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CHINA DAILY

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XI'S VISION | EMPLOYMENT

Nation targets high-quality job opportunities

Greater efforts to be channeled to nurture new growth engines in emerging industries

By CHENG SI
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China is stepping up efforts to promote high-quality employment by developing new growth engines in sectors such as artificial intelligence, modern manufacturing and electronics.

On May 27, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee held its 14th group study session, of which the topic was promoting high-quality and sufficient employment.

Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, who presided over the study session, said that employment forms the basis of people's livelihoods and it is imperative to make high-quality and sufficient employment a priority goal of social and economic development. He called for greater efforts to develop modern human resources characterized by high quality, sufficient quantity, optimized structure and rational distribution, in order to ease the structural imbalance between supply and demand in the job market.

With about 11.79 million students expected to graduate from college this year, Xi urged continuous efforts to prioritize the employment of young people and develop more job opportunities to fully harness their skills.

China's job market has been stable in recent years, with the unemployment rate staying within a reasonable range. A total of 12.44 million new urban jobs were created last year and another 3.03 million were created in the first three months of this year, according to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

The development of new growth engines in sectors such as high-tech, the green economy and the "silver

economy" are also creating more job opportunities.

Figures cited by recruitment portal Zhaopin show that in 2023, job openings related to new energy vehicle businesses increased 32 percent year-on-year. The average salary for automotive software development positions rose 18 percent year-on-year in 2023, while professionals with a master's or doctorate degree were paid an average monthly salary exceeding 25,000 yuan (\$3,450), data from the portal showed.

There is also great demand for computing talent in the job market, allowing for the rapid development and application of AI technologies, according to Zhaopin. For example, in the first quarter of this year, job openings for natural language processing engineers surged 126 percent year-on-year, with the monthly salary for the position reaching 24,535 yuan, up 12 percent year-on-year.

Pang Shi, director of the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science's department of employment and entrepreneurship, said that some strategic new industries are key to the growth of new quality productive forces, the emergence and development of which will not only inject fresh impetus into society and the economy, but also generate more job opportunities.

The demand for top-notch and versatile talent is growing in emerging industries such as AI, big data, new energy, modern manufacturing and biomedicine, Pang said, noting that such eligibility criteria will push job seekers to hone their skills and professionalism. "Their improving working knowledge and skills, in return, will enable them to secure higher pay," she added.

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Debut of 'lucky treasure'

Above: Fu Bao enjoys a bamboo cake on Wednesday as she makes her public debut at the Shenshuping giant panda base in Wolong National Nature Reserve in Southwest China's Sichuan province. She was born in July 2020 in South Korea, marking the birth of the first giant panda in that country. Her parents, Ai Bao and Le Bao, were sent to South Korea from China in 2016 as part of a 15-year cooperation agreement on giant panda research. Fu Bao arrived in Sichuan in early April and underwent two months of inspection, quarantine and adaptation before her debut. LI CHUANYOU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Right: Visitors wait in line on Wednesday at the Shenshuping giant panda base to catch a glimpse of Fu Bao, whose name means "lucky treasure". PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



China denounces EU's tariff decision on EVs

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels and WANG KEJU in Beijing

The European Commission announced on Wednesday that Chinese-made battery electric vehicles will soon be subjected to punitive countervailing tariffs following its anti-subsidy investigation launched in October.

The commission said it "has provisionally concluded that the BEVs (battery electric vehicles) value chain in China benefits from unfair subsidization, which is causing a threat of economic injury to EU BEV producers".

The commission said the countervailing duties will vary depending on the brand, including 38.1 percent tariffs on SAIC, 20 percent on Geely and 17.4 percent on BYD, and the new tariffs will come on top of the existing 10 percent import tariffs.

China has expressed grave concern and strong dissatisfaction following the European Commission's decision, the Ministry of Commerce said on Wednesday.

It has also called on the European Union to immediately rectify its wrongful actions and seek dialogue and negotiations to effectively address the ongoing trade friction between the two sides, a spokesperson said in a statement released on the ministry's website.

The decision, which disregards factual evidence and World Trade

Organization rules, has been made despite China's repeated strong objections, and it ignores the appeals and warnings from several EU member states' governments and industry sectors, the spokesperson said.

The ruling also fails to recognize that China's competitive advantage in the electric car industry is a result of fair and open competition, and the decision is a violation of WTO rules and a failure to acknowledge the comprehensive cooperation of Chinese companies during the investigation, the spokesperson added.

Furthermore, it is a blatant act of protectionism that will escalate trade friction and undermine fair competition under the guise of "maintaining fair competition", which will not only jeopardize the legitimate rights and interests of China's electric car industry, but also disrupt the global automotive supply chain, the spokesperson said.

The actions taken by the European Commission not only harm the interests of European consumers, but also jeopardize the EU's own goals of green transition and collaboration in addressing climate change on a global scale, according to the spokesperson.

China will keep abreast of the developments on the EU side and is prepared to take necessary

measures to firmly protect the rights of the Chinese companies involved, the spokesperson added.

Also on Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry urged the EU to honor its commitment to support free trade and reject protectionism.

Lin Jian, a ministry spokesman, said at a daily news briefing that the anti-subsidy investigation is a typical act of protectionism.

Lin said that using the investigation as a pretext, the EU plans to impose tariffs on EVs imported from China, which violates the principles of the market economy and international trade rules.

The move will also damage China-EU economic and trade cooperation as well as the stability of global automotive supply chains, ultimately harming Europe's own interests, he said.

The spokesman added that political figures from several European countries and representatives from the European auto industry have recently expressed opposition to the anti-subsidy investigation, saying that they believe imposing additional tariffs on Chinese EVs to protect the EU industry is a misguided approach.

"Protectionism is not the way forward, while openness and cooperation are the right path," Lin said.

He urged the EU to work together with China to uphold the overall situation of China-EU economic and trade cooperation. China will take all necessary measures to firmly defend its legitimate rights and interests, he added.

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WORLD WATCH
By Roy Anthony Roger

Flame of longtime friendship burns brightly

On May 31, Malaysia and China celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations. Bilateral diplomatic ties between the countries began with the signing of a joint communique in Beijing on May 31, 1974. Since then, Malaysia has upheld the one-China principle.

Over the past 50 years, the two governments have signed several agreements that are at the core of the relationship between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing.

The economy is one of the main aspects of Malaysia-China relations and China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years.

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).

Investment cooperation has yielded significant results, creating a mutually beneficial situation.

The Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park, which is a testament to the strong cooperation between the two countries, is celebrating its 10th anniversary. It has seen the signing of 13 projects, with investment agreements exceeding 46 billion yuan, and a total industrial output worth 60 billion yuan. The ongoing construction of the East Coast Rail Line and the Baleh Hydroelectric Dam, Sarawak, built by China Gezhouba Group, are further examples of the two sides' fruitful collaboration. These projects hold the potential to supply sufficient resources for Sarawak's future development.

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Tough summer



A displaced Palestinian girl splashes water on her face in front of a tent during a heat wave on Tuesday in the central city of Deir al-Balah, which is a frequent target of Israeli firepower in the Gaza Strip. CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT / AFP

SENIORS' CHOIRS IN HARMONY ON HOPE, HAPPINESS

Singing groups help members to alleviate loneliness, improve cognitive capacity

By CHEN NAN
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At 8:30 am on May 22, a group of seniors wearing colorful clothes began gathering at a small pavilion in Beijing's Zizhuyuan Park, a scenic spot with lakes, pavilions and clusters of bamboo.



They greeted and chatted with one another, took songbooks from their bags, drank water and cleared their throats.

At 9 am, amid the tranquil sur-

roundings and shaded pathways, they formed circles in preparation for their performance.

Yan Lanying, a retired waitress in her early 60s, picked up a microphone and announced the start of the performance, and the conductor, Li Yongkang, standing on a stone step, waved his baton.

The seniors, who are members

of the Beijing Health Voice Choir, performed more than 20 songs in two hours, attracting the attention of passersby, some of whom joined in the singing. At the end of each song, the choir members and spectators warmly applauded.

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Members of the Beijing Health Voice Choir perform at Zizhuyuan Park in Beijing on May 22. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

From page 1

"Lots of senior citizens gather together to perform choral singing and we have developed a number of choir branches across the country, attracting over 10,000 people who are mostly above 60 years," said Li, the 67-year-old founder and leader of the Beijing Health Voice Choir.

Every week, Li and the choir perform at three locations in Beijing — Zizhuyuan Park, Madian Park near the North Third Ring Road, and Wangjing Cultural Square in the city's east. The choir has also traveled to other cities including Xi'an, Shaanxi province, and Pingyao, Shanxi province, to join in performances with other seniors' choirs.

Improving well-being

Far from just a musical pastime, being part of a choir has profound significance for the mental, emotional, and social well-being of the elderly, Li said.

Li Baolin, 77, is a member of the Beijing Health Voice Choir. Before joining the choir in 2015, he enjoyed taking two of his grandchildren to Zizhuyuan Park and listening to the singers.

"I was drawn to the sounds of the choir. They not only had a conductor, but also a live band. I always loved singing and I could sing all the songs they performed when I first watched their performance," recalled Li Baolin, who travels to Zizhuyuan Park by taking a 30-minute bus ride.

When one of his grandchildren started primary school, Li Baolin decided to join the choir, a decision supported by his family.

"I join in the choir activities three times a week, which has become one of my favorite things to do now. Two hours of singing fills me with energy for the whole week," said Li Baolin, a retired researcher who worked at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The conductor selects songs that senior people know and appreciate, he noted.

"The members of the choir are of a similar age and we grew up listening to those songs, mostly patriotic songs, which resonate with the shared experiences and memories of the choir members," he said.

"For seniors who have been retired for a long time, many of whom may be dealing with loneliness, loss, or health challenges, engaging in choral singing offers a lifeline to joy and companionship," said Li Baolin.

"My wife's health is not very good, so she spends much of her time at home taking care of our younger grandson, who is only two years old. My children are all adults and they are busy with their lives and work."

He said singing in the choir brings him health and happiness, and puts him in a "beautiful mood", which also benefits his family.

Not only does he attend rehearsals, but he also arrives at the park around 7 am on performance days to help carry instruments and speakers. "Life feels incomplete without singing. For us elderly folk, this is much better than seeing a doctor and taking medicine," he said.

One choir member surnamed Zhang, spends nearly two hours traveling from her home outside Beijing's Sixth Ring Road to participate in choir activities.

Despite the need to rise early to make the journey, she is always filled with anticipation knowing that she will soon be surrounded by fellow choir members and sharing in the joy of singing.

"Before each activity, the conductor sends us messages in the group chat. Many members arrive at the park 30 minutes, or even earlier, before the choir starts to perform. Our faces are radiant with enthusiasm, just like meeting with old friends," said Zhang, in her 60s, who is also retired.

Building confidence

The seeds of the Beijing Health Voice Choir were planted more than 15 years ago.

That year, Li Yongkang, a retired singer who also had some experience conducting, moved from Datong, Shanxi province, with his wife, to live with their daughter in Beijing after both of them retired. One day, the couple visited the Temple of Heaven, a popular park and tourist site, where they saw a group of senior people singing together.

The couple joined in, and after one of the choir members learned that Li Yongkang was a retired singer, the member encouraged him to conduct the choir.

"The atmosphere was great and as more and more people gathered, I started to conduct," recalled Li Yongkang.

In 2011, he founded the Beijing Health Voice Choir.

Many seniors enjoy singing with Li Yongkang, thanks to his confident and powerful conducting style.

SENIORS: GAINING POWER FROM SONG



Li Yongkang conducts the Beijing Health Voice Choir in Beijing on May 22. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

He selects the choir's songs — from patriotic ones, to popular soundtracks from classic Chinese movies and TV dramas — and coaches the seniors on choral singing.

"My goal is not about taking their singing skills to a higher level. What I want to do is to make them feel confident and happy about singing, and about their lives," said the conductor.

He also noticed that the majority of his choir members are "elderly migrants" who had moved to Beijing to help their children with household chores and child care.

"Away from their familiar hometowns, fatigue and loneliness have become the main themes of their lives. Despite the challenges of adjusting to a new environment and the loneliness that often accompanies old age, they found comfort and a sense of belonging in the choir," he said.

Wei Fengying, 65, who watched the choir's performance at Zizhuyuan Park in May said she wanted to join the group.

Before each performance he selects and irons his own clothes, she said. "He also works out different song lists for the activities. For example, on Mother's Day the choir sang songs about mothers," said Ji, who is also part of the choir.

"Many choir members are women. We also share our ideas about fashion and cooking skills after the activities. What we do together is beyond singing," she said.

After a performance, the choir members share a meal at a restaurant, which has become a way for them to bond and deepen friendships.

Ji has named the choir a "health voice" as their mission is to bring joy and positivity through music, which benefits the seniors' health.

"Some of the choir members struggle with diseases, such as cancer and depression. Choral singing is more than just a hobby — it is a source of strength and joy," Ji added.

"Through shared rehearsals, performances, and social events, these groups create a supportive network where seniors can find friendship, encouragement. For some, the choir becomes like a second family, providing emotional support during difficult times."

Li Gang is a professor at the music school of Capital Normal University who has been conducting research on choral singing and promoting the activity among seniors. Studies have shown that music therapy can reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline in seniors, while also improving their overall quality of life, Li said.

"Choral singing provides a unique combination of cognitive stimulation, physical activity, and social interaction, all of which are essential for maintaining mental health in senior people," he said.

In parks across the country, seniors have various activities to make their lives fun and healthy, he said, including singing and dancing, playing musical instruments and enjoying ping-pong games. "They all have similar functions, that is, to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of senior people," Li Gang said.

He noted that one of the major benefits of seniors' choral groups is the sense of community they foster.

"For many participants, these gatherings provide a much-needed opportunity to connect with others who share their love of music and their life experiences," said Li Gang, adding that the physical act of singing

requires deep breathing and breath control, which can strengthen respiratory muscles and improve lung capacity.

He also called on songwriters to create more Chinese songs for seniors to expand their song lists and inspire them to learn new songs.

Expanding repertoire

On May 9, the China Chorus Association announced it was working on a project with the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and People's Music Publishing House to encourage Chinese musicians to write songs for choral singing. The project kicked off in March and will wrap up in July.

Since 1999, the China Chorus Association has been holding choral singing festivals for seniors from across the country. This year, the festival will take place in Weihai, Shandong province, in October.

"We've already had 12 editions of the singing festival for senior people and every edition attracts thousands of senior people from around the country," said Li Yan, who is in charge of the event.

"Choral singing is very popular among Chinese people, from children in schools to senior people in parks. Its ability to evoke emotions and memories makes it a potent tool for healing and connection."

Li Shuyun, a member of another seniors' choir which sings five days a week at Beijing's Taoranting Park said: "Park choirs attract many elderly individuals, primarily because of their low entry barriers, which can cover a broader range of elderly individuals without musical backgrounds. In this environment, they relieve pressure, and feel more free and relaxed."

Named Harmony and founded six years ago, the choir has about 500 members, mostly retired people 60 to 90 years old. Li Shuyun is a co-founder of the choir.

"After retirement, I felt isolated from society. My kids are all grown-ups and I didn't want to become a burden," she said. "However, after my husband died, I didn't know how to go on with my life. Luckily, I found a new life in singing."

Li Shuyun said in the beginning she just sang along to tapes by herself in the park. Gradually, she found friends who shared a passion for singing. Now, singing with the choir gives her a reason to get out of the house and meet new people, she said.



Seniors attend a choir class at a university for the elderly in Southwest China's Chongqing in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A band accompanies the Beijing Health Voice Choir in Beijing's Zizhuyuan park on May 22. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

TOP NEWS

Cultures in Xinjiang brighten civilization

By CUI JIA in Kashgar
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Learning more about the history of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region can let the world see that its development has been deeply influenced historically by diverse cultures and religions, officials and scholars said at an international forum.

More important, they said, it can help people understand that the region's rich culture is an integral part of Chinese civilization.

Xinjiang has always been the home of people from many different ethnic groups with diverse cultures. Through coexistence and exchanges, different cultures in the region have integrated and flourished. And they are all part of Chinese civilization, Erkin Tuniyaz, chairman of the region, said on Wednesday in Kashgar at the International Forum on the History and Future of Xinjiang.

More than 100 scholars and archaeologists from countries including China, the United States, Australia, Germany, Egypt and Kazakhstan took part in the forum in the city in southern Xinjiang, sharing the latest archaeological findings in the region and the ties between the history of the region and Chinese culture.

The forum can help Xinjiang further explore its history and look into how its unique culture was formed, which is valuable to China and boosts exchanges between the East and West, Erkin Tuniyaz said.

Internationally, there is a baseless narrative that separates Xinjiang culture and Chinese culture and even



Experts discuss archaeological findings in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Chinese civilization's unity in diversity at the International Forum on the History and Future of Xinjiang held on

“The story of Xinjiang fully demonstrates that Chinese civilization has always remained vibrant through its inclusiveness.”

Pan Yue, director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission

portrays them as being in opposition. However, a large amount of archaeological evidence shows that Xinjiang has always been an important part of the Chinese cultural sphere, Pan Yue, director of the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, said at the forum.

“The story of Xinjiang fully dem-

onstrates that Chinese civilization has always remained vibrant through its inclusiveness,” Pan said.

Because of the ancient Silk Road jointly opened up by ancestors in the western regions and the Central Plains, numerous trading cities were built, including Kashgar, he added.

“Over several thousand years, people from all directions and ethnic groups migrated, settled, traded, intermarried, and formed a pattern of coexistence in Xinjiang. Ultimately, Xinjiang and the Central Plains belonged to the same political community, which was the inevitable result of the development of economic, social and cultural communities,” Pan said.

Wu Xinhua, a research fellow at the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the unique geographical location of Xinjiang, which connects other parts of China with Central Asia, has determined that it is a natural hub for

exchanges of cultures and religions.

“As a trade hub on the ancient Silk Road, the exchanges of the fruits of civilization around the world have happened in Xinjiang naturally and constantly. They are then integrated into the local culture and passed on to different regions via Xinjiang,” Wu said. “And Xinjiang's role remains the same till today.”

Pan said concerns that Xinjiang might lose its cultural identity are unnecessary, because Chinese civilization in modern times always strives for harmonious coexistence, consistently seeking common ground while reserving differences, and continually pursuing peaceful and mutually beneficial outcomes.

The preservation of the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups in Xinjiang is protected by law. Efforts to protect Xinjiang's culture have reached a new level in recent years, said Erkin Tuniyaz, the region's chairman.

BRICS meeting pledges unity, cooperation

Developing countries urged to make collective voice louder for improving global governance

By ZHOU JIN
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Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi highlighted on Tuesday the role of the Global South and called for more efforts to strengthen unity and cooperation in addressing global challenges and improving global governance.

Wang made the remarks during the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Dialogue with Developing Countries, or BRICS+, in Nizhny Novgorod in Russia, which assumed the chairmanship of BRICS in January.

The dialogue saw the participation of BRICS member countries and 12 major developing countries with regional influence, including Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Belarus, Turkiye, Venezuela and Bahrain.

Wang said that BRICS+ serves as a vital dialogue platform for the BRICS nations toward the broader emerging markets and developing countries, and has become a flag of South-South cooperation.

While the North-South divide is widening and the global economic recovery is facing setbacks, the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries significantly drives the process toward a multipolar world, he said.

A new wave of technological and industrial revolutions is emerging, propelling numerous countries onto a fast development track, he noted.

Wang emphasized that the Global South is no longer a silent majority, but a new awakened force. He called on developing countries to resolve disputes and conflicts through dialogue and consultation, and promote security through cooperation, in order to inject more stability into international affairs.

Wang also urged efforts to prioritize development and deliver development benefits to all countries. Developing countries should safeguard true multilateralism, work for an equal and orderly multipolar world as well as make their collective voice louder and their collective

strength stronger to improve global governance, he said.

China supports BRICS in welcoming more like-minded partners with open arms, in order to further drive development and cooperation, he added.

Wang Youming, director of the Department for Developing Countries Studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said that many developing countries have shown a willingness to join BRICS. This indicates that China's advocacy of equal and orderly multipolarization as well as open and inclusive economic globalization have been recognized by the majority in the Global South, he said.

While the Western camp continues to monopolize the international order, only a “scaling effect”, or adding more members to the group, can make the voice of the Global South louder and more influential, Wang Youming said, noting that the BRICS+ meeting has already demonstrated the openness and inclusiveness of the BRICS mechanism.

“It shows the positioning of the mechanism, which represents emerging countries and developing countries, and speaks for the Global South,” he added.

During the meeting, the participants agreed that the BRICS+ model facilitates unity and cooperation among developing countries, and is conducive to enhancing the Global South's influence and building a more just and reasonable international order.

They pledged to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, oppose unilateralism and hegemony, and promote political solutions to international hot spots.

The participants also called for reforms to the international financial system and enhanced cooperation in the fields of digital economy and infrastructure, among others, in order to safeguard the stability of the global industrial and supply chains, narrow the development gap and achieve shared progress.

More policy support to boost demand amid CPI rise

By OUYANG SHIJIA
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China's consumer prices will likely remain steady, with a mild increase in the following months, as the economy is on track for solid recovery this year with a series of stimulus policy measures gradually taking effect, analysts said.

They also noted that persistently low price levels indicate uneven recovery in the world's second-largest economy, highlighting the need for further policy support to address insufficient demand. They emphasized that policy efforts should focus on boosting consumption and accelerating the issuance of ultra-long-term treasury bonds and local government special bonds.

Their comments came as data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Wednesday that the country's consumer price index, a main gauge of inflation, rose 0.3 percent year-on-year in May, a rise on par with that in April.

The growth in core CPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices and is deemed a better gauge of the supply-demand relationship

in the economy, rose 0.6 percent year-on-year in May, after a 0.7 percent rise in April.

“Among the eight major expenditure categories within the CPI, only food prices and transportation and telecommunication prices fell year-on-year in May, while the other six categories saw their prices rise year-on-year,” said Zhang Xuewu, head of the price analysis and forecasting division at the National Development and Reform Commission's Price Monitoring Center. “That indicates a continued recovery trend in consumer demand.”

Zhang said that he expected a mild rise in overall price levels in the following months, as domestic demand is set to continue improving. He noted that a series of policies will take effect, such as driving large-scale equipment replacement and trade-in of consumer goods, that are aimed at boosting consumption and expanding effective investment.

While China's consumer prices rose mildly in May, the producer price index, which gauges factory-gate prices, dropped 1.4 percent year-on-year in May, narrowing from a 2.5 percent decline in

April, according to the NBS.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said: “The PPI decline may narrow to 0.7 percent year-on-year in June, due mainly to a still-low base. The recent sequential increase in prices of construction materials, such as cement, may also indicate a narrowing decline in the PPI.”

“In view of the jump in wholesale pork prices, softening leisure services activity during the Dragon Boat Festival, and ongoing auto price cuts, we expect consumer inflation to pick up modestly to 0.4 percent year-on-year in June,” he said.

Lu said he expects CPI growth to stay positive over the remainder of the year, although it may remain below 1 percent until the fourth quarter.

For the full year, Lu said his team estimates that 2024 annual CPI growth will hit 0.4 percent, while the PPI will decline 0.8 percent.

Cai Hanpian, a researcher at Peking University's National Economy Research Center, forecast that the CPI will rise modestly in the second half of the year with the gradual economic recovery and stabilization.

Aspects, namely promoting trade and investment, strengthening the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and facilitating cross-border travel. The two governments have also agreed to increase cooperation through the BRI, especially with regard to the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park and Qin-zhou China-Malaysia Industrial Park projects, and the development of Kuantan port and stations along the East Coast Rail Line. Chinese companies are also constructing the Gemas-Johor Bahru Electric Double Track Rail Project.

It should be emphasized that during Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's visit to China in March 2023, a consensus was reached with Chinese President Xi Jinping proposing the building of a China-Malaysia community with a shared future, which has become a blueprint for the development of future China-Malaysia relations. In addition, in September 2023, Anwar visited China to attend the 20th China-ASEAN

Expo and promoted joint efforts to create more stable and smooth regional industrial chains and supply chains. Malaysia-China relations were further strengthened that year with the exchange of visits by the leaders of the legislative bodies, namely Zhao Zhanshu, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, and Tan Sri Johari Abdul, speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives.

At the same time, there are challenges in bilateral relations, including in the South China Sea. However, Malaysia and China have agreed to resolve the issue peacefully and through dialogue without the use of force or the involvement of third parties. Diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China are still strong as the relationship was built five decades ago. In any bilateral relationship there are bound to be challenges and problems, but the two countries handle the problems that exist in the spirit of comradeship.

The future cooperation between

Malaysia and China, especially over the next 50 years, should be focused on cooperation in the fields of education and technology transfer from China to Malaysia. This includes sectors such as green technology, new energy automobiles, telecommunications and aerospace. At the same time, China should intensify its educational path. It will involve second-track diplomacy. Sincerity is the key to eternal friendship. The two countries should deepen people-to-people and intercultural exchanges, encourage exchange visits between young people of the two countries, and expand academic cooperation and scientific research cooperation, so that the candle of friendship continues to burn for future generations.

The author is an associate professor and deputy executive director of the Asia-Europe Institute at the University of Malaya and a member of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for the Asia Pacific. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Employment: Shortage of ‘core talent’ among concerns

From page 1

Experts and industry insiders cautioned that the job market will face pressures on the course of high-quality development.

Guo Sheng, CEO of Zhaopin, said the complicated geopolitical situation has increased difficulties in introducing top-notch talent from overseas, while the booming new quality productive forces have triggered a shortage of “core talent”.

China's growing aging workforce could negatively impact industrial development and, in turn, the nation's economy, Guo warned.

Pang, from the academy, said that in order to secure high-quality

employment, it is necessary for government authorities to strengthen support for private companies and small and medium-sized enterprises, which can play an important role in stabilizing the job market.

“Continuous efforts can be channeled to nurture new growth engines in the digital economy and silver economy sectors, which can generate high-quality job opportunities,” she said, adding that it is also necessary to improve employment services for the public and release more supporting policies to promote the employment of young people.

Xinhua and Xu Wei contributed to this story.

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CHINA

Testing time

Parents brave scorching temperatures outside Shandong Experimental High School in Jinan, Shandong province, on Wednesday as they wait for their children to complete the day's senior high school entrance exams. Nearly 80,000 students in the city are taking part in the exams, which will conclude on Saturday.

HUANG ZHONGMING / FOR CHINA DAILY



Studies of sand aim to protect high-speed railway

LANZHOU — Chinese scientists are endeavoring to ensure the smooth and safe operation of a high-speed railway in the windy Gobi Desert by better understanding the movement of sand.

They have made progress in revealing the movement of sediment by strong winds along the Lanzhou-Xinjiang high-speed railway in Northwest China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources said.

The study is of practical importance to the safe operation of the line and could serve as a theoretical foundation for preventing and managing disasters caused by winds along the railway, said Liu Benli, a researcher at the institute.

The 1,776-kilometer high-speed railway links Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, with Lanzhou, capital of Gansu province.

Strong winds that blow over the vast Gobi can cause significant environmental problems and damage to infrastructure, but Liu said scientific understanding of the underlying mechanisms and dynamics of the process remains limited.

Institute researchers selected a windy area along the railway to carry out field observations of the transportation of wind-blown sand.

The study results indicate that sand transportation heights in the region can reach 9 meters, roughly three to six times higher than in other gravel deserts.

Wang Tao, an associate researcher at the institute, said the study proposes suggestions for improving the railway's windblown sand protection system.

It found that the amount of windblown sand transported in the region each year exceeds that of most other deserts around the world, and that fine sand and total suspended particulates contribute to around 90 percent of the sediment deposited on railway tracks.

"To control transportation of these fine particles, we propose increasing the height of sand-blocking fences within the current railway windblown sand protection system from 2 to 3 meters," Wang said.

Simultaneously, damage to the Gobi's surface caused by human activities should be minimized to reduce the excessive release of dust, he added.

The results of the study have been published in the journal *Land Degradation & Development*.

XINHUA

Heat wave to linger until next week

By LI MENGHAN in Beijing and SHI BAOYIN in Zhengzhou

The scorching heat, which has engulfed China since Saturday and broken historical records in some areas, is expected to linger until next Thursday, a meteorological expert said on Wednesday.

"This heat wave is characterized by its prolonged duration, extensive reach and high intensity," said Fu Jiaolan, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Center.

"Daily maximum temperatures in certain areas have reached or exceeded their historical records for the same period."

Since Saturday, this year's first significant heat wave has hit areas in North, East, Central and Northeast China, with central and southern parts of Hebei province, the southern part of Tianjin, the northwestern part of Henan province, and the central and western parts of Shandong province experiencing temperatures as high as 42 C, Fu said.

The National Meteorological Center has issued high temperature alerts for six consecutive days since Friday evening. On Sunday evening, the center elevated the yellow alert to orange in the three-tier, color-coded warning system for high temperatures. Red represents the most severe level, followed by orange and yellow.

On Wednesday, meteorological departments in the severely heat-affected regions of Shanxi province, Shandong, Henan and Hebei, issued red alerts for high temperatures.

"A continental high-pressure ridge and the eastward movement of a warm air mass are the primary causes for the heat wave," said Fu, adding that the recent sunny and low humidity conditions provided a

A continental high-pressure ridge and the eastward movement of a warm air mass are the primary causes for the heat wave."

Fu Jiaolan, chief forecaster at the National Meteorological Center

favorable environment for the rise in temperatures.

The ongoing heat in North China and the provinces of Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu and Shandong is expected to reach its peak by Thursday, and ease off with the projected arrival of cold air and light rainfall next Thursday. North China may experience a drop in temperatures next Friday and Saturday, she said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs launched a Level 4 emergency response to major natural disasters on Tuesday, warning of the impact that persistently high temperatures and drought may have on crops such as corn and soybean in provinces including Hebei, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Anhui, Shandong, Henan and Shaanxi.

The Henan climate center issued an orange drought alert — the second most severe level in the classification system — on Wednesday, with 72 national meteorological stations across 16 city-level regions in Henan reporting 10 consecutive days of severe drought.

The drought situation is expected to continue intensifying until next

Thursday, leading the provincial climate center to propose activating emergency backup water sources, implementing artificial rainfall measures and curbing water consumption in the services sector to guarantee the water supply for major crops.

"Drought resistance and summer planting is the primary task for this period," said Dong Haiying, an agricultural technician in Kaifeng, Henan.

"After planting corn, the crops need to be continuously watered to ensure a high germination rate," Dong said, adding that it was necessary to have timely information on issues such as crop diseases and pests to ensure the autumn harvest.

Some areas in North China have recently not only experienced high temperatures, but also encountered severe convective weather. On Tuesday, Beijing experienced temperatures exceeding 35 C during the day and was hit by severe convective weather in the evening, with thunder, lightning, hail, strong winds and heavy rainfall occurring at around 7 pm.

Shi Yan, a meteorological analyst at China Weather, said it's normal to experience continuous high temperatures and frequent thunderstorms at the same time. The warm air generated by daytime high temperatures interacts with a southward-moving cold air mass, stimulating strong convective weather.

More such weather is expected to hit areas such as Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei on Thursday and Friday.

Qi Xin in Zhengzhou contributed to this story.

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Tariffs: 'Protectionism not the way forward'

From page 1

The European Commission said it has reached out to Chinese authorities to discuss the findings and explore possible ways to resolve the issues in a WTO-compatible manner.

"Should discussions with Chinese authorities not lead to an effective solution, these provisional countervailing duties would be introduced from July 4," the commission said.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to the EU expressed "its shock, grave disappointment and deep dissatisfaction with the protectionist trade measure" by the European Commission.

The chamber believes this measure "will seriously impair the legitimate rights and interests of BEV companies and exert negative impacts on China-EU trade and cooperation in the automotive sector," it said.

According to a recent survey by the chamber, within the Chinese BEV industry, imposition of a 10 percent additional levy would already carry significant implications for most Chinese car manufacturers, resulting in a substantial negative impact on their exports to Europe.

The rates ranging from 17.4 percent to 38.1 percent will pose a serious market barrier, the chamber said.

5 percent of battery electric vehicles manufactured in China were exported to the EU member countries in 2023.

Despite China's strength in the global BEV production and sales market, exports of BEVs to the EU accounted for only about 5 percent of China's BEV production in 2023. The market share of China's BEV brands in the European market has consistently remained lower than that of local European companies, according to the chamber.

It also said the EU's investigation into China's BEVs was politically motivated, driven by protectionism, and lacked substantive complaints from its own industry.

"In contrast, numerous European industry representatives have voiced concerns regarding the investigation, citing potential negative impacts on Chinese and European BEV supply chains, innovation and market cooperation," the chamber said, adding that the chamber and the Chinese car industry also share these concerns.

Carl Bildt, co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations and a former Swedish prime minister, said on social media on Wednesday that he's "not

too worried by what is said to be Chinese EV subsidies — if they want to subsidize the EU green transition, which really needs to speed up, then it's OK with me."

David Henig, director of the United Kingdom Trade Policy Project at the Brussels-based European Centre for International Political Economy, wrote on social media: "In essence, the real purpose of EU tariffs is giving the domestic industry a few years to become closer to competitive as the Chinese industry or to receive investment from them. Yes there are subsidies, but so there are everywhere. China started on EV way earlier."

Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao, on a recent trip to Europe, dismissed accusations of "unfair competition" made by the EU and the United States, calling them groundless. He said that some countries are implementing high tariffs, discriminatory subsidies, investment restrictions and unilateral sanctions that contravene WTO rules, with the aim of excluding Chinese companies from their markets.

"This is not fair competition at all," Wang said.

Zhao Jia in Beijing contributed to this story.

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Rural doctor races for organ donation

Wuhan's Transplant Games highlight need for increased awareness

By WANG XIAOYU in Wuhan wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

For more than two decades, rural doctor Li Qianfeng has traversed rugged and remote mountains in a Southwest China village, racing against time to save lives.

The 45-year-old raced again on Wednesday. But this time, he ran on a smooth rubber track, and not for the purpose of overcoming ailments, but to champion the value of organ donation.

Li, who received a kidney transplant in 2008, was one of about 400 organ recipients participating in the 8th China Transplant Games that opened in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Tuesday, which coincided with this year's China Organ Donation Day.

"It was my first time participating in the games," he said. "I am very excited to be here to not only compete and connect with people with different backgrounds, but also to share our transplant experiences and showcase the power of organ donation."

Participants competed in various events, including track and field, table tennis, badminton and tug of war, according to the China Organ Transplantation Development Foundation, which jointly hosted the event with the Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology and Tongji Hospital.

The competitors, transplant recipients ranging in age from 9 to 78, came from 21 provincial-level regions. The transplants they received included kidney, liver, lung and bone marrow.

Zhao Hongtao, chairman of the foundation, said the event aimed to raise awareness about organ donation, promote advances in organ transplantation technologies and demonstrate the power such donations have to change people's lives.

This year's event was the first since China announced its latest rules on organ donation and transplants last year, Zhao said.

"The document outlining the new rules highlights 'donation' in its title, signifying China's commitment to promoting organ donation and aligning itself with

global standards," he said.

In 2015, voluntary donations became the only legitimate way people could receive organ transplants in China. Since then, the country has seen more than 160,000 organs donated from about 53,000 deceased donors, according to official data.

The number of registered organ donors in China has been rising over the years, and recently reached 6.79 million.

Li finished fifth in the 800 meter race at the event and said he was grateful for the chance to compete.

"My job as a rural healthcare worker has pushed me to trek and run frequently through the hills, and I also like playing basketball and volleyball during leisure time, so I am confident in my strength," he said.

"I would not be here today without the transplant, and to honor my second chance at life, I ran as well as I could."

For Dabao, a 35-year-old man who underwent a kidney transplant eight years ago, taking part in the games made him "feel more alive than ever."

"It was my third time competing in badminton during the national transplant games," said Dabao, who used a pseudonym to protect his privacy. He lost early in the tournament, but said the games were not only about competition, but also about camaraderie.

"Each time, I get to meet people with similar experiences, and we've built friendships over the years," he said. "I think being here carries significance for me because it means that I am still healthy and energetic after the transplant."

Chen Zhishui, head of Tongji Hospital's research institute on organ transplantation, said that transplant recipients are encouraged to engage in social activities, return to their workplaces and lead normal lives after recovering from surgery.

Chen said a shortage of donated organs remains a serious challenge in China. The nation registered only 4.6 donors per 1 million people last year, lagging behind the rate in developed countries.



Organ recipients participate in the 8th China Transplant Games in Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Former vice-governor of Gansu under probe

Yang Zixing, former vice-governor of Gansu province, is being investigated on suspicion of severely violating Party disciplines and national laws, China's top anti-corruption watchdogs said on Wednesday. The investigation was announced and disclosed by the Communist Party of China Central Committee for Discipline Inspection and the National Commission of Supervision on their website. Yang, 64, a native of Gansu, joined the Party in 1984. From June 2015 to January 2018, he served as vice-governor of Gansu.

Bar exam hopefuls can start applying

China's national unified qualification exam for legal professionals — the nation's bar exam — will begin accepting online applications from Friday to June 30, the Ministry of Justice announced on Tuesday. The first phase of testing, which will feature objective questions, will be held on Sept 21 and Sept 22. The second phase covering subjective questions will be held on Oct 20. Last year, around 860,000 applicants registered for the objective question phase of the exam.

XINHUA

CHINA



A homestay in Xijingyu village in Jizhou district, Tianjin, attracts visitors. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Homestays bringing tourism to Tianjin

Accommodations coupled with agritainment lead to many jobs

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin
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Mountainous Jizhou district in Tianjin embraced a significant influx of 3,000 runners from some 20 countries as the 21st Huangya Pass Great Wall Marathon kicked off on May 18.

The event brought big business to the area, especially for people offering accommodations.

"Some participants have been running in the contest for over a decade and have already reserved numerous homestays to enjoy the

district's mountain views," said a spokesperson for the district.

Statistics indicate that over 300 boutique homestays have been established in the district since it ceased industrial production in 2018. Apart from those high-level homes, some agritainment projects such as vegetable planting and cultural dining activities were initiated by 2,089 families.

Both agritainment projects and boutique homestays have created a combined 60,000 job opportunities for local farmers.

Last year, the total revenue generated by homestays and agritainment projects reached 590 million yuan (\$81.5 million), marking an 81 percent increase year-on-year.

Song Weilong, the Party chief and director of the Jizhou Culture and Tourism Bureau, said: "The district's tourism sector has flour-

ished across 100 villages in 20 townships, and we have devised concrete development strategies to enhance branding and culture and to elevate the boutique homestay experience for guests."

Gao Cuilian, a 61-year-old entrepreneur from Changzhou village, was the first person in Jizhou district to open a homestay.

"I consistently update and enhance our offerings to tailor our services," she said.

Gao manages mid-range and high-end homestays featuring 60 rooms that can house up to 100 guests daily, as tourists' demand for stylish accommodations continues to increase.

Back in 1994, when she courageously established the inaugural homestay, few believed that the concept of "experiencing life and dining in a farmer's home on food

with a light, non-greasy flavor" could yield any profits.

At that time, she refurbished her residence on the mountain-side near the Jiushanding Scenic Area, the highest point in Tianjin that is also known as "the peak of nine mountains". She recalled preparing fish and duck dishes sourced from the mountain river for guests there.

These days, many villagers no longer personally manage their homestays, she said.

"Several have opted to lease their homestays for a few years to urban-based managers, securing stable returns," she explained.

Data reveals that in Xiaying township, 31 out of the 35 villages are operating homestays.

Reservations for homestays in villages with traditional architecture such as Guojiagou and Xijingyu typically require booking a month in advance.

"Homestays have now emerged as new economic drivers in the area, with a rising trend in homestay hybrid businesses such as bookstores, cafes and those themed around history and music — signifying a fresh wave in the fusion of culture and tourism," said Li Pengyue, Party chief of Xiaying.

Jazz festival draws foreign artists and fans

As dusk fell, Laurent Maur and his band began their show, enveloping the audience with graceful jazz music created by rhythmic drumming and an interweaving melody of harmonica and flute.

The performance by Maur, a French harmonica player, marked the opening of the 2024 Taihu Jazz Festival, a five-day event that began on May 22 at the Taihu Stage Art Center, a branch of China's National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The festival has welcomed over 200 jazz musicians from home and abroad.

Liu Mingxin, a Beijing resident and jazz enthusiast, hurried to the jazz festival in Tongzhou district with her friend immediately after finishing work. "We often attend concerts and music festivals together. Jazz makes me feel relaxed, and I can really feel the music," the 30-year-old said.

During his performance, Maur enthralled the audience with his original creations themed on Sino-French friendship.

"Music possesses incredible power to connect people from different countries, and I believe it also plays a very important role in cultural exchanges between China and France," he said.

Maur has a profound love for China. Since 2010, he has made numerous trips to the country, including a 28-day performance tour across 24 cities.

"When we performed in China, the audiences were very enthusiastic and really got into it," he said.

Launched in 2021, the Taihu Jazz Festival has been held for four years now. Li Xiaochuan, a renowned Chinese jazz trumpeter, is a regular attendee. This year, he performed a variety of original music infused with Chinese elements. Compared to other music genres, jazz appears more niche. According to Li, jazz emerged in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s and experienced a thriving period in Beijing during the 1990s. Today, jazz has also gained popularity in Chinese cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xi'an and Chongqing.

"Jazz is a universal language with inclusiveness, and in China, it is reaching ordinary audiences," said Li, adding that it is the rise of jazz festivals and clubs, as well as jazz education, that is promoting jazz in the country.

Having performed both at home and abroad, Li, 42, found that compared with their foreign counterparts, Chinese audiences are younger and more curious about jazz, providing a positive impetus for the industry. "I noticed in China that young people go to jazz shows, which is great," said Balazs Bagyi, a Hungarian jazz drummer, who was also invited to perform at this year's jazz festival.

"In Western Europe and North America, jazz audiences are get-

ting older and older, but here in China, we have new audiences," Bagyi said. "Some people think jazz music is for the trained ears, but I think it is for the open heart and open mind."

Laurent Maur, French harmonica player

According to Guan Jianbo, vice-president of the NCPA, to make jazz more accessible to the public, this year's jazz festival set up three affiliated stages that were free to visitors, inviting more than 40 young jazz bands to perform.

Jin Zhilin, a junior majoring in vocal jazz at the Beijing Contemporary Music Academy, started a jazz band with her peers last year, and they prepared eight songs to perform at the festival. "This is our first time participating in the jazz festival," she said during the event. "I think it is a great opportunity to introduce more people to jazz as well as our band, and we really cherish the stage."

Living close to the Taihu area, Chen Jianlin and his wife went to enjoy the performances of the young jazz bands while taking a leisurely stroll nearby. "The music festival enriches our daily lives, and I am looking forward to more activities like this," said Chen, 39.

Hu Na, an associate professor at the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, said the development of jazz in China can be attributed to the diverse needs of the Chinese music lovers, as well as the Chinese government's efforts to foster an open and inclusive environment for cultural exchange.

"For the audience, jazz is not only a music genre, but also reflects a way of life," Hu said.

According to data from the China Association of Performing Arts, the number of large and medium-sized concerts and music festivals (those with more than 2,000 audience members) nationwide reached 5,600 last year, an increase of 100.36 percent compared with 2019. Accordingly, the total number of attendees reached nearly 35.52 million, up 208.5 percent from 2019.

XINHUA

Yan'an apples' popularity literally out of this world

By QIN FENG in Xi'an
and ZHAO RUINAN

When the crew of the Shenzhou XVIII manned space mission takes a break, they can enjoy a special treat — apples from Yan'an, Shaanxi province.

The astronauts have enough of the apples, an essential part of the spaceship's fruit supply, to last for about six months.

"Fresh Yan'an apples are making their eighth trip to space," said Liu Jiangtao, assistant general manager of Yan'an Huasheng Modern Agriculture Group, the supplier of the apples.

On April 25, China launched the spaceship to send three astronauts to its orbiting Tiangong space station for a six-month mission.

On May 28, the astronauts conducted their first spacewalk outside the station.

"To ensure the quality of the 'flying apples', we strictly control each production step, including ensuring the precise use of pesticides and fertilizers and conducting rigorous tests to ensure the quality of the apples," Liu added.

Yan'an is well-known for apple growing. It sits at a high altitude and has thick soil, ample sunlight, signif-



A farmer harvests apples in Yan'an, Shaanxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

icant temperature variations and moderate rainfall, making it an ideal apple production base.

One in every 10 apples in China comes from Yan'an. The city has the largest high-quality apple production base in the country, employing more than 1 million people.

The base benefits about 800,000 farmers, with the apple industry accounting for about 60 percent of the net income for families farming in the region.

In recent years, the Yan'an government has focused on the industry, promoting eco-friendly, standardized and high-end production techniques. This has led to the development of its Yan'an Apple and Luochuan Apple brands.

Last year, the city launched a three-year plan to build a national high-quality apple development zone. They created over 40 demonstration zones in 13 counties, established water-conserving apple

production bases and renovated 11,333 hectares of old orchards.

"In 2023, production of Yan'an apples hit a record high of 4.55 million metric tons, with a fresh fruit output value exceeding 26 billion yuan (\$3.6 billion)," said Lu Shuguo, head of the city's fruit industry center.

Each year, over 60 percent of Yan'an apples are sold to high-end markets both domestically and abroad, according to Wang Jianfeng, deputy head of the fruit industry center. The apples are exported to more than 30 countries and regions, including Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Canada, with annual online sales exceeding 4.4 billion yuan.

Wang said Yan'an will continue to help farmers increase their incomes and accelerate the development of its high-quality apple production zone. "By 2025, we expect the apple-growing area in the city to stabilize at 3.3 million mu (220,000 hectares), with production reaching 5 million metric tons. Our goal is to make Yan'an the largest and highest-quality apple production cluster in the country," Wang said.

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Farmers' writings depict rural life

LANZHOU — For a long time, local villagers viewed Pei Aimin as just an ordinary farmer who spent her days toiling in the fields, taking care of her family and chatting with neighbors. In recent times, however, the 50-year-old woman from Gansu province has gained a reputation as a writer, harvesting a fine literary work from her experiences farming the land.

"I always crouch in the fields, watching the clouds gather and scatter, feeling the breeze stroking the seedlings," she said. "The rhythm of nature brings tranquility,

which I like to record with my pen."

Pei lives in Shangxin village, Minqin county, which is surrounded by the Badain Jaran and Tengger deserts. In 2022, she published her first book, *Diary of Aunt Vole*, consisting of a collection of prose passages in diary format, describing rural life in the modern day.

"I used to think that farmers lived a hard and dull life. But through Pei's writings, I can see a free and unbounded pastoral life," said 26-year-old reader Fu Wei.

In Pei's room, there is a work of calligraphy which reads, "Plowing

in sunny days and reading when it rains," which is a reflection of her life. After finishing her farm work, she often sits down to write or edit.

"The encouragement I've received has boosted my love of writing, and I want to share the changes taking place in our village," Pei said.

At the mention of changes in the countryside, she happily talks at length about the improvements that have taken place. Ten years ago, she grew corn and wheat on her family's single hectare of land, earning about 22,500 yuan (\$3,100). Now, thanks in part to crop diversifica-

tion, her income has increased significantly.

She said she was amazed at how much money can be earned these days on just a fraction of the land with a single crop.

"If you set up a greenhouse to grow ginseng, you can earn 100,000 yuan a year," said Pei, beaming.

She believes farming has been made much easier through intelligent agriculture and mechanical operation.

"An area of corn measuring 10 mu (a bit more than half a hectare) can be reaped by harvesters in two hours. This same workload used to take us up to six days," she said.

Since China eradicated absolute poverty, rural vitalization has been

in full swing throughout the country. Young people from various backgrounds, including fresh university graduates and those interested in rural development, have been keen to join the rural vitalization effort.

"Running a farm, or engaging in e-commerce, young people now have diverse career choices in rural areas," Pei said.

Such changes are also recorded in the works of Song Yaping, a 54-year-old rural writer living in Lingtai county, Gansu.

According to Song, modern farmers are quite different from traditional ones.

"Generally, they are intelligent and insightful," he said. "Although they live in villages, they have a

broader vision. The world they care about is not limited to rural life."

In his view, the process of urbanization in the countryside means many farmers have purchased new houses or rebuilt old ones, thereby embracing a better quality of life.

"My aim as a writer is to truly describe the rural life that I'm familiar with, and to faithfully record the era in which I'm living," Song said.

One of his short stories has been adapted into a movie script and will soon be hitting the silver screen.

"I hope my works will reach more and more readers, and a wider audience in the movies and television," he said.

XINHUA



Artists stage a performance at the 2024 Taihu Jazz Festival in Beijing on May 22. CHEN ZHONGHAO / XINHUA

WORLD

Cinema gear from China shines at expo

By RENALI in Los Angeles
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A lecturer from the American Society of Cinematographers attracted a crowd of attendees at Warner Bros Studios, where cinematographer Shane Hurlbut shared his experiences using LED lights from the Guangdong Nanguang Co.

"We can create a beautiful reflection in the character's eyes, and it enhances the overall quality of the picture under these light sources," Hurlbut told the audience Saturday in Burbank, California, as he demonstrated the lighting effects through the camera lens.

A cinematographer should "first and foremost" be focused on self-expression, he said. A good cinematographer also should be a creator who uses cine lenses and lighting to tell stories, leveraging technology to increase production value.

The seminar was one of many programs held during the Cine Gear Expo 2024. Since its inception in 1996, the expo has developed into the premier event for the technology, entertainment and media industries.

The three-day show draws thousands of artists and technicians from around the world to display new technologies and products, providing a lens on the future of film production and content creation.

The integration of LED (light-emitting diode) lighting for movies is one of the key advances in a wave of cinematic innovation. With its many advantages, LED lighting is gradually changing the way films are made, adding a new dimension to cinematic storytelling.

The Chinese lighting industry stood out as a leader in innovation among the exhibitors, as several Chinese manufacturers displayed their latest lighting and power equipment.

"Our vision is becoming a Chinese brand respected by the whole world," Shirley Lin, senior marketing manager for Nanguang, told China Daily. "The US market is the most important market for our brands, and we continue collaborating with American partners and studios."

Barry Garcia, the technical sales manager for Nanlite USA, said that American customers recognize the quality and innovation of Chinese lighting products, and their global market share is continually increasing, reflecting a growing appreciation among consumers.

"They do a very good share, I would say, in the North American market as well as probably some of

the South American market because the light quality is there," Garcia said. "Here in Hollywood, being a content creator in the US, having these types of lights available to them is very useful for anything that they need to create."

Many television series and movies from major studios like Amazon and Netflix utilize Nanlite lighting for their productions, especially for special effects work, Garcia said. As a local American distributor for Chinese lighting products, Garcia described his work with the Chinese companies as a good "give and take" relationship. Having worked with many Chinese companies and factories over the past decade, he said he found it interesting that Shantou, in South China's Guangdong province, where Nanlite is based, was known primarily as a place for manufacturing toys.

Nanguang is also located there, as the city has evolved into a hub for LED and other technological advancements.

"That's the lighting area where a lot of LEDs we use come from. They are unique because of the innovative way they develop new technology and products," Garcia said.

Aputure, founded in China in 2005, is another leading designer of cinema lighting. The company sells its products globally, with offices in North America, South America, Europe and Asia.

"Cinematography is one of the hardest things for even AI to accomplish. High-quality Chinese products help us solve some of the film industry's most challenging problems," cinematographer Joseph Dean said.

With the shift toward LED lighting in the film industry, Simon Lam, sales and marketing director for Dongguan Huiguan Culture Technology Co, emphasized the advantages of LED lighting over traditional lighting for the actual needs of professional film-lighting sources.

Lam said the company has several leads it is negotiating "to explore the market in the US". He said his home city, Dongguan, has become the global production base for LED light parts.

A group of visitors also gathered at the booth of Dulens, a made-in-China optics manufacturer that designs vintage cinema lenses for filmmakers and cinematographers. Among the visitors was Peter Stephens, a cinematographer who owns a lens company.



Cube party

Children pose with Rubik's Cubes during a flash mob performance to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hungarian architect Erno Rubik's invention, in Budapest on Wednesday. In 1974, Rubik created the first prototype of a movable cube made from small wooden blocks and held together by a unique mechanism. Originally called the Magic Cube, it was later renamed after its inventor and became a global phenomenon.

FERENC ISZA / AFP

Japan reels after car safety testing scandal

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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A car safety testing scandal in Japan has raised concerns about legal compliance and corporate governance after five automakers admitted to improperly obtaining the certification needed for mass production.

It was revealed on June 3 that auto companies, including Toyota and Mazda, had carried out safety tests in ways not approved by the Japanese government, meaning they had incorrectly been given model certifications before being sold.

Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism requested 85 vehicle and equipment makers to carry out internal investigations in January and February, following certification fraud issues at Toyota's Daihatsu Motor.

Some 68 companies have submitted their investigations and fraudulent activities were found at Toyota, Mazda, Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha Motor, affecting 38 models, including discontinued ones, totaling more than 5 million vehicles.

The transport ministry has begun on-site inspections of the headquarters of the five companies, and will assess the circumstances and severity of their misconduct to determine whether administrative sanctions are necessary.

A reduction in vehicle production stemming from safety test fraud discovered at Daihatsu Motor last year weighed heavily on the Japanese economy, which shrank at an annualized rate of 1.8 percent in the first quarter of this year from the previous three months.

The recent discovery of falsified certification tests may cast a shadow on Japan's economic recovery in the second quarter, experts said.

The issue may slow the pace of economic normalization through May and June, Chief Economist at Mizuho Research & Technologies Saisuke Sakai told Nikkei.

On June 6, Toyota and Mazda halted production of five models found to have been improperly tested.

Prolonged influence

Experts said the influence could be prolonged because the two carmakers have more than 3,000 second-tier and subsequent suppliers between them.

Kota Yuzawa, a research analyst at Goldman Sachs, told Nikkei that governance needs to be further strengthened regarding legal compliance.

Consumers expressed divided views on how differences between corporate standards and national standards should be handled.

"It's fine for each company to set their own standards but they

should also evaluate their products in accordance with national standards," said Mitsuo Mita, a 22-year-old political science major in Tokyo.

He said the data from both evaluations should be disclosed to the public.

Changing the national standards all at once would affect all machinery and the economy, he said.

Big companies at fault should take responsibility and align their standards with the national ones, Mita said.

Kazuhi Ukita, a resident of Saitama Prefecture, said, "The real question is whether it is more reassuring to follow national standards or independent standards set by companies, as people want to choose the safest option."

Junko Watanabe, a 51-year-old Tokyo resident, said some auto manufacturers have been following even stricter standards than the national ones, but they have been punished anyway.

Penalties were imposed on those companies simply because they did not adhere to the national standards during the tests required to obtain model certification, Watanabe said.

"Japan is a conservative country that strictly follows many rules. If something is mandated by the government, it is considered the top priority," she said. "I think the national standards should be reconsidered."

French left and right scramble to form a pact

By JONATHAN POWELL
in London
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French opposition parties on both the left and right have quickly moved to build alliances following President Emmanuel Macron's call for a snap election.

Macron dissolved the French Parliament on Sunday and called for legislative polls, to be held on June 30 and July 7, after his party suffered a crushing defeat in European Union parliamentary elections.

Left-wing parties have agreed to form an alliance that includes the Greens, the Socialists, the French Communist Party and the far-left France Unbowed of Jean-Luc Melancon, Agence France-Presse reported.

Following the EU election results, left-leaning politicians are seeking unity to thwart a potential victory for the National Rally, which would be the first time a French far-right party leads a government since World War II.

In a joint statement, the alliance urged all left-wing entities, including powerful labor unions, to come together in support of a "new popular front", or "Front populaire", that offers an alternative to Macron's centrists, as well as fighting the far right.

On the right, Les Republicains party leader Eric Ciotti has proposed a coalition with Marine Le Pen's National Rally, citing common ground in their ideologies, Reuters reported.

"We say the same things, so let's stop making up imagined opposition," Ciotti told TF1 TV. "This is what the vast majority of our voters want. They tell us 'reach a deal!'"

Le Pen is working to consolidate power on the right, The Associated Press reported. Her niece, Marion Marechal, who secured a seat in the European Parliament with the Reconquer! party led by Eric Zemmour, visited the National Rally headquarters in Paris on Monday to discuss forming a far-right alliance, the AP said.

Le Pen is also reported to have met with members of Les Republicains to consider a united front.

Easing restraints

Ciotti's move is raising concerns that Europe's mainstream right is easing its restraints on the far-right movement.

Centrist and left-leaning members of the European Parliament were quick to slam Ciotti's proposal, viewing it as a potential dismantling of a barrier that has kept radical right-wing forces out of power in France, Euronews reported.

"It's unthinkable for me (and many Les Republicains MPs) that there could be the slightest agreement, the slightest alliance, even local, or personal, with the RN (National Rally)," Philippe Gosselin, a Les Republicains lawmaker, told Reuters.

Co-chair of the European Green Party, Melanie Vogel, said in a statement: "In the last decade, we have seen liberals and conservatives in France making all of the same mistakes ... By failing to defend democratic values, by 'normalizing' the ideas of the far right, and by institutionalizing their presence in the Parliament, they have paved the way for the worst."



Serene beauty

Visitors at Guimet Museum in Paris enjoy the *Au coeur de la couleur: Masterpieces of Chinese monochrome porcelain (8th-18th centuries)* exhibition on Tuesday, which showcases China's taste for simplicity in form and purity in color through 250 masterpieces. It runs through Sept 16.

LI YANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

FRIENDS AFAR

'Rock-solid' ties benefit China, Malaysia

Editor's note: *China Daily* presents the series *Friends Afar* to tell the stories of people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries. Through the vivid narration of the people in the stories, readers can get a better understanding of a country that is boosting openness.

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong
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The close and "rock-solid" relationship between Malaysia and China, forged 50 years ago, will be further enhanced in the future, said Chin Yew Sin, president of the Malaysia Strategy Research Center in Kuala Lumpur.

The two countries established a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2013. And last year, they announced the joint construction of a China-Malaysia community with a shared future.

"Malaysia is one of the pioneer countries in the world to implement the Belt and Road Initiative projects. This has sped up the development process of Malaysia," Chin said.

"It has also brought in FDI (foreign direct investment) from other countries into Malaysia due to the availability of better infrastructure (in the country) that has reduced the cost of transportation and, in

turn, cut down the cost of doing business in Malaysia."

He also said Malaysia has bought many digital technology-based products from China, such as DJI drones, robotics and Huawei's smartphones, to improve national productivity.

Chin, a third-generation Malaysian Chinese whose grandfather hailed from Pingyuan county in Guangdong province, understands the significance of this bilateral bond.

He studied Chinese language during his primary and secondary school days in Ipoh, capital of Malaysia's northwestern Perak state.

"Later on, I self-studied after school by reading classical Chinese literature and poems," he said.

His personal engagement with China began in 1996 when he visited Beijing, his first trip to the country. During the visit, Chin was not only impressed by the many historical sites but also the country's vast culture.

"From that moment on, I became proud of my ancestral roots as Chinese (and the country's) 5,000-year-old civilization," he said.

In the next 28 years, Chin has made more than 20 trips to China, exploring all 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four munic-



Chin Yew Sin

palities and two special administrative regions. Chin has also witnessed the different stages of China's urban development and its overall progress.

He marveled at the lightning pace of China's various achievements, which can be aptly described by the saying, "Small changes in three years, big ones in five years."

In 2003, Chin was appointed as a central committee member of the Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia (Huazong). From 2009 to 2019, he served as Huazong's deputy secretary-general.

In his role with Huazong, Chin established frequent and close contacts with delegations from different parts of China. These visits aimed to enhance the existing friendship between overseas Chinese and the Chinese mainland, foster educational and cultural exchanges between China and Malaysia, and promote bilateral trade and investments.

As Chin often chaired the receptions of official delegations to Malaysia, he always took the opportunity to introduce Malaysia's his-

torical background, culture, education, economy, trade and investment opportunities to those from China.

During his tenure, Huazong and its Chinese counterparts co-organized various cultural performances and forums for the Chinese community in Malaysia, with topics covering traditional Chinese medicine and China's ancient and modern art.

Recognizing the potential for economic collaboration, Chin mooted the idea of setting up a Greater Chinese Economic Circle. The initiative sought to connect people and businesses across the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao and overseas communities, fostering stronger economic ties through trade and investment.

Winning accolades

In 2013, Chin received his first business award — Outstanding Chinese Business Leader — in Beijing. He has since received more than 50 business awards and was featured in several Chinese publications.

Among his accolades, two stand out: the first recipient of the World Outstanding Chinese Lifetime Achievement Award by Peking University in 2015, and the sole recipient of the World Best Academic Award by the China Association for Promoting International Economic and Technical Cooperation in 2015, which recognized his

ACROSS ASIA

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



A rickshaw puller works in Kolkata, India, on June 1, 2021. AFP VIA VCG

RUNNING on RICKSHAWS

Plight of Kolkata's rickshaw pullers powers growing calls to plug gaps

His body glistening with sweat, a gaunt man in a loincloth pulls a rickshaw through the serpentine lanes of north Kolkata. Amid the summer heat, the towering brick-red dwellings with baroque cornices overlook his toil.

Plying people or packages, this man is a symbol of an enduring legacy in India's "city of joy", a platinous nickname it earned from French author Dominique Laperrière's novel.

Despite Kolkata's strides toward modernity, the sight of hand-pulled rickshaws continues to define its streetscape.

Mukhtar Ali, general secretary of All Bengal Rickshaw Union, said there are about 3,500 hand-pulled rickshaws today, which is a significant decline from the 6,000 that plied the streets in 1919.

Hand-pulled rickshaws were invented in Japan in 1869, with the term "rickshaw" derived from the Japanese word *jin riki sha*, meaning human-powered vehicle.

The British introduced these rickshaws to Kolkata, replacing the ornate palanquins used by the aristocracy, including landlords and businessmen. This shift reinforced the colonial master-slave power dynamics, as it involved one human manually pulling another. In 1919, the British enacted the Calcutta Hackney-Carriage Act, which authorized the use of hand-pulled rickshaws for passenger transport in Kolkata. These rickshaws thus became the bourgeois alternative to palanquins. Despite the decline of British colonialism in India after World War II, hand-drawn rickshaws remain a lasting legacy in the city.

Despite efforts to phase them out, hand-pulled rickshaws continue to survive due to their simplicity and the ease with which unskilled laborers can operate them.

Many pullers are seasonal migrants from the states Bihar and Jharkhand, turning to this work when their farmlands lie fallow. These pullers typically rent their rickshaws from sardars, owners who run rickshaw garages. The government has ceased issuing new licenses or renewing old ones, aiming to phase out these relics of a bygone era.

Kamal Ali, a hand-drawn rick-



A rickshaw puller transports passengers through a waterlogged street in Kolkata on May 27. DIYANGSHU SARKAR VIA VCG

“Despite the challenges, I take pride in my work. In places where other forms of transport can't reach, my rickshaw can navigate effortlessly.”

Rajan Kumar, a rickshaw puller



From top: Rickshaws in Kolkata. MOMENT RF VIA VCG A Kolkata rickshaw puller in 2008. CHICAGO TRIBUNE VIA VCG

shaw puller, said: "It's difficult to get by with a monthly earning of not more than 3,000 rupees (\$36). If our rickshaws are banned, I shall not survive. I'm illiterate. I have two sons and three daughters. My sons have moved to another city with their wives, and barely visit. My daughters are married."

"Every day is a battle against exhaustion and uncertainty," said Rajan Kumar, another rickshaw puller. "Pulling a rickshaw in the scorching heat or pouring rain, I dream of a life where my family won't have to endure any hardship. The future is always on my mind, but the present is all-consuming. Despite the challenges, I take pride in my work. In places where other forms of transport can't reach, my rickshaw can navigate effortlessly. Whether it's ferrying people through narrow lanes or delivering packages to hard-to-reach areas, I know my work is essential to the city's daily life. It's this sense of purpose that keeps me going."

The erstwhile West Bengal government, under the Left Front, attempted to ban hand-pulled rickshaws in 2006, citing human dignity concerns. The proposed Calcutta Hackney-Carriage (Amendment) Bill aimed to phase them out, but implementation has been slow. Talks of replacing these rickshaws with battery-operated versions have surfaced but remain unrealized.

Mukhtar Ali from the All Bengal Rickshaw Union acknowledging the stagnation, said they have discussed their concerns with Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of West Bengal.

"Prior to the elections, we sent

her (Mamata Banerjee) a letter, which she promptly forwarded to the transport minister. He has assured us that he will address our issues after the elections. In the meantime, we are drafting a letter outlining our demands for rehabilitation packages."

A report by The Calcutta Samaritans and Action Aid showed the harsh realities of the rickshaw pullers' lives. About 76 percent of them work over 12 hours a day without access to adequate healthcare.

Prolonged isolation from families leads to loneliness, and many turn to sex workers, increasing the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. The report further revealed that 27 percent of them suffer from stomach upset, 26 percent from malaria, 14 percent from tuberculosis, 13.2 percent from spine-related issues, 4.4 percent from cough and cold, and 30 percent from joint pain.

Despite the grim conditions, these rickshaws have one redeeming feature — they are eco-friendly. Unlike motorized vehicles, they do not rely on fuel, making them a green mode of transport. Their small size allows them to navigate the narrow lanes of Kolkata, which can be especially useful during the monsoon season when many streets are flooded. The hand-pulled rickshaws of Kolkata embody a complex blend of history, struggle and pliability. These vehicles, once symbols of colonial power dynamics, have become an integral part of the city's fabric, providing essential services where modern transportation falls short.

As the city strides toward modernization, the need for a compassionate and sustainable transition becomes imperative. Ensuring the dignity and livelihood of these workers through thoughtful rehabilitation packages and alternative employment opportunities is not just a moral obligation but a necessary step toward an inclusive future.

In a city that prides itself on its rich heritage and progressive strides, the plight of the rickshaw pullers is a call to bridge the gap between the past and the future, ensuring that no one is left behind in the march of progress.

THE STATESMAN

Cyclist on yearlong fundraiser ride to aid children's hospitals

Long-distance cyclist Tev Dararith set off on an extraordinary mission on June 4, a yearlong odyssey stretching 20,000 kilometers from Cambodia to Europe.

The ambitious expedition aims to generate \$250,000 in support of children's hospitals, particularly the Angkor Hospital for Children as it marks its 25th anniversary.

Dararith's meticulously planned route, spanning 25 countries, has garnered widespread support from both the Cambodian government and the Angkor Hospital for Children.

At a news conference on June 3, Neth Pheaktra, Cambodia's minister of information, expressed the ministry's backing for Dararith's humanitarian endeavors, emphasizing Cambodia's commitment to children's rights and welfare.

"I take pride in being Cambodian and spreading awareness of my country through humanitarian efforts," Pheaktra said. "The fundraising efforts will benefit two hospitals, Kantha Bopha Hospital and Angkor Hospital for Children."

With six years of experience in deep forest adventure travel in remote areas, Dararith aims to address the lack of hospitals, schools and medical supplies in the country by raising funds to assist Cambodian children.

Dararith embarked on a journey of 9,000 km across Southeast Asia to raise funds for the hospital last year. Starting his mission on May 31, 2023, Dararith cycled through Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, aiming to raise \$50,000.

Despite facing challenges like bike breakdowns and illness, he remained committed and raised nearly \$60,000 by Aug 26.

The funds supported the Angkor Hospital for Children, providing healthcare to over 400 children daily regardless of their financial situation. Dararith's efforts gained recognition and support from local and international philanthropists.

Va Virak, a member of the board of directors of the Angkor Hospital for Children, hailed Dararith as a Cambodian hero, especially for children,

highlighting the hospital's crucial role in providing care for about 3 million children for over 25 years.

He said it covers over 100,000 children annually, with an average of about 400 consultations daily.

"(The hospital) each year allocates approximately \$5 million to \$6 million for its operations, with roughly 70 percent sourced from international philanthropy and 30 percent from local benefactors," Virak said.

Khan Touk, head of public relations at the Kantha Bopha Foundation, underscored the hospital's vital contributions, noting its role in facilitating the births of over 23 million infants since its reopening in 1992.

Despite encountering visa hurdles in Myanmar and Afghanistan, Dararith has been granted unrestricted travel throughout Europe. He will navigate through Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Türkiye, bypassing Myanmar and Afghanistan by air due to travel restrictions.

Equipped with a high-quality bicycle capable of carrying nearly 100 kilograms of gear, Dararith is prepared for the challenges ahead.

His journey, spanning paved roads, dirt tracks and mountain paths, includes fundraising efforts potentially extending for another year after his return.

"I'll cycle from dawn till dusk, setting up camp and editing videos," Dararith said. His daily routine will include content creation and community engagement, with a focus on leveraging social media to draw attention to his cause and inspire donations.

Acknowledging the arduous nature of his journey, Dararith will undertake it solo, recognizing its unsuitability for ordinary cyclists.

Beyond a personal feat, Dararith's trip symbolizes hope for Cambodian children battling severe illnesses like cancer and aims to effect substantial change through his unwavering determination and humanitarian spirit.

THE PHNOM PENH POST

Looking out for strays

About seven years ago, animal lover Anika Islam began rescuing and protecting animals — particularly stray cats and dogs — in her local community in Bangladesh.

"These poor animals cannot talk. They cannot communicate with us. If they are feeling discomfort or pain, they cannot tell us," she said. "So, of course we should do our best to help them."

From the start of her journey as an animal rescuer, Anika has found support in online communities, particularly Facebook groups, in which she could ask questions or reach out to like-minded individuals.

Seeing the benefit of working in tandem with other animal lovers, Anika began her own online group with those interested in the same issues.

The group of 15 friends would go on to feed and rescue countless animals in their neighborhoods. They also worked with other organizations to spay and neuter dogs in their areas.

Whenever they receive information about an animal being abused, they try to raise awareness about animal rights and even help turn many people into animal lovers.

However, members of this group were left shaken to their core when a stray dog was mercilessly beaten to death by guards on the premises of a footwear factory in Gazipur, a city in central Bangladesh, in early March.

Video footage of the incident went viral on social media.

The Animal Welfare Act 2019 in Bangladesh states that anyone found guilty of abusing or hurting an animal can be sentenced to two years in prison or fined about \$425 or both. Despite this law, animal cruelty continues unabated in the country.

Allegedly, when Anika and numerous others tried to seek justice for the inhumane killing of the

dog in Gazipur, they found very few legal solutions. Regardless of the law, the implementation and awareness surrounding the act seem almost nonexistent.

Desperate to find some justice, Anika, along with her friends and numerous others, recently formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital Dhaka.

About 25 of them gathered there, equipped with placards and signs. They also handed out leaflets containing the most vital parts of the Animal Welfare Act 2019.

Hazara Synthea Shaoleen, an animal rescuer who attended the protest, said, "We wanted to raise awareness about the issue of animal rights, because not many people know there are laws that protect animals in our country."

Barrister Sheikh Robaiyat Islam also joined their efforts after seeing the passion with which Anika and her friends were going about trying to get justice for stray animals that are killed.

He was previously involved in the writ petition filed to control unregulated fireworks — particularly in relation to the hazard caused to wildlife.

"A general diary (GD) was filed but no action has been taken yet. If this goes to a criminal court, it is unlikely to go anywhere. However, if we file a writ petition with the High Court to implement the existing law, then we might get some results," he said.

"I will try my best to support this cause. Many other people were involved in the initial GD filing, but backed out when we spoke about filing a writ petition. However, Anika and her friends have come forward to take on that responsibility. Hopefully, we can make the Animal Welfare Act 2019 a more solid law that is implemented properly."

THE DAILY STAR

Fun on floats

Tourists sit in circular watercraft through flooded vegetation in the Bay Mau coconut forest on the coast of Hoi An, Vietnam, on May 23.

SOLENT NEWS VIA VCG



BUSINESS

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Policy package to lift cross-border e-commerce

By WANG KEJU
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China has rolled out a package of policy measures to expand cross-border e-commerce and scale up the construction of overseas warehouses.

This is part of the government's efforts to foster new engines for foreign trade and drive economic growth in the long run.

By tapping into new foreign trade formats and leveraging efficient logistics infrastructure, Chinese businesses can seize new growth opportunities and strengthen their competitiveness on the international stage, experts said.

Cross-border e-commerce, together with new infrastructure such as overseas warehouses, will streamline processes, provide direct access to consumers, and contribute to the optimization and stability of China's foreign trade structure, the Ministry of Commerce said in a joint notice with eight other departments on Tuesday.

China's cross-border e-commerce sector has experienced significant growth over the past five years, with the trade volume increasing by over tenfold. In the first quarter, the total trade value of cross-border e-commerce reached 577.6 billion yuan (\$79.63 billion), up 9.6 percent year-on-year, according to the ministry.

The number of cross-border e-commerce entities nationwide has exceeded 120,000, and over 1,000 cross-border e-commerce industrial parks have been established, the ministry added.

Going forward, the country will take proactive steps to further cultivate and support cross-border e-commerce players, including collaborative partnerships between localities, with cross-border e-commerce platforms showcasing and promoting locally produced goods, according to the notice.

Moreover, China is encouraging universities to offer courses related to cross-border e-commerce and foreign languages through both full-time and part-time programs. This initiative aims to provide talent for export-oriented enterprises in the cross-border e-commerce sector, enabling them to explore emerging markets effectively, the notice said.

Financial institutions are encouraged to develop specialized financial products and solutions that are designed for cross-border e-commerce enterprises with genuine trading activities, the notice said.

By providing financial support, institutions play a vital role in enabling businesses to manage cash flow, expand their operations, and invest in new technologies and marketing strategies, said Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

This is particularly important for small and medium-sized enterprises, which often face greater challenges in accessing traditional financing channels, Bai added.

In the competitive landscape of the cross-border e-commerce market, efficient overseas warehouses and well-structured supply chains are emerging as a competitive advantage for cross-border enterprises, experts said.

Data released by the ministry show that the number of overseas warehouses exceeds 2,500, covering a total area of over 30 million square meters. Among these, more than 1,800 are specifically dedicated to serving the needs of cross-border e-commerce, with a combined area surpassing 22 million square meters.

China will promote a market-driven approach and encourage private sector participation in supporting businesses in the overseas warehouse sector. Additionally, efforts are underway to encourage the establishment of overseas warehouses along the China-Europe Railway Express lines, according to the notice.

Overseas warehouses have emerged as vital links in the supply chain of cross-border e-commerce, characterized by their ability to facilitate fast Customs clearance, swift delivery, rapid turnover, efficient services, and lower costs, said Wang Jingwen, director of the Macro Research Center affiliated with the China Minsheng Bank Research Institute.

By leveraging the benefits of overseas warehouses, businesses can enhance their global presence, improve customer satisfaction, and achieve competitiveness in the international marketplace. As cross-border e-commerce continues to thrive, overseas warehouses will be instrumental in shaping the future of international trade infrastructure, Wang added.

The ministry will also incorporate cross-border e-commerce as a key topic in free trade agreement negotiations, in order to facilitate the establishment of fair and transparent rules and enhance cross-border e-commerce cooperation between nations.



A Chinese new energy vehicle on display during an expo in Geneva. MENG DINGBO / XINHUA

Arrows in quiver to counter EU tariffs

EC to apply additional duties of up to 38.1% on Chinese EVs from July

By CHENG YU
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China has "abundant" countermeasures against the European Commission's latest tariffs on imported Chinese electric vehicles, and will safeguard the legitimate rights of its companies, said industry experts and officials on Wednesday.

Their comments came as the EC, which represents the interests of the EU as a whole, notified automakers on Wednesday that it would apply additional duties of up to 38.1 percent on imported Chinese EVs from next month.

Sun Xiaohong, secretary-general of the automotive branch of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily that China has abundant countermeasures against the EC's latest tariffs.

"But the country is more willing to negotiate with the EU to avoid a trade war as much as possible," Sun said, adding that the EU's move is rare, unreasonable and does not conform to WTO principles.

Sun said that the EC's motive is not for trade development at all.

For example, Tesla has been temporarily excluded from the temporary tariffs and is pending in this respect regarding supplementary materials, which reflects how "targeted" the tariffs are at China's EV industry, he said.

Despite China's dominance in the global EV market, the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU pointed out that China's exports of EVs to the EU accounted for only about 5 percent of its total production in 2023 and notably, these exports are primarily comprised of European and US branded EVs.

The chamber said in a recent statement that the move was "politically motivated and protectionism-driven", as several Chinese enterprises and stakeholders have reported misuse of investigative power and misconduct by the EC during the investigation.

This includes exercising investigative powers exceeding the scope of an anti-subsidy investigation, unreasonable documentation and information requests beyond the enterprises' capacity and burden of proof, and insufficient time given to concerned enterprises to collect requested data and information, it said.

Sun said that as the EU's investigation has never occurred before globally, it is difficult for both the initiators and affected companies to complete quantitative analysis.

"Many Chinese companies don't know how to respond and are worried about privacy leaks."

At a news conference on Wednesday, Ding Weishun, an official from the Ministry of Commerce, said that China firmly opposes any form of protectionism, and will safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese firms.

Ding said that the EU has been leveraging various discriminatory trade means to launch probes into Chinese companies, which will seriously affect the confidence of enterprises in related cooperation overseas.

"Such moves are typical means of protectionism ... but they won't stop Chinese new energy companies from going global," Ding said.

Sun also pointed out that cooperation between EU and Chinese companies will only bring huge benefits to the European automotive industry.

"Cooperation will only help Europe to accelerate their industrial transformation and upgrading. Many European companies, in fact, also hope to cooperate with China's EV sector to achieve win-win results," he added.

DHL bullish on green auto sector

By WANG XIN in Shanghai
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As Chinese automakers dominate the global electric vehicle and battery cell sectors, international logistics giant DHL is ramping up investment in China. With its EV-focused Center of Excellence in Shanghai recently established, the company is seeing big opportunities in helping Chinese EVs expand both locally and globally, said a senior executive.

The new center in Shanghai marks DHL's first of its kind in China, following locations in key regions including Indonesia, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom. The facility specializes in seamless and integrated end-to-end logistics for EV products, including batteries, electric motors, charging infrastructure and more. It is also equipped with a team of specialists to ensure efficient handling, storage and transportation while meeting the unique needs of the EV sector.

"In 2023, Chinese automakers dominated the global EV market, manufacturing over half of the EVs on roads worldwide and helped China become the largest auto exporter. As a battery powerhouse, China is home to six of the top 10 EV battery manufacturers, supplying close to 60 percent of the world's battery cells," said Niki Frank, CEO of DHL Global Forwarding APAC.

Frank shared that DHL has been involved in the international logistics of Chinese EVs for quite some time, and has been working with "almost all the key players in the

Chinese market, either on the battery side or on the vehicle side."

Starting from helping move production equipment and set up factories, to transport testing vehicles and finished vehicles to different destination markets, the company sees the current expansion of Chinese EVs as "the beginning", and expects a lot more growth and massive opportunities in the future.

"We see the Chinese players being extremely well-positioned to serve other markets, and that's why we have invested in the Center of Excellence here (in Shanghai) to help the majority of key Chinese OEMs and battery players even better bring their products to market," Frank added.

According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, the export volume of China's NEVs in 2023 reached 1.2 million units, up 77.2 percent year-on-year, marking a record high.

However, the burgeoning growth and appetite for EVs globally also present specific challenges for Chinese manufacturers in logistics, including regulatory uncertainties and geopolitical risks, and growing demand for storage solutions at both origin and destination markets to manage increased battery shipments. In particular, batteries classified as dangerous goods entail stringent safety and regulatory requirements to navigate in different regions across the globe.

Fathi Tlatli, president of global auto-mobility sector at DHL Customer Solutions & Innovation, explained earlier this month at an event that the transportation of

battery cells and EV power trains often requires compliant movement in line with relevant global and local regulations, as well as efficient delivery with sensor-tested humidity conditions.

"Our deep understanding of the logistical complexities in the EV industry, coupled with our expansive global network, positions us to facilitate this next chapter of international expansion for Chinese EV firms. With the Center of Excellence, we aim to be the partner of choice for customers seeking international business growth," said Frank.

Looking ahead, DHL sees huge opportunities in the further expansion of Chinese EVs, both locally and globally, and will remain committed to ramping up investment in the country.

"China has been, is and will be the biggest market within the Asia Pacific for DHL Global Forwarding. We have a saying internally that the most common reply when we ask our people 'What is the most important country after China?', is China. So China represents a very significant part of our business in the Asia-Pacific. We will continue to invest in China," said Frank.

He added that apart from the investment into the facilities — such as the new center — to better cater to customer needs, the company is also expanding investments in sustainability, IT system optimization and digitalization, as well as hiring more people with specific skills to focus on certain sectors, such as EVs, renewable energy and semiconductors.

GBA poised to gain from RMB milestone

By WANG XU and FLORENCE LI
in Shenzhen, Guangdong

Cross-border renminbi transactions in South China's Guangdong province reached a record high of 7.39 trillion yuan (\$1.02 trillion) in 2023, up 25.1 percent from the previous year, according to data from the provincial government.

This is a milestone achievement in facilitating smooth and efficient financial transactions across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Zhang Hu, executive vice-governor of the province, said the RMB has become the top settlement currency for cross-border receipts and payments in the GBA. Zhang promised further measures to facilitate the "seamless flow of diverse resources and elements" across the three regions.

"We are dedicated to intensifying efforts to eliminate barriers in investment, trade, qualification standards, and market access within the GBA," Zhang said in an interview to China Daily on Tuesday.

According to Zhang, Guangdong had issued several action plans over the years to promote regulatory alignment, mechanism and market integration, with a focus on key areas such as cross-border flow of resources, improvement of the business environment, and integration of public services.

Central to this effort has been the enhancement of financial market connectivity, which emphasizes expanding cross-border investment opportunities for Hong Kong, Macao and mainland residents and institutions, and steadily increasing the channels for residents to invest in each other's financial products, said Zhu Wei, deputy director of the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission.

Promoting financial interconnectivity of the GBA has not been easy because the growth engine of China operates under two different political and administrative systems, three separate Customs territories and has three different currencies as well as legal jurisdictions.

However, the introduction of the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect (WMC) Scheme in 2021 and its updated version in 2024 has helped to significantly increase the number of securities companies involved and RMB-denominated deposit products sold by mainland banks through the northbound leg of the WMC.

WMC allows eligible residents in the GBA to invest in wealth management products distributed by banks in each other's market through a closed-loop funds flow channel established between their respective banking systems.

Data from the Guangdong branch of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, show that about 71,000 investors have engaged with the WMC, with 46,000 from Hong Kong and Macao, and 25,000 from the Chinese mainland. The total value of funds transferred through WMC has reached 13.8 billion yuan.

"All these efforts had contributed to making Guangdong the first province in China to achieve a financial industry value exceeding 1 trillion yuan," Zhu said, adding that it will not only promote investment diversification and facilitate capital flow in the GBA but also drive RMB internationalization and strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international financial center.

In 2023, the financial industry's added value in Guangdong reached 1.24 trillion yuan, contributing 9.2 percent to the province's GDP.

Li Yihui in Guangzhou
contributed to this story.Contact the writers at
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A view of a cross-border e-commerce logistics center in Rongcheng, Shandong province. LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

PBOC adds liquidity via reverse repos

China's central bank conducted 2 billion yuan (\$281.16 million) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent on Wednesday. The move aims to keep liquidity reasonable and ample in the banking system, the People's Bank of China said in a statement.

Renminbi strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 2 pips to 7.1133 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2

percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

Passenger car sales up 5.7% in Jan-May

Retail sales of passenger cars in China rose in the first five months of 2024, with supportive policy measures serving to boost consumer spending, industry data showed. A total of 8.07 million passenger cars were sold via retail channels in China during the January-May period, an increase of 5.7 percent year-on-year, according to the China Passenger Car Association. In May alone, sales hit 1.7 million units, down 1.9 percent year-on-year but 11.4 percent higher than the previous month.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

PATH TO MODERNIZATION

Yancheng shows which way the wind is blowing

Boasting rich clean resources, strong manufacturing capacity, city in Jiangsu seeks big green role globally

By CANG WEI in Nanjing and PENG CHAO and ZHENG YIRAN in Yancheng, Jiangsu

Visitors to the Yellow Sea coastal city of Yancheng in Jiangsu province are often amazed by giant wind turbines lined up on the tidal flats that stretch all the way to the horizon.

With an average wind speed of more than 7.6 meters per second at a height of 100 meters, Yancheng enjoys an annual equivalent of 3,000 to 3,600 full-load hours, making it an ideal place for offshore wind farms, local officials said.

According to the local government, the cumulative installed capacity of offshore wind power in Yancheng reached 5.54 million kilowatts by the end of 2023, accounting for 46.2 percent of the province's and 15 percent of the nation's total.

The city is also a major global offshore wind power equipment manufacturing base.

Goldwind Science and Technology Co Ltd, a leading Chinese wind turbine maker, has been expanding its production capacity in Yancheng since setting up operations at the wind power industrial park in the city's Dafeng district in 2009.

Zhai Endi, chief engineer of Goldwind, said Yancheng boasts large-scale advantages, and has rich experience in developing offshore wind power. Goldwind has a whole industry chain in the city.

Zhai said Goldwind's final assembly plant in Dafeng is capable of producing 800 sets of 4.5-megawatt and 6-MW wind turbine units per year, with an annual production capacity of 1.95 million kW.

"Goldwind has expanded its business to 38 countries, with its wind turbine units sold overseas account-



An employee works at a wind turbine production facility of Goldwind in Yancheng, Jiangsu province. PENG CHAO / CHINA DAILY

ing for nearly half of China's total wind turbine exports," Zhai said, adding that 80 percent of its exports were from Yancheng.

Local officials said the presence of Goldwind and its peers in Yancheng has attracted more upstream and downstream companies, forming a more complete industry chain.

Yancheng is home to 41 wind power equipment enterprises with a sales income of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.76 million) each. Its offshore wind power equipment manufacturing capacity accounts for over 40 percent of the national total, while its blade manufacturing capacity accounts for about 20 percent, according to the local government.

Bo Wenxi, vice-chairman of China Enterprise Capital Union and chief

economist at wealth management firm IPG China, said: "Yancheng possesses core competitiveness in developing the wind power industry. The local government has provided strong support to the industry, including funds, land and other resources. It has also formulated relevant policies, offering a favorable business environment for industrial development."

"Meanwhile, Yancheng owns a solid foundation for industrial development. The city has gathered a group of large-scale wind power equipment enterprises, forming a complete industrial chain, covering research and development design, equipment manufacturing, resource development, operation and maintenance services."

Qu Fang, an investment consultant at Wanlian Securities, said enterprises

in Yancheng, and their partners outside the city, have formed a strong and complete industrial chain. At present, four of the nation's top 5 wind power machine enterprises have set up branches in the city. More than 80 component enterprises alongside the industrial chain are also there.

The complete industrial chain ecosystem has jointly created the wind power industry in the city, Qu added.

In the storage yard of Sheyang CRR Wind Turbine Blade Engineering Co Ltd in the Sheyang Port Zero Carbon Industrial Park, automated guided vehicles are transporting wind turbine blades that have just come off the assembly line.

Hao Xiaojun, deputy general manager of the company, said there are nearly 300 blades in the yard, ranging

in length from 110 to 126 meters, and they will be transported to a port that is less than 3 kilometers away.

Hao said onshore wind power resources have been extensively developed, and the future trend is to develop offshore wind power.

"Compared with onshore wind power, offshore wind power equipment can be easily transported from coastal factories to offshore platforms, which is much more efficient than land transportation," he said.

Hao said his company's offshore wind turbine blade intelligent manufacturing project, which started construction in the industrial park in March 2023, will build six production lines with an annual capacity of 300 sets of large-megawatt offshore wind turbine blades.

The company will start production of 131-meter blades this month, and is expected to produce blades of over 140 meters in length next year. It is also developing a 150-meter blade for 20-MW wind turbines, he said.

While expanding the scale of its wind power industry, Yancheng is also accelerating the green transformation of the wind power equipment manufacturing process.

One highlight is Sheyang park, which aims to become the first fully green-powered and zero-carbon demonstration park in the Yangtze River Delta region, said Chen Shuangxi, secretary of the Party working committee of Sheyang Port Economic Development Zone.

"By installing photovoltaic and wind power systems within the park and connecting to offshore wind and photovoltaic power, it is expected that we will achieve full green power coverage for companies in the park," Chen said.

Chen said the park's smart IoT (internet of things) management platform can monitor the energy consumption of enterprises in real time. It can also analyze carbon data, determine carbon footprints, and reduce carbon emissions based on its algorithmic models.

Qiu Lin, chief scientist for Envision Digital's zero-carbon products, said Envision Energy's zero-carbon factory in the park can achieve carbon neutrality through carbon management, carbon emission reduction and carbon offsetting.

"The lifecycle carbon footprint accounting service provided by the park will enhance the competitiveness of our products in the international market," he added.

In terms of future development of Yancheng's wind power industry, Qu from Wanlian said: "With rich wind power resources, advanced R&D and manufacturing capabilities, a complete industrial chain, as well as favorable policies, there is huge room for growth and opportunities to be tapped."

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Changzhou racing forward with NEVs, electric motorcycles

By CANG WEI in Nanjing and ZHENG YIRAN and GUO JUN in Changzhou, Jiangsu

Fueled by new quality productive forces, Changzhou, Jiangsu province, is barreling down the fast lane in the new energy sector, helping the city achieve pole position in terms of economic growth.

In 2023, the GDP of Changzhou reached 1.01 trillion yuan (\$139.2 billion), up 6.8 percent year-on-year, the local government said.

Changzhou, long known as a

major new energy vehicle hub, became the fifth city in Jiangsu to boast a trillion yuan-plus GDP.

Located in the Yangtze River Delta region, the city has evolved into a thriving cluster of top-notch battery and NEV makers, infusing robust momentum into its economic growth.

In an industrial park in Changzhou, a batch of electric motorcycles undergo road tests. Its e-motorcycles, which have won the prestigious Red Dot Award: Design Concept

"The new energy industry is a winning formula for Changzhou's development."

Chen Jinhu, Party chief of Changzhou

2024, were developed and manufactured by Hornwin Inc, a local high-tech firm.

The company said the top speed of its e-motos is 200 kilometers per hour, achieving a record-breaking

0-100 km/h in just 2.8 seconds.

"We have applied augmented reality-enabled remote collaboration, 5G cloud-based automated guided vehicles, 5G-enabled artificial intelligence vision, digital twin-

ning, data collection and energy management.

"The deployment of these applications helps us achieve high automation, refined production and digitization. Measurable achievements include a 50 percent increase in production efficiency, a 30 percent reduction in operating costs, a 30 percent shorter product delivery cycle and an 80 percent decrease in defective production rates," said the company.

Currently, Hornwin's e-motos are sold to more than 100 countries

and regions. In 2023, the company sold \$1 billion worth of e-motos to Africa.

On May 31, Beijing-based NEV maker Li Auto rolled out its 20,000th L6 model in Changzhou.

The company currently owns two major production bases nationwide, with the other being in Beijing.

Chen Jinhu, Party chief of Changzhou, said, "The new energy industry is a winning formula for Changzhou's development."

In the future, Changzhou will make every effort to build a new energy industry base, representing Jiangsu's international competitiveness and high-quality development level, Chen said.

Holding Up Half the Sky

Gender equality is the bedrock of a productive and progressive work environment, and when women are empowered to shine on the job, the world is a brighter place.

Equitable opportunity and compensation for women strengthens society and nurtures stability, so please join us in building a brighter future for all.



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BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

By HUANG ZHILING
and PENG CHAO in Chengdu

If you visit Luping community deep in the Longmen Mountains on the northern edge of the Chengdu Plain, you will be amazed to see all kinds of drones flying as if they are in the midst of an aerial combat movie.

The mountain village, little known until recently, has become a hot destination for drone research and development, testing, and application companies from all over the country, thanks to an innovative program launched by a local entrepreneur seven years ago.

Located about 70 kilometers from the urban area of Chengdu, capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province, Luping community in Guihua town, Pengzhou, is home to the "Sky Eye" Unmanned Aerial Vehicle flight test base.

Zhou Xiaoming, born and raised in Luping, is the founder of the base and one of the pioneers of the UAV flight test business in Chengdu.

"I've always dreamt of aviation as a child. While helping my parents with farm labor on the mountain-top, I used to look into the distance at the sparkling lights of Chengdu's urban area, hoping to one day fly out of the mountain village and achieve something," the 39-year-old recalled.

After graduating from university in 2007, Zhou entered the general aviation industry. While there, he realized the advantages and market potential of UAVs, which are increasingly being used in crop protection, mapping and inspection. In 2015, Zhou joined a UAV company as a flight test mechanic.

Inspired by the huge development potential of the low-altitude industry, Zhou quit the job in June 2017, sold his apartment in Chengdu, and returned to Pengzhou to start his own business.

"Despite the rapid development and wide applications of drones, the lack of flight test sites remained a major problem," Zhou said.

He said drone companies typically chose to conduct flight tests at general aviation airports, but the flight approval process was complicated and expensive. This gave him the idea of establishing a flight test base specifically for drones.

"I thought of my hometown, which faces the Jianjiang river valley and has a complex terrain that is suitable for flight tests, with no military or civilian aircraft flight paths overhead and the nearest airports over 50 kilometers away," Zhou said.

After returning to Pengzhou, he found the local government also vigorously promoting the development of the drone industry. For professional and standardized management and operation, he cooperated with a State-owned company in Pengzhou to jointly build the "Sky Eye" UAV flight test base.

In December 2017, Sichuan was approved as the first province to

Eye in sky nets big fame for village

Luping in Sichuan hot destination for drone R&D, testing, application thanks to local entrepreneur



Above: A JOUAV staff member conducts flight tests at the "Sky Eye" Unmanned Aerial Vehicle flight test base in Pengzhou, Sichuan province.

Left: A JOUAV drone takes a test flight. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



conduct a pilot program for low-altitude airspace.

Thanks to that, the base has obtained a flight test airspace within an altitude of 1,200 meters and a radius of 5 km. It currently operates eight flight test sites at different altitudes and offers 14 test scenarios.

Zhou said the pilot program has simplified the approval process for drone flights from seven working days of prior approval to a one-hour report before takeoff.

"Drone companies coming to the base for flight tests do not need to go through the process of reporting to various departments themselves. They simply need to send their daily flight plans to the base, which will then report to the air traffic control department on their behalf," he said.

Zheng Wenqiang, who is in

charge of the flight test tasks at the base for his company JOUAV, said they used to conduct flight tests at general aviation airports, but UAVs were given lower priority than manned aircraft there, making it quite difficult to guarantee stable and sufficient flight time for their drones.

"At 'Sky Eye', our drones can conduct normalized flight tests. We are currently conducting flight tests for several models of drone products here," he said.

Zheng said JOUAV has been conducting flight tests at the base since July 2019, with the number of flights reaching about 1,500 per year.

"The flight test sites at the base are scattered across various terrains such as mountains, hills, rivers, lakes, flatlands and forests, which can simulate various actual application scenarios of industrial drones," he said.

The "Sky Eye" gained more atten-

tion and favor from UAV companies after it was designated as a State-level civil UAV experimental base in 2022 by the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

Now, more than 90 companies and institutions involved in UAV R&D, production and training conduct flight tests at the "Sky Eye", with the daily flight volume exceeding 100. The base's revenue has seen an annual growth of more than 100 percent in the past three years, Zhou said.

Leveraging the abundant drone resources, the base is striving to establish a complete drone industry chain with a variety of new business models, including drone delivery, drone pilot training, model aircraft competition and drone study tours.

The drone delivery service, launched during this year's Spring Festival holiday, covers five home-stays and campsites in the towns of Tongji, Bailu and Danjingshan in Pengzhou, Zhou said.

"The trial operation has proved to be successful. There are so many orders that my colleagues and I have

to give up our vacations to maintain the drones and ensure the normal operation of the flight routes," he said.

In the past few months, the drone delivery service has expanded to some 50 routes to cover the "Bailu Gallery" ecotourism area in Pengzhou, which is about 60 km long and covers an area of over 100 square km.

In April, China's first public service platform for drone airworthiness, Jianjiang Laboratory, was established at the base. The laboratory will focus on drone airworthiness capacity building, standard system exploration, scientific research, talent cultivation, and transfer and transformation of intellectual achievements.

Lu Min, director of Pengzhou's economic, technology and information bureau, said the city will help the base develop into a center for training and examination, exhibition and sales, flight test and management and operations of UAVs.

The city also plans to build the country's first 4S store for UAVs

and one of the most influential UAV flight schools at the base, he said.

"We will conduct pilot trials in the Jianjiang river valley scenic area to explore the commercial operation models of new technologies including eVTOL (electric vertical takeoff and landing) aircraft, to expand the market and promote the development of the low-altitude economy," Lu added.

Zhou said construction of the 4S store for UAVs is scheduled to be completed in the latter half of this year.

"Customers to the 4S store can not only buy a wide range of drones with complete functions at a reasonable price, but also enjoy a one-stop 'buy and test' service," he said.

Zhou is also planning to develop a drone performance competition. He believes this will promote the iteration and upgrade of drone technology, while bringing exciting drone performance to the public.

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By HUANG ZHILING
and PENG CHAO in Chengdu

When a drone carrying a square, orange-colored box landed steadily on a small platform, a staff member opened it to hand over a cup of steaming hot coffee to Xu Wei, a visitor to the ongoing International Horticultural Exhibition 2024 Chengdu.

"This is so cool! It's like stepping into a futuristic world," Xu said.

All she had to do was to scan a QR code at a delivery point and place the coffee order, and it was delivered to her by drone within 10 minutes.

Drone deliveries of foods and beverages are a new consumer scenario introduced at the expo's main venue in Chengdu Eastern New Area. Local authorities said they plan to open six drone delivery routes and set up 12 delivery points at the 242-hectare main venue during the 186-day event, to meet the consumption needs of a large number of visitors.

The drone delivery service in the main venue will offer more application scenarios such as remote shopping, emergency medical aid, and quick lost-and-found retrieval, the authorities said.

As China gradually opens up its low-altitude airspace for civilian use, Chengdu in Southwest China's Sichuan province is devoted to fostering the development of its drone industry and cultivating the low-altitude economy, local officials said.

Leveraging the achievements

made in the pilot program for low-altitude airspace, as well as its advantages in the general aviation and industrial drone sector, Chengdu is building itself up into a low-altitude economic hub in western China, according to the city's government work report for 2024.

Fei Lan, marketing director of Aerofugia, a Chengdu-based tech company specializing in low-altitude transportation and smart industry solutions, said the development of the low-altitude economy has gained strong momentum since it was identified as one of the strategic emerging industries by the Central Economic Work Conference in December.

Aerofugia is dedicated to developing intercity commuting capacity of up to 200 kilometers and urban air mobility capacity of up to 30 km. The company completed the maiden flight of its AE200 electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft for airworthiness certification at the end of last year.

"With the enhanced policy support and continuous rise in market demand, Chengdu's eVTOL industry is expected to see rapid growth and serve as a new growth engine for regional economic development," she said.

Fei said Aerofugia is strengthening cooperation with its partners to accelerate the commercial application of eVTOLs and contribute to the formation of a low-altitude transportation ecosystem.

Chengdu goes extra mile in UAV sector



Chengdu-based Aerofugia's AE200 demonstrator carries out its test flight in December 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

With the enhanced policy support and continuous rise in market demand, Chengdu's eVTOL industry is expected to see rapid growth and serve as a new growth engine for regional economic development."

Fei Lan, marketing director of Aerofugia

The company signed a strategic cooperation agreement with CITIC Offshore Helicopter Co Ltd in April to strengthen collaboration in low-altitude transportation, aerial sightseeing and emergency rescue. The two sides will gradually implement low-altitude economic application scenarios in regional centers such as Chengdu, and jointly explore the commercial operation of the scenarios, according to the agreement.

Aerofugia also signed an agreement in July 2023 with Sino Jet, one of the largest business jet operators in the Asia-Pacific region, to provide 100 AE200 aircraft. After the AE200's airworthiness certification is completed, executive air travel service using the aircraft is expected to debut in Chengdu, Fei said.

Ren Bin, founder and CEO of JOUAV, a leading industrial UAV manufacturer based in Chengdu, said the city has comparative advantages in developing the low-altitude economy, as it pushes ahead its pilot program for low-altitude airspace, and cultivates a complete industrial chain.

Chengdu has also been actively cooperating with universities and research institutions to promote talent and technological innovation in the low-altitude economy sector, he added.

Statistics from the city's economic and information technology bureau show that Chengdu is already home to more than 100 enterprises in the industrial drone sector. In recent

years, the output value of Chengdu's industrial drone sector has maintained an average annual growth rate of more than 20 percent.

Ren said JOUAV provides products and services to more than 1,500 clients across 40 countries. Of late, it has been exploring new models for intelligent drone applications, and has developed a series of industrial solutions.

Last year, JOUAV finished construction of its new manufacturing base in Chengdu. It has a maximum annual capacity of 3,700 units of standard models and enables efficient and cost-effective production of various types and large quantities of UAVs.

"The new facility allows us to be fully prepared for the future development of the industry and to deliver products to our clients on a large scale," Ren said.

To further boost the high-quality development of its industrial drone sector, Chengdu's economic and information technology bureau and finance bureau jointly issued 10 special policies in October 2023. The detailed implementation rules of the special policies were released on April 28.

Enterprises and institutions that develop new drone models and achieve sales, as well as those that establish flight test bases and provide flight test services to drone manufacturers, can receive a maximum reward of 3 million yuan (\$413,580), according to the policies.

COMMENT

Editorials

Visits aim to strengthen exchanges and trust, and deepen cooperation

Chinese Premier Li Qiang is in New Zealand on an official visit, the first leg of his third overseas trip of the year that will also take him to Australia and Malaysia. These visits have aroused broad interest as Li will be the first Chinese premier to visit New Zealand and Australia in seven years. And there has been no official visit to Malaysia by a Chinese premier since 2015.

The visits present a precious opportunity to strengthen the respective bilateral relations during this period of profound geopolitical challenges. There certainly is plenty to discuss after such long intervals.

Judging from the messages from the four capitals so far, the focus of discussions is mainly on economic and trade cooperation. China is a salient cooperation partner of New Zealand and Australia. As important countries in the Asia-Pacific with high economic complementarity and promising futures for strengthened cooperation, China has worked with both countries to overcome any difficulties encountered to sustain the sound and steady growth of relations.

With broad common interests and great untapped cooperation potential in sight, the Chinese guest and his New Zealand and Australian hosts seem intent on not allowing their differences on security and geopolitics to get in the way of shoring up their economic and trade relations. After years of sometimes bitter exchanges, even in the form of trade disruptions, the three parties appear to have concluded that whatever their disagreements, at the end of the day they have to make things work, get along and get down to business.

Numerous previously thriving small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the private sector, are either struggling or have gone bankrupt as a result of the Western economies reshuffling their supply chains. And Australian exporters reportedly lost on average \$13 billion a year as a result of the previous government's diplomatic row with Beijing.

China-Australia relations have thawed since Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's visit to Beijing in November 2023. During that visit the two governments agreed to resume key bilateral dialogues and further cooperation in a number of areas. In fact, Beijing has already dropped tariffs on Australian beef, barley and wine, lifted an import ban on timber and resumed coal shipments. Besides comparing notes on bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern, Li and Albanese are also expected to meet with Australian and Chinese business leaders.

"Premier Li Qiang's visit to Australia is an important opportunity to engage directly on key issues for both our nations," said Albanese. Saying that Australia continues to pursue a stable and direct relationship with China, with dialogue at its core, is recognition that letting Washington exclusively have its ear will be detrimental to Australian interests.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, too, sees Li's visit as a valuable opportunity for exchanges on deepening and broadening cooperation. In Wellington, officials are reportedly saying their discussions with the Chinese guest are aimed at realizing their goal of doubling exports to China in a decade.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations half a century ago, ties between China and Malaysia have enjoyed a sound momentum of growth, with deepening strategic mutual trust, fruitful high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and increasingly closer cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Both countries champion the Asian values featuring peace, cooperation, inclusiveness and integration, and contribute significantly to peace, prosperity and stability in the region.

In Malaysia, as well as attending an event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of China-Malaysia diplomatic relations, Li will take the opportunity to carry forward the traditional friendship between the two countries, and deepen and expand cooperation in various areas.

China is a key export market for New Zealand and Australia, and a traditional partner of Malaysia, so common prosperity is the most sensible goal for improved ties.

It will also send the badly needed message that the countries are capable of managing their rather convoluted relations in today's challenging geopolitical landscape.

Dialogue crucial for global vitality

It should not be taken as a coincidence that those trying to pour dirty water on the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod on Monday and Tuesday are also those that are responsible for the challenges the participants of the meeting tried to resolve.

The club of wealthy nations that has steered the world into dangerous waters has no reason to not refrain from trying to undermine BRICS, and the rise of the Global South as a whole.

This is the first foreign ministers' meeting of the expanded BRICS, which now consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Given the wide representativeness of these countries, not to mention their close interaction and cooperation with the West, it is ridiculous that there are people trying to politicize and even smear the BRICS meeting as an anti-West gathering.

Those daunted by the rise of the Global South should put aside their pride and prejudice, and be realistic about the true picture of today's fast-evolving world. They need to objectively see that BRICS is representative of the increasingly important roles the emerging market economies and developing countries are assuming in world affairs. The BRICS countries are playing an indispensable role in promoting common development among the economies of the Global South and fostering fairer multilateral global governance.

The joint declaration issued after the BRICS meeting on Tuesday is the latest testimony to the members' shared commitment in that regard. BRICS is not a geopolitical tool of any party, nor does it target any third party. It represents a new type of multilateral cooperation mechanism that is open and inclusive. Although there are divergences among the BRICS members on some issues, they all uphold BRICS' original aspiration of openness, inclusiveness, and win-win cooperation, and share a willingness to resolve their differences through dialogue. That BRICS has expanded from its original four members in 2009 to its current size, with more countries seeking accession to it, reflects the historical trend toward a multipolar world and more equitable international order.

The BRICS countries' common calls for adherence to multilateralism, reform of the international financial architecture, fairer and more effective global governance, touch upon some of the core issues that need addressing. More importantly, the BRICS countries are trying to transform those calls into concrete actions for the common good of the world.

As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted in his speech at the meeting, the profound changes that are underway in the world raise two questions that need to be answered: How can new opportunities be created amidst the changes? And how can new opportunities be fostered amidst the crisis? For China, the answers to both these questions are unity, development and fairer global governance. All countries should make development their priority and pursue more robust, greener and more balanced global development, Wang said. Dialogue, not division, is the solution.

While we live in a time of turbulence and confusion, it is also a time of renewal. But history has many lessons to offer of the disastrous consequences that arise when the wrong choices are made at such times by those who put themselves before the common good.

The BRICS countries have always stood together, and the expanded membership of the group shows that it stands as a testament to the solidarity of the Global South.

The dark clouds, seeded by a few countries, will not last forever. And as the rays of light from the BRICS meeting show, a brighter future lies ahead.

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Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Toward high-quality development through cross-border e-commerce

The Ministry of Commerce and eight other departments jointly issued a policy guideline on Tuesday, rolling out a series of policy measures to cultivate cross-border e-commerce businesses, strengthen the construction of relevant infrastructure and logistics systems, and promote the high-quality growth of overseas warehouses. These are part of China's efforts to inject new momentum into foreign trade.

The guideline says China will encourage financial institutions to provide financial support for cross-border e-commerce enterprises with a real trade background, and optimize export credit insurance underwriting models to provide insurance guarantees. It will also encourage qualified cross-border e-commerce companies to build sale networks and brand operation centers in overseas markets.

China will simplify foreign exchange revenue and expenditure procedures for

small and micro cross-border e-commerce enterprises and support qualified banks and nonbank payment institutions to provide cross-border e-commerce enterprises efficient cross-border fund settlement services.

Given that the State Council passed a document at an executive meeting on May 24, pointing out that the development of cross-border e-commerce, overseas warehouses and other new forms of foreign trade is conducive to optimizing China's foreign trade structure, the guideline marks a concrete step to promote the development of China's cross-border e-commerce business.

Cross-border e-commerce is a new form and model of foreign trade that adapts to new trends. Together with overseas warehouses and other new foreign trade infrastructure, it can reduce intermediate links and create new

advantages in international economic cooperation.

The scale of China's cross-border e-commerce trade has increased by more than 10 times in the past five years. In the first quarter of this year, the import and export value of China's cross-border e-commerce was 577.6 billion yuan (\$79.63 billion), up 9.6 percent year-on-year. China now has more than 120,000 cross-border e-commerce entities, more than 1,000 cross-border e-commerce industry parks, and more than 2,500 overseas warehouses covering more than 30 million square meters, of which more than 1,800 focus on serving cross-border e-commerce trade.

With the implementation of these measures, China's cross-border e-commerce business is expected to usher in a new spring for further and high-quality development.

— WUYIXUE, CHINA DAILY

Social goodwill takes a beating from fraud

The Ministry of Civil Affairs issued a notification on Tuesday, confirming that a person surnamed Ke, attached with the China Charities Aid Foundation for Children, had privately raised funds from parents of sick children in the name of the foundation. In the process he had defrauded unsuspecting donors of nearly 10 million yuan (\$1.37 million). Ke was taken into custody for suspected fraud in September 2023.

The foundation had earlier claimed that Ke was merely a "short-term volunteer", but the notification confirmed he was involved in its projects. Furthermore, the

foundation's deputy secretary-general and project leader, a man surnamed Wang, has been handed over to judicial authorities for suspected job-related crimes.

Clearly, Ke could not have acted alone in defrauding people of 10 million yuan in donated funds; the foundation he worked for cannot wash its hands of responsibility. Earlier media reports have quoted foundation officials as saying they cooperated with local social organizations to establish relief stations, with the local partner organizations running and managing the relief stations in the name of the foundation.

This incident serves as a warning of the risks inherent in this "chain store" model. It has also laid bare the loopholes in the charity sector.

In its notification, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said it will urge and guide the foundation to conduct thorough rectification and urge the foundation to operate in accordance with the law and its charter. Hopefully, this can serve as the beginning of a "rebirth" for the foundation and can also be an opportunity to improve the standardization of public welfare and charity.

— THEPAPER.CN

What They Say

Modern governance key to crack hard reform nuts

The fifth meeting of the central commission for deepening overall reform of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee convened in Beijing on Tuesday.

The three documents that the central authorities released after the meeting detailed their latest instructions for cracking the three hard nuts of how to form a modern corporate system, how to protect farmers' rights and interests, and how to foster a globally competitive pro-innovation system.

These documents are expected to serve as a foundation for relevant departments to draft their respective policies in these

regards. For instance, to accelerate the formation of a modern corporate system, governments at various levels should improve their corporate governance to protect enterprises' property rights, implement a clear separation of rights and responsibilities between government and enterprises and enhance scientific corporate management. To sta-

bilize grain production, local governments should provide higher subsidies to grain farmers in a timely manner, and make the supporting policies for farmers better targeted. To found a more effective pro-innovation system, the country should take more concrete actions to expand its international cooperation in the high-tech and innovation sectors and open up to integrate into the global innovation network.

These instructions are made in response to the series of challenges China faces that originate from not only the internal structural issues of the Chinese economy and governance, but also the increasingly volatile global situation, particularly some developed economies' protectionist and coercive approaches to world trade and economic cooperation.

Now the relevant departments and local authorities should adapt these instructions to their actual local situations and draw up workable policies and well-targeted measures to address the institutional and practical obstacles that have long hindered the resolution of the problems in their jurisdictions. They should bear in

mind that many socioeconomic problems that the country needs to resolve through reforms now, including the three above, are partly caused by the side effects of previous reforms. So in the process of implementing the new round of reforms, they should avoid reform-for-reform's sake reforms, and not interfere in the market.

The government should create the necessary institutional and policy environment to guarantee that the market plays its due role and refrain from overstepping its role when promoting entrepreneurship and innovation and strengthening the protection of farmers' interests.

There should be an effective supervision over the authorities' exercising of power to reduce graft and black box operations that invariably fatten private pockets with funds that should be used to boost grain production and innovation. Before a modern governance system is formed it is almost impossible to build a modern corporate system, foster a modern agricultural sector and establish an advanced innovation mechanism.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Chang Chak-yan

Lai leading island into a dead end

The inaugural speech of the new Taiwan island administrative head Lai Ching-te on May 20 revealed his true colors. Instead of acknowledging the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China, Lai laid emphasis on "democracy" and exposed his agenda of "Taiwan independence", which he expects to take forward with the support of so-called democratic countries led by the United States. All this shows Lai is foolish enough to think of confronting the Chinese mainland.

However, Lai's attitude is not incidental, given his track record of issuing provocative statements. There are three main reasons behind his provocative remarks and moves.

First, he is over-confident of achieving success because he won the island's leadership election, which in turn makes him believe he cannot fail on the political front. That his self-aggrandizing belief could bring more danger than hope is something he refuses to acknowledge. Even when it comes to cross-strait relations, he exhibits the same attitude of unrealistic overconfidence.

Second, his "Taiwan independence" agenda has its origin in the policies of

the Democratic Progressive Party, a party that provides shelter for separatist forces. Surrounded as he is by his separatist supporters, he cannot hide his true colors of being a bigoted separatist. It appears his political relationship with separatists is entrenched and strong.

Even though Lai is now the head of the island's administration, his identity as a separatist was evident throughout the election process, which suggests he is leading the island into a dead end.

And third, Lai, by refusing to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus, is trying to destroy the painstakingly built cross-strait communication structure by the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations across Taiwan Straits. If Lai continues to tread on the dangerous path he has chosen, the cross-strait communication mechanism will collapse, making it impossible for the island to maintain constructive communication with the mainland and thus lose valuable trade.



According to political scientist Harold Nieburg, the collapse of all cross-strait communication channels could lead to political upheaval, and even conflict. If that were to happen, separatists and political extremists on the island might target those people who oppose their divisive politics, which would be disastrous. Lai's attempts to sever all communications with the mainland indicate that he would solicit foreign help to counter the mainland.

Unfortunately, he seems to believe a confrontation between the US and its allies on the one side and China on the other would be a long-drawn affair, like the Cold War between the US-led West and the Soviet Union, which would give him enough time to achieve "Taiwan independence". He is wrong.

He also believes the US needs the island to confront China as much as the island needs US protection.

Lai's political agenda is one of gross miscalculation. Beijing has many ways to counter US interference in the Taiwan question. For example, the People's Liberation Army's drills and blockade of the Taiwan Strait and the waters around the

island show the mainland is capable of reunifying Taiwan with the motherland, if need be, through the use of force. Such a blockade could isolate Taiwan and deter foreign investors from investing in Taiwan, which will weaken the island's economy.

More importantly, Taiwan voters will not be passive onlookers while Lai dismantles one cross-strait communication channel after another. They will teach him a lesson in the next election. Also, as the PLA drill showed, the US and its allies cannot breach the blockade, no matter how well they try.

Indeed, the PLA is capable of thwarting any move by the separatists on the island to realize "Taiwan independence". The US seems not able to afford intervening in the PLA drills, Lai and his separatist followers may lose confidence in the US. Should Taiwan residents distance themselves from Lai and his party, the prospects for peaceful reunification will greatly increase.

The author is the dean of Tuima Journalism and Information Academy, Malaysia. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Hannan Hussain

Iran remains an important regional player

As Iran gears up for the snap presidential election following the tragic death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash last month, how will its foreign policy toward key countries in the region and beyond evolve? This question merits special attention, given the imminent change of guard in Iran.

To begin with, Iran's relations with the United States remain fraught, and may continue to be so in the near future. Iran is likely to adopt a principled approach to negotiations on a possible nuclear deal, but the US' unwarranted sanctions could prevent the two sides from reaching common ground. As such, negotiations on a new nuclear deal cannot possibly progress without the help of third parties.

The US' open support for Israel's brutal assault on the Gaza Strip is another major point of friction between Tehran and Washington. Israel's incessant attack on Gaza has also made it more difficult to negotiate a cease-fire in the Israel-Palestine conflict and resolve the Palestine question. And vocal criticism of Israel, given the US' financial support and weapons supply to Israel, could further dampen the chances of bringing the conflict to an end.

In such a situation, lifting of the US' sanctions against, and respecting the sovereignty of, Iran could help drive the negotiations on a new nuclear deal forward, but in the lead-up to the US presidential election there is little prospect for that. After all, both US President Joe Biden and his Republican challenger Donald Trump look set to adopt a hard-line approach toward the US' perceived adversaries such as Iran in order to garner the support of the hawkish elements in their constituencies.

On the other hand, despite the election of a new president, Iran's relationship with Saudi Arabia will continue to improve. Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to restore diplomatic relations after seven years after China brokered a rapprochement between the two Middle East countries last year. Tehran is likely to use late president Raisi's "neighbors first" policy to further improve relations with Riyadh, not least because the policy will help it expand its relations with other Arab countries, and facilitate the opening up of its economy. And the two countries' mutual desire to prevent any spillover from the Israel-Palestine conflict to affect their relations with neighbors will drive Iran-Saudi Arabia relations forward.

As for Iran's relations with China, they are set to move from strength to strength. Both sides are already on track to invest in their landmark 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan signed in 2021, after having worked to strengthen the plan's operational mechanism during Raisi's tenure. Also, the Israel-Palestine conflict has underscored the importance of Iran's continued engagement with the Belt and Road Initiative to improve connectivity and pursue high-quality, long-term development.

China and Iran have strengthened cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, trade, tourism, environmental protection, healthcare, disaster relief and culture. In fact, it is in the best interest of both sides to maintain that relationship regardless of the changes in the international situation.

In 2023, the Sino-Iranian trade volume was \$14.65 billion. Bilateral trade has been declining because of the US sanctions.

While China-Iran relations are centered on trade and the two sides are trying to boost bilateral trade, Iran-Pakistan ties can benefit from cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Frequent terrorist attacks and rising threat perceptions this year have consolidated Pakistan's resolve to rein in terrorist groups such as Jaish-e-Islam and the Balochistan Liberation Army. In this context, Raisi's landmark visit to Pakistan earlier this year emphasized the importance of Iran-Pakistan political, military and security cooperation to fulfill their counter-terrorism objectives. The use of foreign bases by terrorist groups to launch devastating terror attacks makes Iran-Pakistan cooperation a critical factor in restoring stability in the region.

Similarly, Iran remains an important player, along with Russia, China and Pakistan, in helping create the right conditions for Afghanistan to address its intertwined challenges and improve its economy.

In sum, Iran's relationships with countries in the region will play an important role in promoting peace and development, and safeguarding security. And it is likely to adopt a more cautious approach to any talks with the US to finalize a new nuclear deal.

The author, a Fulbright scholar at the University of Maryland and a former assistant researcher at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, is a foreign affairs commentator. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



China and Iran have strengthened cooperation in various sectors, including agriculture, trade, tourism, environmental protection, healthcare, disaster relief and culture.

Bjorn Lomborg

Politicization of research not good climate action

Climate studies are increasingly becoming politicized. Harvard University recently shut down a key geo-engineering research project because of an intense backlash, despite the college's aspiration to become "a global beacon on climate change".

Geo-engineering is one way humanity could deal with the real problem of climate change. The



standard approach — which most of the rich world is focused on — is to try to cut carbon emissions and divert investment to solar and wind energy. However, this approach is incredibly difficult and expensive because fossil fuels still power most of the world. Despite decades of political support for fossil fuel reduction, emissions have been increasing, with last year seeing the highest ever.

In contrast, geo-engineering tries to directly reduce the planet's temperature. One approach is to emit sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere, which would cool the planet. There is ample evidence that this works: Erupting volcanoes typically pump particles into the stratosphere, with each particle reflecting a little sunlight back into space. In 1991, the Mount Pinatubo eruption cooled Earth by about 0.6 degree Celsius for 18 months.

Harvard researchers weren't attempting anything so grand. They simply wanted to launch a single high-altitude balloon that would release a tiny amount of particulates high above Earth. Their experiment would have gathered data showing how particles disperse and how much sunlight they reflect.

As the world has so far mostly failed to tackle climate change by reducing fossil fuel reliance, it seems prudent to also investigate other policies that could address parts of the problem. Even the United Nations admitted in 2019 that "there has been no real change in the global emissions pathway in the last decade" despite the 2015 Paris Agreement. Since then, greenhouse gas emissions have continued to reach new highs with "no end in sight to the rising trend", according to a new report from the World Meteorological Organization. We're just not in a position where we can afford to ignore any pathway to mitigating climate change.

Unfortunately, as The Harvard Crimson found, pressure from climate activists made this impossible for the scientists. Even high-profile campaigner Greta Thunberg criticized the first planned tests in northern Sweden. Then the Indigenous Saami Council — whose land the tests would be above — suggested firing a single balloon into the sky bore "risks of catastrophic consequences". Politicians jumped aboard the bandwagon, including a former foreign minister of Sweden, who declared geo-engineering was "crazy", while young activists pushed academic funders to cut off funds to such research.

In addition to the activists, the project's lead researcher pointed a finger at a "vocal minority" of scientists who agree with the campaigners that geo-engineering could provide an excuse not to cut fossil fuels by highlighting another

possible solution to climate change. Among such scientists, climate professor Michael Mann claims geo-engineering is a pernicious and false solution offered up by polluters to keep profiting from fossil fuels. The Saami Council opposed the Harvard experiment because the research "could compromise the world's necessary efforts to achieve zero-carbon societies".

That isn't science; it's dogma. The idea that there is only one correct policy — reducing carbon emissions to zero within a short time frame — is absurd, especially so when this sole policy is failing globally. The truth is that geo-engineering could be an incredibly useful innovation, even if it harbors risks.

Geo-engineering is the only feasible way that humanity has ever identified to lower temperatures quickly. If we were to see the West Antarctic ice sheet starting to slip into the ocean — which would be a global disaster — no standard fossil fuel policy could make any significant

change. Even if all nations impossibly were to cut their emissions to zero in a matter of months, temperatures would not come down but would only stop increasing.

In contrast, geo-engineering could, in principle, end the global temperature rise — and even reverse it — at a low cost. Geo-engineering offers a price tag in the tens to low hundreds of billions of dollars over the 21st century compared with standard policy costing tens of thousands of times more.

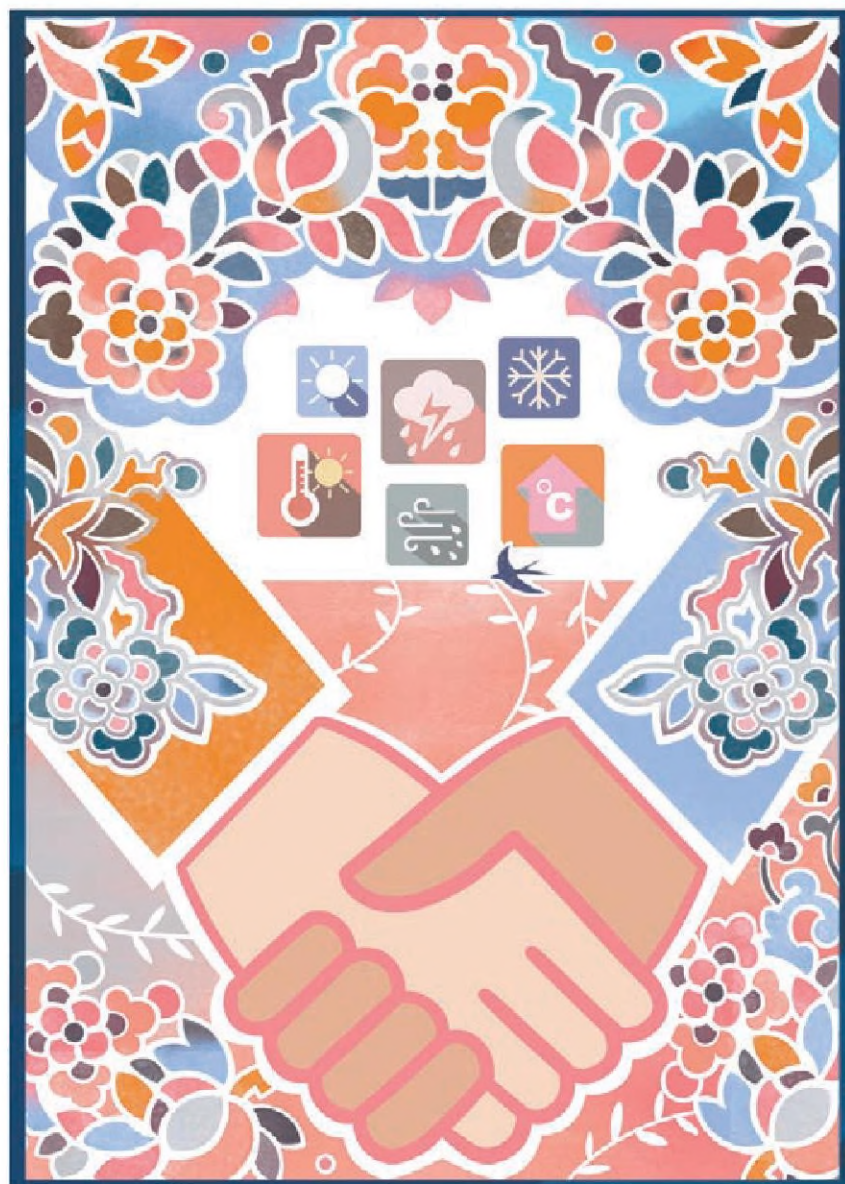
Of course, the world shouldn't start pumping particulates into the atmosphere anytime soon. But we need to know if this technology works and we also need to know about any potential negative impacts from its use. Partly because it is likely that countries and even the world will want to consider using this approach later but also because the cost of geo-engineering is so low that there is a risk that a single country, a rogue billionaire or even a

highly energized nongovernmental organization could use the technology alone. We need to make sure the world knows the ramifications. That requires research.

These considerations are why both the scientific journal Nature and the Barack Obama administration have endorsed research into geo-engineering — even the Joe Biden administration has offered measured support.

Just like with any other research, humanity needs to know what works and what problems might arise in the future. The politicization of climate research out of fear it might lead to politically unfavorable outcomes is bad for the world.

The author is president of the Copenhagen Consensus. His new book Best Things First was named one of the best books of 2023 by The Economist. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL VIEWS

ZHANG YONGJUN AND GUO YINGFENG

Dollar to be strengthened by delay

The Fed maintains high interest rates to keep the dollar strong, while cutting rates ahead of others could dramatically weaken it

Many are expecting the United States Federal Reserve to end its rate hikes in 2024 and begin a new round of rate cuts. However, the inflation rebound in February and March and sticky core inflation means it is difficult to achieve the 2 percent core inflation target in the short term. Considering market expectations and the need to maintain a strong US dollar, the Fed has slowed down its pace of rate cuts.

With another Federal Open Market Committee meeting just around the corner on June 10 and 11, whether the Fed will keep the rate unchanged has become one of the most discussed topics in international markets.

So far, it seems that the Fed will delay its first rate cut until the European Central Bank and the Bank of England confirm their rate cut plans. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fed injected massive amounts of cash into the market in 2020, which led to accelerated inflation in the US in 2021. To tame high inflation, the Fed launched a series of aggressive rate hikes from March 2022.

As a result, the US dollar strengthened its position and global capital flowed into the US, which to some extent drove investment and reduced the unemployment in the US, creating better conditions for the growth of top US high-tech giants including Apple, Microsoft and Nvidia. However, the US has been reaping global high-quality assets at the expense of the global economy.

First, the Fed, by launching rate hikes before the ECB did, has pushed the economies of its European allies into stagnation, a typical example of the "America First" protectionism. The Fed's aggressive

rate hike cycle started in March 2022, four months earlier than the ECB's, resulting in a strong dollar and a weak euro. As global capital flowed into the US, the dollar appreciated significantly while other currencies, assets and commodities depreciated sharply relative to the dollar, greatly enhancing the dollar's purchasing power. This is a key reason why the US economy outperformed expectations in 2022 and 2023, while the economies of the European Union and the United Kingdom were relatively weak.

Second, the Fed's rate hikes and the dollar's appreciation have left many emerging markets and underdeveloped countries deep in debt. As the world's major settlement and reserve currency, the US dollar is used to denominate about 70 percent of global trade. As it appreciates, the import costs for other countries rise; investment in emerging markets, popular destinations for international capital, drops; inflation worsens in many developing countries; emerging economies that need to repay debt in US dollars, especially those with inadequate foreign exchange reserves, are stuck in debt crises. During the Fed's rate hike cycle in 2022-23, more than a dozen emerging and developing countries, including



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

Domestically, the macroeconomic situation in the US market supports the expectations for delayed, less frequent and smaller rate cuts. The main reasons behind the weakening expectations are rising inflation, a sticky labor market and core service prices, as well as the White House's strong fiscal spending plans and deficit rate.

At the start of this year, the majority expected the first rate cut by the Fed in June or July, followed by one or two additional cuts through the year by a total of 50 to 75 basis points.

But now, it is very likely that the Fed will delay the first rate cut. If the ECB makes the move first, the Fed will have an opportunity to observe and determine the timing of its first rate cut based on the ECB's actions and market response. The current international markets do not have enough high-quality assets to absorb the massive amount of dollars, which is not conducive to maintaining a strong dollar.

In the process of raising interest rates, the Fed released \$2.1 trillion liquidity to the US bond market by reducing the scale of reverse repurchase, which was used to buy short-term treasury bonds. If the rate is cut, it will be difficult to find buyers

for these short-term treasuries, because the global market is not yet capable of absorbing these funds.

Geopolitical risks from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Palestine conflict have driven up oil prices and pushed gold prices to historic highs. In the international market, there was no serious economic crisis, no large-scale asset collapse, leaving no "bargain assets" for dollar funds to purchase. The liquidity released by a rash rate cut will only push up the prices of consumer goods and services, heighten inflation expectations and increase the self-reinforcing risks of high inflations, thus disrupting the dollar's strong position created by the Fed's rate hikes.

The purpose of the Fed's rate-cut delay is to maintain the dollar's strength. The tug of war among the Fed, ECB, and BOE has a profound influence on international exchange rates.

Since September 2023, international capital markets have predicted that the BOE will cut rates much more slowly than the Fed and the ECB, leading to a generally bullish outlook for the pound in the foreign exchange market. However, the current widespread concerns about the UK economy weaken that expectation.

According to an interview with Philip Lane, the chief economist of the ECB, at the end of May, the ECB will start cutting rates in June, but will also need to keep rates in restrictive territory through 2024.

From a practical standpoint, the Fed is likely to guide market expectations and cut rates later than the ECB and BOE, keeping rates at a high level to maintain the strong position of the dollar.

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Argentina, Türkiye, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Ghana, fell into debt quagmires.

To protect the core interests of the US, the Fed's market guidance

and actual operations for rate cuts in 2024 will center around maintaining a strong dollar, while cutting rates ahead of others could dramatically weaken the dollar.

BADR JAFAR

Shared conundrum

China and the Gulf states are pursuing a just energy transition without compromising their human development agendas

In the face of escalating climate challenges and the pressing need for sustainable development, the partnership between China and the Middle East — and in particular the Gulf Cooperation Council countries — offers a beacon of hope and progress. By leveraging the pragmatism of key Gulf powerhouses, such as the United Arab Emirates, and China's formidable political will and scale, these regions can drive forward the global human development agenda while accelerating a just and equitable energy transition. This synergistic relationship is not only strategic but essential for fostering a sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

All economies are dependent on energy. The Gulf is one of the main sources of oil for China. Indeed, energy is the bedrock for Sino-Arab economic cooperation, forging a solid foundation over the past two decades that is only strengthening. Trade between China and the Gulf states nearly doubled in the five-year period to 2022, reaching more than \$500 billion. In 2020, China replaced the European Union as the Gulf Cooperation Council's largest trading partner.

At the same time, both sides are committed to fighting climate change. China leads the global renewables market. The nation was expected to install a record 230 gigawatts of wind and solar power last year, more than double the number of installations in the United States and Europe combined, and it dominates the clean energy supply chain, as it seeks to peak car-

bon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. Gulf nations, experiencing temperatures of 50 C, rising sea levels and coastal degradation, have been preparing for the post-oil era for the past two decades. Led by the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf states are proud to have spearheaded some of the world's largest solar-energy projects, to have the potential to become a world-class carbon capture hub due to the abundance of industries, and to be developing a large-scale green hydrogen industry.

This alignment of market dynamics in China and the Gulf Region, combined with bold national visions to achieve net zero emissions, gives us a shared experience, and a shared conundrum. We are countries in the midst of building our economies and opportunities for our thriving societies. We are pursuing a just energy transition that embraces a greener evolution of our energy systems without compromising our human development agendas. We see both as two sides of the same coin, with the edge of this coin conducive energy policies to drive sustainable progress for all.

Our collective experiences lay bare the interconnectedness of the challenges the world faces: decarbonizing the global atmosphere through massive emissions reductions, while ensuring equitable growth opportunities for the billions of people who are yet to be afforded them. Together, we can meet this challenge and unlock



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

immense opportunities.

The omnipresent nature of climate change and the interconnectedness of global goals demand a holistic and coordinated response. The convening capabilities of Gulf nations, combined with the political willpower and unmatched scale of China, can bring nations together

and advance a just transition.

The UAE's success in leading COP28, which culminated in a landmark agreement called the UAE Consensus, has proved three things. First, the UAE is a globally trusted and visionary actor that can unite nations to act and deliver for the betterment of humanity and

our habitat. Second, the fight against climate change must be inclusive and acknowledge the interconnectedness of global goals if it is to be successful. And finally, the ability to foster dialogue and collaboration is critical in driving the human development agenda and ensuring that sustainable

development goals are met. To that end, the inaugural COP28 Business and Philanthropy Forum saw more than 1,300 CEOs and foundation heads from over 80 countries convene to accelerate progress around net zero goals, including \$7 billion in new climate action commitments.

China, for its part, is making its presence felt in every corner of the world. Its successful trade and investment policies — which include major investments in sustainable energy projects — have solidified its role as a global powerhouse with ambitious goals to connect the world and the capacity to act on them.

More than bilateral cooperation, the partnership between the Gulf Region and China is both a model for and a driver of global progress, fostering sustainable development, providing unique blueprints for successful economic diversification and innovation, and promoting regional stability and peace, through economic interdependence and collaborative development projects.

By leveraging our combined strengths, we can jointly play a pivotal role in advancing the global agenda. Together, we can foster a sustainable future, not only for our own regions but also for the entire world.

The author is the CEO of United Arab Emirates-based Crescent Enterprises, a diversified business operating across nine industry sectors in 15 countries, including in energy. He is also the UAE's special envoy for business and philanthropy and the COP28 special representative for business and philanthropy. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Great Wall restoration teams uncover trove of secrets

Latest technology identifies construction techniques to better protect iconic structure, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Clouds seem to run like a river beneath the Jiankou Great Wall in Beijing's Huairou district. SUN YONGDONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Archaeology has played an increasingly important role in understanding the Great Wall that stretches across the rugged landscapes of northern China, experts agreed at a recent seminar, which is a reflection of the country's increasing focus on the Great Wall protection.

In May, President Xi Jinping called for continued efforts to protect the Great Wall, promote its culture and pass on the precious heritage to future generations.

Xi made the remarks in his reply to a letter from residents in Shixia village at the foot of the Badaling Great Wall. The letter recounted their work in protecting the Great Wall and changes taking place in the village.

Xi noted that the Great Wall is a representative symbol of the Chinese nation and an important symbol of Chinese civilization. Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, Xi has attached great importance to tapping into the cultural value of the Great Wall and the conservation of its cultural relics, and has given multiple important instructions on advancing the construction of the Great Wall National Cultural Park.

A dozen projects have been conducted on the sections of the Great Wall in Beijing, with most of them in Huairou district in the northeast of the capital city and Yanqing district in the northwest, says Shang Heng, associate research fellow at the Beijing Institute of Archaeology at the seminar in Beijing's Huairou district on Friday.

Related studies have shed light on the Great Wall's architectural form and construction techniques.

"For example, although certain sections of the Great Wall are not very long, they employ a variety of construction methods," Shang says.

"In steep mountainous areas, the technique involved chiseling the mountain into a staircase shape. In gentler areas, foundation trenches were dug. In some places, soil was used to create a base," he adds.

The Beijing sections of the Great Wall are one of the most well-preserved and complex among those meandering through more than 10 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. They run more than 520 kilometers across six districts in the city.

In 2021, Beijing shifted its focus from general protection of the Great Wall to research-based restoration, selecting the Dazhuangke section in Yanqing and the Jiankou section in Huairou as pilot sites for research-based restoration.

"Previously, we only observed the Great Wall from the surface and didn't understand the buried parts, making it difficult to create comprehensive and scientific protection plans. By using archaeological methods to observe, diagnose and treat, we can identify the root cause of the Great Wall's issues and provide targeted treatments," Shang explains.

In recent years, artifacts unearthed from the Great Wall in

Beijing can be categorized into three major types: architectural components of the wall, weapons and daily utensils, Shang says.

In 2022, researchers discovered charred grains from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) on the Dazhuangke section of the Great Wall, including millet and Chinese prickly ash.

Although these grains were charred, they have provided an authentic representation of the daily diet of the Great Wall garrison soldiers, Shang says. He notes that a pile of more than 50 stone grenades found on the Badaling Great Wall last year was a major discovery.

"This updates our previous understanding of the weapons used by the Great Wall garrisons. We used to think that they mostly used long-range weapons and that there weren't many close-combat weapons," Shang says.

However, the stone grenades being stashed away in several watchtowers within a short section of the Badaling Great Wall suggests that they were likely commonly equipped along the entire length of the Great Wall, he adds.

Shang is among several archaeologists and cultural heritage preservationists from across the country, including Hebei province, the Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions and Shaanxi province, who engaged in discussions and exchanges about their distinct archaeological experiences at the seminar that was hosted by the Huairou district government and the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture.

By using archaeological methods to observe, diagnose and treat, we can identify the root cause of the Great Wall's issues and provide targeted treatments."

Shang Heng, researcher at the Beijing Institute of Archaeology



Highlighting the research-based restoration of the Great Wall, a seminar was held in Beijing's Huairou district on Friday. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

neering and Architecture.

They concur that archaeology plays an important role in addressing the chronological classification of the Great Wall, deepening the overall understanding of the Great Wall's defense system, interpreting the techniques of its defensive structures, identifying the causes of deterioration of the wall, and enriching its knowledge.

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ferent periods, such as those from the Qin (221-206 BC), Han (206 BC-AD 220) and Ming dynasties.

A total of 24 beacon towers on the Fenshuiling section of the Great Wall in Chongli county of the province have been recently studied, and 21 of them didn't reveal Han Dynasty pottery shards (two of them have already been destroyed), Han says.

"The other three beacon towers where Han Dynasty pottery shards were found are relatively low and lack surrounding trenches, while those without Han Dynasty pottery shards are relatively tall and typically have surrounding trenches, which are characteristic of Ming Dynasty beacon towers," Han explains.

Based on the coexistence of artifacts from both the Han and Ming dynasties, it can be inferred that this section of the Great Wall was initially built during the Han Dynasty and later renovated and utilized during the Ming Dynasty, he adds.

"The Han Dynasty beacon towers were either reinforced with additional stones or newly built upon, with surrounding trenches added during the Ming Dynasty renovations," he says.

At the same time, the sections from the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577) were found in the Haigang district of the province's Qinhuangdao, and continuously arranged beacon towers from the Han Dynasty were uncovered in Chongli.

Han believes the findings will be conducive to the scientific management, protection and research of

the Great Wall, enriching its significance and deepening the understanding of it.

Li Yipi, a researcher from the Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, expounds on the characteristics and value of the Great Wall of Chu, a vassal state to the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC) dating back more than 2,000 years.

"According to the archaeological excavation findings, the earliest artifacts unearthed within the Chu Great Wall remains date back to the mid-Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC)," Li says.

To date, the Chu Great Wall, as recognized by the National Cultural Heritage Administration, is mainly distributed in Pingdingshan, Nanyang and Zhumadian in Henan province. It extends for 383 km and comprises various elements, including artificially constructed long walls, passes, beacon towers, barracks sites and ancient roads, as well as natural mountain passes and rivers, forming an organically unified defensive line.

The Chu Great Wall is also the southernmost of the early Great Wall found so far and its unique geographical location and regional climate have led to distinctive architectural features.

"Archaeological discoveries have shown that at the base of the Chu Great Wall's man-made wall, there are large-scale accumulations of charred wooden sticks or charred wooden sticks mixed with stones. These charred sticks were made through firing and had drying properties that prevented dampness and moisture," Li says.

Other experts at the Beijing seminar shared studies of a large number of statues and architectural remains unearthed from Shaanxi that proved cultural exchange on both sides of the Great Wall during the Ming Dynasty, as well as those of relics of Tang Dynasty (618-907) frontier soldiers in Xinjiang, proving the Tang Dynasty's effective governance.

At the seminar, Song Xinchao, chair of the Chinese National Committee for the International Council on Monuments and Sites, called on related parties to further enhance the protection of the Great Wall, strengthen the exploration of its overall value, and further standardize archaeological operations.

"By streamlining the current work processes and taking the construction of the Great Wall National Cultural Park as an opportunity, we aim to comprehensively improve the level of protection and inheritance," Song says.

Tang Yuyang, a professor from the Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, emphasizes the evolution of Great Wall protection strategies, advocating for a shift toward research-driven restoration and proactive preventive measures, building upon the valuable practical experience garnered in Beijing.

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Jiankou work starts to go deeper into layers of history

By YANG FEIYUE

A new round of restorations of the Jiankou Great Wall in Beijing's Huairou district kicked off on Friday, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing conservation efforts of this historical marvel.

The section stretches about 7,800 meters and has gone through four rounds of restoration since 2016, with a substantial 4,250 meters already revitalized.

The latest restoration project involves 915 meters of the Jiankou section, including six watchtowers and five sidewall sections. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of November 2026.

The project is in the wake of an archaeological study that started in April. The archaeological work was carried out from west to east, incorporating methods that involved the participation of multiple disciplines to present in detail the historical information of this section of the Great Wall, according to Shang Heng, an associate research fellow at the Beijing Institute of Archaeology.

More "technological archaeology" methods were employed this time, involving botany, zoology, materials science, metallurgy and environmental science, Shang says.

"For example, in the field of environmental science, the excavation of the deeply buried soil around the watchtowers will help restore the historical environment and study



Left: The Jiankou Great Wall in Beijing's Huairou district is a section of the Great Wall that is known for its steep ridges and rugged terrain. Right: Shang Heng, an associate research fellow at the Beijing Institute of Archaeology, at the restoration site. PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

the varieties and conditions of the vegetation that existed, thus providing a scientific basis for future vegetation management on the Great Wall," Shang explains.

At the same time, to avoid long gaps between archaeological work and restoration, the project employs a coordinated archaeology and restoration approach, ensuring both processes proceed in sequence.

Lyu Yan from the institute has been in charge of environmental archaeology for the project. She has taken small samples of mortar from the brick joints and is working on analyzing their constituents.

Lyu has engaged in Great Wall studies over the years and has found

the formation of mortars varies by location on the Great Wall.

Oxide composition, minerals and organic components will be analyzed, and mechanical tests will be conducted to assess the pressure the mortar can withstand.

Additionally, she says she will compare the samples with the dolomite found around the Great Wall and try to determine the origin of the mortar and reconstruct the ancient processes of mortar production and firing.

Yin Da, also from the institute, has been paying attention to vegetation on the Great Wall.

She joined the study and restoration of the Dazhuangke Great Wall

in Yanqing district, northwestern Beijing, a few years ago.

Through the identification of large plant remains, charred plant seeds were discovered in the soil accumulations of stoves and heated brick beds in her previous work, which she says can be used to explore issues related to the composition, source and supply methods of military provisions during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Yin says she hopes she can make richer discoveries in the Jiankou project. In addition to examining more types of military provisions of the frontier soldiers in ancient times, Yin says she is also interested in understanding the various ways

the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) garrisons obtained and utilized plant resources around the Great Wall.

Shang believes the involvement of "technological archaeology" will produce richer results.

"Not only can we reconstruct the daily lives of the frontier soldiers, but we can also make the Great Wall, which many see as solely a military structure, warmer and more vivid and tangible, revealing more stories hidden beneath its mysterious facade," Shang says.

During the restoration, numerous professional teams specializing in Great Wall conservation will be involved, adhering to the principle of minimal intervention, according to

the authorities in charge of the restoration. Traditional techniques and materials will be used for emergency reinforcement to preserve the current state of the cultural relics and maintain the historical appearance of the Jiankou Great Wall for the public, according to the authorities.

Additionally, comprehensive digital recording will be carried out throughout the new restoration project. Digital information and 3D modeling have been conducted before the project started and during the archaeological process, and will continue during restorative construction and after completion, according to technology provider Tencent.

This will create a complete digital record of the restoration process and establish a chronological digital scenario, according to Tencent.

Deng Chao, director of the artifact and historical site department of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, says related parties should implement guidelines for cultural relic work in the new era and accurately follow the direction of the Great Wall protection work.

Deng calls for strengthening the management of cultural and tourism projects involving the Great Wall, building a comprehensive value presentation system for the Great Wall, and further improving policies and measures for social participation in the protection of the Great Wall.

LIFE

A camera of the Ming (Dynasty of China) is how Yang Danxia, an expert on ancient Chinese painting from the prestigious Palace Museum in Beijing, describes Zeng Jing, a leading portraitist active in the late 16th century to mid-17th century China.

Of the many works he presumably painted, only around 20 have lasted to date.

One of them, owned by the museum, depicts a man named Wu Yunzhao, a lyricist-poet and member of the literati among whom Zeng had commanded a large following.

Donning a monochromatic robe and a black headscarf befitting a scholar-recluse, Wu was placed amid forested mountains, where he was accompanied by his own read, which he held by hand, as well as two boy attendants rendered skillfully by Zeng.

It's worth noting that the scenery was done by Zeng's contemporary Hu Zongxin, one of the several landscapists Zeng had cooperated with in an effort to bring out the inner tableau of those he portrayed.

"Zeng brought something new into a long tradition of ancient Chinese portraiture, with huge success," Yang says.

That reason alone has guaranteed his position in art history, and his inclusion in an ongoing exhibition focusing on the art form during the country's Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties between the mid-14th and early 20th century.

"Why Ming and Qing? Because in between those centuries, Chinese portraiture, steeped in the thoughts and aesthetics of Confucianism, underwent big changes, of which Zeng was a key figure," says Yang Zewen, the exhibition's curator.

Featuring around 100 pieces of work ranging from ancestral and royal portraits to images of eminent officials and celebrated men of words, the exhibition is held by the Suzhou Museum in Suzhou city, Jiangsu province, whose modern-day capital Nanjing, around 200 kilometers from Suzhou, was where Zeng spent his most productive years.

In 1582, around 18 years after Zeng was born, Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit priest, arrived in Macao, where he studied the Chinese language and customs.

It eventually took him 13 years to arrive in Nanjing, where he stayed for a couple more years before making his way further north to Beijing. There he was given an audience by Emperor Wanli of the Ming Dynasty in 1601.

Among the gifts he presented to the Chinese ruler were three oil portraits. The emperor was believed to have been astounded by how lifelike the images were. In the following two centuries, more Jesuit missionaries followed Ricci's footsteps, among whom were many painter-portraitists with an innate understanding of the power of art.

"Two artistic traditions intersected — one embraced by traditional Chinese portraitists; the other, by Western artists who had previously been trained, among other things, to carve a vivid image with light and shadow," says Yang Zewen.

Light and shadow — prominent factors in Western painting including portraiture — had largely been ignored by ancient Chinese portraitists "for a deeper, philosophical rea-

Framing a portrait of innovation

Suzhou exhibition focuses on art during Ming and Qing dynasties, **Zhao Xu** reports.



Left: Lyricist-poet Wu Yunzhao (middle) depicted by renowned Ming-dynasty portraitist Zeng Jing (1564-1647), with the landscape painted by Hu Zongxin. Above: A Qing-dynasty portrait of a woman, painted using *mogu fa*, or the technique of structuring with ink, as first employed by Zeng. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Two artistic traditions intersected — one embraced by traditional Chinese portraitists; the other, by Western artists who had previously been trained, among other things, to carve a vivid image with light and shadow."

Yang Zewen, curator at the Suzhou Museum

son", to quote Yang Danxia from the Palace Museum.

"For them, it was the perceived truth about an individual rather than physical likeness that mattered. So, instead of going after a heightened sense of existence and momentariness often conveyed by the employment of intense light and shadow, they went for something more constant, more indispensable of the man, as seen through their mind's eye," she says. However, that doesn't mean that the Chi-

nese portraitists who had contact with the missionaries and their art weren't tempted to reflect on their own way of painting. In fact, some of them did, including Zeng, who soon came up with what's known today as the *mogu fa*, or the technique of structuring with ink.

He first used light ink both to outline the subject's facial features and to shade certain areas of his face. This was before colored ink, sometimes of a rosy-beige or dusky tone, was applied on the face, one ultrathin layer after another. The goal was not to cover the black ink-shaded areas but to slightly subdue and soften them.

Still visible under the translucent colored paint, these inky parts would add dimension to a face that would otherwise look much flatter, emphasizing details from the brow ridge and cheekbones to wrinkles and eye bags.

"By doing so, Zeng had merged the two main methods in traditional Chinese portraiture, one using pure lines without any color or wash, the other, more popular in Nanjing and the surrounding regions, relied on the smooth application of colored ink for facial depiction," says Yang Zewen, the curator.

"He did so, informed by Western portraiture. And what he had accomplished was highly evocative representations of his subjects that still exuded the sensibilities of the literati culture."

To walk that fine line, Zeng had to adhere to a muted color palette, and had limited his experiments only to the faces of his subjects. The rest of the figure, clothing included, are rendered with highly suggestive lines.

The resulting succinctness and two-dimensionality was an antithesis to what his Western counterparts were so bent on achieving through their palpable rendition of delicate crispy lacework or sensual silk and velvet.

"Toward the end of the Ming Dynasty, the Yangtze River Delta region, where Nanjing was located, experienced great prosperity, which in turn led to a general enthusiasm toward anything new. Zeng, with his latest adaptations, became the portraitist of his time," says Yang Danxia.

"He was admired, copied and emulated as a pioneering force who brought the art to a place it had never quite been."

In 1644, three years before Zeng's death, the Ming Dynasty met its own end, succeeded by Qing, which lasted for another 267 years.

The dynastic transition did almost nothing to stop Western artists from coming to China, and Beijing in particular, where they tried very hard to impress the Qing rulers, and in that process, interacted closely with their Chinese counterparts.

Reflecting on Zeng's phenomenal success, Yang Danxia says: "It's important to remember that Zeng had never sought to revolutionize classical Chinese portraiture. In fact, his very success lies with the great sensitivity he had shown toward an art tradition into which he was born, while trying to take that tradition just one calculated step further."

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By ZHAO XU

"One must try to forget what one has already learned, and open up fully to new (artistic) influences and techniques, in order to come up with works that appeal to the cultural sensibilities of his new audience," wrote French Jesuit painter and missionary Jean Denis Attiret (1702-1768) in his diary during his stay in Beijing, which lasted from 1739 until his death in 1768 at the age of 66.

There, in the capital of the Qing Dynasty, Attiret painted inside the Forbidden City, the vast imperial palace that today houses most of his works under the name of the Palace Museum. And the words Attiret, whose Chinese name Wang Zhicheng denotes sincerity and earnestness, had put down were probably meant as much for himself as for his fellow Western artists who had willingly entered the service of the Qing emperors.

"For one thing, their royal Chinese patrons — like all other Chinese at the time — found shadows on the face highly disagreeable. So that had to go, or at least had to be greatly adjusted," says Yang Zewen, curator of an ongoing exhibition at the Suzhou Museum that focuses on portraiture from China's Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties.

Yang is standing right in front of a portrait of Emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735), whose father Emperor Kangxi, considered the greatest Qing ruler, harbored a passionate interest toward Western painting, which directly facilitated the arrival in China of many missionary artists.

Flanked by two portraits of his royal consorts — one of them the mother of his successor Emperor Qianlong, Yongzheng appears in the painting, done with traditional Chinese colored ink on silk, as a rather benign-looking character with a sense of aplomb. His facial features are delicately rendered, with light shading on the nasal wings and toward the back of his face.

"One gets the feeling that whoever had painted this was fully aware of the element of light, and by extension, shadow, in portraiture," Yang says. "Yet the same person must be equally aware of the Chinese aes-

Interpreting art in a different light



Left: A portrait of Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing Dynasty, tentatively attributed to Italian Jesuit missionary painter Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766). Above: A rubbing of a likeness of celebrated Qing-dynasty painter Wang Hui, done by his portraitist friend Yu Zhiding upon Wang's departure from Beijing.

thetics as not to upset it.

"While many Western paintings indicated strongly at a single light source through the dramatic interplay between light and shadow, the missionary artists, in their attempt to reconcile two artistic traditions, had made their works appear as if they had been painted in open light, which readily deleted all darkness."

Interestingly, one Western ruler who also insisted that no shadow come across her face is Elizabeth I, the powerful, long-reigning Queen of England from the 16th century. Elizabeth oversaw the creation of many of her likenesses by artist Nicholas Hilliard that look a bit flat, a deliberate decision for the monarch who probably thought naturalistic representation was not entirely helpful in the projection of power and symbolism.

The aforementioned Emperor Yongzheng

portrait has been tentatively attributed to Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), an Italian Jesuit missionary painter who served three Qing emperors — Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong. A friend of Attiret and a master of fusion when it came to mixing artistic influences, Castiglione, whose Chinese name Lang Shining implied serenity and harmony, saw his fame reach its height during the reign of Emperor Qianlong, who declared him as "standing head and shoulder above all other portraitists (in my court)".

Under the auspices of Qianlong, Castiglione and other Western artists gave lessons to young Chinese trainees deemed talented. They also helped raise the status of studio-trained portraitists, long considered lesser mortals to literati painters who, as their collective name suggests, were usually highly educated, well-versed in poetry, and domi-

nated Chinese landscape painting since around the 10th century.

In 1729, *Shi Xue*, or The Science of Perspectives, a richly illustrated book and the first Chinese one to have dealt with the topic, was published. The author, Nian Xiyao, elder brother of Nian Gengyao, the right-hand man of Emperor Yongzheng before his deadly fall from grace, had studied perspective with Castiglione.

A notion central to the illusion of depth in Western painting, perspective was brought into traditional Chinese painting — the depiction of architectural landscape in particular — by missionary artists around the same time, and was quickly taken up by their Chinese counterparts, especially those working at the imperial court.

In 1689, Emperor Kangxi made a grand tour to consolidate his authority over south-

ern China. The renowned landscapist Wang Hui (1632-1717), assisted by his team of painters, recorded the journey in a series of twelve oversize handscrolls ranging from 14 to 26 meters long.

While the format of a handscroll is decidedly Chinese, the spatial representation in each painting pointed to an acute sense of depth and perspective not typically seen in traditional Chinese paintings.

On view at the Suzhou Museum exhibition are two images of Wang Hui. One is the rubbing of an original work done by celebrated Qing-dynasty portraitist Yu Zhiding. Yu meant it as a parting gift for Wang Hui who, having spent eight whole years on his royal commission, had decided to leave Beijing for good.

In the painting, Wang Hui, wearing a loosefitting robe and no hat, was making his way home on the back of a cow, followed by his luggage-bearing attendant. For those familiar with the iconography of Chinese portraiture, Wang Hui, once trusted by the emperor, had chosen to be seen as someone whose only ambition was to be with nature.

A few steps away from the rubbing is a portrait of him living the life he had always wanted, amid nature's untended wilderness. Visibly older than he had appeared in Yu's work, the man, slightly frail and in white, seems to be receding slowly into the background. This deeply spiritual portrait was from Wang Hui's two other painter friends, Xie Bin and Wu Li, the latter believed to have befriended many Western artists who lived in China at the time.

"It's a two-way street whereby the Chinese and Western artists came under the influences of each other," says Yang. "While some of the influences had led to conscious decisions — like the one to keep shadows off the face, others were felt more subtly, sometimes without one's knowledge."

In 1711, Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ripa was appointed court painter by Emperor Kangxi. According to his own memoir, to get that position, Ripa was asked to prove his own worth, with painting tools drawn from both Chinese and Western traditions.

"These included a Chinese brush, some paint and an oil painting canvass," he wrote.

LIFE

Scientist with a winning formula

Esteemed academician makes dream of building a world-class university in Shenzhen a reality, **Xing Wen** reports.

When a scientist with entrepreneurial experience makes establishing a world-class university in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, a thriving industrial center, his life's ultimate goal, anticipation swells — what kind of institution will emerge?

At 61, Fan Jianping, an esteemed academician of the International Eurasian Academy of Sciences, started this endeavor in 2018.

That year, Fan assumed the position of director of the preparatory office for the establishment of the Shenzhen University of Advanced Technology.

On June 5, the Ministry of Education announced the founding of SUAT, which is set to officially begin enrollment this September. The ministry hopes that the university will focus on serving the development of national strategic emerging industries and future industries. It aims to promote the integration of industry and education, as well as the convergence of science and education.

Additionally, the university expects to attract a top-tier faculty, develop world-class disciplines, cultivate talent, produce outstanding achievements, and actively explore new models for operating research-oriented universities.

Fan's expertise spans high-performance computing, cloud computing and parallel and distributed computing.

Fan's illustrious career, marked by significant contributions to the development of China's renowned "Dawning Series" supercomputers and the founding of the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, underscores his capabilities for this venture.

After earning his PhD from the Institute of Computing Technology at the CAS in 1990, Fan was engaged in the development of the Dawning I high-performance computer.

As a key founder of the "Dawning Series" supercomputers, he played a pivotal role in driving the large-scale industrialization of high-performance computing in China.

In 2006, his leadership extended to his role as the founding dean of the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology, which has fostered close collaborations with enterprises in Shenzhen, addressing industrial challenges and pioneering key technological breakthroughs.

SIAT was jointly established by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Shenzhen government and the Chinese University of Hong Kong in February 2006.

Over the past 18 years, it has evolved into a flagship institution among China's new research entities. SIAT has successfully incubated nearly 2,000 enterprises and has attracted over 150 national-level talents and more than 800 overseas returned talents. Furthermore, 77 individuals from SIAT are named in the world's top 2 percent of the most cited scientists by Stanford University.

Fan says that establishing a remarkable university is his "final destination".

"There is no other pursuit in my life," he says. "We aim to leverage the research institution SIAT to establish a first-class university."

The SIAT currently boasts three national key laboratories specializing in medical imaging science and technology systems, quantitative



Clockwise from top: Fan Jianping (center), founding dean of the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology and director of the preparatory office for the establishment of the Shenzhen University of Advanced Technology, participates in the 2023 Shenzhen Marathon; the university aims to build a campus that is open to local communities; a designer's rendering of its stadium. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“We aim to pioneer a new path in interdisciplinary fields and nurture a large number of versatile talents who are urgently needed by the nation.”

Fan Jianping, director of the preparatory office for the establishment of the Shenzhen University of Advanced Technology

synthetic biology and integrated circuit materials, as well as four national-level innovation centers focusing on high-performance medical devices and intelligent engineering biology, among other frontier areas.

These platforms will be valuable resources for SUAT, according to Fan.

Freshmen at SUAT will rotate through different laboratories to explore diverse fields and choose their desired majors. Starting in their second year, they will commit to a specific major and participate in weekly lab research. Over four years, they will spend at least 20 percent of their time in the lab.

"Think about a young student starting in a top national lab from their first year of university. Being in that research-rich environment will definitely make them stand out," says Fan.

Opportunities for freshmen to engage in research are rare in traditional Chinese universities. This is what Fan emphasizes as the need for innovation in running a university.

Another innovative move at SUAT will be the absence of typical science and engineering schools. Instead, all schools will emphasize interdisciplinary studies.

For instance, the School of Life and Health at SUAT will establish four departments dedicated to biology, neurobiology, intelligent cross-science, and mental and public health, with a primary focus on nurturing talents in brain science-related fields. Students will be required to take courses spanning various disciplines such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and engineering, among others — an approach seldom found at traditional universities, Fan explains.

The other six inaugural schools are the School of Synthetic Biology, the School of Computer Science and Control Engineering, the School of Biomedical Engineering, the School of Materials Science and Energy Engineering, the School of Pharmacy and the School of Computing and Microelectronics.

Notably, these schools will all

boast international faculty. For example, Pan Yi, an academician of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering who previously taught at Georgia State University in the United States, is scheduled to be the dean of the School of Computer Science and Control Engineering. Wang Yutian, an academician with the Academy of Science of the Royal Society of Canada in Ottawa, will lead the School of Life and Health. Chen Youhai, also an academician of AIMBE and who once taught at the University of Pennsylvania, will serve as the dean of the School of Pharmacy.

"We aim to pioneer a new path in interdisciplinary fields and nurture a large number of versatile talents who are urgently needed by the nation," says Fan.

Noticing the growing preference among Chinese youth for stable government positions and the high regard for official roles, Fan expresses his ambitious vision.

"We want to foster individuals with a strong sense of citizenship, capable of changing the world through science and technology."

Fan was raised in the remote pastures in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region. Before his first trip abroad to Japan in 1990, the then 20-something envisioned the world as portrayed in Hong Kong movies, with long hair and bell-bottom pants seen as trendy.

Later, he underwent several eye-opening experiences during his vis-

its to universities in the US.

In 1998, he founded a startup in Chengdu, Sichuan province, engaged in computer technology development and application.

These experiences of engaging in the industrialization of cutting-edge technology made him aware that "entrepreneurs can create new ways of life".

And Shenzhen is a fertile land that has nurtured numerous private entrepreneurs. Since China's reform and opening-up, Shenzhen has evolved from a rural fishing village into the country's leading city in industrial output value.

In recent years, the city has been endeavoring to develop such strategic emerging industries as semiconductors, integrated circuits, high-end medical devices, biomedicine and new energy. It has also positioned itself in eight future industries, including synthetic biology, brain science and neuromorphic intelligence.

Fan aspires for SUAT to embody the scientific ethos and the spirit of reform and opening-up in Shenzhen, emerging as a university capable of guiding enterprises in innovative development and nurturing talents in the aforementioned emerging industries, rather than solely concentrating on research.

China has been actively implementing an innovation-driven development strategy in recent years. Efforts include enhancing cooperation between industries,

universities and research institutes, supporting leading scientists in conducting original and pioneering research to achieve scientific and technological breakthroughs and ensuring self-reliance in critical areas and key sectors.

Around SUAT, there are not only incubators such as the Shenzhen Engineering Biomedical Industry Innovation Center and the Guangming Brain Science and Technology Industry Innovation Center but also resources such as the Neuromorphic Intelligence Industrial Park and the Synthetic Biology Industrial Park. These resource and geographical advantages allow students to have intimate contact with industries and grow together from the moment they enroll, he says.

To enhance the industrial application of research outcomes, the Shenzhen Engineering Biomedical Industry Innovation Center is structured with enterprises located downstairs and SIAT's research team and equipment upstairs.

Cui Junfeng, CEO of a biotech company in the innovation center, fully supports this talent development approach.

"To commercialize the synthetic biology industry, having both an engineering and high-end research team is paramount," says Cui.

While having excelled in China's exam-oriented education system, Fan stands firm against the sole emphasis on test scores.

He believes that mental and physical well-being matters far more than the purported wisdom represented by test scores.

As an enthusiast of long-distance running, he likens life to a marathon.

"There's no need to overly concern oneself with current test scores, feeling the need to outperform others at every kilometer. Why bother?"

"It's important to nurture each person according to their nature, recognizing everyone's uniqueness."

The SUAT has established a college system where mentors will assist students in creating a community environment conducive to holistic personal development.

There will be two colleges at SUAT — Dawning College and Yuangeng College.

Song Junfeng, a senior student from Hebei province, is among the beneficiaries of SUAT's educational model, as it has collaborated with universities such as Hebei University, Shenyang Aerospace University and Nanchang University in an attempt at joint student training.

"The college feels like home, with each undergraduate student having three mentors: an academic mentor, a career mentor who is a corporate expert and a college mentor who provides us with psychological counseling and organizes various activities to diversify our daily lives," says Song.

He says that the opportunity to work in high-end laboratories ignited his interest in research.

Fan says that creating an educational institution is like cultivating a garden.

"It should be vibrant and diverse, with trees, grass and flowers each finding their own place."

The soil is fertile for sowing seeds that will grow and develop the future of science and technology.

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Museum gives glimpse into distant past

By **WANG QIAN**
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Highlighting a selection of objects acquired in the past two years that exemplify the National Natural History Museum's collecting vision and strategies, *A Symphony of Nature — An Exhibition on Selected Collection Acquired in 2022 and 2023* kicked off on June 5 at the museum in Beijing.

The exhibition aims to celebrate its first anniversary as the National Natural History Museum, changed from the Beijing Museum of Natural History on June 5 last year. It has 209 items selected from the new collection of more than 40,000 since 2022. Most are on dis-

play for the first time. "These precious specimens and artworks can help visitors better understand the evolution of life and our planet, raising public awareness of environmental protection," Zhang Yuguang, deputy director of the museum, says.

Running until July 21, the exhibition is divided into 10 sections, including geological minerals, life in water, plants and animals.

With a collection of more than 401,600 historical and current specimens and artworks and a history of more than 70 years, the National Natural History Museum has actively played an essential role in scientific research, developing diversified learning programs and deepening

international communication, according to Zhang.

In the section, *An Epic of Life*, a giant sea turtle skeleton (*Alienochelys selloumi*) from the Late Cretaceous of Morocco, approximately 66 to 70 million years ago, is a rare fossil more than 3 meters long, according to Gao Lihong from the museum's Earth sciences department.

"The extinct genus of sea turtle is a relative of the modern leatherback turtle," Gao says, adding that as far as she knows, the well-preserved skeleton with 70 percent completion is the only one in China.

Besides the turtle skull, a fossil of 21 trilobites showcasing rare preservation forms has been unveiled to the public. Trilobites, the first domi-

nant form of complex life on earth, are a group of extinct marine arthropods that first appeared around 521 million years ago, shortly after the beginning of the Cambrian period, living through the majority of the Palaeozoic Era, for nearly 300 million years.

Gao says all the items on display have been carefully selected to give a glimpse into our planet's distant past.

As a popular attraction exploring life on Earth in the capital, the 23,000-square-meter museum has some 1.8 million visits every year. Meanwhile, a new location covering a total area of 57,700 sq m has been selected along the south of Beijing's Central Axis.



The exhibition highlights a selection of objects, including a skeleton of a giant sea turtle (top left) from the Late Cretaceous of Morocco, approximately 66 to 70 million years ago, a fossil of 21 trilobites (top right) and animal specimens (above). PHOTOS BY WANG QIAN / CHINA DAILY