden administration, given the current economic challenges in the US.

Celico questioned the tariffs' impact on economic prosperity, whether they are justified for national security purposes, and if the US should compete with a country that operates under a different set of rules.

"And thinking about balancing economic prosperity with national security, we are paying a cost over this set of policies," Celico said.

There's no question that "we're paying a cost," said Barshefsky. As "most governments aren't philosophically oriented ... they're here and now oriented."

Many economists, who continue to favor less restrictive trade with China, have criticized both US presidential candidates' plans — not simply because they risk raising

prices for American shoppers.

Barshefsky, known globally as the architect and negotiator of China's World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement, which opened China's economy as a worldwide market, recognized that the idea behind WTO accession is not to create uniformity among countries, as countries are inherently different.

"It's not about establishing the same economic system everywhere. Instead, the goal is to foster greater compatibility between different economic models," she said. "So that in the international trade space, we're talking the same one ... roughly abiding by the same rules, and no system is perfect."

The US and China are not using the same model since China shifted from an import substitution economic model to an innovation program in 2010s, diverging from a Western-based system, according to Barshefsky.

As a former US economic officer working in Shanghai for years, Celico believes that previous US administrations understood that fostering closer economic ties by expanding cross-border investment flows would be beneficial for the relationship between the two countries. However, "our recent two governments failed in that endeavor," she said.

"Of course, the Chinese government would accuse the US government of undermining Chinese

interests at every turn and really trying to prevent China from continuing to be able to grow, unfairly treating Chinese investors in the US (and) restricting that access," said Celico.

Most Americans believe decoupling from China is not a good idea, she said. It would result in many challenges for both countries and effectively reduce the vulnerabilities of interdependence. It's important to protect national security interests while maintaining a robust economic relationship.

Celico said the way that China and the US treat each other in a global competition is consequential for the business community, but she hopes the competition can be more "constructive".

"I do think stakeholders matter so much right now, and the relationship requires more stabilization," she said.

One NCUSCR member questioned the policy regarding TikTok, which raises disputes about whether it's solely a security issue, and if so, what the basis for that is, saying "it seems to be anti-competitive. It seems to deny free trade and it doesn't make sense."

Barshefsky said that she generally "doesn't favor" a ban. Once implemented, "the ban is extremely harsh. They're too final and inflexible, and it's very hard to unban; circumstances have to be so radically different."

COMMENT

Editorials

China-Arab ties continue to move forward in spirit of friendship at an ever-faster pace

The convening of the 10th Ministerial Conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in Beijing on Thursday is the latest manifestation of the two sides' efforts to strengthen their historical bonds, traditional friendship and win-win cooperation. Relations between China and the Arab world have kept scaling new heights since the beginning of the new century, with the two sides agreeing to build a China-Arab community with a shared future in the new era at the first China-Arab States Summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in December 2022.

That President Xi Jinping announced on Thursday that Beijing will host the second China-Arab States Summit in 2026, two years prior to its scheduled date, demonstrates the two sides' confidence in the prospects for their relations, as well as their shared resolve to seek common development.

To realize that endeavor, the Chinese leader called for the two sides to further synergize their development strategies under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and strengthen their cooperation in key areas such as oil, gas, trade and infrastructure, and to step up their efforts to foster new growth areas such as artificial intelligence, investment, financing and new energy.

China welcomes the Arab states to participate in the China International Import Expo, and Arab banks to join the Cross-border Interbank Payment System. It also encourages the Arab states to deepen exchanges and cooperation on central bank digital currencies and issue panda bonds in China, which are among the latest opening-up measures the country has implemented in the financial sector. That highlights the two sides' intent to move beyond their traditional cooperation in fossil fuels to pursue an innovative, green and sustainable path to prosperity.

With that destination in mind, the two sides should nurture a more dynamic framework for their cooperation so they can put into practice the principle of planning together, building together and benefiting together.

As the Chinese leader said in his speech, in a world of growing diversity more dialogue means less confrontation, and more inclusiveness means less estrangement. With three influential Arab countries — Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — joining BRICS as new members, China and the Arab states can not only set a good model of South-South cooperation, they can also more effectively coordinate on the world stage and champion a more equitable global governance system.

Platforms such as the China-Arab Center for the Global Civilization Initiative, which Beijing has said it is ready to establish with the Arab side, and the China-Arab Research Center on Reform and Development that has been proposed, should be established to promote exchanges between think tanks, universities, research centers and the cultural and tourism departments and youth of the two sides.

Building a China-Arab community with a shared future represents a strong statement of the two sides' common desire for a new era of China-Arab relations and a better future for the world, featuring common development, peace and stability, mutual respect and true multilateralism.

The Middle East is a region with great development prospects, but it is a region still wracked by conflict. Since last October, the Israel-Palestine conflict has escalated rapidly, spilling over to the broader region. As China and the Arab states jointly advocate, justice should not be absent forever. China will continue to work with the Arab states in support of the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty based on the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital and Palestine's full membership in the United Nations.

As the meeting demonstrates, China and the Arab states are determined to carry forward the spirit of friendship, and that can only be of benefit to the world.

NATO should push talks, not weapons

France and Germany said on Tuesday that Ukraine should be allowed to use their weapons against targets inside Russia.

In a joint news conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron said that Ukraine would be permitted to use weapons supplied by France against military bases inside Russia from which Ukraine is being attacked.

His comments were echoed by the German leader, who said that Ukraine was allowed to defend itself so long as it complied with international law.

Which may sound well and good. But in fact it indicates that these countries and others want to use Ukraine to fight Russia so they don't have to bear the direct consequences themselves. That means that they are not seeking a negotiated end to the conflict.

This paints an alarmingly gloomier picture for the Ukraine conflict as instead of there being any signs of the conflict abating after dragging on for more than two years, the war at the heart of Europe now presents the formidable prospect that NATO is getting itself directly involved. That doesn't bode well for anybody.

Admittedly, Ukraine has become Europe's number one headache, putting it in a Catch-22 situation: despite the unprecedented Western unity and support behind the European country, Kyiv has made little progress on the battlefield.

Now, with many Europeans struggling with the cost of living crisis triggered by the conflict, European leaders are finding it ever more difficult to gain public support for the continued support of Kyiv, which is being increasingly viewed as an entreaty to nationalism to divert attention from their failures to deal with the problems at home.

But the bid for more visible Ukrainian progress in the conflict risks the direct involvement of NATO countries. Since they act on an all-for-one principle, that is a recipe for World War III given how far removed the United States is from the fight zone and how gung-ho inclined its leadership of the organization is.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already warned of a global conflict if Kyiv is allowed to use weapons supplied by Western countries to strike inside Russia. The prospect of a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be catastrophic, with unfathomable consequences for the world.

It has been clear from the start, that the US has sought to use Ukraine to drag Russia into a debilitating war of attrition. The war has not only consolidated unity of purpose within NATO but also strengthened the US grip on the organization that would otherwise have diminished to its demise.

It is no exaggeration to say that the US is the real maker and instigator of the Ukraine crisis, and the lighter of the fuse. With its endless pursuit of selfish interests, the US-led NATO has pushed rounds of eastward expansion, eroding the buffer zone between Russia and a resurgently belligerent NATO, harming Russia's security interests.

To consolidate the US' hegemony, Washington has every intention of prolonging the conflict as it calculates that serves several purposes, including weakening Russia and forcing Europe to further rely on it on security matters. Not to mention that US arms manufacturers and the broader US economy — and thus the vote-seekers in Washington — have benefited hugely from the Ukraine conflict. Each time the US Congress passes a bill to provide staggering amounts of military aid to Kyiv it is a cold-blooded lives-for-power exchange.

It is now evident to all that until Russia is exhausted by the conflict, the US will have no appetite to end the crisis, or stop taking advantage of it. This explains why the US has never showed an iota of interest in joining efforts to get Kyiv and Moscow to the negotiating table.

The other NATO members must not get trapped on the same wavelength as Washington lest it lead them by the nose. In which case, they would only find themselves embroiled in a worse mess than the one they are in now.

A negotiated end to the conflict and a new security architecture for Europe are what are needed, not an escalation of the crisis.

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Policy and resilience raise confidence in stable economic growth this year

The International Monetary Fund has raised its forecast for China's economic growth for 2024 to 5.0 percent from the previous 4.6 percent. It said this after concluding the 2024 China Article IV Consultation, its annual assessment of the Chinese economy, on Tuesday. The IMF also raised its forecast for China's economic growth to 4.5 percent for next year, up 0.4 percentage points compared with its April projection.

Actually, after China released its strong first-quarter economic data, many international institutions have raised their expectations for China's economy. The IMF said that its upward revisions of China's economic growth forecast are driven by China's strong GDP growth in the first quarter and recent policy initiatives. The IMF not only fully affirms China's economic performance, but also pins high hopes on its policies and economic trend in the next stage.

China's GDP registered growth of 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, and, given that, this was achieved despite last year's high base, it is indeed confidence-boosting. It was possible mainly because China's accelerated net export growth has considerably offset the slowdown in domestic demand.

Driven by the export industry chain, the current investment in China's manufacturing sector has continued to maintain a nearly double-digit growth rate, and the operating conditions of enterprises, those of small and medium-sized ones in particular, have improved significantly. Consequentially, the country has seen improvements in employment conditions. Statistics show that China's surveyed urban unemployment rate fell to 5.0 percent in April, the lowest in more than two years. A recent global foreign direct investment confidence index released by Kearney raised China's ranking from seventh last year to third. In the context of the global economy tending to stabilize and improve, China's greater efforts to stabilize foreign investment and foreign trade are expected to play a stronger driving role in boosting the economy.

China is expected to release a series of policy measures to mitigate the downside risks of its economy. The recent issuance of ultra-long-term special government bonds and the introduction of a slew of measures to stabilize the real estate market are rallying a stronger momentum for China's economy in the times ahead. What now matters most to China's economy is that the country should adopt an integrated and comprehensive policy package to facilitate the adjustment of the real estate sector and provide adequate macroeconomic support to boost domestic demand and mitigate downside risks. With the continuous unleashing of policy effects, aided by the still-existing resilience of external demand, China will in all probability achieve economic growth of 5.0 percent or more this year.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

ROK's foundation for compensation fatally flawed

Despite domestic opposition, Republic of Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol has pushed for setting up a government-backed foundation to compensate labor victims from the ROK who were exploited during World War II in an attempt to bypass the deadlock between Japan and the ROK over their colonial history and wartime culpability.

Japan and the United States played a behind-the-scenes role in this move. Shortly afterward, Yoon visited Japan, leading to a rapid warming of bilateral relations and the announcement of "significant progress" on a series of sensitive issues. However, on May 27, the head of the foundation said that the foundation lacks about 12 billion Korean won (\$8.71 million) required for compensation and called for donations from Japanese companies. The shortfall stems from a technical

flaw in the "foundation mode". First, the mode does not hold the responsible Japanese companies and the Japanese government accountable. Once the mandatory legal obligation to pay is stripped away, it becomes difficult to make enterprises "voluntarily donate". Especially, given that the Japanese government and responsible companies are unwilling to take responsibility for the historical crimes.

Second, the foundation accepts voluntary donations from both Japanese and ROK companies. So if the contribution from ROK conglomerates is too small, the foundation relies too heavily on Japanese enterprises and risks running out of funds; if the contribution from ROK conglomerates is too large, domestic opponents will inevitably clamor that Koreans are compensating themselves.

When the foundation model was introduced in March 2023, it involved 15 plaintiffs, and so far, more than 2.5 billion Korean won has been paid to 11 plaintiffs and their relatives. However, since the end of 2023, the ROK's supreme court has issued several unfavorable rulings against Japanese companies. And now the overdue interest is estimated to exceed 9.5 billion Korean won. The foundation may exhaust its funds.

Further, the Yoon government has become a lame duck following the opposition party's victory in the parliamentary elections on April 10, while the unfavorable economic situation in ROK makes it hard to press ROK conglomerates to "voluntarily donate". The Yoon government might need to find another solution to the decades-old problem.

— BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Strict accountability to prevent financial risks

The central leadership has recently reviewed trial regulations aimed at strengthening financial security.

The trial Regulations on Accountability for Failing to Prevent or Defuse Financial Risks strengthen the centralized and unified leadership of the Communist Party of China Central

Committee over work in the financial sector and require relevant administrative departments and financial institutions to shoulder their responsibilities.

With the new regulations, leading officials at all levels should shoulder their responsibilities to make sure that various tasks in strengthening financial regulation across the board, preventing and defusing financial risks, and promoting high-quality

development in the financial sector are fulfilled well.

As the central leadership stressed, a good job must be done in implementing the regulations. Rigor must be prioritized, the specific requirements of the regulations must be enforced to the letter, and any who violate them must be held to account. Financial oversight must have "teeth and thorns" that are sharp-pointed.

It should be emphasized that strict and strong financial supervision will not be a temporary campaign-style action. Authorities at various levels are expected to carry out sustained strict administrative and supervisory measures to ensure the healthy development of the financial sector.

In the past, there were problems of lax accountability and unfair rewards

and punishments in the country's financial sector. For example, some financial institution staff members violated laws and regulations in lending to fatten their own pockets, causing significant losses to the country. From now on, the discipline and financial supervisory departments must reinforce the institutional "firewall" and make the financial regulatory system and capabilities better adapt to the development requirements of the country's financial system.

They should resolutely investigate and deal with the corruption behind various financial risks, and hold those financial institution staff members and regulators who seek illegal gains from installing "revolving doors" between government and business accountable according to the law.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

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COMMENT

Li Honglei and Sun Nanxiang

China Coast Guard Procedures fully legitimate

Establishing, improving and perfecting a legal system for maritime governance are necessary measures to establish a sound maritime order. Accordingly, to implement maritime laws, the China Coast Guard recently issued the "Administrative Law Enforcement Procedures for Coast Guard Institutions" (referred to as Coast Guard Procedures).

The Coast Guard Procedures are aimed at regulating maritime law enforcement, providing a solid institutional guarantee for advancing maritime legal governance. Recently, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement, claiming China's Coast Guard Procedures violate international law. This is a typical case of "a thief crying thief", because the Coast Guard Procedures comply with international law and customary practices.

The Coast Guard Procedures are an important component of China's policy to improve regional maritime governance and uphold the rule of law. The procedures are applicable to China's jurisdictional waters and airspace in line with international legal norms, and do not constitute "rule-making beyond jurisdiction".

According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a country's jurisdictional waters extend beyond its internal waters and territorial seas to include contiguous zones, exclusive economic zones and continental shelves. For instance, Article 73 of UNCLOS says coastal states have the authority to take law enforcement actions such as boarding, inspection and arrest within their exclusive economic zones when exercising sovereign rights over exploration, exploitation, conservation and manage-

ment of living resources.

Coastal states may even pursue foreign vessels on the high seas if they have sufficient reason to believe the people operating those vessels are violating national laws and regulations.

Yet the Philippines claims that the application of China's Coast Guard Procedures is in violation of permissible international law boundaries, which is baseless. China's sovereignty and maritime rights in the South China Sea have been established through historical practices, and are fully legitimate.

Huangyan Island is an inalienable part of China's maritime territory — China was the first country to discover and name Huangyan Island and has been controlling and exercising jurisdiction over it and the surrounding waters since then.

On the other hand, the Philippines' so-called South China Sea arbitration award, which unlawfully determined that the waters near Huangyan Island fall under Philippine jurisdiction and are part of the high seas, is legally untenable. The South China Sea arbitration award blatantly violated international law, including UNCLOS. It is an illegal ruling concocted by the Philippines and the United States.

The various forms of law enforcement, in accordance with the Coast Guard Procedures, are all legitimate. Hence, China's right to detain and inspect foreign nationals suspected of illegally entering or exiting its maritime territory are in line with international law and common practices. If the US Coast Guard can have the right to detain foreign individuals who illegally enter or exit its maritime territory, why can't China?

In the almost three and a half years of the Joe Biden administration, the US has

detained thousands of people who illegally entered its waters. The Philippines' Coast Guard, too, has forcibly enforced the country's law and detained Chinese fishermen, accusing them of fishing illegally and causing environmental damage, posing a serious threat to Chinese nationals.

The implementation of the Coast Guard Procedures is part of China's efforts to enforce maritime law in order to improve regional maritime governance. The procedures clearly state that "administrative law enforcement must be based on facts and guided by the law" and should follow the principles of legality, fairness, openness, respect for and protection of human rights, and safeguarding the dignity of individuals, which is important to ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of maritime law enforcement.

The Coast Guard Procedures also uphold international law. For instance, Article 33 of the Coast Guard Procedures states that boarding, inspection, interception and pursuit of foreign vessels should comply with the provisions of international treaties to which China is a signatory, showing China is committed to promoting the rule of law globally.

Some non-regional major powers have long been meddling in the South China Sea issues, while trying to sow discord among countries around the South China Sea. Encouraged and supported by these major powers, Manila has been making one provocative move after another against Beijing.

Of late, Manila has reneged on its commitments and denied the existence of a "gentlemen's agreement" with China, while sending its coast guard and militia vessels to Huangyan Island and Ren'ai

Reef, which dangerously navigate the surrounding waters, leading to collisions with Chinese law enforcement vessels.

From May 15 to 17, a self-proclaimed civil organization in the Philippines mobilized a group of "local fishermen" to enter the waters around China's Huangyan Island. To safeguard China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and maritime rights, China's Coast Guard had no choice but to take appropriate countermeasures. And despite the Philippines' repeated provocations, Chinese maritime officials have acted lawfully, professionally and in a restrained manner to maintain peace in the South China Sea.

Maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea is the common aspiration of China and neighboring countries. China has long demonstrated its goodwill toward the Philippines, by agreeing to jointly manage maritime disputes, hoping that the Philippines would abide by the agreements reached between the two sides, adhere to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea to resolve the differences through negotiations.

Therefore, the Philippines should return to the path of dialogue and consultation to resolve the maritime disputes, while complying with international law and respecting the agreements reached by the regional countries to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, and refraining from exacerbating regional tensions.

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Chen Weihua

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US will burn itself by playing fire with 'Taiwan card'

The People's Liberation Army's latest naval drills around Taiwan island have sent a powerful and timely message to the separatists on the island that any attempt to seek "Taiwan independence", and to the external forces trying to interfere in the Taiwan question that using cross-Taiwan Strait relations as a tool to contain the Chinese mainland, is doomed to failure.

The naval drills were held after the new Taiwan administrative head, Lai Ching-te, in his inauguration speech on May 20, indicated he stood for "Taiwan independence", and challenged the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China.

Lai's outrageous speech made it clear that he is a hardcore "worker for Taiwan independence". And the PLA's drills were held to warn Lai to stop daydreaming about "Taiwan independence".

Adding fuel to the fire, however, Lai's predecessor Tsai Ing-wen recently said "the cost (for Beijing) of taking over Taiwan is going to be enormous" and "what we need to do is (to) increase the cost".

Lai, Tsai and their ilk are undermining the unwavering resolve of the whole Chinese nation's determination to achieve national reunification.

Beijing will make the utmost efforts to achieve peaceful reunification, but it will never rule out the use of force to achieve that goal if external forces interfere in the Taiwan question and the separatists on the island try to seek "Taiwan independence".

But the positive trend has reversed in the past eight years, thanks mainly to Tsai's policy, which changed the status quo and threatened cross-strait peace, stability and prosperity.

Cross-strait relations developed rapidly not just in trade and investment but also in terms of people-to-people exchanges after virtually no contact between the two sides of the Strait for almost 40 years after 1949.

It is especially true after Kuomintang won the island's local elections in 2008. From 2008 to 2016, under then Taiwan island leader Ma Ying-jeou, the island had very friendly relations with the mainland. It was also the time when cross-strait trade and other exchanges reached their peak.

But the positive trend has reversed in the past eight years, thanks mainly to Tsai's policy, which changed the status quo and threatened cross-strait peace, stability and prosperity. Like her successor, Tsai, too, refused to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus.

The military drills are to prevent Taiwan politicians such as Lai and Tsai, and their party, the Democratic Progressive Party, from going too far with their "independence" agenda, as well as to warn the United States against using Taiwan as a tool to further its "Indo-Pacific" strategy that the PLA held the drills.

That incumbent US President Joe Biden and his predecessor have sent more wrong signals to the separatists on the island than any other US president is very clear. During a Brookings Institution discussion last month, Rorry Daniels, managing director of Asia Society Policy Institute and a China specialist, warned that the more Washington supports "Taiwan independence", the more the threat of force against the island.

She listed numerous such US policy changes. For example, the US government has changed the language of regular policy statements, replacing "support for an outcome acceptable to both sides of the Strait" with an outcome acceptable to (only) the people of Taiwan, refers to Taiwan as a "country" in its National Security Policy documents and State Department fact sheets, has deleted statements on the State Department website which said it would not support "Taiwan independence", and approved of high-level political visits by US officials to Taipei including that of former House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022.

The list of such provocations is very long. US naval warships sailing through the Taiwan Strait in January and Biden sending a delegation to Taiwan for Lai's inauguration are some of the latest provocations, not to mention Biden's erroneous remarks on Taiwan that were walked back by White House officials.

Some US politicians are trying to misinterpret UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 which states the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate representative of China. But the US should know that helping "Taiwan independence" forces is playing with fire. And by doing so, the US will only burn itself.

Hassan Ragab

Culture wellspring of Chinese youth's confidence

I had the privilege of studying in China in the 1980s. Since then I have engaged deeply with the Chinese language and culture.

Upon returning to Egypt, I dedicated myself to teaching the Chinese language and promoting Chinese culture in my country, establishing three Chinese departments and serving as the foreign director of the Confucius Institute at Suez Canal University in Egypt for nearly a decade. And by doing so, I have realized the importance of cultural inheritance in boosting cultural confidence.

First, the inheritance of Chinese culture is crucial for the enhancement of Chinese people's confidence.

Similarly, people in every country should have confidence in their respective culture and traditions. As a 5,000-year-old civilization, China has a rich cultural heritage including Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, traditional Chinese medicine, calligraphy, painting and opera.

These cultural traditions reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese people, and characterize their cultural identity. By promoting these valuable cultural assets, China can showcase its confidence, pride and charm on the world stage.

Second, the inheritance of Chinese culture plays a key role in enhancing the country's cultural soft power, and culture is a vital component of a country's soft power. As a major global power, China's cultural traditions have influenced people worldwide.

For example, traditional Chinese cultural heritages such as Peking Opera, Kunqu Opera, tea ceremonies and Tai Chi are practiced and celebrated worldwide. By promoting these cultural heritages, China can also enhance its discourse power and influence in the global arena, injecting new vitality into its cultural soft power.

And third, the inheritance of Chinese culture is a key necessarily for promoting national cohesion and enhancing people's sense of identity. In the context of social diversity and economic globalization, national identity is essential for maintaining stability and unity.

China is home to 56 ethnic groups, each with its distinct cultural traditions. Cultural inheritance serves as an important bond promoting harmonious coexistence among these diverse ethnic groups. By inheriting and promoting their excellent traditional cultures, the Chinese people can enhance their sense of identity and community, fostering national unity and harmonious development.

This underscores the importance of striking a delicate balance between traditional culture and modern civilization, and fostering a harmonious relationship

between the preservation of cultural heritage and the pursuit of innovative development, addressing pressing issues at hand. China's successful promotion of its culture offers other developing countries some significant lessons.

Developing countries should protect their valuable cultural assets by building legal safeguards and educating their people about the importance of their cultural heritages.

I have seen the immense impact of cultural inheritance in both cities and rural areas in China. In Beijing, for instance, historical sites such as the Palace Museum and the Summer Palace are well-preserved, attracting millions of domestic and foreign tourists. This not only boosts Chinese people's cultural confidence but also helps spread Chinese culture globally. And in Jiangsu province, traditional handicrafts such as Suzhou embroidery and cloisonné remain vibrant in the market, enriching the lives of local residents and facilitating business.

Also, strengthening cultural education

to instill among youths a sense of identity is crucial. By introducing traditional culture courses in curriculums, the authorities can help students gain a better understanding of their culture. Such an approach will not only boost national pride but also nurture talents with both modern perspectives and deep cultural understanding.

During my visits to various Chinese primary and secondary schools, I have observed that traditional culture courses are taught from the elementary to university level, which helps students gain a deep understanding of their cultural roots even if their major is science and technology.

Engaging in international cultural exchanges to showcase one's culture is essential. In this age of globalization, cultural exchanges and mutual learning have become increasingly important. And cultural exchanges not only promote different countries' cultures but also allow countries to learn from each other's experiences.

Using online platforms such as new

media to disseminate cultural knowledge, too, is important for engaging with people, especially the youth, of other countries. In fact, China Central Television and China Global Television Network broadcast high-quality cultural documentaries, and high-tech companies develop culture-themed apps, breathing new life into traditional culture.

China's experience shows that only by respecting and protecting traditional culture can a country boost its cultural confidence, which other developing countries can emulate to promote their cultures worldwide. By strengthening their cultural education, engaging in global cultural exchanges, and promoting their cultures using modern technologies, developing countries can chart a path of cultural development that is both unique and suited to their real situation.

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JIN DING / CHINA DAILY



GLOBAL VIEWS



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

ONG TEE KEAT

Tone setter

Malaysia has blazed a trail for ASEAN's relations with China

Half a century ago, much to the surprise of the world, Malaysia emerged as the first member state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China.

The bold move raised many eyebrows across the world as it came amid the headwind brought about by the Cold War ideological face-off. Instead of rallying behind the West, the then Malaysian prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein sought to pursue the collective dream of ASEAN in creating a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia.

The ideal was embodied in the 1971 ZOPFAN Declaration signed off by the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and the special envoy of the National Executive Council of Thailand in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The signatory parties publicly stated their intent to keep Southeast Asia "free from any form or manner of interference by outside Powers" and "broaden the areas of cooperation". This was viewed then as a move toward equidistant diplomacy by ASEAN amid the protracted Cold War ideological confrontation.

Given the benefits of hindsight, it was in the interest of ASEAN to stay out of the Cold War confrontation by proactively thawing the relations with China. ASEAN's pursuit of peace could only come true through the engagement with its giant neighbor China. This explains the collective wisdom of ASEAN's founding countries in rolling out the ZOPFAN Declaration before the end of the Vietnam War.

Malaysia was geopolitically astute in tapping the opportunity of the ZOPFAN ideal. Never had the nation imagined that it would be instrumental in linking China to the bloc decades later. This became real when the then Chinese foreign minister accepted Malaysia's invitation to attend the 24th ASEAN Min-

isterial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 1991. Beijing's readiness to cooperate with the regional bloc has since precipitated the engagement of China as ASEAN's first dialogue partner, which later further evolved into a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2021.

Prior to this, the warming of Malaysia-China diplomatic ties in the early 1990s witnessed the inauguration of the Track II diplomacy, where people-to-people exchanges between the two nations were allowed to flourish as the Cold War finally came to an end. The engagements made leaps and bounds in multi-dimensions with growing confidence, among which legislatures' interaction stood out as a bright spot, alongside the conventional trade and culture exchange.

In 1993, the Malaysian Parliament rolled out the red carpet in greeting the first ever visiting chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, inaugurating the engagement of people representatives borne out of diverse political systems of governance. This further signifies the disparity of political governance has never been a stumbling block to fostering symbiotic cooperation in pursuit of shared aspirations. This became increasingly real and relevant in the globalized world as the new millennium was ushered in.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

As China was actively and confidently integrating itself into the Southeast Asian regional dynamics, it was among the first countries outside ASEAN to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 2003, signifying its commitment to embracing ASEAN's foundational peace treaty

that embodies the universal principles of peaceful coexistence and friendly cooperation among its member states and beyond. The peace dividend accrued therefrom provides an environment conducive to trust building and economic cooperation between China and its Southeast Asian neighbors,

including Malaysia.

Over the years, Malaysia, as a trading nation, has owed much of its economic progress to the global trading facilitated by its non-aligned diplomacy which stays above geopolitical affiliation. In this context, the robust China-ASEAN trade that reached \$911.7 billion in 2023 has proven to be most rewarding to Malaysia.

Last year witnessed the 15th consecutive year in which China continued to be Malaysia's top trading partner, and Malaysia the second-largest trading partner in ASEAN to China. In 2023, China held 21 percent of Malaysia's total trade, while in the first quarter of this year, trade with China further expanded 3.3 percent year-on-year to over 112 billion yuan (\$23.9 billion).

All in all, Malaysia is deeply ingrained in China's value chain in the region, and this will be more so as an increasing number of Chinese enterprises have been endeavoring to relocate their supply chains to Malaysia in response to the supply chain reorientation after the COVID-19 pandemic shock.

While Malaysia intensifies its efforts in drawing in more FDI from China, notably in manufacturing, infrastructure development, and digital innovation, where high value and quality investments are prioritized, the nation is equally committed to galvanizing its relations with China through more

dimensions of engagement beyond sheer economics.

In this context, the recent reciprocal granting of visa-free status to tourists from both countries is a timely harbinger of more people-to-people exchanges as the two countries usher in the sixth decade of Malaysia-China ties. This is commensurate with the coming of age of the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership amid the escalating geopolitical rivalry in the region. Ten years on, it's time to see a mature Track II diplomacy underpinning the Malaysia-China relationship. Statistics of tourist arrivals may provide a good quantitative indicator of such engagement, but certainly not the entirety of Track II diplomacy. In-depth understanding of each other's cultures and norms in the respective social fabrics is to be given due emphasis.

In commemorating the golden jubilee anniversary of the bilateral relations, the historic deeds of the past leaders from both nations in facilitating the China-ASEAN engagement remain inspirational.

With the incoming ASEAN rotational presidency in 2025, whether Malaysia could ever repeat the same feat by means of concluding the ongoing ASEAN-China Free Trade Area 3.0 is indeed anybody's guess. But one thing for sure is China and ASEAN, including Malaysia, are all set to endeavor the coming into fruition of the China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Vision 2030.

What lies ahead is exploration of cooperation in sectors such as the blue economy, the digital economy and low-carbon sustainable development. Along the way, common challenges posed by unconventional insecurities, ranging from climate change, food and energy security concerns are all set to put the partnership to test.

The author is president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for the Asia-Pacific and former transport minister of Malaysia. The author contributed this article to China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

PETER T C CHANG

Pioneering partners

China and Malaysia are working together to advance a more stable and equitable new world order

The strong relationship between China and Malaysia can be a catalyst for advancing a more stable and representative world order. By leveraging their close ties, both nations can collaborate on diplomatic initiatives, economic partner-

ships, and cultural exchanges that promote global stability and inclusivity.

In 1974, Chairman Mao Zedong and then Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein convened in Beijing to formally establish diplomatic relations between China and Malaysia. This significant event, occurring during the Cold War era, marked Malaysia's strategic realignment to reduce its dependency on Western powers. This momentous decision laid the foundation for deeper bilateral engagement between the two countries and contributed to regional stability.

In the 1980s, economic integration became the focal point of the China-Malaysia relationship. Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian prime minister at that time, recognized China's potential as an emerging economic power and sought to strengthen economic ties. He encouraged Malaysian businesses to explore opportunities in China and welcomed Chinese investment in Malaysia.

Over the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has emerged as a pivotal catalyst further driving and shaping the robust economic cooperation between the two nations. In 2022, China-Malaysia trade reached \$203.59 billion, up 15.3 percent year-on-year. China has

been the largest trading partner of Malaysia for 15 consecutive years since 2009, accounting for 21 percent of Malaysia's total trade in 2023.

From the 1990s onwards, Malaysia advocated for a greater role for China in regional and international groups. Through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the East Asia Summit, South-South cooperation and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, Malaysia has supported China's active participation, recognizing the mutual benefits of such engagement in promoting economic growth, regional stability, and development cooperation.

The strengthening of ties between China, Malaysia and the broader region is occurring against the backdrop of a shifting global order. The 21st century is witnessing a paradigmatic transition from a Western-centric international system to one that is more representative of the global community as a whole. As with all historic changes, this transition presents both opportunities and risks. Tensions are rising worldwide, with warfare erupting in Europe and the Middle East. In the Asia-Pacific region, the danger of open conflict remains high across the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea.

In 2025, Malaysia will assume the chairmanship of ASEAN. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has pledged to revitalize ASEAN-led forums, such as the East Asia Summit, to reinforce ASEAN's central role in regional affairs. This is crucial as geopolitical tensions in the region are escalating, putting Southeast Asian countries at risk of being reduced to mere pawns in the ongoing great power rivalries. Southeast Asian nation-states must

take proactive steps to deescalate regional tensions.

In this regard, the pragmatic relationship between China and Malaysia plays a vital role in mitigating risks. In the South China Sea, for instance, despite unresolved territorial disputes, leaders of both countries have agreed to set aside their differences to pursue the greater common good. By prioritizing cooperation over conflict, Beijing and Putrajaya can contribute to regional stability and foster an environment conducive to peaceful negotiations and mutual economic growth. This approach not only helps to manage tensions but also sets a positive example for other nations in the region facing similar challenges.

The ongoing US-China trade war poses significant risks to the global economic order. The imposition of tariffs and sanctions undermines a key ASEAN principle: promoting open trade with all stakeholders for the common good. This protectionist trend threatens to disrupt supply chains, increase costs for consumers, and hinder economic growth across the region.

In this context, strong China-ASEAN economic cooperation, exemplified by initiatives such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, serves as a stabilizing counterweight. China and Malaysia must continue to champion open trade and economic cooperation to counter rising economic nationalism. By strengthening their economic ties and supporting multilateral trade agreements, Beijing and Putrajaya can help ensure a more resilient and interconnected regional economy. This collaborative approach not only mitigates the adverse effects of the US-China trade war but also promotes long-



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

term prosperity and stability in Southeast Asia.

In March 2023, during a visit to Beijing, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and President Xi Jinping agreed to collaborate on building trust between world cultures through the Global Civilization Initiative. This commitment is crucial, as mistrust between civilizations has become a major cause of human conflict.

The ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict, for instance, is fueled by deep-seated religious animosity. Prime Minister Anwar has been a vocal

advocate for a two-state solution as a means to resolve the Palestinian crisis. Recently, China has assumed a critical role in addressing the Middle East crisis by brokering a detente between Saudi Arabia and Iran and mediating reconciliation between Palestinian factions. Malaysia and China should collaborate to help bring the Gaza conflict to an end.

Over the past half-century, despite some challenges, the ties between the two countries have been strengthened. Looking ahead, the prospects for growth remain

strong. However, the robust bilateral bonds between China and Malaysia have broader significance. Beijing and Putrajaya can and should work together to foster greater regional stability and help advance a new world order that is truly representative.

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BUSINESS

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Auto execs punch big holes in 'overcapacity', subsidy narratives

By CHENG YU
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China's auto industry had no overcapacity problem in the recent past and even now automakers have to incentivize component companies to increase their production capacity to meet the soaring domestic demand, said executives from leading vehicle manufacturers at a recent gathering organized by the China Public Diplomacy Association.

"As a vehicle manufacturer, we have been encouraging our component suppliers to increase their production capacity to ensure that our production and sales will not be affected due to high demand. Sometimes, we even provide some financial support ourselves to incentivize them to expand their capacity," said Wang Zhang, chief scientist of automaker BAIC Group.

Wang said that in certain segments of the vehicle sector in China, there has been insufficient capacity and the supply of some high-quality, high-level key auto components remains tight this year.

According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, last year, China's new energy vehicle sales reached 9.49 million units, slightly lower than the production of 9.59 million units.

"Considering the rapid growth we have achieved in recent years, there is actually no overcapacity at the current stage," Wang said.

"In a market economy, we companies do not blindly expand capacity without market demand, as overcapacity would lead to economic losses."

He said BAIC Group did not receive any so-called subsidy from the government and the government subsidies in recent years are mainly targeted at

consumers, not companies.

Zhao Yuhui, vice-president of Chinese EV maker Zeekr, which went public on the New York Stock Exchange this month, said: "The development of Chinese NEVs over the years is directly related to their own investments."

"Chinese automakers have devoted a significant amount of time and effort to the research and development of NEVs. The industry's advantages have been achieved through genuine expertise in long-term scientific research and innovation, and have been shaped by extensive market competition."

Zhao also said that China, as one of the countries with the most diverse road and vehicle usage scenarios globally, offers a unique testing ground for the NEV industry.

"The large number of vehicle owners also provides abundant positive feedback, allowing car manufacturers to quickly iterate and improve their products based on user feedback, leading to significant progress."

In addition, many carmakers are now focusing on NEVs, investing heavily in R&D and innovation. This not only brings substantial technological accumulation to the market but also provides consumers with more choices, he said.

Wei Wei, assistant professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou), said that EVs have been playing a role in ensuring energy security and achieving the dual carbon goals.

"China's NEV industry has been continuously offering affordable, high-quality capacity, which will make a significant contribution to global green development," she said.



An employee works on a solar panel production line in Baotou, Inner Mongolia autonomous region.
LIU LEI / XINHUA

Experts laud plan for carbon reduction

Multiple sectors may gain as 74 GW of new installations could be created

By LIU YUKUN
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The carbon reduction action plan released by the State Council on Wednesday signals a clear energy-saving roadmap and timeline, experts said on Thursday.

They highlighted that the relaxation of the requirement on the utilization rate of new energy may create about 74 gigawatts of new installations, bringing multiple benefits to key sectors.

The National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic regulator, said that despite the significant progress made in advancing energy-saving technologies and carbon reduction, China's green transition is behind schedule for 2021-25, due to factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, making the task of meeting the binding targets essential this year and the next.

The plan outlines that by the end of this year, energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP should decrease by around 2.5 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively.

Non-fossil energy is expected to weigh around 18.9 percent in total energy consumption by the end of this year, with key industries expected to achieve energy savings equivalent to about 50 million metric tons of standard coal and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 130 million tons.

By 2025, the proportion of non-fossil energy consumption should

increase to about 20 percent of the total mix, the plan said.

"The plan demonstrates China's strong commitment to a green transition despite challenges," said Jin Li, vice-president of the Southern University of Science and Technology. "It highlights several key issues to be addressed, including optimizing the energy structure, upgrading industries and transforming energy consumption patterns. It calls for dealing with problems like reliance on fossil fuels, low energy efficiency and outdated production methods and technologies in some industries."

To tackle these problems, the plan proposes specific solutions, including reducing fossil fuel consumption, increasing non-fossil energy use and implementing energy-saving and carbon-reduction actions in energy-intensive industries like steel, petrochemicals, construction and transportation. It also calls for refining policies and increasing financial support to facilitate China's green transition.

"This action plan signals further development opportunities for sectors like decarbonization of fossil fuels, new energy, energy storage, environmental protection, green buildings and electric vehicles," Jin said.

Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, echoed the sentiment. "The increasing share of new-energy installations already had a substantial impact on the grid due to its volatility and instability.

Recent favorable policies are actively promoting the consumption of new-energy electricity, which will drive the development of multiple segments like energy storage and green power trading."

China Galaxy Securities analysts said that the action plan's stipulation that the utilization rate of new energy should be lowered from 95 percent to 90 percent in resource-rich areas, could create about 74 GW of new-energy installation space. They predicted that this demand could potentially increase China's photovoltaic installation scale in 2024-25.

The plan offers guidelines on healthier industry development by raising the entry requirement of new nonferrous metal projects. The analysts said low-quality silicon production capacities may be gradually eliminated, benefiting companies with cost and technology advantages in silicon materials and batteries.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said emission reductions need a stable mechanism that allows various industries to improve energy efficiency and also gain benefits from the process.

Beyond the new-energy sector, the application of low-carbon technologies in high-energy-consuming sectors like green buildings will also see broad development opportunities.

Charlie Zheng, chief economist at Samoyed Cloud Technology Group, said, "Under higher energy-efficiency and environmental standards, small-scale steel, cement and nonferrous projects may be gradually phased out, thus driving the upgrade of industry equipment manufacturing."

EgyptAir to expand operations in China

By CHINA DAILY in Shanghai

EgyptAir, a prominent airline in Africa and the Middle East, has unveiled ambitious plans to bolster its footprint in the Chinese market through significant business expansion and strategic partnerships.

The airline announced its plans during ITB China 2024, an industry event. The airline's latest initiatives aim to enhance connectivity, promote cultural exchanges and attract more Chinese tourists to Egypt.

During the event, EgyptAir revealed its intention to ramp up its Cairo-Shanghai route to four weekly flights starting July 14, with plans for additional flights to Beijing in the pipeline.

Emphasizing China's importance as a key market, Amr Adawy, vice-president (commercial) of EgyptAir, highlighted the airline's commitment to expanding its presence in China.

"China is a top priority for EgyptAir due to its vast population and significant passenger volume," said Adawy. "We aim to expand our destinations in China to foster greater cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two countries."

Currently operating 16 weekly flights between Cairo and various cities in China, including routes to Guangzhou in Guangdong province, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, EgyptAir is set to introduce new routes to Hong Kong and Xiamen, a coastal city in Fujian province.

Besides Adawy, other top executives from EgyptAir, including EgyptAir Holding Company's chairman and CEO Elnakady Yehia, EgyptAir's chairman and CEO Mohamed Moussa, attended ITB Shanghai 2024 to explore further business opportunities in the region.

A significant milestone was reached as Cairo International Airport, in collaboration with EgyptAir, signed an agreement with Shanghai International Airport Co, underscoring the deepening cooperation between China and Egypt in the aviation sector.

In a bid to promote cultural exchanges, EgyptAir is partnering with the Shanghai Museum to present an exhibition titled *On Top of the Pyramid: The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*. Scheduled to run from July 19 to Aug 17, 2025, the exhibition aims to showcase the rich heritage of the ancient Egyptian civilization in Asia.

Ashraf Rateb, vice-president (tourism) of EgyptAir, emphasized the shared history and culture of Egypt and China, noting the significance of appreciating each other's splendid heritage.

To attract more Chinese tourists, EgyptAir introduced enticing discounts, including a 50 percent discount on flights from China to Egypt or connecting through Egypt to other destinations during the ITB exhibition.

Adawy reiterated EgyptAir's commitment to enhancing services tailored to the needs of the Chinese market, highlighting the airline's dedication to improving passenger experience. With Shanghai's focus on high-quality cultural tourism, EgyptAir is optimistic about the growth potential in the Chinese market.

Through its expansions, partnerships and cultural initiatives, EgyptAir, he said, aims to strengthen connectivity, foster cultural exchanges and invite more Chinese travelers to explore the wonders of Egypt. "I encourage everyone to visit Egypt by choosing EgyptAir."

Luo Bin contributed to this story.



A Zeekr 007 vehicle on display during an auto expo in Beijing.
TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

BYD debuts fifth-gen DM hybrid technology

Chinese new energy vehicle giant BYD has released its fifth-generation dual mode hybrid technology for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles with a comprehensive driving range of 2,100 kilometers. With the technology, BYD's plug-in hybrid vehicles can lead globally in a series of key indicators including achieving a thermal efficiency of 46.06 percent, a fuel consumption of 2.9 liters per 100 km even when in an electricity-deficit state, and a comprehensive range of 2,100 km.

Jan-April container throughput up 9%

China's container throughput at its ports rose 9 percent year-on-year in the first four months amid foreign trade expansion, official data showed. A total of 104.03 million twenty-foot equivalent units of containers were handled at domestic ports during the period, said the Ministry of Transport. The country's cargo throughput at ports totaled 5.55 billion metric tons over the period, up 5.2 percent.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Further limits on securities refinancing urged

By ZHOU LANXU
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As investor confidence in China's A-share market has yet to substantially improve, finance experts stressed the need to further limit securities refinancing activity or potentially even halt it to ensure market fairness and stability.

In essence, the securities refinancing market enables listed companies' major shareholders to lend shares they own to investors for short-selling. Such shareholders lend their stocks to a securities finance company, and the company lends the shares to a brokerage, which, in turn, lends them to investors for short-selling purposes.

China has prohibited the lending of restricted shares — stocks that cannot be sold during a lock-in period — in a new regulation on Friday, aimed at fending off large shareholders' illegal shareholding reduction moves. Yet, major shareholders' lending of circulating shares remains permissible.

With the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index hovering between 3085.38 and 3174.27

points this month despite improving economic data and continuous policy support, some retail investors have attributed the lukewarm performance to securities refinancing activity.

Common complaints on social media include that securities refinancing could facilitate short selling, intensify downward market pressure and put retail investors in a disadvantaged position as only those with securities assets worth at least 500,000 yuan (\$69,099) are eligible to borrow shares.

"Blaming the market downturn and volatility solely on securities refinancing is clearly unreasonable," said Yang Haiping, a researcher at the Central University of Finance and Economics' Institute of Securities and Futures.

However, securities refinancing indeed causes inequities among different types of investors, easily stirs up trouble during market downturns and can hinder the restoration of investor confidence, Yang said.

"In light of this, while adopting various measures to enhance the quality of listed companies, combat illegal activities and encourage the

entry of long-term capital, it is advisable to first completely halt securities lending," he said.

Independent stock market analyst Wang Jiyue suggested that instead of using asset size as the threshold to determine eligibility for borrowing shares, eligibility should be based on passing qualification tests to address issues of fairness.

Data from Wind Info showed that the outstanding amount of shares lent in the stock refinancing market has decreased to 45.88 billion yuan as of the end of April, from 110.42 billion yuan as of the end of last year as the China Securities Regulatory Commission has made efforts to better regulate the activity.

Wu Qing, chairman of the CSRC, said in March that the commission will further strengthen regulations when it comes to securities refinancing to address loopholes.

Xue Yi, a professor of finance at the University of International Business and Economics, said that completely shutting down the stock refinancing market may not be the best option as it is still beneficial in terms of boosting liquidity and providing risk hedging.

But Xue stressed the need to optimize the regulations related to securities refinancing, including requiring institutional investors to disclose the real-time data of their share borrowing behaviors — including whether the borrowed equities are used for short-selling — and introducing third-party audit firms to assure disclosure compliance.

It is also necessary to impose stricter restrictions on the volume of short-selling by investors who have borrowed shares during market downturns and in sectors strategically important for national security, to guard against malicious short-selling, Xue said.

The monitoring of securities refinancing should be strengthened to better detect and restrict frequent arbitrage activities, he added.

Yang Delong, chief economist at First Seafont Fund, said it is reasonable to restrict the size of securities refinancing during drastic market slumps, but completely abolishing the practice could impede price discovery and lead to market bubbles over the long run.

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Chinese autos looking to meet global demand

Market proximity, geopolitical stress, trade frictions lead to more offshore vehicle production

By LIU YUKUN
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More than 1,000 years ago, an overland trading route starting from present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi province, transported silk and porcelain during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) to West Asia and Europe. Today, the Silk Road still exists, but its cargo has evolved to new energy products, with electric vehicles leading the charge.

Due to cost-effectiveness, improved quality and efficient after-sales service, Chinese new energy vehicles have steadily gained a larger market share by offering affordable solutions to green transition drives in more countries, especially developing economies.

Most recently, Chinese NEVs and auto parts manufacturers are increasingly setting up production facilities overseas, as their foreign clients demand quick responses to their needs and on-time delivery amid heightened supply chain security concerns — all within the context of deglobalization and geopolitical tensions. Central Europe and Mexico are becoming key destinations for investment.

Although some Western politicians and media outlets claim that China is creating excess capacity and dumping products at low prices overseas, experts and business executives argue the notion is unfounded, saying that the growing overseas footprint of Chinese EVs and auto parts makers not only facilitates the global green transition and benefits users by reducing costs, but also offers substantial opportunities for global manufacturers.

"Some foreign media have inaccurately linked China's export growth in recent years to overcapacity, labeling it as 'dumping' without basis. The strong export performance of Chinese branded vehicles is due to improved product quality, technological upgrades and enhanced business services," said Fu Bingfeng, deputy secretary-general of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

The association said that in the first two months, about 831,000 vehicles were exported, representing a 21.9 percent year-on-year increase. Among these, 285,000 were NEVs, marking an 11.1 percent year-on-year increase.

Responding to "overcapacity" accusations, Fu said the current utilization rate of China's NEV production capacity now exceeds 70 percent, which is within a reasonable range.

"China's automotive industry is currently undergoing a transition period (from traditional fueled cars to NEVs). During this transition, investing ahead of market demand is a normal development strategy for the industry. As the market share of NEVs continues to rise, demand for traditional fuel vehicles will gradually be replaced. Consequently, companies will refurbish existing factories and transition to producing NEVs, which is a dynamic conversion process and needs time to adjust production capacity," Fu said.

"Global consumers favor Chinese NEVs because they fill supply gaps in certain regions, which is driven purely by market demand. China's NEV development provides technical support and policy references for the development of NEVs globally, contributing to worldwide green development," he said.

Norbert Wiest, general manager of SW China, the Chinese branch of German machine tool maker SW, said, "It is logical for China's car industry to go global."

Wiest said, "In industrial history, every rapidly expanding and influential economy has ventured onto the global stage. For instance, Japan extended its reach globally during the growth of its automotive industry. Although Japan faced initial hurdles, it succeeded in its second attempt due to enhanced performance, technological advancements and cost reductions achieved through mass production — an



Consumers experience a BYD electric vehicle at a dealership in Mengzi, Yunnan province, in May. XUE YINGYING / FOR CHINA DAILY



Visitors check out SW products during a machine expo in Shanghai in April 2018. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The booth of Zhejiang Shuanghuan Driveline Co Ltd is seen at an industrial fair in Shanghai in September 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

experience similar to that of China. Additionally, German OEMs achieved considerable success by exporting parts to China."

He added that the competitive pricing of Chinese NEVs and auto parts manufacturers is driven by technological progress and large-scale production, pointing out that long-term market strategies and excellent services play crucial roles in their international success.

"Many of SW's customers in China are Tier-1 suppliers that directly serve OEMs. Their primary motivation for overseas expansion includes following global customers like Tesla into Europe and North America. These innovative companies have also contributed to global technological advancements in the electric vehicle sector, benefiting various entities in the supply chain," Wiest said.

Wiest said SW's Hungary branch saw a business boom in the past two years, largely due to orders from Chinese auto parts makers establishing production bases there.

"It's a win-win process. Our business with Chinese customers also experienced remarkable expansion."

Last year, about 40 percent of SW's global income came from Chinese orders.

SW Group isn't the only foreign company to benefit from China's rapid NEV development. EMAG Group, another German machine tool manufacturer, said it will further tap opportunities from China's evolving NEV market with several million euros of investment over the next three to five years.

"China is playing an increasingly

significant role in supporting EMAG's global structure. We are confident in further collaboration with Chinese customers as they expand globally," said Markus Clemens, global CEO of EMAG Group.

"EMAG is poised to support its Chinese partners not only within China, but also across international markets, including Europe and emerging regions like Southeast Asia," Clemens said.

The remarks came after Chinese automakers, a downstream industry of machine tool manufacturing, are facing critical challenges including the European Union's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese-made EVs.

The challenges that Chinese NEVs face are daunting. In mid-May, the US government decided to impose additional tariffs on its imports of Chinese products like electric vehicles and lithium-ion batteries on top of existing tariffs under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974. Starting this year, the US government will increase tariffs on imported Chinese EVs from 25 percent to 100 percent.

Despite Chinese NEVs having a relatively small market share in the US, analysts explained that the rationale behind the US move is a concern about the rapid growth of the Chinese NEV industry, which it sees as a potential threat to US competitiveness.

The pressure on Chinese companies to invest and build factories in other parts of the world will increase, accelerating their decision-making processes, said Sun Lei, a senior partner at Beijing Dacheng Law Offices.

Chinese companies have started such attempts in recent years, with Central Europe and Mexico becoming key investment destinations.

Chen Shihua, deputy secretary-general of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, said: "Amid the current trend of deglobalization and geopolitical complexities, foreign clients, either being dealers or automakers, are shifting their focus from cost to supply chain security. As a result, they favor suppliers of NEVs or auto parts capable of production near their sites."

Chen said: "Tapping the trend, Chinese automakers and parts suppliers have started venturing overseas and gained significant market share and recognition due to their years of large-scale production, technological advancements, and comprehensive supply chain systems and services."

In Central Europe, both leading automotive industry players and specialized niche companies are setting up operations in Serbia and Hungary due to their strategic location, favorable policies and proactive efforts to attract Chinese auto parts manufacturers.

Serbia is set to implement a free trade agreement with China, which will result in over 90 percent of trade between the two countries being tariff-free, effective from July. Sectors such as automotive, lithium batteries and photovoltaics will benefit first.

While in Hungary, low corporate tax rates, the establishment of German vehicle production bases, as well as stable and favorable policies to welcome foreign investment also

make it a hot spot for Chinese automotive and parts manufacturers.

Chervon-Auto, a Chinese automotive components manufacturer listed in Shanghai, established operations in Hungary with an investment of approximately 120 million euros (\$129.8 million) in 2021. It completed factory construction in Hungary in 2023.

Shi Jiaqi, director of its overseas projects, said: "Our overseas orders generally account for 40-50 percent of our total, with around 80 percent coming from Europe. Establishing an overseas production base was essential to better understand and promptly meet customer needs."

"Our foreign clients prefer suppliers who can produce auto parts nearby to avoid instability from deglobalization and geopolitical conflicts. This factor significantly influenced our decision to set up overseas branches," Shi said, adding the company plans to establish a strong R&D center in Hungary within three to five years to better serve its European clients.

Hungary was chosen after evaluating factors such as policy stability, workforce strength and technical expertise, after conducting surveys of several countries like Serbia.

"While venturing abroad, we faced a few challenges such as finding a robust supply chain, and transferring technology and skills from China to our new factory, because the two countries vary in many areas such as production standards," Shi said.

Talking about current trade conflicts, Shi said globalization is a necessary choice for not only Chinese auto and parts makers, but also global manufacturers, just like how US, German and Japanese automakers took their supply chains abroad decades ago. He said the company's overseas production also boosts local supply chain develop-

ment and increases employment opportunities.

"Whether expanding production capacities, innovating technologies or upgrading services, all are to meet the demand of our global clients. That's the primary reason for us setting up new facilities in Anhui province in China and Hungary," he said.

Zhejiang Shuanghuan Driveline Co Ltd is another auto parts maker with operations overseas. The Shenzhen-listed auto transmission producer invested 122 million euros as a first phase project in Hungary. It is also expected to sign a long-term investment cooperation memorandum with the local government in the coming months.

Wang Binlian, director of overseas projects at Shuanghuan, said that in today's climate of deglobalization and geopolitical conflicts, their clients are increasingly prioritizing supply chain security over simply minimizing costs. This shift favors suppliers capable of auto parts production near their sites, which is why the company is establishing an overseas plant to meet client needs.

"Several Central European countries, including Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, have been the main destinations for Chinese companies' site visits," he said.

"Our foremost priority is a stable investment environment, even if it results in marginally higher logistics costs. In addition, Hungary's cultural similarities to China enable us to adopt Chinese management systems effectively. Moreover, Hungary serves as a central hub for the eastward relocation of European manufacturing, with major firms like Audi and BMW setting up factories. The Hungarian government is also actively encouraging the development of the automotive manufacturing sector," he added.

LIFE

Pulitzer winner shares *Trust* with China readers

On his first trip to East Asia, award-winning author discusses 'truth' during literary appearances, **Fang Aiqing** reports.

Within Johann Sebastian Bach's polyphony — with its repetition, inversion and reversion — novelist Hernan Diaz found inspiration, penning *Trust*, in a book-within-a-book format, exploring family, wealth and ambition, that won him the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Since the recent publication of its Chinese version, Diaz, who was born in Argentina, raised in Sweden and currently lives in the United States, embarked on his first journey to China, a novel land for him. It was also his first trip to East Asia.

From May 11 to 17, the author was held to a tight schedule of public appearances and book signings in Shanghai, Beijing, and Nanjing, the provincial capital of East China's Jiangsu province, where he met Chinese counterparts, critics and a group of serious readers who are particularly curious about the male writer who cares for, studies and raises women's voices through storytelling.

Trust revolves around the mysterious wealthy couple Andrew and Mildred Bevel in New York, who earned an exponential fortune during the Great Depression in the late 1920s and '30s.

The story is told in a quartet of narratives rendered in different literary styles, forming integral material for understanding the wealth growth and intimate life of the couple.

The first narrative, *Bonds: A Novel*, is credited to a fictitious Harold Vanner, followed by the second narrative, an unfinished autobiography of the husband as a result of his anger toward Vanner's work, in

which Helen Rask, a character based on Mildred Bevel, struggles with mental illness in the last days of her life.

The third narrative is a memoir of Andrew Bevel's ghostwriter behind his autobiography, Ida Partenza, daughter of an Italian anarchist. In the 1980s, 70-year-old Partenza steps into the Bevels' former residence and, while reviewing their archives, discovers the brief, fragmented but profound journals of Mildred Bevel written before her death — the fourth narrative.

As Diaz's rigorous writing unfolds, previous plots become doubtful and overturned. "I thought it would be much more interesting to have readers experience these different voices and feel them," Diaz told China Daily about the polyphonic structure of his work.

"There isn't just a monolithic truth," Diaz says. "Truth emerges from the intersection of many different stories on the negotiation of different points of view, and out of the noisy, messy and confusing dissonance of the various voices emerges something we could precariously call truth."

Everything is prismatic; such unstable, questionable, nonfinal "truth" should be revised, revisited and critiqued, he adds.

The author thus provides a piece of advice in facing an age where reality itself has become a luxury: "I fail all the time and it's not a comfortable position to be in, but I try to be flexible and limber. I try to find a very difficult balance between a sort of paranoia and a firm belief that truth is something that we may never

attain but it's worth looking for and fighting for.

"Believe in truth but don't believe in those who say they have the truth."

Zhang Li, a professor from the School of Chinese Language and Literature at Beijing Normal University, says the novel reminds her of lychee.

"At first, it read like the hard shell of lychee and I didn't like it that much. Then I touched the soft part and sensed there was something with power. I removed it and saw the hard core — in terms of this novel, it's the incognito, silenced female who wants to reclaim the power of narrative and be discovered," she commented during a public dialogue with Diaz at the Columbia Global Centers in Beijing on May 15.

One major intention behind Diaz's work is the fact that all over the world, the voices of women, making up half of the human population, have long been suppressed.

Despite his self-proclaimed low-key, moderate attitude, he claims it's difficult to find the perfect way to put his views on women-related topics, and points out the period in US history when women were excluded from the financial world.

Their exposure was limited to wife or secretary, and it was not until 1967 that the New York Stock Exchange allowed its first female floor broker and not until the 1960s could women open a bank account without a male cosigner, Diaz adds.

For decades women were associated mainly with domestic genres of writing like letters and diaries, whereas men could give



Above: Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hernan Diaz (center, on stage) discusses literature, wealth, femininity and music during a dialogue with Chinese writer Zhang Yueran (right) in Beijing on May 17. **Below:** Diaz's book-within-a-book *Trust*, which explores family, wealth and ambition, is the winner of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



I try to find a very difficult balance between a sort of paranoia and a firm belief that truth is something that we may never attain but it's worth looking for and fighting for."

Hernan Diaz, novelist

speeches, write novels and make public pronouncements.

"If *Trust* had a volume control, it lowered the more you read until you were left with this whisper," Diaz says about the difference in volume of the two genders' voices. "We have been taught to trust more in the voices that are louder, which of course is entirely wrong."

Diaz says he tries to strive for true equality of the voices between genders while at the same time highlighting the differences in these voices — a paradox in a way that "if you say there are no male or female voices, that's wrong; but if you say there is a big difference between them, that's also wrong."

He adds that such paradox only stresses how important the problem is, and the complication makes him want to understand it better.

In *Trust*, Partenza endeavors to accustom herself to men's thinking and write in a man's way, whereas in reality, Diaz's writing partly involves viewing the world with a woman's mind and hand.

To get to such a place, he absorbed the views of female writers he appreciates — Virginia Woolf, for example — as well as diaries and personal letters of wives of historical financial tycoons that have been untouched in libraries or archives for almost a century.

In Shanghai, amid a pressing

schedule, Diaz was taken to visit the well-known matchmaking corner inside the Renmin Park, where crowds made up of anxious parents hang personal information about their adult children — age, educational background, income, family assets, contacts, and more — in search of an appropriate partner for them. Diaz was fascinated.

"There's a great novel there waiting to be written," he says. "Care and affection are universal." Parenthood — the intimacy and love, the patriarchal order and control that cuts across class and political divides — is another major concern in his novel.

According to Peng Lun, who runs indie literary publisher Archipel Press, a co-publisher of the Chinese edition of *Trust*, a Chinese edition for Diaz's other novel, *In the Distance*, is underway.

"Although Diaz only has two works published, he's a very mature novelist who knows exactly what he wants and has a strong ability to control it," Peng says.

He adds that literature, in essence, presents life and many foreign works are helping Chinese readers understand others more while getting to know themselves better.

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Yinxu Museum helps US scholars dig deeper into Shang history

ZHENGZHOU — Nestled beside the tranquil Huanhe River in Anyang, Central China's Henan province, stands the new hall of the Yinxu Museum, a striking structure in the shape of a bronze square *ding*, or ancient cauldron. Its exterior walls are adorned with classic Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) bronze decorations, and the lintels above its three main doors feature the characters *Da Yi Shang* in bronze.

Anyang, the last capital of the Shang era, China's second dynasty, has been a focal point of archaeological significance since work began at the Yin Ruins in 1928. The site has yielded a wealth of exquisite bronzes, oracle bone inscriptions and other cultural relics that highlight Chinese civilization's enduring charm and grandeur.

"The characters *Da Yi Shang* mean the 'Great Settlement of Shang'." At that time, this was the most populous and prosperous city in China, and the Shang people proudly referred to it using this name," said Tang Jigen, one of China's most senior archaeologists on Shang, as he explained the meaning of *Da Yi Shang*, derived from oracle bone inscriptions, to three visiting American scholars on May 17.

The Director of the National Museum of Asian Art in the United States Chase Robinson, Deputy Director Lori Duggan Gold and Curator of Ancient Chinese Art J. Keith Wilson, traveled to this ancient city for inter-museum exchanges. In a single day, they explored the museum, visited the archaeological sites of Shang's largest palace ruins discovered so far and its royal tombs and held in-depth discussions with their Chinese counterparts. As the sun set, they found it difficult to leave, moved by the deep cultural connections they had forged.

America's National Museum of



Left: Oracle bone inscriptions displayed at the new hall of the Yinxu Museum in Anyang, Henan province. XINHUA

Right: Chinese archaeologist Tang Jigen (left) introduces Simuxin *Ding*, an ancient bronze cauldron, to visiting curators from the National Museum of Asian Art in the United States, including Chase Robinson (right), director of the American museum. ZHAI XIANG / XINHUA

Asian Art in Washington consists of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and is part of the Smithsonian Institution, the largest museum complex in the world. The Freer Gallery of Art, founded in 1923 and the Smithsonian's first art museum, sponsored China's early works of the Yin Ruins archaeological excavation that began in 1928. In February 2023, to commemorate the centennial of the Freer Gallery, the National Museum of Asian Art held a special exhibition titled *Anyang: China's Ancient City of Kings*, which displayed over 200 artifacts from Shang. The exhibition continued until April 28.

"It was one of three major exhibitions that we mounted for our centennial. It's the only one that was up for 13 months. It occupied the main exhibition space in our museum and was very popular, not only with the public but also with critics and museum professionals," says Robinson, adding that it narrated a story of Shang civilization, technology, industry, city planning, archaeology and collaboration.

The exhibition's popularity in the US also inspired Chinese archaeology and cultural heritage scholars to bring the exhibition closer to Chinese audiences in Anyang by displaying several photos during the planning of the new hall of the Yinxu Museum.

The American scholars were delighted by the museum's design and the depth of their exchanges and mutual learning with their Chinese counterparts.

"Worldwide, we work together. It's very exciting for us to be featured here," says Gold. Her museum regards exchanges in arts as a big responsibility and takes very seriously how to share works and form partnerships and collaborations with the world.

"Seeing your exhibition was a stunning experience. Having more people see the Yin Ruins and sharing the discoveries with a broader audience is our shared mission," Zhao Qingrong, executive deputy director of the Yinxu Museum, told Gold.

"Over a century, the museum has been committed to understanding



ancient Chinese civilization," says Robinson, expressing his wish to continue this tradition and carry out joint exhibitions, research projects and staff exchanges.

In 1977, Wilson visited China for the first time while attending college. Experiencing China's history and culture in person strengthened his determination to study it. Today, he has become a revered Sinologist in the US. He believes that Shang's most notable contribution to world civilization was the technology to produce bronzes, jades and ceramics of "incredible beauty and technical complexity."

Wilson refers to his visit to Anyang as "coming home". During his first visit to Anyang in the 1990s, he became good friends with Tang.

This visit showed not only friendship but also the power of international attraction of Anyang studies, Wilson says.

"The symbolism of having the Anyang exhibition at the time of our centennial was very rich," says Wilson, adding that the centennial was a moment to look forward and

identify goals important for the next century.

Reflecting on his experiences since joining the National Museum of Asian Art in 2006, Wilson mentions that he has curated exhibitions on the Xiangtangshan Grottoes, Houma Bronzes and ancient Chinese music. He looks forward to continuing to introduce American audiences to important moments in Chinese history.

Digital products at the Yinxu Museum, such as 3D artifact short films and immersive digital exhibitions, left a deep impression on the American scholars.

"Many museums around the world hold artifacts from the Yin Ruins. We could bring together artifacts collected in different places in the form of a digital return of Yin Ruins artifacts," says Niu Shishan, a senior archaeologist of Shang's royal tombs.

Li Xiaoyang, director of the Anyang Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics, proposed various collaborative efforts, such as exchanging information on cultural relics, shar-

ing digital projects and coproducing documentaries.

In response, Robinson says that these proposals are attractive and research projects, collaborations and exchanges can be outlined through a memorandum of understanding. Archives concerning the archaeological projects of the Yin Ruins housed at Freer can also be made available.

Gold congratulates her Chinese counterparts on "the beauty of the building and the excellent interpretation for visitors to the gallery".

She adds, "I took many photographs today of how you designed the spaces to share with audiences."

Robinson says, "You have an extraordinary facility, an extraordinary collection and a wonderful story to tell."

As Robinson concluded his first visit to the Chinese mainland, he reflected on the importance of building trust and exploring possibilities together: "I'm very pleased that we've gotten such a good start."

"What impressed us most was the great expertise that's gone into the creation of this museum. There is also great expertise on the part of the archaeologists working on the site."

May 18 marked International Museum Day, with this year's theme being Museums for Education and Research. Robinson says America's National Museum of Asian Art owns the digital platform Teaching China, which is devoted to middle school students and teachers.

"It's been immensely successful. There is a real appetite from Americans to understand Chinese culture, history and Chinese civilization," he says.

"Expertise and knowledge are the foundation for great museums. It's the foundation for great archaeology, and you have a very strong foundation."

XINHUA