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CHINA DAILY

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Xi praises Chang'e 6 mission

President says probe's return from lunar far side marks a new milestone

By ZHAO LEI
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President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message on Tuesday on the success of the Chang'e 6 mission, which for the first time brought scientifically precious samples from the moon's far side back to Earth.

On behalf of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Council and the Central Military Commission, Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the CMC, extended warm congratulations and sincere greetings to the Chang'e 6 mission headquarters and all those who participated in the historic mission.

In his message, the president noted that the Chang'e 6 probe realized the world's first sample-return endeavor from the lunar far side, marking a new milestone in China's effort to become a global power in the space industry as well as in science and technology.

"Over the past 20 years, all comrades taking part in lunar exploration programs have been upholding the spirit of the cause, continuing to climb the peak of science and technology. You have made world-class achievements and established a high-quality, efficient path for exploring the moon," Xi said. "Your extraordinary feats will be enshrined in the memory of our motherland and the people."

The president expressed the hope that those who participated in the mission will make full use of the new samples in scientific studies and keep working on deep-space explorations and other major space projects. "You shall march toward building the country into a major power in space, achieving new feats in exploring the universe and benefiting humanity, and making new contributions to Chinese modernization and national rejuvenation," Xi said, also encouraging the mission's participants to continue strengthening international cooperation.

Carrying the unique lunar samples, the reentry capsule of the Chang'e 6 robotic probe touched down at 2:07 pm on Tuesday on its preset landing site in Siziwang Banner in the



Above: Staff members check the return capsule of the Chang'e 6 probe on Tuesday after it landed in Siziwang Banner, Inner Mongolia autonomous region. The Chang'e 6 mission has brought back to Earth the first samples ever collected from the far side of the moon. LIAN ZHEN / XINHUA
Left: Staff members at Beijing Aerospace Control Center pose for a group photo on Tuesday upon the completion of the Chang'e 6 mission. JIN LIANGKUAI / XINHUA

Inner Mongolia autonomous region, successfully completing a 53-day voyage that involved a host of complex and challenging maneuvers.

The reentry and landing processes started at around 1:20 pm after the mission controllers at the Beijing Aerospace Control Center uploaded high-accuracy navigation data to the orbiter-reentry capsule combination.

The capsule separated from the orbiter about 5,000 kilometers above the southern Atlantic Ocean and began to descend toward Earth.

It entered the atmosphere at around 1:41 pm at a speed of 10.9 kilometers per second, close to the second cosmic velocity, and then bounced out of the atmosphere in a

maneuver to reduce its ultrafast speed.

The second cosmic velocity, also known as the escape velocity, refers to the ultrafast speed required to escape the gravitational field of a celestial body.

After a short while, the capsule reentered the atmosphere and kept gliding down. When the craft was about 10 km above ground, it released its parachutes and landed smoothly on the sandy grassland. The entire landing process was operated by the capsule itself with the help of its sensors and computers.

Shortly after touchdown, recovery personnel sent from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center arrived at the landing site in helicopters and

off-road vehicles. The capsule is scheduled to be transported by airplane to Beijing on Wednesday, where it will be opened by experts at the China Academy of Space Technology.

The samples will be taken out of the capsule and weighed before being delivered to the National Astronomical Observatories, a subsidiary of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, according to the China National Space Administration.

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Nations called on to face up to growth predicament

By CAO DESHENG
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Premier Li Qiang has called for countries around the world to face the growth predicament of the world economy squarely, and find reasonable interests in making a bigger "pie" together to promote both their own development and global economic recovery.

Li made the remarks on Tuesday when addressing the opening ceremony of the World Economic Forum's 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the 2024 Summer Davos, in Dalian, Liaoning province.

He said the world economy lacks sufficient growth momentum due to various factors including the shock from the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation and the worsening debt issue, as well as other deep-rooted contradictions and problems.

"If countries only think about maximizing their own interests without considering that of others, and even turn back the wheel of history by decoupling and cutting off industrial and supply chains with the 'small yard and high fence' policy, it will only raise the cost of global economic operations, sever economic ties between regions and intensify contradictions and disputes," the premier said. "That would even drag countries around the world into a vicious cycle where they vie for a pie, but the pie is becoming smaller and smaller amid the fight."

Li said the right choice would be to approach development with a broader horizon and mindset, and to seek reasonable interests in making a bigger pie together, in order to give a lasting impetus to the world economy and open up new horizons for development.

Speaking of China's emerging industries, the premier said, "The rapid growth of new industries has strongly supported the sustained and healthy development of the Chinese economy, and has also created greater cooperation opportunities for enterprises from various countries."

Electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products produced by Chinese companies have not only met domestic market demand but also enriched the global market supply, Li said. "This has alleviated global inflationary pressures and made a positive contribution to global efforts in addressing climate change," he added.

Li underlined the importance of building an open world economy, and called for deepening technological exchanges and cooperation. It is essential to create a fair, just and nondiscriminatory environment for technological innovation while protecting intellectual property rights, he said.

The three-day event, themed "Next Frontiers for Growth", gathered some 1,700 leading figures from the public and private sectors of more than 100 countries and regions to jointly explore new drivers and pathways for global economic growth.

Polish President Andrzej Duda and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh attended the opening ceremony.

Duda said that Poland is an excellent place for investment, adding that the nation offers "credibility, predictability and stability" to international investors.

Chinh called for greater international cooperation in making, planning and implementing policies at the global level, and greater coordination in the management of dynamic, proactive, flexible, timely and effective monetary policy.

Business executives attending the event were upbeat about China's economic prospects and expressed their commitment to expanding investment in the country.

Jason Ding, managing partner of consultancy Bain & Company Greater China, said that China remains a key growth driver for the global economy and his company is confident about the Chinese economy's potential and resilience.

"All the multinationals cannot ignore China. They have to be engaged with China and also win in China to truly become a global leader. Our company is also very committed to investing and growing with our clients in China," he added.

Fan Feifei contributed to this story.



Premier Li Qiang (center), Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum Klaus Schwab (second from left), Polish President Andrzej Duda (right) and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (second from right) attend the opening ceremony of the WEF Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, in Dalian, Liaoning province. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

HK'S 'PAY-AS-YOU-THROW' WASTE DISPOSAL PUT ON HOLD

City officials look to optimize program amid concerns raised by businesses, unions, workers

By WU KUNLING in Hong Kong
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Cleaner Lau Mui-chun, 69, breathed a sigh of relief last month after hearing that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government had decided to shelve the city's waste-charging program, which it had already postponed twice.

Lau looks after 34 levels of a resi-

In-depth

dential building in Kowloon, cleaning the corridors and trash room on every floor, and carrying household waste to the garbage collection point on ground level.

A cleaner for over 30 years, she

understands that the "pay-as-you-throw" program is a key initiative for the city's waste reduction, which will eventually cut her workload. Yet her anxieties escalated as Aug 1, the official implementation date for the program, approached.

Lau found that she knew little about the program, let alone what she should do if someone does not comply with the new regulations — such as refusing to put waste in

prepaid rubbish bags for disposal.

"My company has never offered any guidance, and no organization has reached out to us to explain relevant policies," Lau said, adding that all her knowledge about the program comes from talking with colleagues who garnered most of their information from TV programs.

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Middle East wakes up to Chinese version of soft power

Egypt narrowly escaped colonization by France and Britain, the two great European powers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Instead, Egypt experienced French and British "cultural imperialism".

French engineering built the Suez Canal, the French Napoleonic Code became the basis of the Egyptian legal system, the children of Egypt's upper classes studied French language and literature, and Cairo's architecture reflected French styles. The spread of British culture came later, after the militarization of the Suez Canal, with administrative, commercial and financial influence.

British tourists traveled the Nile and upper-class Egyptians began to play English sports.

After World War I, Egypt gradually came more under the cultural influence of the United States, the new great power. In 1956, when the US stopped the British-French-Israeli seizure of the Suez Canal, the prestige of the European powers collapsed. As the US seemed to care less about dominating Egypt than controlling the oil resources of the Gulf, Egyptians came to view it as benign, less self-interested than the Europeans.

The US quickly achieved a simi-

WORLD WATCH By Amr Elhenawy

lar reputation across most of the Middle East. As Arab countries emerged from British or French colonial rule, they readily identified with Americans who had also escaped an empire. Moreover, in the final decades of the 20th century, the US' economic achievements and prowess in space suggested there was much to learn from it. The atheism of Soviet communism

made it easier for Muslims to side with the Americans; Hollywood movies and American television familiarized Arab elites with American culture; and friendly American tourists were popular as they toured the region's historic sites.

The US, the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the uncontested leader of the global economy, dominated the region. It was not only US naval strike groups or American influence over global economics that impressed the Arab elite. Many accepted the US' claimed "exceptionalism" and even its self-image

as the "indispensable nation", the only power capable of managing international conflicts. Many were also attracted by the American political and social model, viewing it as the best template for the gradual modernization of their own societies and the advancement of their poor. They saw much to gain from learning from the US.

By the end of the 20th century, it was common to speak of the US' "soft power" — non-coercive means of co-opting support through the appeal of its values and the attraction of its example. The assertion of such cultural power, it was suggested, would minimize US dependence on its military.

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Left: Residents purchase takeout from a restaurant at Admiralty, Hong Kong, in April, as the city began to enforce the first-phase ban on disposable plastic products in restaurants and hotels. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY



Right: Students participate in educational activities on waste reduction and the city's waste-charging plan at a primary school in HK on Jan 16. Multiple booths were set up in the school hall to demonstrate ways to reduce waste at the source and promote recycling. CALVIN NG / CHINA DAILY

Management: Striving for sustainability

From page 1

Even cleaning workers who took part in an eight-week trial run, which covered 14 buildings, nursing homes and restaurants, told a government survey that they needed more time to adapt to the program. They also said they were worried about potential conflicts if residents did not follow the regulations.

Clearer guidelines

The front-line cleaners' confusion helps explain why Hong Kong's ambitious waste-charging program has been pushed into a tight corner.

The program requires residents to use designated garbage bags, which are eco-friendly and priced between HK\$0.30 (3.8 US cents) and HK\$11, to discard rubbish. For oversized waste, users will need to attach a label costing HK\$11 to each item before it's disposed.

The Hong Kong government launched a small-scale trial run of the program on April 1, hoping to garner feedback and publicize it.

However, problems raised during the trial, such as low use of the prepaid bags, lack of education about the program, and concerns about the expense — along with considerable criticism from the general community — forced the government to shelve the program on May 27.

The full program was originally scheduled to begin in late 2023, but was postponed to April 1, and then Aug 1. Government officials are now looking at ways to optimize it before its implementation.

Cleaners like Lau are concerned about the guidelines on dealing with violations, and believe breaches are bound to happen at the beginning of the program. For example, Lau said, should she stop or report people who fail to comply with the program? Will she bear any responsibility if she fails to prevent or report such acts? And, if she has to repack improperly discarded trash with the designated bags, who will pay for the bags?

The additional workload and responsibilities for cleaners under the program deserve a salary hike, Lau added.

Chan Kam-wah, vice-chairman of the Hong Kong Environmental Services, Logistics and Cleaning Employees Association, said grassroots cleaners face pressure from residents and are wary of their legal obligations. They may have

to take responsibility for residents' actions and end up unintentionally breaking the law, he said.

Cleaning workers are in urgent need of guidance on the new program, similar to that the HKSAR government has provided to the public, Chan said.

The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, the city's largest labor organization, said given the fact that many cleaning workers are older and less educated, the government should provide them with information through more channels, such as face-to-face briefings.

Restaurant leftovers

Hong Kong's catering industry, which deals with large amounts of food waste every day, is concerned about the extra costs involved with waste-disposal charges, given the sector's general slump. In March alone, an estimated 200 to 300 restaurants closed, according to industry figures.

"A 2,000-square-foot (185.8-square-meter) restaurant would incur an additional cost of HK\$8,000-HK\$10,000 per month just for purchasing the designated bags," said Winston Yeung, chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurant and Related Trades. A restaurant chain could spend up to HK\$10 million a year on the bags, a figure Yeung described as "terrifying".

While there will be short-term economic pressures, he acknowledged that charging for waste disposal could benefit restaurants in the long run as they will be forced to optimize operations and reduce food waste.

He suggested that the government prioritize education about the program and encourage reducing the amount of food waste, rather than solely relying on charging fees.

In a citywide survey conducted a few weeks before the shelving of the program, less than half of the respondents said they knew the aim of the initiative was to reduce waste. Over 20 percent believed the program was being introduced to increase government revenue.

Lawmaker Chan Hoi-yan, who organized the survey, said the existing facilities were inadequate for the program's implementation. "People just feel robbed," she told reporters.

Lawrence Iu Chun-yip, executive director of Civic Exchange, a Hong Kong-based think tank focusing on environmental challenges, said it was important to



The designated bags for the Hong Kong waste-charging program. LI ZHIHUA / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



A cleaning worker sorts waste at the Lockhart Road refuse collection point in Wan Chai on May 27. ADAM LAM / CHINA DAILY

reverse the public's perception that waste charging was being introduced simply to impose fines.

Iu said the communication gap between the HKSAR government, industries and the public, which was exposed during the program's trial run, had prevented waste charging from being implemented in recent years. As the initiator of the program, the government needs to take more responsibility to promote it in different sectors, he added.

Enforcement 'the key'

Jonathan Wong Woon-Chung, professor emeritus of biology at Hong Kong Baptist University, called on the government to implement the waste-charging program as soon as possible.

He said the city's limited progress in waste recycling was

“Hong Kong cannot afford more delays in waste management as the city is running out of landfills.”

Jonathan Wong Woon-Chung, professor emeritus at Hong Kong Baptist University

due to people's long-standing reliance on the government handling trash. Legal enforcement of the new program is the quickest way to change people's mindsets and habits, Wong said, adding "imperfect" regulations should not be used as an excuse to further delay implementation of the program.

He cited South Korean capital Seoul as an example of what can be achieved through such a system. Seoul has introduced a volume-based waste charging system, which has reduced waste by one-third since it started in 1995.

"Hong Kong cannot afford more delays in waste management as the city is running out of landfills," Wong warned.

Yeung, from the restaurant federation, said eateries could reduce the number of prepaid bags they would need by recycling their food

waste. However, he added there are not enough facilities to process the city's massive amount of kitchen waste.

The city has around 18,000 eateries. But to date, the government had established only 80 food-waste recycling points, which falls far short of the restaurants' needs, Yeung said. Small eateries also lack the manpower to recycle food waste on their own, he added.

The government should team up with private waste collectors to sort and transport restaurants' kitchen waste to better prepare catering businesses for the introduction of waste charging, he said.

The federation has long coordinated with recyclers to help restaurants deal with food waste, glass bottles and cardboard, Yeung said. It has also cooperated with suppliers to cut packaging materials.

Progress on plastics

The setback in waste charging has not deterred Hong Kong's long-term pursuit of waste control. The city began the first phase of its ban on single-use plastics on April 22.

Restaurants are banned from offering nine types of products made of expanded polystyrene — a nonbiodegradable material — such as cutlery, straws, plates, cups and lids, as well as food containers.

Cotton buds with plastic parts, umbrella bags and many other single-use plastic products have been removed from shop shelves. Hotels are not allowed to offer plastic-handled toothbrushes and combs, shower supplies packed in plastic containers, and free plastic bottles of water in rooms.

Yeung said replacing plastic tableware with eco-friendly materials is expected to lead to additional costs of 20 to 30 percent for restaurants. A six-month grace period set by the government allows restaurants to gradually replace their plastic products without facing harsh penalties, a measure which Yeung described as "very reasonable".

The city's Environment Bureau said in May that of 7,000 restaurants it had inspected, over 70 percent had fully switched to nonplastic products. Over 90 percent of the 5,000 retail shops and hotels bureau officials visited were complying with the ban.

Iu from Civic Exchange applauded the plastic ban, saying it had sent a strong message to residents and tourists about Hong

Kong's commitment to waste reduction.

Alternative measures

Hong Kong is also looking at new waste-management methods to get rid of its dependence on landfills.

The Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1, currently under construction near Shek Kwu Chau, an island in the south of Hong Kong, is expected to commence in 2025. The facility will have the capacity to incinerate 3,000 metric tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) per day, the equivalent of about 30 percent of the waste generated in Hong Kong per day.

The government is also planning the development of the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 2, which will have the capacity to process about 6,000 metric tons of MSW per day.

However, Wong from Hong Kong Baptist University, said it's a pity that recyclable resources are being incinerated. He believes there should be a tiered process for waste processing, starting with reduction at the source, followed by reuse and recycling, then incineration, with landfill the last resort.

Hong Kong's rate of waste recycling is still far behind the average of 60 percent achieved in many European cities. To address the problem, the government should boost the circular economy to give waste more economic value, he said.

Cooperating with other Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area cities is another way for Hong Kong to manage its waste, Wong said. The neighboring cities could help Hong Kong process waste and manufacture products made from recyclables.

There was also scope to develop recycling-related technologies, such as converting plastic waste into petroleum, he said.

In addition to the government's efforts to reduce waste, the city's residents are taking small steps themselves to make a difference.

A group of coffee shops launched an initiative on the internet similar to a library lending out books that are returned. Customers are offered reusable coffee cups that can be used at coffee shops that join the network.

The system has gradually expanded from the Central and Sheung Wan districts on Hong Kong Island to Kowloon, the New Territories, and even Lantau Island.



A staff member checks takeaway orders for customers at a restaurant in Admiralty on April 22. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY



A sign reads the restaurant will not supply free single use plastic utensils to customers in Hong Kong from April 22. PETER PARKS / AFP

TOP NEWS

Events to mark 70th anniversary of key initiative

Experts highlight importance of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in the world today

By ZHOU JIN
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President Xi Jinping will attend a conference on Friday commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, with observers highlighting the everlasting value of the foundational principles in providing the basic approach for countries to get along with each other and a framework for resolving disputes.

In addition to the conference, a luncheon and a series of subforums will be held as part of the commemoration, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday. Former state leaders, experts and representatives of media outlets and business communities will attend the commemorative events, which are themed "From the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind", according to Mao.

The events aim to discuss carrying forward these five principles, promoting global response to the multiple crises and challenges facing the world, and answering the call for peace, development and cooperation from various countries, she said.

Seven decades ago, then Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai put forward in full these principles — mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

These principles have been widely accepted and recognized by various countries, and have become part and parcel of the fundamental norm governing international relations and basic principles of international law, Mao said.

China looks forward to detailed discussions on the theme and hopes to see solid commitment to the spirit of the five principles as well as hear wisdom and input on the global response to crises and challenges, she added.

Observers said the principles offer a key approach for the peaceful settlement of disputes, as countries with different social systems, ideologies

and development paths are equal and should resolve their disputes through consultations.

Lin Minwang, deputy director of Fudan University's Center for South Asian Studies, said the hosting of the commemorative events demonstrates that China has remained true to the original aspiration of its diplomacy.

The set of five principles was the first initiative proposed by the People's Republic of China and was its first attempt to integrate into the international stage, Lin said.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which was founded in the 1960s, adopted the five principles as its guiding philosophy. These principles were also incorporated in relevant declarations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1970 and 1974.

Song Zhihui, vice-dean of Sichuan University's School of International Studies, wrote in a recent article that the principles have deepened mutual understanding and trust among developing countries, promoted South-South cooperation and improved North-South relations.

He said the principles have paved a new path for the peaceful resolution of historical issues among countries as well as international disputes.

The principles play an active role in forming a new type of international relations, featuring fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, Song said, adding that over the past 70 years, the significance of these principles has deepened and their impact has grown stronger.

Lin, from Fudan University, said that commemorating the principles has become all the more important now because they hold great significance both for China and the international community.

He noted that the increasing competition among major countries, heightened tensions in international affairs and regional conflicts further highlight the value of the five principles.

The principles must be carried forward and correctly understood, as they provide the fundamental way for countries to get along with each other, Lin added.



Show of talent

Contestants demonstrate their jewelry making skills on Monday during the second Belt and Road International Skills Competition in Chongqing. The three-day event attracted participants from 61 countries and regions for contests in 18 categories including digital construction, information network cabling, floristry and hairdressing. WANG QUANCHAO / XINHUA

Mideast: China forging ties with whole Arab world

From page 1

In the new century, however, the US aggressively exercised its hard power, first in Afghanistan, then in Iraq and Libya. US prestige waned as each military venture failed to achieve its stated aims. In those years, also, the US was gradually losing its absolute preeminence in the global economy and the appeal of its institutions was being sullied by its increased political and social dysfunction. The American example no longer seemed so worthy of emulation.

Policy failures and strategic incoherence hastened a decline in American soft power. Washington pursued inconsistent policies toward the great rivals, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Russia, not the US, was the decisive player in the murderous Syrian civil war. President Obama punctured Egyptian belief in a friendly US by abandoning the Hosni Mubarak regime for the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Middle East awoke to China's version of soft power in the second decade of the 21st century. Governments and elites, astounded that tens of millions of Chinese were escaping poverty every year, saw much to admire, perhaps to emulate, in China's economy and its win-win approach to problem-solving. Chinese diplomacy amazed the region by brokering an accommodation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Some began to think that the West was in terminal decline, and that the future

would belong to the Global South in a multipolar world.

Unlike the US, but in the tradition of other great powers of history, China understands that the Middle East is the bridge between the Mediterranean world and Asia. Moreover, in contrast with US policies, which had dealt with the region on a country-by-country basis, China announced an ongoing relationship with the whole Arab world.

President Xi Jinping indicated that the Chinese-Arab relationship, building on historic Silk Road contacts, would involve enhanced exchanges and mutual understanding between two great civilizations. His recognition that Chinese and Arab civilizations are historic peers is in significant contrast to Western attitudes that privileged the achievements of the Pharaohs while neglecting those of the Arab past.

President Xi described China's relationship with the Arab world as "a strategic partnership of comprehensive cooperation and common development". The economic promise of the partnership is to link China's market of 1.4 billion people with the Arab world's 475 million.

The lodestar or guiding principle for "a closer China-Arab community with a shared future" is the Belt and Road Initiative. China puts Egypt and the Suez Canal at the center of its 21st Century Maritime Silk Road for Asian trade with Europe.

Egypt is home to huge BRI engineering projects, including major power plants and a new Canal Economic Zone for industry, trade and logistics. Egypt's New Administrative Capital, now being created in the desert east of Cairo, will house 6.5 million people in skyscrapers projected to be among the tallest buildings in Africa. These projects support Egypt's national development plan targeted for completion in 2030.

Breaking with America's laissez-faire doctrine of modernization through private investment and market forces, China has integrated its BRI projects with the national development plans of other Middle Eastern governments, including Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, Oman's Vision 2040 and Morocco's Emergence plans. China has also supported several Arab governments in developing port infrastructure and coastal economic zones, and improving logistics and supply chains.

The West never built anything on the scale of the BRI projects. Indeed, in physical terms, only the architectural monuments of the ancient empires in Egypt — the Ptolemies, Romans, Arab dynasties and Ottomans — are comparable. And those ancient monuments were built over centuries, not in a decade or two.

But soft power achieves its persuasive influence over hearts and minds — not physically, but gradually through countless human interactions. After two centuries,

the cultural impression of the West remains strong in the Middle East. China's soft power faces formidable cultural competition from the English language, Western ideas about economics and politics, and long habits of interaction between Western and Arab elites.

People-to-people connectivity, identified by President Xi as a primary BRI goal, will add to China's soft power by producing mutually profitable deals between Chinese and Arab businesses. He also emphasized the importance of cultural mutual respect and mutual learning.

Today, however, both Chinese and Arab commercial elites are largely ignorant of the other society, either its historic achievements or its contemporary culture. Chinese-Arab business — indeed the whole Chinese-Arab relationship — will never achieve its potential until that deep cultural divide is bridged.

The future of China's soft power in the region depends on Chinese and Arabs getting to know one another better, and more fully understanding each others' lives, hopes and struggles. It will be decided by individual Chinese and Arabs discovering mutual goals as they talk, work and play together.

The author is a former senior Egyptian diplomat, most notably as consul general to London and Hong Kong and ambassador to Slovakia. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Moon: New samples expected to offer further clues

From page 1

The Chang'e 6 probe, representing the world's first attempt to bring samples from the far side of the moon back to Earth, was launched by a Long March 5 heavy-lift carrier rocket on May 3 from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province.

The 8.35-ton spacecraft was designed and built by the China Academy of Space Technology, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, and consisted of four components — an orbiter, a lander, an ascender and a reentry capsule.

After a host of sophisticated steps, the lander touched down at the South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of

the largest-known impact craters in the solar system, on the morning of June 2. The landing marked the second ever by a spacecraft on the lunar far side.

The vast region had never been reached by any spacecraft until January 2019, when the Chang'e 4 probe landed in the South Pole-Aitken Basin. The Chang'e 4 surveyed areas surrounding its landing site, but did not collect and send back lunar samples.

The Chang'e 6 lander worked for 49 hours on the moon's far side, using a mechanical arm and a drill to collect surface and underground materials. Meanwhile, several items of scientific equipment were activated to conduct simultaneous survey and analysis assignments.

After the tasks were completed, the sample-loaded ascender lifted off from the lunar surface and reached lunar orbit to dock with the reentry capsule and transfer the samples. In the final leg of the mission, the orbiter-reentry capsule combination flew back to the Earth's orbit, before separating on Tuesday.

Until now, all the lunar samples brought back to Earth by the United States' six Apollo manned missions, the former Soviet Union's three Luna robotic missions and China's Chang'e 5 unmanned mission were collected from the near side of the moon.

The landscapes and physical characteristics of the lunar far side, which permanently faces away from Earth, are very different from those of the near side, which is visi-

ble from Earth, according to scientists. The new samples are expected to offer researchers around the globe useful clues to answer questions related to the moon, and will likely bring a range of invaluable scientific payoffs, they said.

The Chang'e 5 moon mission, which was launched in the winter of 2020, gathered 1,731 grams of samples, the first lunar substances obtained since the Apollo era. It made China the third nation, after the US and the former Soviet Union, to have collected lunar samples.

So far, the samples brought back by Chang'e 5 have enabled Chinese researchers to make a number of academic strides, including the discovery of the sixth new lunar mineral, named Changosite-(Y).

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More drugs to be added to controlled substances list

By YANG ZEKUN
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China will add 46 new psychoactive substances to its list of controlled substances from the beginning of next month as it intensifies efforts to combat drug manufacture, trafficking and abuse, the China National Narcotics Control Commission announced recently ahead of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which is on Wednesday.

The country maintains one of the world's most extensive lists of scheduled drugs and chemicals, with strict controls in place. The NNCC said that after July 1 a total of 510

narcotic and psychotropic substances, including 234 new psychoactive substances, a full range of fentanyl-related substances, synthetic cannabis compounds and 38 precursor chemicals, will be regulated.

The commission noted the ongoing challenges posed by synthetic drugs like methamphetamine and new psychoactive substances, highlighting the emergence of new varieties and trafficking methods. China is addressing significant issues, such as the influx of foreign drugs and cross-border trafficking, by gathering intelligence, dismantling trafficking networks and combating activities related to synthetic drugs through special operations.

Enhanced chemical control measures have been implemented to curb drug manufacturing problems from the root. The measures include stricter monitoring and regulation of production, distribution, storage, transportation, import and export processes for precursor chemicals, as well as product labeling and tracing mechanisms to prevent illegal diversions. In the past year, approximately 938 metric tons of scheduled precursor chemicals were confiscated across China, marking a 42.2 percent increase from the previous year.

This year, China has intensified efforts to control the sources of precursor chemicals for drug manufac-

ture, adding 24 substances to its list of controlled chemicals. In response to the proliferation of new types of drugs, especially new psychoactive substances, it has adopted a comprehensive strategy involving monitoring, legal scheduling, administrative oversight, law enforcement and public education.

China has added 14 narcotic and psychotropic substances to its controlled substances schedule since last year and conducted special operations targeting illegal activities involving fentanyl, etomidate and nitrous oxide, also known as laughing gas. To combat misuse, the NNCC has collaborated with other departments to enhance the

regulation of these substances and their alternatives, incorporating prevention into youth drug education programs.

Special operations targeting fentanyl-related substances have led to the closure of 14 online platforms, 332 corporate accounts and 1,016 online stores, and the removal of over 146,000 pieces of related information. This has significantly cut down advertisements of fentanyl precursor chemicals. Information on overseas fentanyl precursor advertisements has been shared with authorities in the United States to facilitate their removal.

The NNCC said China remains committed to equitable and mutually beneficial narcotics-control cooperation with other countries, improving its narcotics control mechanism, and actively engaging

in international initiatives. A China-US narcotics-control cooperation working group was formed in January, and since November last year, senior officials and working teams from both countries have engaged in frequent interactions, achieving positive outcomes in substance control, case cooperation, anti-money laundering, technical exchanges, the removal of online drug-related marketing information and multi-lateral engagements.

Joint investigations of key cases are underway between China and the US, with breakthroughs in some instances. Technical experts have resumed regular exchanges, with online and offline meetings producing positive results. The NNCC said both sides will continue to consolidate and advance practical cooperation in drug control.

CHINA

Draft law on penalties amended

Changes address public concerns and ambiguity in enforcement

By CAO YIN
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National legislators have refined a draft amendment to the Law on Penalties for Administration of Public Security, addressing public concerns raised during the initial deliberation last August.

The revised draft was submitted to the ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for a second review on Tuesday. The legislative item, which affects many citizens, garnered significant public attention after its initial deliberation, with certain provisions sparking heated discussions on Chinese social media.

One controversial clause proposed detention of five to 10 days or a fine for anyone wearing or forcing others to wear signs that "hurt the feelings of the Chinese nation". Critics questioned the ambiguity of what constitutes "hurtful" attire or signs, arguing that such vague language could complicate law enforcement and infringe on legitimate rights and daily life.

Shen Chunyao, an official with the NPC's Constitution and Law Committee, said on Tuesday that the latest draft amendment has removed that expression, considering various factors and the need for clear law enforcement.

Several other clauses have also been revised and optimized based on feedback from research centers, academies, government departments and the public. For instance, the new draft allows individuals under administrative detention to apply for leave in special circumstances, such as

10 days

of detention may be given to perpetrators who fail to take safety measures with their animals, resulting in harm to others.

taking entrance exams, the imminent birth of a child, or the grave illness or death of a close family member. Shen emphasized that this improvement aims to regulate administrative behavior while respecting and protecting human rights.

In response to concerns about illegal dog keeping and animal attacks, the new draft amendment stipulates that those who fail to take safety measures, resulting in harm to others, will face up to five days of detention or a fine of up to 1,000 yuan (\$137). In serious cases, the detention can extend to 10 days. Additionally, those who illegally sell or raise dangerous animals, such as fierce dogs, will receive a warning. Failure to comply after a warning will result in detention of up to five days or a fine of up to 1,000 yuan.

On Tuesday, several other draft laws were submitted to the NPC Standing Committee for review, including those on emergency response and management, the rural collective economy, financial stability and preschool education. National lawmakers have also begun deliberating draft revisions to the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law, Accounting Law, Cultural Relics Protection Law and Mineral Resources Law.

Fallen giants



Chimneys collapse in clouds of dust after being detonated in Zhengzhou, Henan province, on Tuesday. In about 20 seconds, three 210-meter chimneys and three of the five 105-meter cooling towers that were part of a thermal power station were demolished. The plant, now surrounded by residential buildings and greenery, shut down in 2019. The two remaining cooling towers will serve as industrial scenery when the land is repurposed. BAI ZHOUFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway marks third anniversary

By PALDEN NYIMA
and DAQIONG in Lhasa

The Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway, a vital artery connecting the capital of the Xizang autonomous region with cities to its southeast, has transported over 3 million passengers and hauled more than 783,000 metric tons of cargo since its opening three years ago, China Railway Qinghai-Xizang Group said.

Tuesday marked the third anniversary of the opening of the line, which has surpassed expectations and fueled regional growth.

It has been a game-changer for central Xizang's economy, significantly reducing travel times and unlocking new opportunities for the region to participate in domestic circulation and integrate with

the country's new development strategy.

The 403-kilometer railway, linking Lhasa with Nyingchi via Lhokha, boasts a designed top speed of 160 kilometers per hour. It is the first electrified single-line railway service on the Tibetan plateau, paving the way for Fuxing bullet trains — China's fastest — to traverse the entire nation.

Travel times have been slashed. Lhasa-Lhokha journeys, once lengthy car rides, can now be completed by rail in roughly an hour, while travel times between Lhasa and Nyingchi have dropped from five hours to three-and-a-half hours.

The economic impact is undeniable. Tenzin Samdrub, a tourism official in Nyingchi, said tourist

numbers have doubled at popular attractions like the Yarlung Zangbo River Grand Canyon and Draksum Tso Lake since the railway opened.

Han Chunwang, Party secretary of the Nyingchi Railway Station, emphasized the railway's far-reaching positive effects on economic development, cultural exchange and social progress along its route.

"The harvest from tourism keeps growing year after year," Tenzin Samdrub said.

Han Chunwang, Party secretary of the Nyingchi Railway Station, emphasized the railway's far-reaching positive effects on economic development, cultural exchange and social progress along its route.

"The reduction in travel time between Lhasa, Nyingchi and other cities enhances transportation effi-

ciency," Han said. "This provides a more convenient and comfortable travel experience for both residents and tourists."

The railway has also opened doors for local residents. More than 20 villagers from Nyingchi have found stable employment as station janitors, allowing them to better support their families.

"Local specialties and agricultural products like chili peppers from the city's Nang county and walnuts from Gyatsa county can now be transported to other parts of the country quicker and easier," Han added. "This expands their market reach and boosts their popularity."

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Cruise ship sets sail from new Nansha homeport

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou
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Nearly 1,000 passengers embarked on a voyage from Guangzhou's new Nansha International Cruise Homeport on Tuesday. The *Blue Dream Melody* cruise ship set sail for a five-day, four-night visa-free adventure to Vietnam's Ha Long Bay, marking the official opening of the much-anticipated port in Guangdong province.

The 609-cabin *Blue Dream Melody*, operated by Shanghai Blue Dream International Cruises Holding, boasts a variety of stylish dining options, shopping venues and leisure activities for guests to enjoy throughout their journey.

Nansha International Cruise Homeport, under construction since 2016, began trial operations in November 2019. The ambitious project, spearheaded by CCC Urban Investment Holding Company, envisions a 1,600-meter shoreline with dual berths capable of accommodating massive cruise ships of up to 225,000 gross tons.

Phase I, currently operational, features a 770-meter shoreline with dual berths and a 60,000-

square-meter terminal building. The phase boasts a designed annual passenger capacity of 750,000. Future plans include the construction of commercial and office facilities, including an international shipping center and a seafarers' home.

The Nansha port seamlessly integrates with various transportation modes, including buses, subways and waterborne passenger services to the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions. This distinction makes it China's first inland cruise port with direct subway connections.

"Nansha International Cruise Homeport fills a critical gap in Guangzhou's cruise industry infrastructure," said Chen Jiannian, deputy general manager of Guangzhou Port Group. "This port will act as a catalyst for the development of cruise tourism, ship supplies, consumer shopping and leisure entertainment industries."

Chen emphasized the port's potential to attract domestic and international cruise lines to operate regularly from Nansha.

"Guangzhou's strong passenger base, prime location, excellent infrastructure and favorable visa



The *Blue Dream Melody* cruise ship sets sail from the Nansha International Cruise Homeport in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Tuesday, marking the port's opening. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

policies give us a significant edge," he said. "Nansha International Cruise Homeport will play a pivotal role in establishing Guangzhou as a world-class consumer tourism destination within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area."

Acknowledging the current market challenge of more ports than ships, Nansha officials are actively pursuing strategic marketing efforts.

"We will leverage Guangzhou's strengths in passenger base, location and infrastructure to attract domestic and international cruise

companies," said Xie Xiaohui, director of Nansha district commerce bureau. "By collaborating with nearby cities and capitalizing on Nansha's unique geographical position, we aim to develop distinctive cruise routes and enrich the travel experiences for passengers."

Nansha has implemented convenient visa policies established by the National Immigration Administration. These policies include a 15-day visa-free entry and a 144-hour visa-free transit specifically for cruise passengers entering China.

Scientists find graphene flakes in lunar soil sample

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun
and LIANG SHUANG

Chinese scientists have discovered the presence of a special form of carbon in lunar soil retrieved by China's Chang'e 5 probe, offering new evidence about the geological evolution of the moon and providing clues for the future utilization of the substance.

The research, published in the journal *National Science Review* last week, revealed the existence of naturally formed few-layer graphene, a substance consisting of carbon atoms in a special, thin-layered structure.

The team, led by professors Zou Meng, Zhang Wei and senior engineer Li Xiujuan from Jilin University, and Ren Wencai from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Metal Research, analyzed an olive-shaped sample of lunar soil, about 2.9 millimeters by 1.6 mm, retrieved from the Chang'e 5 mission in 2020.

According to the team, scientists generally believe that some 1.9 percent of interstellar carbon exists in the form of graphene, with its shape and structure determined by the process of its formation.

Using a special spectrometer, researchers found an iron compound that is closely related to the formation of graphene in a carbon-rich section of the sample. They then used advanced microscopic and mapping technologies to confirm that the carbon content in the sample comprised "flakes" that have two to seven layers of graphene.

In tracing the graphene's formation, the team proposed that it may have formed in volcanic activ-

ity in the early stages of the moon's existence, and been catalyzed by solar winds that can stir up lunar soil and iron-containing minerals that helped transform the carbon atoms' structure. They added that impact processes from meteorites, which create high-temperature and high-pressure environments, may also have led to the graphene's formation.

On Earth, graphene is becoming a star in materials sciences due to its special features in optics, electronics and mechanics. "If silicon was the strategic new material of the 20th century, graphene is that for the 21st century," Liu Zhongfan, an academician at the CAS, told *The Economic Observer* in April.

The team believes its study could help develop ways to produce the material inexpensively and expand its use.

"The mineral-catalyzed formation of natural graphene sheds light on the development of low-cost scalable synthesis techniques of high-quality graphene," the paper said. "Therefore, a new lunar exploration program may be promoted, and some forthcoming breakthroughs can be expected."

By early this month, some 77.7 grams of the 1,731 grams of lunar samples retrieved by Chang'e 5 had been distributed to 114 research teams from 40 facilities, yielding some 70 studies published in major journals, according to the CAS' Institute of Geology and Geophysics.

Han Junhong contributed to this story.

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Knife attack injures 3, including 2 Japanese citizens

By ZHAO JIA
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The Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that an attack that injured three people, including two Japanese citizens, was an isolated incident and their lives were not in danger.

Police in Suzhou, Jiangsu provin-

ce, said on Tuesday that the knife attack took place on Monday afternoon, and the suspect was a 52-year-old unemployed man who was apprehended on the spot by police officers and has been detained pending criminal charges.

Police said the injured were immediately taken to a hospital for medical treatment. A Chinese

national who tried to stop the crime was seriously injured and is still undergoing treatment.

One Japanese national is receiving treatment and is not in critical condition, while the other was discharged on Monday, police said.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning expressed regret over

the incident at a daily news briefing on Tuesday.

While emphasizing that similar isolated incidents can happen in any country worldwide, Mao said China will continue to take effective measures to protect the safety of foreign nationals in China, just as it protects Chinese residents.

POLICY REVIEW

Cultivation of digital talent urged

Government aims to address shortage of workers as nation's 'smarter' economy begins taking shape

By CHENG SI
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Yan Jie, 26, plans to take a job researching artificial intelligence after finishing his postgraduate studies in Shanghai next year.

Majoring in computer science and information engineering, he said he is sanguine about his future career.

"Many newly emerged industries such as big data, the metaverse and AI have a strong need for young people with computing knowledge," he said. "It will be interesting to get involved in such industries, and I'm looking forward to seeing the future 'digital world' that applies more information technology to real-world scenarios."

Yan is among the nation's growing community of professionals who are shaping the nation into a "smarter" economy. According to a recent report by the National Data Bureau, China's digital economy scale has exceeded 55 trillion yuan (\$7.6 trillion), with the added value of core industries of the digital economy accounting for about 10 percent of the nation's GDP last year, which reached 126.06 trillion yuan.

"Nurturing professional digital talent can help improve the nation's competitiveness and boost the high-quality development of the economy," said Pang Shi, director of the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science's department of employment and entrepreneurship. "The nation's employment structure can be optimized and transformed from a lower-skilled one to a higher-skilled one. Also, the cultivation of digital talent can strengthen the nation's technological innovation and research capability and lead to the incubation of more new industries."

She added, however, that China faces a digital talent shortfall of about 25 million to 30 million workers, and the shortage will possibly continue in the near future.

"So far, industries that are especially in need of digital talent are the company e-management, e-commerce and software engineering sectors, as well as some of the newly emerged fields such as AI, biomedical engineering, new energy and financial engineering."

Based on the continuously flourishing digital economy, the nation has stepped up efforts to cultivate talent to serve in the sector.

In April, nine central departments — including the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission and the Ministry of Education — revealed an action plan to set a target of nurturing a talent pool focused on innovation and high-quality growth from this year to 2026 to support the development of the digital economy.

According to the plan, State-level standards and systematic training courses for some new professions incubated by digital technologies such as big data, AI, smart manufacturing and data security will be drafted and published to help ease the job evaluation process and promotion channels for people working in these professions.

The central government is encouraging local authorities, industrial associations, vocational schools and companies to produce talent with digital knowledge and skills. It will also make continuous efforts to enhance international exchanges by introducing high-level digital talent from abroad and attracting more overseas returnees to start their own businesses.

In addition, more investment institutions will get support from the government, as the nation hopes they will nurture more promising, well-performing digital economy-related companies.

Some State-level markets offering employment services to digital talent will be established in cities and regions such as Beijing, Shanghai and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

According to the action plan, more skills



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

competitions for digital technology workers will be organized. The nation will add individual events testing participants' digital knowledge and skills in categories such as AI and integrated circuits in future State-level competitions, which have taken place every two years since 2020.

Earlier in November, a report by the China Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team and online recruitment portal Zhaopin revealed that companies are dangling big salaries as they aggressively recruit digital talent.

The report said that the average recruiting salary for jobs requiring digital knowledge and skills was 14,244 yuan (\$1,962) per month during the first three quarters of last year, which is 40 percent higher than the salaries offered for average posi-

tions advertised on Zhaopin's platform.

Of those digital technology-related jobs, the highest starting salary offered from January to September last year was for analog IC (integrated circuit) designers (38,797 yuan per month), followed by IC validation engineers (35,695 yuan per month), according to the report.

Li Qiang, vice-president of Zhaopin, said that as the digital economy becomes a new growth engine for China's economic development, the market demand for digital talent will increase.

"Digital talent also plays an important role in bettering people's lives, and digital technology has been used in various sectors, including catering, transport and accommodation."

He said that the State-level action plan

offers a sensible blueprint for the cultivation of the nation's digital talent.

"From my perspective, higher education facilities should avoid homogenization in their efforts to produce talent. For example, research-based universities can produce high-level innovative digital talent, while colleges focusing on practical uses can train their students to become professionals with good skills."

The central government's action plan also clarified some policies and measures supporting digital talent production, including optimizing payment systems for digital talent. Local authorities are also encouraged to attract more such workers with preferential policies on housing, healthcare, children's education and entrepreneurship.

Policy Digest

Regulations to ensure fair market competition

China will bring regulations for fair competition reviews into force from Aug 1 to help ensure a level playing field for all market players and build a unified domestic market free from regional protectionist practices, according to the country's top market watchdog.

The regulations aim to prevent authorities from rolling out measures that exclude or restrict market competition, Zhou Zhigao, an official of the State Administration for Market Regulation, told a news conference Friday.

When formulating laws, rules and policies related to business activities, the authorities will be required to conduct such reviews over several aspects, including market entry or exit, the free flow of goods and business operation costs and practices, Zhou said.

Work plan aims to upgrade old chemical equipment

The Ministry of Emergency Management, together with three other departments, has issued a work plan for the phasing out and upgrading of old chemical equipment. This initiative is part of China's commitment to launching a new round of large-scale equipment upgrades and further facilitating trade-ins of consumer goods this year.

Given that some chemical installations and equipment in China have been in operation for many years since their establishment last century, the plan is also part of the country's efforts to conduct a three-year campaign from this year to 2026 aimed at addressing workplace safety risks.

According to the plan, enterprises that have obtained permission to produce or use hazardous chemicals are required to gradually phase out or upgrade old equipment and certain storage tanks identified during recent safety inspections, in accordance with relevant policies and standards.

Authorities are instructed to develop a timetable, refine policies and strengthen both technical and financial support for this initiative. Additionally, relevant departments should promptly address any problems that arise during the process to ensure that all tasks are completed successfully, it said.

New measures support China's home services sector

China has introduced measures to support its home services industry, aiming to promote employment in the sector and better meet people's needs, according to a guideline released on Friday.

The guideline, jointly issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and several other departments, emphasized the need to adapt to the evolving demands in the sector with such efforts as developing and revising national occupational standards for related professions.

Domestic service companies and training institutions are encouraged to guide home service workers to participate in skill level assessments and obtain occupational skill certificates.

While companies are primarily responsible for improving the skills of home service workers, the guideline also calls for further school-enterprise cooperation to develop programs that enhance both academic qualifications and vocational skills.

The guideline highlighted the importance of encouraging more workers to seek employment or start businesses in the domestic services sector, aiming to expand the workforce and alleviate labor shortages.

To this end, efforts will be made to help domestic service companies build brands, strengthen supervision over the industry and support social organizations and legal aid institutions in safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of workers in accordance with the law.

Additionally, the guideline stated that China will organize national-level competitions in the future to leverage the role of such events in enhancing domestic service skills.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

China to recognize 19 emerging professions that contribute to growth

By CHENG SI

China has announced plans to recognize 19 new professions related to the digital economy, smart manufacturing and modern services that contribute to the nation's overall economic development.

The new professions include biological engineer, livestreaming host and generative AI system operator, according to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

Young workers are particularly attracted to such jobs.

"I don't like wearing the same clothes as other people or doing traditional jobs as the previous generations did. Being a livestreaming anchor interests me, as I love sharing everything beautiful with

my peers and bringing joy to them," said Yan Zewen, 26, who has been doing the job for three years in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Yan said she felt she was an "underdog" when she took the position in 2021, as it wasn't an attractive job to most university graduates.

"I had some misunderstandings with my friends and parents, but I pulled through," she said. "The job earns me a considerable salary, and I'm happy to hear the news that it will be getting official recognition from the government."

Yan is among the new generation of workers who have shown an increasing preference for new or niche professions, especially those closely related to the digital economy.

A recent survey by the online recruitment portal Zhaopin shows that in the first quarter of this year, over a third of people polled have demonstrated an interest in working as industrial robot system operators, while around 27 percent said they would like to become home organizers.

"Many new professions have emerged with the development of new technologies as a result of the nation's industry upgrades," said Li Qiang, vice-president of Zhaopin. "New professions offer young people more job opportunities while also imposing new requirements on the knowledge and skills they need to do the work, pushing them to improve their abilities."

Li said that the emergence of new professions reflects the market's critical

need for new technologies and industries, and the government can set standards for the professions by giving them official recognition.

"Recognizing these professions can also eliminate the public's discrimination of workers serving in new industries and protect their rights. Approving these new professions shows the nation's increasing attention to artificial intelligence and intelligent connected vehicles, which can attract more talent to these industries," he added.

The human resources ministry recognized 74 new professions from 2019 to 2022, covering the sectors of agriculture, healthcare, information technology, education and elderly nursing.



New professions offer young people more job opportunities while also imposing new requirements on the knowledge and skills they need to do the work, pushing them to improve their abilities."

Li Qiang, vice-president of online recruitment portal Zhaopin

WORLD US

US: Firearm violence a health crisis

Surgeon general: Failure to address gun violence in the country also a 'moral crisis'

By MAY ZHOU in Houston
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US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued a landmark advisory Tuesday, declaring firearm violence in America a "public health crisis."

"Our failure to address it is a moral crisis. To protect the health and well-being of Americans, especially our children, we must now act with the clarity, courage and urgency that this moment demands," Murthy said in a video announcement posted on YouTube.

The advisory marked the first time the nation's leading voice on public health — the same office that in the 1960s highlighted the lethal consequences of cigarette smoking — has issued an urgent pronouncement on deaths related to firearms.

Murthy said the impetus for the advisory stems from the increase in gun violence, especially mass shootings since 2020, which he said exact a profound toll on the nation's well-being.

"I want people to understand the full impact of firearm violence in our country, and I want them to see it as

a public health issue," Murthy said in an interview with The Washington Post. "I know it's been politicized, and I know it's been politicized, but if we can see it as a public health issue, we can come together and implement a public health solution."

Murthy said that as a doctor, he has witnessed the consequences of firearm violence up close, and the 40-page advisory he put out "outlines the urgent threat firearm violence poses to the health and well-being of our country."

While many applauded the advisory, gun rights groups and individuals attacked it with profanities in their social media posts.

The Firearm Policy Coalition also used profanities and called the advisory "a joke" under a headline of "Second Amendment alert."

According to the advisory, firearm-related injuries have experienced a sharp rise since the pandemic. They have surpassed car accidents to become the leading cause of death for Americans ages 1 to 19 since 2020.

More than 4,600 young people died of firearm violence in 2022, 1,000 more than in 2019 and earlier.



Surgeon General Vivek Murthy

advisory.

"Fifty-four percent of adults in America report that they or a family member have experienced a firearm-related incident, whether they've been personally threatened with or injured by a firearm, lost a family member, witnessed a shooting, or shot a firearm in self-defense," said Murthy. The findings are from a recent survey.

Murthy said that firearm-related trauma and fear are contributing to mental health challenges. "Nearly 6 in 10 US adults say they worry about a loved one being a victim of firearm violence," he said.

Across all firearm-related deaths in 2022, more than half — 56.1 percent — were from suicide, while 40.8 percent were from homicide.

While the numbers fluctuate year to year, the overall trend is worrisome, according to the advisory. It noted that

when measured over a decade from 2012 to 2022, children and the young populations experienced a staggering increase in firearm-related suicide rates: 43 percent for 25-34-year-olds, 45 percent for 15-24-year-olds, and 68 percent for children ages 10-14. Overall, firearm suicide increased by 20 percent across the population.

The advisory compared US firearm violence with 28 other high-income nations and said that in 2015, the overall firearm-related death rate in age groups across the 29 countries was 11.4 times higher in the US.

In that year, 83.7 percent of all firearm-related deaths across the countries studied occurred in the US, which accounted for about 31 percent of the combined population.

Mass shootings and school shootings create collective trauma and fear, the advisory said. It cited data by the Gun Violence Archive that the US experienced more than 600 mass shooting incidents each year between 2020 and 2023, up an average of less than 400 annual mass shootings between 2015 and 2018.

As a result, 51 percent of US teens ages 14-17 said they worry about a shooting happening at school, and 79 percent of adults said they experienced stress from a possible mass shooting, while a third said the fear of

a mass shooting kept them from going to certain public places or events.

Of all firearm-related incidents, active shootings result in a large number of deaths and injuries in one incident. According to the FBI, such incidents are also on a sharp rise based on data from the past decade.

The agency released data on Monday showing that 229 active-shooter incidents occurred from 2019 to 2023, representing an 89 percent increase over the 121 such incidents from the previous five-year period of 2014-2018.

The FBI recorded 48 active shooter incidents for 2023. Although the incidents decreased by two over 2022, the number of active-shooter incidents increased 60 percent since 2019, when there were 30 incidents.

The 48 active-shooter incidents in 2023 occurred across 26 states and happened in five location categories, including open space, commerce, education, healthcare and residence, according to the FBI.

Overall, 244 victims were shot by active shooters last year, with 139 injured and 105 killed.

The worst 2023 active-shooting incident happened in Maine in October, which left 18 people dead and 13 injured.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Wegovy weight-loss drug OK'd in China

By AI HEPING in New York
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Danish drugmaker Novo Nordisk said Tuesday that its injectable weight-loss drug Wegovy has been approved in China, where the proportion of overweight and obese adults reached almost 51 percent of the country's 1.4 billion people in 2022, according to the country's National Health Commission.

Chinese regulators have already approved two locally produced drugs for weight loss that work in a similar way to Wegovy.

Novo Nordisk didn't announce a launch date or give any details about volumes.

The company's Ozempic was approved to treat diabetes in China in 2021. Sales of the drug in the greater China region more than doubled in 2023, reaching 4.82 billion Danish kroner (\$693.6 million), The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday.

The company told Forbes it will only launch in China once it could guarantee supplies for those already taking it, as shortages plague the US market.

In the United States, where obesity affects about 42.3 percent of US adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wegovy, Ozempic and similar medications have soared in popularity and price.

Americans paid 10 times more for Ozempic than patients in the UK did in 2023 — \$936 a month compared with \$93, according to the British newspaper The Guardian. It said Wegovy costs Americans \$1,349 a month, compared with \$296 in the Netherlands (the drug isn't yet available in the UK).

The drugmaker has said the initial focus of a volume-capped launch would be on Chinese patients willing to pay out of pocket for the once-weekly injection.

The drug will initially be available to patients with a body mass index that is the threshold for obesity and at least one weight-related comorbidity, the drugmaker said, CNBC reported.

Weight-related comorbidities refer to additional medical conditions that someone with obesity can develop due to their weight, according to the report.

The report noted that the approval for Wegovy comes as the patent on the drug's active ingredient, semaglutide, is set to expire in China in 2026 and as competition from domestic drugmakers increases.

Clinical trial records show around 15 generic versions of Wegovy and Ozempic — also made by Novo Nordisk and which contains the same semaglutide active ingredient as Wegovy — are being developed in China, Reuters reported last month.

Novo Nordisk's semaglutide patent expires in China in 2026, which will pave the way for generic versions.

To meet the surging demand for Wegovy in other markets, Novo Nordisk has committed to spend several billion dollars in building new production capacity.

Chinese regulators have already approved two locally produced drugs for weight loss that work in a similar way to Novo Nordisk's offering. The drugs, made by Huadong Medicine and Shanghai Benemea Pharmaceutical, both mimic a gut hormone to suppress appetite, delay stomach emptying and control blood sugar, according to The Wall Street Journal report.

In addition, Chinese biotech company Innovent Biologics has the Chinese rights to a next-generation obesity drug from Eli Lilly called Mazdutide, which is currently in Phase 3 trials.

Eli Lilly's blockbuster diabetes drug Tirzepatide won approval in China last month, while its Zepbound obesity drug that shares the same active ingredient is still under review, the Journal reported.

Beijing and New York celebrate 44th year of sister-city relationship

By MINGMEILI in New York
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A delegation from Beijing celebrated the 44-year sister-city relationship with New York City with musical performances and speeches from representatives of both cities at China's New York Consulate General.

More than 150 people participated in the event on Monday, aimed at enhancing city tourism, cultural exchange and economic cooperation.

"Welcome to New York, it's been waiting for you," lyrics from a song by popular American singer Taylor Swift could be heard at the event. The song has garnered more than a million streams across China's top three music platforms and highlights New York's status as one of the most popular tourist destinations for Chinese travelers.

As a "must-visit" destination for Chinese tourists in the US, New York mirrors the importance of Beijing for American tourists visiting China. The two cities have enjoyed the sister-city relationship established soon after China and the US formalized diplomatic relations.

"Over the years, the two cities have enjoyed close economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and frequent interactions among the people. Together, the two cities have witnessed the development of our state-to-state relations, serving as a model of friendly exchanges," said Xia Linmao, executive vice-mayor of Beijing municipality.

He also noted previous cooperation and exchanges on music, including the strategic partnership between Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts and New York's Carnegie Hall. Those led to the establishment of the World Association for Performing Arts and tourist attractions like the Universal Beijing Resort, jointly developed by New York City-based NBC Universal, which has attracted more than 20 million visitors

since opening in 2021.

"These are vivid illustrations and splendid reflections of the interactions between the two countries and cities," Xia said, adding that he welcomed New Yorkers to share development opportunities in Beijing, strengthen business and trade cooperation, deepen cultural exchanges and contribute to sub-national exchanges between China and the United States.

"These relationships between New York City and Beijing are a powerful example of how international cooperation can lead to shared success. Both cities benefit immensely from their collaborative spirit," said Edward Mermelstein, commissioner for international affairs of New York City. He listed several bilateral cooperation examples such as cultural performances, education and program exchanges and mutual business opportunities.

"Having Beijing and New York sisters is even more interesting because they're both dynamic and influential in their own ways, and that's why they're more like sisters because two sisters are never really completely the same," Gabby Gabriel, the founder and CEO of Gab China, told China Daily. "So one is older and has a rich history. One is newer and brings a lot of dynamism to the world."

"One of the things that I think that I love about America and China, what makes us the same is we're both very hardworking. I think that both Americans and Chinese are very interested and committed to trying their best to push, push their goals forward," she said.

Gabriel said the two cities and two countries can learn from each other: "They are two leading economies in the world, and there's lots of opportunity between the two regions."

Tourism and travel between Beijing and New York are resuming, with 27 direct flights from Beijing to major US cities each week, including five weekly flights from Beijing to New York.



Xia Linmao, executive vice-mayor of Beijing municipality, speaks at the Beijing City Promotion and Beijing-New York Sister Cities concert at the Chinese Consulate General in New York on Monday.
MINGMEILI / CHINA DAILY

Assange saga concludes



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange arrives at United States District Court in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, on Tuesday. KIM HONG-JI / REUTERS

China urges Israel to follow cease-fire

By MINLU ZHANG
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Despite a United Nations Security Council cease-fire resolution, there have been continuous attacks on Gaza, said China's ambassador to the UN, urging Israel to heed international calls for an immediate cease-fire.

The Security Council in June adopted a resolution endorsing a three-phase cease-fire deal proposed by the United States. The US said that Israel had already accepted the cease-fire proposal.

"Unfortunately, to date, we have not seen concrete signs from Israel indicating an agreement to achieve a lasting cease-fire," said Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN.

Instead, Israel continued its large-scale military operations, attacking multiple refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, he said. The attacks have caused major casualties and put in danger humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the International Committee of the Red Cross, he said.

"An immediate cease-fire must be implemented, and once achieved, there must be no restart of the war," Fu emphasized. "China urges Israel to listen to the international community, stop military actions in Gaza, and end the collective punishment of Gaza's population. We call on influential

countries to take a just stance and sincerely work to promote a cease-fire and end the conflict," he said.

The UN blamed Hamas for stalling the cease-fire resolution, saying that Hamas ignored voices from the international community.

"Hamas has eschewed the calls from this council and ignored voices from across the international community. In fact, rather than accept the deal, Hamas has added even more conditions," said Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US permanent representative to the UN.

The UN this month told Israel that it will suspend aid operations across Gaza unless urgent steps are taken to protect humanitarian workers, The Associated Press reported. In April, Israel's military strikes killed seven workers of the World Central Kitchen. The UN World Food Program has suspended aid delivery from a US-built pier in Gaza due to security concerns.

A UN report released on Tuesday said that Gaza is facing "a high and sustained risk of famine." It said 96 percent of the population in Gaza, or about 2.15 million people, face acute food insecurity at "crisis" levels or higher. Almost half a million people are enduring "catastrophic" conditions, the report said.

Fu also voiced his concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza. He said that Israel's military actions threaten humanitarian workers and called its

accusations of inaction by the agencies "unacceptable".

He called on Israel to protect humanitarian workers and ensure that sufficient supplies enter Gaza swiftly and are delivered safely to those in need.

With regard to the situation in the West Bank, Fu noted that searches, arrests and attacks against Palestinians by Israeli law enforcement agencies occur daily. He called on Israel to curb violence against Palestinian civilians, stop undermining the Palestinian National Authority, and return seized taxes promptly.

"China reiterates that settlement activities violate international law and Security Council Resolution 2334, eroding the prospects of a two-state solution. Israel should immediately stop all settlement activities," he said.

China is deeply concerned about reports of Israel preparing a military attack on Lebanon, Fu said, recalling the statement of UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "The situation in the Middle East is very precarious, and the world cannot afford for Lebanon to become another Gaza," he said.

Israel and Hezbollah have exchanged fire across the Lebanon-Israel border since the beginning of the war in Gaza. Tensions have been heightened on both sides over the last several weeks. Last week, Israel's military said it had "approved and validated" plans for an offensive in Lebanon.

WORLD

Investigators comb wreckage after S. Korea battery plant fire kills 23

SEOUL — Investigators combed the charred wreckage of a South Korean lithium factory on Tuesday to find the cause of a massive blaze that killed 23 in one of the country's worst factory disasters in years.

The fire department said 23 people are now confirmed dead, including 17 Chinese nationals, one fewer than their initial figure of 18, with identification work ongoing.

"We plan to confirm the victims' identities by collecting DNA from their bodies," firefighter Kim Jin-young told reporters.

The government launched its formal investigation on Tuesday, involving ministries and departments from across the board, to pinpoint the exact cause of the fire, with investigators entering the building. More than 100 people were working in the factory when workers heard a series of explosions from the second floor, where lithium-ion batteries were being inspected and packaged.

CCTV footage from the entrance of the factory building showed white smoke filling the area in less than 20 seconds, as people raced out, Yonhap News Agency reported.

Toxic fumes likely overwhelmed workers quickly in the area where the blaze began, the fire department said, adding that as it was a lithium fire, the workers' efforts to

extinguish it would not have worked.

Park Soon-kwan, CEO of Aricell, owner of the lithium battery plant, apologized on Tuesday for the fire, saying the company would "support the needs in every way" of the families of the victims.

He said the company would cooperate with investigators, adding that it had dry-powder fire extinguishers throughout the building and conducted regular safety training drills for employees.

"We will be conscientiously taking part in the investigation by authorities and will do our best to determine the cause of the accident and will take measures to prevent a repeat of such an accident," Park told reporters at the scene.

Xing Haiming, China's ambassador to Seoul, visited the site of the fire late on Monday.

The South Korean side deeply mourns the tragic deaths of Chinese citizens in the accident and will assist China in doing its utmost to rescue and deal with the aftermath.

Xing urged the South Korean side to find out the cause of the accident as soon as possible, properly deal with the aftermath, and provide all necessary support for the families of the Chinese victims.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



South Korean lawmakers pay tribute to the victims of a fire at a battery factory in Gyeonggi Province during a meeting held by the National Assembly in Seoul on Tuesday. YONHAP NEWS AGENCY

China ambassador calls to restore Iran nuclear plan

By MINLU ZHANG
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The Chinese ambassador to the United Nations on Monday called for the resumption of talks to restore implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, on Iran's nuclear program.

Negotiations to resume compliance with the JCPOA will "bring positive energy and new hope to the Middle East and the world, which are both facing ongoing conflicts and instability," Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, told a Security Council meeting.

Iran signed the JCPOA in July 2015, agreeing to put some curbs on its nuclear program in return for removal of sanctions on the country.

The joint commission consists of the current JCPOA parties made up of China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the UK, with the European Union acting as its coordinator. The United States was initially a party to the JCPOA but withdrew in May 2018.

Fu confirmed the EU's efforts and said that as the coordinator, it "has mediated to promote the resumption of talks and is expected to continue playing a key coordinating role".

Unilateral move

"The US unilaterally withdrew from the comprehensive agreement and imposed maximum pressure on Iran, leading to the prolonged nuclear crisis," Fu said, urging the US to take responsibility and take measures to create conditions for the agreement to be restored as soon as possible.

The US' unilateral sanctions on Iran "harm mutually beneficial

cooperation between countries, violate international fairness and justice, and severely undermine international law and relations", Fu said.

He urged the US to lift "illegal" sanctions on Iran, as well as its "long-arm jurisdiction" measures on third-party entities and individuals.

"This will help restore Iran's right to engage in external economic and trade activities, create conditions for all parties to advance normal economic and trade cooperation with Iran, motivate Iran, and pave the way for advancing the negotiation process," Fu said. "Pressuring Iran will not help the matter and communication and dialogue are the right approach," he emphasized.

Rosemary DiCarlo, UN under-secretary-general for political and peacebuilding affairs, told the meeting that restoring JCPOA implementation has "remained unfortunately elusive".

She also noted that the US has not returned to the plan nor has it lifted or waived the unilateral sanctions reimposed on Iran after its withdrawal from the JCPOA. Also, Iran has not reversed any of the steps it has taken since May 2019 that are inconsistent with its nuclear-related commitments, DiCarlo said.

She called on all parties to the agreement, as well as the US, to pursue all avenues for dialogue and cooperation.

In light of the "deeply troubling situation in the Middle East", Stavros Lambrinidis, head of the delegation of the European Union, called on all parties to the JCPOA and the United States to sustain dialogue and address without delay the Iranian nuclear program.



Palestinians mourn their relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip outside a hospital morgue in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday. JEHAD ALSHRAFI / AP

Pressure mounts on Israel for cease-fire

Experts urge the implementation of UN resolution, highlighting US bias attitude

By MIKE GU in Hong Kong
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Israel kept up its bombardment of Gaza on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ruled out ending its eight-month-long fighting in the enclave any time soon, as experts call for the implementation of the United Nations cease-fire resolution.

Netanyahu said late on Sunday that he would only accept a partial cease-fire deal that would not end the conflict in Gaza.

He said he was ready to make a partial deal to bring back some of the 120 hostages still held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip, but "we are committed to continuing the war after a pause, in order to complete the goal of eliminating Hamas".

Since the UN resolution's adoption on June 10, Hamas has notified mediating parties Qatar, Egypt and the United States that it welcomes the adoption and stated its readiness to implement the resolution.

Although the White House keeps talking of Israeli acceptance, Israel, however, has so far failed to officially announce it would carry out the resolution that requires an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, release of all hostages and no hindrance to the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Hamas noted Netanyahu's position is "a clear confirmation of his rejection of the recent Security

Council resolution and the proposals of US President Joe Biden", according to The Palestinian Information Center.

The US has pressured Hamas to agree unconditionally to its proposals for the three-phase Gaza cease-fire. Biden announced the proposal in May.

The US proposal holds Hamas responsible for the delay, rather than making Israel accept the UNSC resolution.

Abdalfatah Asqool, an international law lecturer at the University of Palestine in Gaza, told China Daily that what the US is doing is to give Israel more time to continue the conflict.

Three phases for peace

The UNSC Resolution 2735 specifies three phases for peace, the first of which would include an immediate, full and complete cease-fire with the release of hostages and the return of the remains of some hostages who have been killed, and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the populated areas in Gaza.

Ayman Yousef, a professor of international relations at the Arab American University in Jenin, told China Daily there are questions regarding the US and Israel's differing views of the cease-fire proposal.

Yousef said the US has failed to differentiate between a temporary or permanent cease-fire, with the

latter effectively meaning an end to the conflict.

This confusion has been passed to both Hamas and Israel, Yousef said, and Netanyahu is exploiting the gap between the different definitions of cease-fire.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces killed at least 24 Palestinians in three separate airstrikes early on Tuesday in Gaza City and the dead included a sister of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh, Gaza health officials and medics said.

Israeli tanks also pressed deeper into the western areas of Rafah overnight, blowing up homes, residents said.

Two Israeli airstrikes hit two schools in Gaza City, killing at least 14 people, medics said. Another strike on a house in the Shati (Beach) camp, one of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, killed 10 others.

The house in Shati belonged to the extended family of Haniyeh, who is based in Qatar, killing one of his sisters along with other relatives too, family members and medics said.

Haniyeh, who leads Hamas' diplomacy and is the public face of the group that has been running Gaza, has lost many relatives in Israeli airstrikes since Oct 7, including three sons.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Tuesday that at least 37,658 people have been killed during more than eight months of war between Israel and Palestinian militants.

Agencies contributed to this story.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Teheran, Manama start talks on assets, relations

TEHERAN — Iran and Bahrain have started talks on the release of Iran's assets, which are currently frozen in Bahrain, the official news agency IRNA reported on Monday.

"Effective" negotiations were held on the release of Iranian assets on Sunday between the vice-governors of the central banks of Iran and Bahrain prior to a trip by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani to Teheran, IRNA quoted the Central Bank of Iran as saying.

This is Al Zayani's second visit to Teheran in a month. The first came during the memorial for President Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May.

During the negotiations, the two sides agreed that the release of Iran's frozen money to take place within a technical framework and with mutual respect.

Exploring ways

The two sides also discussed the primary causes of the issue and explored ways to identify and overcome the obstacles hindering the release of Iran's frozen funds.

The report said the negotiations would continue until the release of the frozen assets.

In July 2021, Bahrain's High Criminal Court issued a verdict to confiscate nearly \$1.3 billion worth of Iranian funds in the country based on money laundering charges, which were rejected by Iranian officials.

Earlier in the day, Iran and Bahrain announced in a joint statement that they had agreed to start talks on the resumption of bilateral relations following an eight-year diplomatic freeze, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

"The two parts have agreed to hold technical negotiations to free Iranian funds frozen in Bahrain," Iran's state media said, without elaborating on the timing of the talks or the amounts involved.

Bahrain cut its diplomatic relations with Iran after Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties with Teheran following Riyadh's execution of an opposition Shiite cleric and attacks on Saudi diplomatic posts in Iran in 2016.

Iran and Saudi Arabia resumed their diplomatic relations in 2023 in a Chinese-brokered agreement that has shifted regional alliances.

Last month, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa said in a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that there was no reason to postpone the resumption of diplomatic relations between the kingdom and Iran.

Kenya parliament approves finance bill amid protests

By EDITH MUTETHYA
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Kenya's parliament on Tuesday approved a finance bill and will send it to President William Ruto for assent, as thousands of people marched through the streets of major towns and cities across the country calling for its rejection.

Tension is building across Kenya as young people protest against proposed tax hikes in the bill that seeks to raise an additional \$2.7 billion to reduce budget deficit.

On Tuesday, people took to the streets in different cities across the country as the demonstrations entered the second week, calling on the legislators to reject the Finance Bill 2024, which they say will raise the cost of living despite many people already struggling to put food on the table.

Several injuries and deaths were reported during the protests with police allegedly using live bullets to contain the protesters.

The protests were triggered by proposed new taxes on bread, sugar, financial services, vegetable oils and a 2.5 percent motor vehicle tax. This is in addition to an "eco levy" on san-

itary towels, diapers, phones, computers, tires and motorcycles.

On June 18, the finance committee announced amendments to the bill to scrap some of the proposed taxes in response to the views of the people and stakeholders during public participation sessions.

However, protesters declined the amendments calling for total rejection of the bill. They could also not bow to the call by Ruto on Sunday that the government would engage them on the way forward.

Ready for a conversation

Ruto had said that he was ready for "a conversation" with thousands of young protesters.

"I want to tell them we are going to engage them," Ruto said in his first public comments on the protests on Sunday.

"We are going to have a conversation so that together we can build a greater nation," Ruto said during a church service in the Rift Valley town of Nyahururu.

Eric Kimori, the director of Griot Consulting Kenya, a consultancy company that offers services in environment and climate change, called on President Ruto to avoid signing the bill into law "for the



People attend a demonstration against Kenya's proposed finance bill in Nairobi on Tuesday. MONICAH MWANGI / REUTERS

sake of the country's stability".

Christianus Otieno, one of the protesters in Nairobi, said the current demonstrations stood out because digital activism drove nationwide physical protests.

"Young people have moved off

their screens and onto the streets, forcing leaders to listen and even make amendments to the finance bill before it was passed," he said.

Otiato Opa in Nairobi, Kenya, and agencies contributed to this story.

BUSINESS

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SUMMER DAVOS IN DALIAN

Consumption's big role in focus

As China moves to become higher-income nation, upgrade of supply side key

By OUYANG SHIJIA and ZHANG XIAOMIN in Dalian, Liaoning

Despite the pressure of lackluster domestic demand, China still has the capability and conditions to further tap consumption potential to sustain high-quality growth, experts and entrepreneurs said at the 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos Forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province on Tuesday.

"China is moving to a higher-income country," Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, told a forum on the theme of "Reinvigorating Consumption" on Tuesday. "The real big chance is on the consumption bundle. The consumption basket changed dramatically."

He noted a shift in consumption from people's needs in basic consumer goods like clothes, transportation and housing to advanced consumption in services including education, healthcare, entertainment and tourism. "So I think in the future we need to upgrade on the supply side to provide a service consumption bundle to the consumer."

Zhu also noted the rising Chinese household savings indicate the still-weak consumption desire and a supply-demand mismatch. He highlighted the importance of tackling issues surrounding consumer confidence, future uncertainties and social security.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that retail sales, a key measure of consumer spending, rose 3.7 percent year-on-year in May



Zhu Min (center), former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, at the Reinvigorating Consumption forum on Tuesday. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

versus 2.3 percent in April.

Zhu said he is confident that China has huge potential to further boost domestic consumption given the potential growth in services consumption and the future development of the consumption sector. "We need to focus on policy to stimulate service consumption and service development, such as reforms in the services sector, and expand opening-up in the services sector."

Hannah Qiu, senior vice-president and China CEO of Paypal, took stock of the new trends in the China market, saying that while consumers are looking for better pricing for basic goods, the younger generation is more focused on experiences and unique designs and willing to pay extra money for that.

"These consumption down-

grades and upgrades may happen in one person. So you can see very different trends," Qiu said. "They're willing to pay for big-ticket products, but they're also looking for smart bargains at the same time."

Paypal's Chinese customers are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises selling in the global market, Qiu said. Such companies have already transformed their business models, trying to build up more value-added services, even for physical goods. "They are not stopping after purchasing the products. They're looking for continuous upgrades or services, even after the purchase transactions are done."

"We see big opportunities to boost consumption and we also see these opportunities for Chinese manufacturers to upgrade their products, with

a focus on design, (after-sales) services and better protection for the customer," Qiu said.

Pierluigi Antonelli, CEO of German healthcare conglomerate Fresenius Kabi, said: "For us, China is one of the top three markets on a global basis, which is the reason why we act very local in China. We have three R&D centers. We have heavy production with four sites and also a commercial unit."

He said China is actively developing the silver economy. More growth opportunities, he said, will arise in terms of services and goods for the elderly in China as the country has the world's largest senior population.

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Event stresses global ties amid tough scene

By FAN FEIFEI and ZHANG XIAOMIN in Dalian, Liaoning

Greater global cooperation in trade and investment is needed to bolster the world's economic recovery and deal with mounting challenges like decoupling, supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions, said speakers at the 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos Forum, in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Tuesday.

Ren Hongbin, chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, said China's foreign trade is facing both challenges and opportunities. Regional conflicts, climate change, rising protectionism and unilateralism have a huge impact on trade routes, international trade systems and global industry chains, he noted.

Ren said the number of developing countries and emerging markets accounted for 56.7 percent of China's foreign trade partners, surpassing that of developed countries, while the exports of high value-added products like mechanical and electrical products have taken up about 60 percent of China's total exports.

China has been the world's largest exporter since 2009, and is now the second-largest importer. According to Ren, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has become China's largest trading partner, followed by the European Union, the United States, Japan and South Korea.

China has played a vital role in ensuring the stability and security of global industry and supply chains, Ren said, adding the country has shown its willingness to strengthen cooperation with the US in the field of trade and investment to achieve win-win results.

Data from the General Administration of Customs showed that China's total trade in goods reached 17.5 trillion yuan (\$2.4 trillion) in the

first five months of this year, up 6.3 percent year-on-year.

The country's exports rose 6.1 percent year-on-year in the January-May period, while imports climbed 6.4 percent.

China ranked as the largest manufacturer for the 14th consecutive year in 2023, when its manufacturing output accounted for nearly 30 percent of the global total, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Li Dongsheng, founder and chairman of consumer electronics maker TCL Technology Group Corp, said globalization is an irreversible trend and any protectionist policies that aim to change the routes of global trade will not be sustainable.

Li emphasized that China's manufacturers should shift from exporting products to exporting industrial capacities, establish industry chains overseas and boost the development of local economies, so as to cope with changes in the global economic landscape amid rising trade protectionism.

Li said TCL has stepped up efforts to strengthen its capacity in global operations. In the past two decades, the company has established more than 20 manufacturing bases around the world, with sales of terminal devices, including electronic products and home appliances in overseas markets, accounting for more than 60 percent of its revenue.

Maggie Chen, professor of economics and international affairs at George Washington University, said: "We are seeing export growth in certain industries that are contributing to green energy and clean energy products. China has been able to significantly improve the efficiency and productivity in producing these green products."

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China at forefront of fight against climate change

By ZHENG XIN and ZHANG XIAOMIN in Dalian, Liaoning

In the next five years, China's economic development will no longer lead to growth in carbon emissions and instead make a significant contribution to the global efforts to combat climate change, energy company executives and industry experts said.

China's installed capacity of new energy is expected to more than double in the next five years, and rise from the current 1.1 billion kilowatts to 2.4 billion kilowatts by 2030, said China Huaneng Group Chairman Wen Shugang during the World Economic Forum's 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, or 2024 Summer Davos, which opened here on Tuesday and will run until Thursday.

This will bring significant opportunities for the global energy technology industry, he said.

By 2030, the proportion of clean energy generation will exceed 50 percent, and the share of electricity

in end-use energy consumption will reach about 34 percent. Power supply will become cleaner, safer, more efficient and smarter, driving society toward green production and lifestyles, he said.

Wen suggested strengthening cooperation in energy technology innovation, so as to build an open and innovative ecosystem, leveraging each country's strengths to deepen technological collaboration and promote cross-border technology applications for mutual benefit and win-win outcomes.

Accelerating breakthroughs in new energy, long-term energy storage, low-cost green hydrogen and ammonia, and large-scale carbon capture technologies will help promote the deep integration of energy and digital technologies, he said.

While the risks posed by climate change to ecosystems and livelihoods are increasingly evident and consequential, industry participants will need to scale up policies and advanced technologies geared to making progress toward a carbon-neutral and nature-positive future, said Robin Zeng, founder and chairman of Chinese battery manufacturer Contemporary Amperex Technology Co Ltd.

"We are also willing to share our technology with each one in the world, helping build battery factories while coming up with industry chains across the globe," he said.

Large, or grid-scale, energy storage systems enable the integration of renewable energy sources, which may have intermittent or variable output depending on weather conditions, into an energy grid while enhancing stability and reliability.

Driven by robust new energy vehicle demand, China's power battery industry has seen growing sales and output in recent years, with emerging technologies expected to accelerate its high-quality development in the short term.

Guo Shougang, deputy director of the equipment industry department at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said earlier that with government support, China leads in both the quality and quantity of batteries, where power batteries serve as the core component of NEVs and are the main driver in automotive electrification.

Experts also said additional investments and actions are needed for countries to meet their climate goals.

China has progressed significantly in recent years, primarily driven by long-term efforts to increase the share of clean energy and enhance their grid reliability, according to a report jointly released by global consultancy Accenture and World Economic Forum in June.

In 2023, China also significantly scaled up its renewable energy capacity and continued to grow and invest in its manufacturing capability in clean technologies such as batteries for electric vehicles, solar panels, wind turbines and other critical technologies, while it is also leading in developing new energy solutions and technologies, said the report.



A participant takes a picture in front of a Formula E race car made of e-waste materials, which is on show at the 2024 Summer Davos in Dalian, Liaoning province. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Clean energy investment continues to be concentrated in advanced economies and China, underscoring the need for financial support from advanced nations to facilitate an equitable energy transition in emerging and developing nations and forward-thinking policymaking in all nations to foster truly conducive investment conditions, it said.

Urgent action is needed. Global

decision-makers must make bold moves to regain momentum in the transition toward an equitable, secure and sustainable energy future, said Espen Mehlum, head of energy transition intelligence and regional acceleration of the World Economic Forum.

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Major buybacks put spring back in A shares' step

By SHI JING in Shanghai

A-share market investor confidence will be boosted and bourse performance will be buoyed amid record performance among listed companies' buyback plans, said experts.

According to market tracker Wind Info, over 1,900 A-share companies have announced their share buyback plans as of Monday. Among them, more than 1,600 companies have already carried out repurchases, with the total buyback value amounting to over 96.4 billion yuan (\$13.3 billion), hitting a record and overtaking the full-year figure of 91.4 billion yuan seen in 2023.

A large number of industry giants have conducted share buybacks this year. Tongwei Group, the world's largest solar silicon provider, announced in late April a buy-

back plan of between 2 billion and 4 billion yuan. Video surveillance firm Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology released in April a repurchase plan of over 2.89 billion yuan while dairy giant Inner Mongolia Yili Industrial Group announced in late May it would repurchase no more than 2 billion yuan of its shares. Biotech company Wuxi AppTec and logistics giant SF Express have each announced 1-billion-yuan buyback plans twice so far this year.

Computer, medicine, electronics and engineering equipment are the industries launching the most share buyback plans this year, according to Wind Info.

Zhang Qiyao, chief strategist at Industrial Securities, said that share buybacks will turn into an important positive signal for the market, as they reflect the companies' confidence in their profitability and income growth.

Investors will thus derive positive sentiment on the companies' development.

Looking back on the previous rounds of drastic market fluctuations, A-share companies' collective share buybacks, which were promoted by supportive government policies, helped stabilize market performance and investor sentiment. The indexes usually picked up significantly after such repurchases, he said.

Related buyback policies have been optimizing since the end of 2023, which have partly contributed to the record high repurchases seen so far this year, Zhang said.

As the buyback scale expands in the A-share market, it can be seen that prices of companies announcing repurchase plans usually rise significantly, outperforming the benchmark indexes. Investors should keep a closer eye on these

companies, especially as regulators have stressed the importance of share buybacks, he added.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission, the country's top bourse watchdog, released late last year its amended regulations for A-share companies' buybacks. Listed companies are encouraged to use repurchase tools according to relevant laws to provide returns to investors in an active manner, according to the new regulations.

The set of new guidelines released by the State Council — the nation's Cabinet — in April underlined the importance of listed companies' market value management. In specific, listed companies will be encouraged to cancel shares after repurchases.

Experts from TF Securities explained that the cancellation of shares after repurchase means that these shares will no longer circulate in the secondary market. Overall

shares in circulation will therefore be reduced, and the company's financial indicators such as earnings per share, return on net assets per share and dividends per share will likely increase as long as the current profit and dividend ratio remain unchanged. This will help increase the company's intrinsic value, they said.

Analysts from Great Wall Securities said that collective buybacks usually take place when the stock market is hovering around a nadir and market performance becomes lackluster. Repurchases will signal to investors that share prices are undervalued at the moment. Risk appetite will thus be elevated, they said.

The price-to-earnings ratio of the A-share market was around 16 times on Tuesday. The CSI 300 companies — 300 heavyweight companies trading in Shanghai and Shenzhen — saw their average PE stand at around 11.7 times, according to Wind Info. Both numbers were around very low levels compared with historical data.

Briefly

Smart electronics consumption pushed

China will support the consumption of new-generation high-tech electronics like smart wearable devices and AI-powered humanoid robots, said the National Development and Reform Commission, promising that efforts will be made to facilitate human-computer interaction by promoting the development of technologies like flexible displays, supercharging, AI assistants and on-device large models.

PBOC adds \$42b to liquidity via rev repos

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, conducted 300 billion yuan (\$42.12 billion) of seven-day, 1.8 percent reverse repos on Tuesday to keep liquidity stable at the end of the first half of this year.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

Smart power transmission key to stable energy supply

By LIU YUKUN
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Further efforts are in the pipeline to speed up power grid construction and enhance power transmission mechanism, said the National Energy Administration, as China's power grid faces increasing stability challenges with the rising share of electricity generated from intermittent new energy sources.

Experts also called for further efforts to enhance energy storage capacity and leverage new technologies such as smart grids to improve the grid fine-tuning capabilities, mainly for peak shaving and valley filling.

China's installed non-fossil fuel power contributed over 50 percent of last year's total, surpassing that of fossil fuel power for the first time in history. By the end of April, cumulative wind and solar installations in China exceeded 1.1 billion kilowatts, a year-on-year increase of about 38 percent, said the National Energy Administration.

With the increasing proportion of renewable energy resources used for power generation, the grid's absorption of them is facing great challenges. Due to the difficulty of large-scale power storage, power is essentially "generated as needed", making real-time dynamic balance crucial between generators and consumers. However, the inherent variability and intermittency of new energy sources such as wind and solar pose challenges to striking such a balance. The grid's insufficiency in accommodating electricity from new energy resources will result in situations where excess electricity cannot be utilized or transmitted effectively, leading to wastage.

Despite wind and solar power installations exceeding half of the total energy mix, consumption of non-fossil energy only comprised 17.9 percent last year, said the NEA.

"To enhance the grid's capability to accommodate power from new energy sources, we are accelerating the construction of grid projects. This year, we are focusing on advancing the completion of 33 key projects such as the Sichuan-Chongqing ultra high voltage alternating current project. We are also expediting the commencement of construction on 37 key projects," said Du Zhongming, head of the electricity bureau of the NEA, at a recent conference.

Du said the NEA will work to improve the grid's ability to flexibly adjust scheduling of power supply

and enhance interprovincial power-sharing capabilities.

"We will also strengthen the construction of the distribution network (that connects the grid to users) to meet the requirements of large-scale development of distributed new energies. By 2025, the distribution network will have the capacity to accommodate approximately 500 million kW of distributed new energies. Furthermore, we have optimized targets for the grid's absorption of power generated from new energy sources, relaxing them to not less than 90 percent in certain regions," Du said.

The new 90 percent absorption rate was announced by the State Council in May.

Previously, the average absorption rate of wind and solar power was set at 95 percent to address the problem of wind and solar power waste during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-20). Areas that fail to meet these standards face restrictions on new project approvals.

However, the increased penetration rate of power from new energies significantly amplified the pressure on its consumption, particularly in provinces with low local electricity demand and insufficient transmission capacity. Some experts argue that power absorption requirements have become constraints on the large-scale development of renewable energies.

"Varying costs were incurred across regions to maintain an absorption rate of 95 percent for wind and solar power in the past. Generally, regions with abundant resources of wind and solar but less demand for electricity in the west and north incurred much higher costs. Scientific formulation and moderate relaxation of renewable energy utilization rates in these regions could release significant new installation space," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xi'an University.

"With the easing of these thresholds, more wind and solar power will participate in market transactions instead of being directly absorbed by the grid. However, unstable wind and solar power may not necessarily have an advantage over coal-fired electricity unless generation sides are equipped with energy storage to stabilize unstable power, thereby increasing generating costs. Other measures include the development of smart grids to optimize power distribution."



Employees promote products via livestreaming at a cross-border e-commerce industrial park in Ganzhou, Jiangxi province, in September. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chile moves to join RCEP for trade boon

South American nation to diversify its export markets, attract investment

By WANG KEJU
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Chile, following in the footsteps of China's Hong Kong and Sri Lanka, recently applied to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, signifying the growing recognition of the benefits and opportunities of the world's largest free trade deal, analysts said.

The application came on the heels of the anniversary of the full implementation of the mega trade pact among its 15 signatory countries — China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Claudia Sanhueza Riveros, Chilean undersecretary for international economic relations, handed over the formal letter of application for the country's accession to the RCEP in mid-June, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile.

If successful, Chile will become the first Latin American nation to join the RCEP, said Xu Ningning, chairman of the RCEP Industry Cooperation Committee.

Xu stressed that Chile, which is pursuing an open and free market economy, had always sought to diversify its export markets and attract foreign investment through the signing of trade deals.

Chile has negotiated 33 trade agreements, covering 65 economies, representing 88 percent of the world's GDP, data from the US-based International Trade Administration showed.

Chile's membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and its existing free trade agreements with RCEP member nations such as China, Japan, South Korea and Australia, have fostered a favorable climate for its accession to the RCEP, Xu added.

The value of merchandise exports from Chile totaled about \$94 billion in 2023, with China, the United States, Japan and South Korea as its top export destinations, according to official data.

China, Japan and South Korea have emerged as significant trading partners and key sources of foreign direct investment for Chile. By seeking to join the RCEP, the South American nation aims to strengthen its trade networks and tap into the vast opportunities offered by ASEAN nations, said Yuan Bo, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Meanwhile, Chile's inclusion in the RCEP would extend the trade pact's reach to South America. Additionally, this development could promote connectivity between the RCEP and the CPTPP and also holds potential to drive the future establishment of an Asia-Pacific free trade area, Yuan said.

In particular, China and Chile's economic links have grown robustly over the years despite their geographical distance, driven by each other's strengths and resources.

Currently, China is Chile's largest global trading partner, top export destination and primary source of imports, while Chile ranks as China's third-largest trading partner in Latin America and its leading supplier of imported copper.

China predominantly exports machinery, electronic products, textiles, steel and household appliances to Chile. In return, it imports copper, lithium, iron ore, pulp, fruits and wine from the country,

said Cui Fan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

Notably, Chile's cherry exports to the Chinese market for the 2023-24 season reached 377,000 metric tons, representing a 91.1 percent market share and reinforcing China's status as the primary export destination for Chilean cherries, according to published by IQ Consulting in April.

China and Chile are at different phases of development with high economic complementarity in industrial structures and diversity in resources, and the signing of the FTA will foster a more enabling environment for expanding trade and investment partnerships and give both nations' long-term growth a boost, Cui said.

Spanning a diverse range of member economies, RCEP encompasses affluent developed nations alongside three of the world's least developed countries. This unique composition allows it to cater to the needs of economies at varying stages of development, Cui added.

Despite rising protectionism and a global trade slowdown, intraregional trade among member countries of the RCEP soared to \$5.6 trillion in 2023, showing a slight increase compared to the pre-agreement year of 2021, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed.

Furthermore, the RCEP region attracted \$234.1 billion in greenfield investments in 2023, marking a substantial growth of 29.8 percent and more than double the number from 2021, according to the ministry.

Bangladesh is in the process of preparing its application. By embracing new members and continuously upgrading its framework, the RCEP can contribute to an inclusive and rules-based global trading system, promoting economic collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, Cui said.



An array of wind turbine blades is loaded onto a vessel at a port in Yantai, Shandong province, in April. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Green farming to help country raise food security

By ZHONG NAN
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Developing green agriculture and enhancing cooperation with partners participating in the Belt and Road Initiative will help China and other developing countries ensure grain security and food supplies, officials and business leaders said on Tuesday.

Green agriculture refers to agricultural practices that are environmentally sustainable, aiming to preserve natural resources, minimize pollution and promote biodiversity, according to the Beijing-based China Agricultural University. It encompasses a variety of methods and approaches that reduce the environmental footprint of farming, including organic farming, sustainable water usage and conservation tillage.

By adopting sustainable agricultural practices, these countries can better mitigate the effects caused by

China will continue to welcome investment from multinational corporations in its agricultural sector."

Yu Jianlong, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade

extreme weather and resource scarcity, said Yu Jianlong, vice-chairman of the Beijing-headquartered China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Speaking at a conference held by the China Chamber of International Commerce in Beijing, Yu said collaborative efforts under the BRI can facilitate the sharing of knowledge, technology and resources, fostering a resilient agricultural sector across

the participating economies.

For instance, supported by tangible growth of the BRI, experts from China have developed a high-yield rice seed tailored to local conditions in Nigeria. The seed outperforms native varieties by over 20 percent, according to information released by the National Development and Reform Commission.

Endorsed by Nigerian agricultural authorities, the new rice seed is now planted across two-thirds of the country's states.

"China will continue to welcome investment from multinational corporations in its agricultural sector," he said, adding the country also encourages capable domestic companies to build a presence in other participating countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to enjoy the pact's preferential policies in the agricultural sector.

Zhang Zhongjun, officer-in-charge of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations'

representation in China, said that numerous factors have contributed to the growth and transformation of agriculture in China.

Among these, innovations in agricultural technology stand out as a key driver of increased agricultural productivity, facilitating the shift toward modern agriculture, said Zhang.

China's grain output hit a record high of 695.4 million metric tons in 2023, up 1.3 percent year-on-year, data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs showed.

China saw the foreign trade value of agricultural products, including corn, wheat, pork and durian, amount to \$330 billion last year, declining 0.4 percent on a yearly basis, accounting for 5.6 percent of the country's total foreign trade value, said the General Administration of Customs.

Cao Baoming, a professor specializing in grain security at Nanjing University of Finance and Economics in

Jiangsu province, said China should not only maintain government investment in agri-food research and development but also adopt a more diversified innovation strategy that encourages increased private sector investment.

"Strengthening the country's overall innovation system can be achieved by offering incentives for private sector innovation," Cao said, adding that providing financial support and tax incentives, particularly for startups, can accelerate the adoption of new technologies by farmers and enhance the private sector's role in this area.

Eager to expand its market footprint in China, US-based agricultural conglomerate Cargill Inc put into operation an upgraded innovation and research and development center in Shanghai early this month.

Faced with the formidable challenges brought about by climate change, no single country or organization can tackle them alone, and cooperation is required from all parties involved in the supply chain, said Liu Chang, vice-president of Cargill Investments (China) Ltd.

BYD eyes major charge in Japan

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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Electric vehicle giant BYD started selling the BYD Seal, the third EV model it introduced to Japan, at 55 authorized dealerships across the country on Tuesday.

With the aim of establishing a position for the BYD Seal as an e-sports sedan in the Japanese market, BYD Auto Japan, a subsidiary of BYD Japan specializing in passenger cars, hopes to enhance brand recognition and image with the BYD Seal as its flagship model.

The rear-wheel-drive version of the BYD Seal, priced at 5.28 million yen (\$33,135), offers a cruising range of 640 kilometers on a single charge. In comparison, the all-wheel-drive version, priced at 6.05 million yen, can travel 575 km.

According to a preliminary survey conducted by BYD Auto Japan at its 55 showrooms across the country, about 100 customers expressed a desire to buy the model as soon as it becomes available. Additionally, many customers indicated that they plan to purchase the vehicle after a test drive.

Despite the high level of interest, most customers are waiting for the confirmation of subsidies before committing to a purchase, and the confirmation will not be available until the end of July. So the company anticipated that official vehicle registrations for the model will likely begin around September.

Last year, BYD launched the Atto 3 and Dolphin EV models in Japan, selling more than 2,500 units as of Thursday since the Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based EV maker opened its first Japanese dealership in Yokohama in February 2023.

"We now have three good car models in Japan to further develop our business. So we will seek to accomplish our target of establishing 100 showrooms all over Japan by the end of next year," said Atsuki Tofukuji, president of BYD Auto Japan.

Apart from completing dealership deployment, Tofukuji reiterated the plan to add at least one new model to the company's lineup in Japan every year.

By expanding the number of models introduced to Japan, BYD is trying to attract more potential customers to its showrooms to take a look at its products.

"We want to capture a broad audience by offering various EV options. Our goal is to familiarize more people with our EVs," he said.

He noted that BYD has a grand mission to contribute to cooling the Earth by 1 C in the hopes of helping mitigate climate change effects.

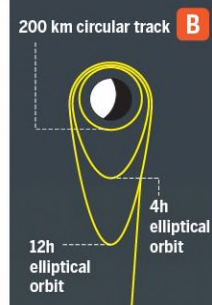
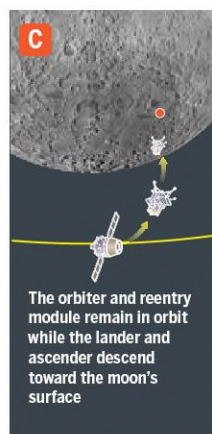
The Japanese government has already declared its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. It also announced plans to ban sales of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035. Gradually, the current car market in Japan — the world's fourth largest market for passenger vehicles — will be shifted to more environmentally friendly products such as plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and battery electric vehicles.

"The shift is a good chance for BYD to get into the Japanese market by utilizing leading EV technology and leading battery management technologies to speed up the realization of carbon neutrality for Japanese customers," Tofukuji said.

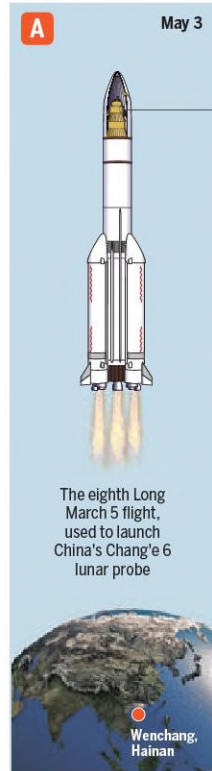
Additionally, many Japanese customers are very keen on quality. Such picky customers will train BYD to become more quality-conscious and to be competitive against big names in the auto industry which are very quality-oriented, he said.

"BYD wishes to be at the same level as major players in the industry within a few years by selling cars in Japan and being trained by Japanese customers to make better products," he said.

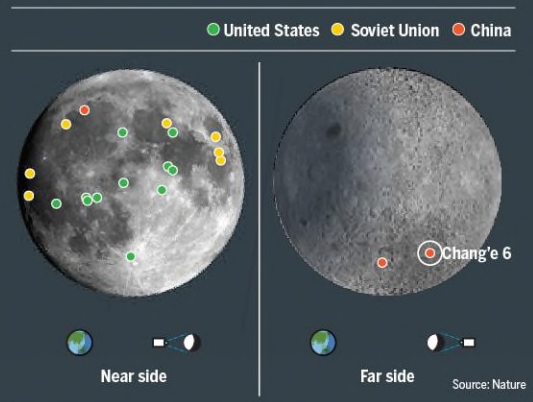
CHINA MARVELS



TO THE MOON



MOON LANDING HISTORY



UNVEILING THE FAR SIDE

A MOON ODYSSEY

Far side gets second 'Earthy' visitor as China's space program makes stellar leap with historic mission

By ZHAO LEI
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China's Chang'e 6 unmanned mission has made history by providing the first-ever substances from the lunar far side to mankind.

Before the mission, all of the lunar substances on Earth were collected from the near side of the moon.

The landscapes and physical characteristics of the far side, which permanently faces away from Earth, are very different from those of the near side, which is visible from Earth, according to scientists.

The new samples will probably offer researchers worldwide useful clues for answering questions about our closest neighbor, and will likely bring a range of invaluable scientific payoffs, they said.

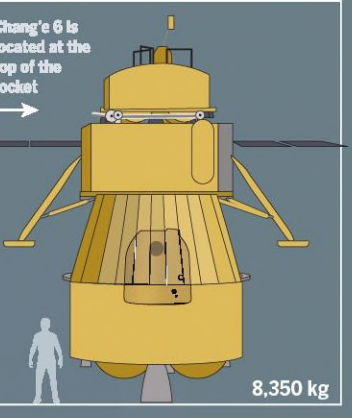
The 8.35-metric-ton Chang'e 6 spacecraft, consisting of an orbiter, a lander, an ascender and a reentry capsule, was launched by a Long March 5 heavy-lift carrier rocket on May 3 from Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province. It entered lunar orbit on May 8.

After a series of sophisticated steps, the lander touched down in the South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the largest known impact craters in the solar system, on the morning of June 2.

It worked 49 hours on the lunar far side, using a mechanical arm and a drill to collect surface and underground materials. Meanwhile, several scientific instruments were activated to conduct surveys and analyses.

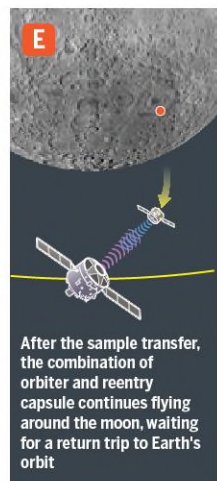
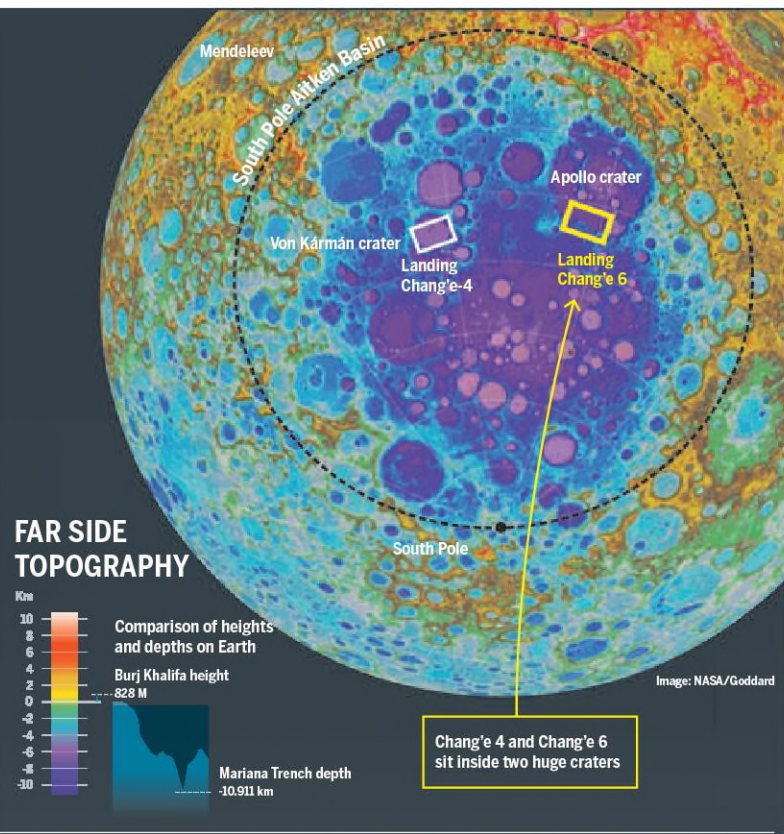
After the tasks were completed, the sample-loaded ascender lifted off from the lunar surface and reached lunar orbit to dock with the reentry capsule to transfer the samples.

In the final step, the reentry capsule flew back to Earth on Tuesday afternoon, delivering the precious samples for closer inspections.

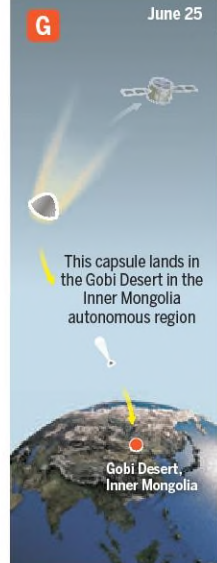
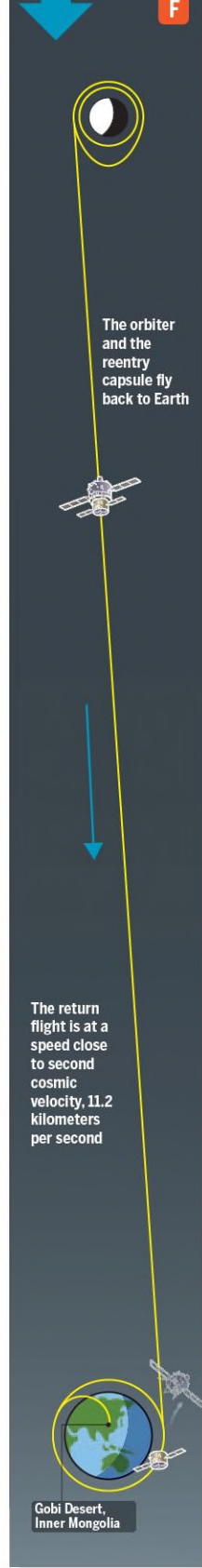


The Chang'e 6 mission includes new, international payloads from France, Sweden and Italy as well as a Pakistani cubesat

The Pakistani cubesat's missions are obtaining detailed images of the lunar surface, conducting intelligent on-orbit data processing of images, obtaining lunar magnetic field data, and verifying new space technologies



BACK TO EARTH

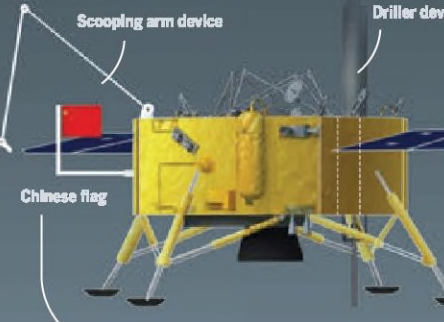


CHANG'E 6 INSIDE

Ascend vehicle
The ascend vehicle functions are to contain the samples and lift off from lunar surface to transfer the samples to the reentry capsule



Lander
Lands on the lunar surface after separating from the orbiter. This module contains a drill and a scooping arm device



Supporting cabin
Protection of reentry capsule



Docking module
Docking module on the orbiter



Reentry capsule
This device houses the lunar samples and reenters Earth

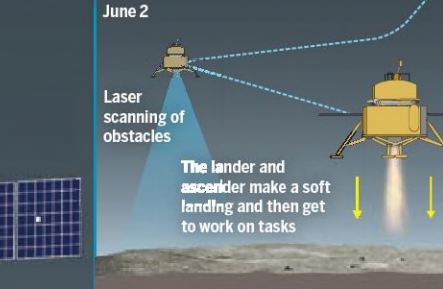


Orbiter
Orbits the moon and docks with the ascend vehicle to begin the return journey to Earth



TASKS ON THE MOON

LANDING ON THE MOON



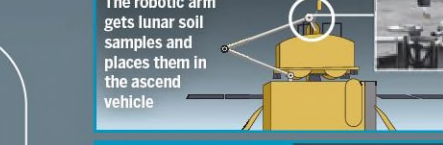
SOIL SAMPLES



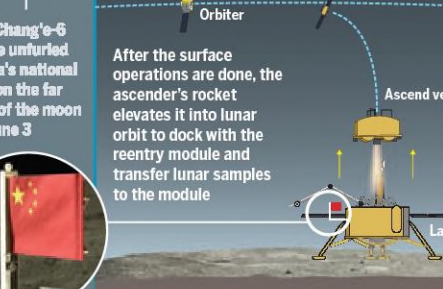
DRILLING



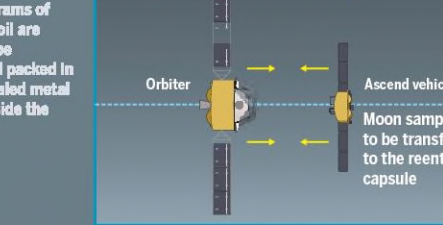
COLLECTING SAMPLES



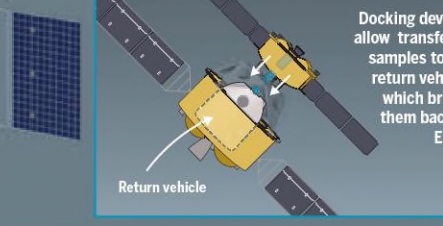
ASCENDER TAKEOFF



TRANSFER MOON SAMPLES



TO THE REENTRY CAPSULE



Sources: China National Space Administration, Nature, NASA.

GRAPHICS BY JORGE CORTES, ZHAO LEI AND LI JIAYING / CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Editorials

Countries must be broad-minded so world can better tap potential of tech and green frontiers

The attention the world is paying to the three-day 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions, also known as the Summer Davos, which opened in Dalian, Liaoning province, on Tuesday, reflects the international community's confidence that it can help promote sustainable growth and inclusive development.

Some 1,600 leading figures from the public and private sectors across nearly 80 countries and regions have gathered to explore ways to put meat on the bones of the theme: "Next Frontiers for Growth."

With the world economy battling the headwinds of protectionism, global volatility, high inflation and worsening debt issues, the event provides a platform for policymakers, entrepreneurs and researchers to pool their wisdom to help the world overcome the challenges to growth by tapping the potential of the new technology revolution. While some developed economies are resorting to punitive tariffs targeting Chinese products, such as new energy vehicles and photovoltaic products, these green products help alleviate global inflationary pressures and make a positive contribution to global efforts to address climate change.

If countries only think about maximizing their own interests, and even turn their back on the wheel of history by pursuing decoupling and cutting the industry and supply chains that have been formed, they will only sever the economic ties between regions and erect barriers to cooperation.

By building "small yards with high fences" in this way, they will raise the cost of global economic

operations and aggravate the contradictions and disputes that are the obstacles to growth.

To make a bigger pie to share, development needs to be approached with a broader horizon and mindset, as Chinese Premier Li Qiang said in his address at the opening of the forum. Li reaffirmed China's commitment to pursuing technological innovation and green growth with countries based on openness, inclusiveness and cooperation.

Li said that the exploration of the next frontiers for growth should not be a zero-sum game but a game in which all benefit. He called on countries around the world to deepen their scientific and technological exchanges and cooperation, saying that unilateral and protectionist policies cannot stifle the development of others, but only shackle those countries carrying out such policies.

To continuously expand the boundaries of development, countries should work together to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation. To that end, China is making concerted efforts to ensure it has a market-oriented, law-based and internationalized business environment.

While striving to fully unleash the innovative potential of enterprises and generate new quality productive forces that are indispensable for the country's own high-quality development, China is playing its part in promoting common development and the sustainable growth of the world economy by working with like-minded partners to blaze a trail in the new frontiers.

Proposed defense partnership cause of offense

The protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine has generated prevailing fear in Europe of either the hostilities spiraling out of control, or Russia expanding its "special military operation" to other European countries should it gain the upper hand on the battlefield in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the increasing likelihood of Donald Trump returning to the White House is driving louder calls for boosting independent European defense capacities.

And although European Union member states have begun joint weapons development and production, it is a remedy too slow to address what are perceived to be immediate needs. Given this severe geopolitical climate to European eyes, the EU seeking security and defense industry partnerships with Japan and the Republic of Korea would seem to be a matter of course. From this viewpoint, since intra-NATO resources have largely been mobilized, it is only natural Brussels should look to "like-minded" allies and partners such as Japan and the ROK to bolster the EU's security confidence.

The EU initiative for joint weapons and equipment development and production is attractive to all three. Citing "the most severe and complex security environment since World War II", Tokyo is trying everything possible to break the constraints of its "peace Constitution" and boost its military capabilities. It has signed a treaty to develop a sixth-generation fighter jet with the United Kingdom and Italy. It has jointly developed an advanced fleet-to-air inter-

ceptor missile with the United States, and is talking about deeper defense collaboration. It is proactively tightening defense cooperation with the Philippines along with the US and US allies, and proceeding with a joint military technology development project under the framework of AUKUS, the US "Indo-Pacific" security mechanism with Australia and the UK.

The revival of the military alliance treaty between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea having angered Seoul, the ROK government, which has until recently treaded cautiously to avoid provoking its northern neighbor, has just announced that it will lift the previous restraints on arms exports to Ukraine. Now, Brussels, too, has its eyes on the ROK as a desirable arms supplier.

From Brussels' perspective, outreach to the two East Asian partners will further facilitate its plan to increase its military presence in the "Indo-Pacific", both under NATO and on its own. Joint arms development will certainly deepen the parties' broader security engagement on global and regional stages.

But as the Chinese Foreign Ministry has warned, the proposed partnership may have very adverse consequences for global and regional peace, as well as for China. As a result of growing geopolitical tensions and threats, the proposed partnership will inevitably further aggravate the tensions in Northeast Asia and throughout the Asia-Pacific.

That will give greater momentum to the vicious circle that has emerged in the region, which will be in no party's interest.

Double act's deceptions dangerously staged

To encroach upon China's territorial integrity and maritime interests, the Philippines has employed many tricks in recent months, including playing the role of victim. Dressing itself up as an underdog standing up to a bully is a tactic it has repeatedly used in recent months in a bid to mislead the international community.

The remarks of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Sunday reflect such a mentality. In a visit to the headquarters of the Philippine South China Sea forces on Palawan island, Marcos said his country "will not be intimidated" and will "continue to exercise our freedoms and rights in support of our national interest, in accordance with international law".

While he did not mention China, Marcos was clearly responding to last week's clash between China Coast Guard ships and Philippine vessels near Ren'ai Reef in the South China Sea. Video footage shows it happened when Philippine ships deliberately and dangerously approached the Chinese vessels, despite repeated warnings from the Chinese side.

To some extent, the clash on June 17 was inevitable as the Philippines has repeatedly staged provocations in the waters adjacent to the Chinese reef since last year. By sending supplies and building materials to it, Manila's ultimate purpose is to extend the life of the rotting warship that it deliberately grounded on the reef in 1999.

Facing Manila's incessant provocations, Beijing is obliged to respond with countermeasures. Yet

these lawful responses are deliberately distorted by Manila, which seeks to portray them as intimidation so that it can play up its portrayal of the Philippines as the victim in the South China Sea disputes.

Marcos did mention in his speech that his country is not in the business of instigating wars and it wants to "settle all these issues peacefully". But such remarks simply sound hollow and even hypocritical as his country is the one that has unilaterally raised tensions over the disputes.

With the covert and overt support of the United States, the Philippines has been pumping enmity into the tense atmosphere that has been produced by its provocative make-a-splash-and-grab antics at Ren'ai Reef, making it a potential flashpoint for a head-on conflict with China. How can the Philippine leader still have the nerve to claim his country wants to resolve the disputes peacefully?

Marcos said his country will continue to assert its rights in accordance with international law. If that is the case, his country should first and foremost observe the treaties that define its territory, including the 1898 Treaty of Peace between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain, and abide by the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. By colluding with the US, a country renowned for going back on its words and ignoring international law and treaties, in this way, the Philippines cannot expect to win global sympathy. Its scheme to deceive the world only brings shame on itself.

Zhang Xueshi



Opinion Line

Coordinated response to risks can help boost agricultural resilience

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has launched a level-III emergency response for agricultural relief following severe drought conditions in some parts of China's northern, central and eastern regions, while the Ministry of Finance has allocated 443 million yuan (\$61.02 million) to support drought relief measures and help affected farmers complete sowing seeds during summer.

While the drought in North China is worsening, heavy rainfall continues to hit parts of South China. Guangdong province recently upgraded its level-III disaster relief emergency response to a higher level. The simultaneous "flood in the south and drought in the north" has brought considerable losses to the country.

Worse, in the coming days, some areas are expected to see a drastic

shift from drought to flood, increasing the pressure on China's overall coordination capacity of flood control and drought relief at the national level. This means that cross-regional and cross-departmental consultation, research and judgment, early warning systems, resource allocation and information delivery should be more flexible, more efficient and more accurate.

Local emergency and disaster prevention and mitigation mechanisms should make more efficient responses, and the focus should shift from drought relief or flood control to both drought relief and flood control. It is necessary for China to comprehensively improve its ability to build agricultural risk resilience.

The risk of spillover from geopolitical conflicts has intensified.

Whenever signs of pending disturbance emerge, some countries want to restrict food exports, affecting the world's normal trade in agriculture.

The country should make overall coordinated arrangements for agricultural development and agricultural security, and enhance risk awareness. It should build an agricultural risk prevention and control system to improve its agricultural production capacity, optimize its agricultural structure, enhance its agricultural resilience and guarantee its agricultural incomes. Better agricultural infrastructure, technology popularization and insurance futures should be given full play so that different risk management tools can play their role in promoting the country's agricultural development.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

Unearthing the moon's secrets, little by little

The Chang'e 6 mission is unique in being mankind's first mission to bring back samples from the far side of the moon. The success of the mission and its outcomes will doubtlessly contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of lunar evolution.

Because the period of the moon's rotation is the same as that of its round trip around the Earth, more or less the same side of the moon faces the Earth all the time, which is called a tidal lock. Although US astronauts landed on the moon in the 1960s, it was not until 2018 that China's Chang'e 4, although unmanned, soft-landed on the far

side of the moon. Later, in 2020, Chang'e 5 brought back lunar soil from the near side of the moon.

Now, Chang'e 6 has surpassed those two earlier missions by bringing soil from the far side of the moon.

While the area where Chang'e 5 landed, namely Mons Rümker, was formed 2 billion years ago, the samples collected by Chang'e 6 come from the South Pole-Aitken basin that's the largest, deepest, as well as the oldest crater basin not only on the moon but in the entire solar system. According to existing knowledge, collisions might have led to the creation of this crater on the moon's surface, which means

the lunar soil collected by Chang'e 6 could be 4 billion years old and reveal secrets of the solar system during that early period.

That's around the time when the Earth had just come into being. In other words, soil samples from the far side of the moon may tell stories about not only the moon but also the Earth and the entire solar system.

That China is the first country to have sent a mission to collect samples from the far side of the moon shows its technological capabilities. More questions about the moon will surely be answered as China has more missions planned.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

Consumption growth points stimulated and nurtured

A circular, jointly issued by some central departments on Monday, stated that China is moving to foster new consumption scenarios in multiple sectors, including tourism, automobiles and electronics, aiming to boost consumer demand and promote the steady growth of consumption.

The circular encourages Chinese cities with restrictions on vehicle purchases to ease these limitations and provide additional quotas for vehicle purchases. Local governments are also encouraged to support vehicle replacement and renewal when conditions allow.

Furthermore, China will support the consumption of new-generation high-tech electronics, such as smart wearable devices and AI-powered humanoid robots. The circular also detailed measures on creating new consumption scenarios in the catering and healthcare industries, among others.

New production models such as reverse customization, personalized design and flexible production will be encouraged, and promotional

activities should be held to increase consumer awareness and market penetration of smart products.

The country will also include more countries in its visa-free policy, increase inbound flights from major passenger source countries, optimize its entry and exit procedures, and take some concrete measures to improve the consumption environment for overseas tourists in China.

For instance, the country will promote the acceptance of overseas bank cards in various venues and stores, enabling easier access to dining, accommodation, transportation, ticket purchases and reservations for international visitors to the country.

Official data show that China's GDP expanded by 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of the year, with domestic consumption contributing 73.7 percent to economic growth.

To effectively implement the measures set out in the circular, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation of

multiple departments, and improve market supervision rules in line with the development of new consumption modes and new formats.

Relevant departments should take the implementation of the circular as an opportunity to improve the business environment, promote healthy market competition, maintain normal market order, and strengthen the protection of consumers' legitimate rights and interests.

Local governments need to strengthen their fiscal, taxation, finance, currency and industrial policy coordination according to the actual conditions of their respective jurisdictions, and create more platforms to encourage social capital participation.

It is believed that the implementation of the circular can also effectively increase the supply of services in nursing for the elders and childcare, which is also conducive to improving families' spending power by reducing the financial care burden on families.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

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COMMENT

Zhang Monan

EU's EV tariff a political and economic gamble

Trade impositions represent more than just economic conflicts; they embody political and diplomatic confrontations as well. Axiomatically, in June the European Commission announced provisional tariffs on electric vehicles imported from China, ranging from 17.4 percent to 38.1 percent, on top of the existing 10 percent tariff. This move by the European Union could severely deteriorate Sino-EU trade relations.

The European Commission has said that if an agreement with China is not reached, the provisional tariffs will take effect in early July. According to the EU, the tariffs will be imposed on the products of "sampled" companies such as BYD, Geely and SAIC at rates of 17.4 percent, 20 percent and 38.1 percent respectively. Non-sampled participating manufacturers will face an average tariff of 21 percent, while the tariffs for non-cooperating manufacturers will be as high as 38.1 percent. Tesla cars imported from China, too, might be subjected to a separate rate of tariff.

It is reported that China and the EU have agreed to start consultations on the EU's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric vehicles, but the prospects are not optimistic. The EU's motive behind announcing tariffs is clear: to protect its domestic electric vehicle (EV) market and expedite local production, aiming for over 50 percent localization in the supply chain under the European Critical Raw Materials Act. The move is in response to the rapid growth of

The EU's trade barriers will only make EVs more expensive in the global markets, slowing the transition from petrol-powered cars to EVs and undermining the efforts to combat climate change.

Chinese-made EVs in the global market. According to General Administration of Customs, China exported 5.22 million vehicles in 2023, surpassing Japan as the world's largest auto exporter, with the EU being the primary destination for Chinese-made EVs.

In 2023, SAIC sold 330,000 vehicles in the EU, which made up a significant portion of its overseas sales. In contrast, both Geely and BYD sold about 20,000 vehicles each in the EU, representing a smaller percentage of their total overseas sales. A Rhodium Group study shows that SAIC vehicles face the highest import tariffs among all EV imports into the EU, and the third-highest countervailing duties ever imposed by the EU. This tiered tariff strategy is evidently a targeted strike against leading Chinese EV-makers.

The high provisional tariffs will hinder

the export of Chinese-made EVs to the EU. The EU-China Chamber of Commerce in China survey indicates that tariffs above 10 percent are considered high and will negatively impact most Chinese car manufacturers' exports to the EU. The current range of 17.4-38.1 percent tariffs are a significant market entry barrier.

The EU's tariff measure against China is not unexpected. In recent years, the EU has increasingly supported industrial policies with stronger government intervention, essentially engaging in strategic protectionism under the guise of industrial policy. In fact, the 2021 EU trade policy paper, "Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy", said the EU will resolutely use trade defense tools while reforming competition law to align external economic policies with its interests and values, linking economic and security policies more closely.

This signals a trend toward protectionism in EU industrial, competition and trade policies. With China's strong emergence in the EV market challenging the EU's auto industry, the EU has been contemplating severe measures to protect its auto industry.

The recent election to the European Parliament and elections in several European countries show Europe's political landscape is shifting, posing new challenges for China-EU cooperation. And given the rise of right-wing forces, the new EU policy- and decision-makers might intensify their geopolitical maneuvers, potentially reinforcing economic security strategies against China.

This could result in increased tariffs and export controls, escalating trade frictions between China and the EU.

Besides, the high tariffs might be the first step in the EU's strategy to counter Chinese-made EVs. More policy tools will likely be used to blunt China's competitive edge in the EV market. Chinese EV investments in the EU, too, will face regulatory constraints, including the EU's recent Net-Zero Industry Act, Critical Raw Materials Act, new Batteries Regulation, Foreign Subsidies Regulation, and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. These acts and regulations demand tough requirements of local manufacturing proportions in terms of clean technologies and reliance on specific critical materials from abroad.

However, sharpening an economy's competitiveness by resorting to protectionism is counterproductive. The EU's trade barriers will only make EVs more expensive in the global markets, slowing the transition from petrol-powered cars to EVs and undermining the efforts to combat climate change. As such, the tariff war will alter the global trade system, disrupt the global EV supply chain, and undermine innovation and cooperation in the global EV market.

The author is deputy director of the Institute of American and European Studies at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Tom Fowdy

Proposed drone ban exposes irrationality of US politics

A bill, titled "Countering CCP Drones Act", passed by the US House of Representatives in mid-June, alleges, without providing any evidence whatsoever, that all Chinese-made drones, especially those made by DJI, constitute a "national security threat" and therefore should be banned.

Industry experts believe there is little reason for the bill not to get through the Senate at this stage, because it is part of a series of US attacks against Chinese technology and manufacturing, and because it is backed by a bipartisan consensus in Washington. However, this is a bill that will cause immense collateral damage to US hobbyists, professionals and organizations, and disrupt the entire domestic market with no feasible replacement for Chinese-made drones.

US politics

is suffering from mass hysteria pertaining to China. All Chinese technology products, whether they be electric vehicles, Huawei products and services, or the TikTok app, are irrationally denounced as a "national security threat" by the US. Although such denunciations are presented as legitimate "concerns" in the mainstream media, the accusers never furnish evidence to back their claim. Such accusations are based on McCarthyist hypotheses, which baselessly speculate that the given target will "spy" on behalf of China in some way or the other, and therefore the only option is to ban it outright.

This mass hysteria reached its height at the beginning of 2023, when the US unilaterally declared China's high-altitude meteorological balloon to be a "spy balloon". The US has applied the same lame logic to pretty much everything, creating a media echo chamber that offers no opinion to the contrary, no balance and no reasoning.

Despite this, the proposed ban has been criticized by industry insiders, who recognize the political motivations behind it and the damage it will cause. The Drone DJI website says: "The Airborne Public Safety Association, Law Enforcement Drone Association, and DRONERESPONDERS — which represent over 6,000 agencies, police and fire agencies with drone programs across the US — have written a letter to the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee to oppose the inclusion of the Countering CCP Drones Act in the Senate version of the NDAA."

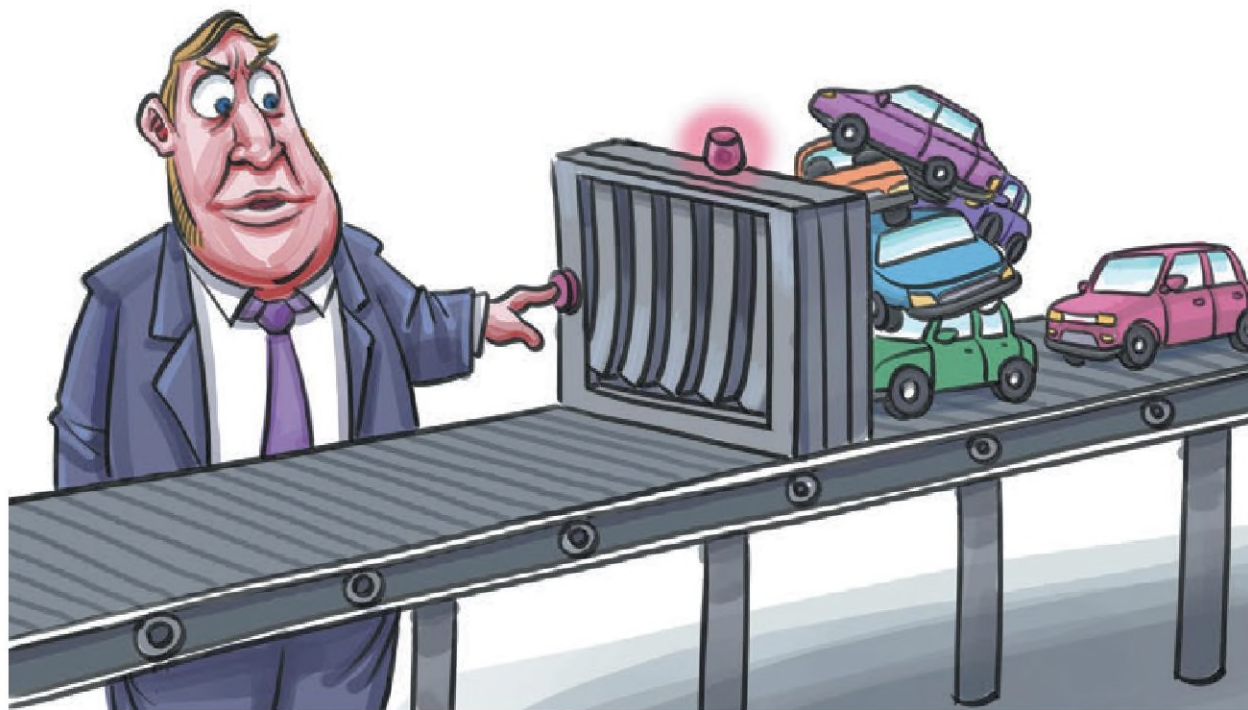
In another article published on the news site TechRadar, a columnist says: "In much the same way that no one has yet to definitively prove how TikTok is stealing our data and putting us at risk, I can find no proof that DJI drones are putting the US at risk." The author adds: "My frustration level with a US government that's sliding Chinese technology companies from safe and acceptable to dangerous and bannable like so many beads on an abacus is at an all-time high."

What sets the DJI ban apart from other US bans and sanctions on Chinese products is that it will impose economic and technological backwardness on itself just to oppose China, an action which is motivated by spite, opportunistic paranoia and small-minded protectionism. As it were with Huawei's 5G, Chinese-made EVs and other Chinese products, US politicians see the ban on Chinese-made drones as an acceptable way to curb China's technological progress only to increase the cost of US consumers and inconvenience them because it has completely lost its mind.

The author is a British political and international-relations analyst. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Despite this, the proposed ban has been criticized by industry insiders, who recognize the political motivations behind it and the damage it will cause.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Harald Brüning

New rules put 'Taiwan separatists' on final notice

The central authorities have put Taiwan's hardcore separatists, those seeking foreign support in particular, on final notice, urging them to accept the 1992 Consensus or face the music.

The Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the ministries of public security, State security and justice jointly issued a set of guidelines in Beijing on Friday, according to which criminal penalties will be handed down to "diehard" supporters of "Taiwan independence" for engaging in or inciting separatist activities.

The guidelines, which use the term "diehard" for clarification, have provisions for trial in absentia, come against the backdrop of escalating tensions across the Taiwan Strait, triggered by intensified separatist activities on Taiwan island, especially since the island's new administrative chief Lai Ching-te assumed office on May 20. Incidentally, Lai, too, is a diehard separatist given that he calls himself a "pragmatic worker for Taiwan independence".

The set of guidelines also acts as a warning to external forces trying to interfere in the Taiwan question to keep their hands off China's internal affairs.

While all the 183 countries that have diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, that is, about 95 percent of the United Nations member states, formally recognize the one-China principle, it is the world's worst kept secret that some of them,



In my opinion, the guidelines are a warning to intransigent separatists in Taiwan, particularly those backed by foreign governments, parties and think tanks, that their actions entail potentially dire consequences.

including some major Western powers, favor Taiwan's de facto separation from the Chinese mainland, although none of them would be brazen enough to openly advocate for the island's de jure independence, because of China's economic and political might and its growing role on the international stage.

Western nations' rejection or backing of separatism in foreign countries is not a matter of principle but depends merely on geopolitical considerations. For instance, while most Western governments supported Kosovo's secession from Serbia, they have kept their hands off the Catalan sepa-

ratism row in Spain. For obvious reasons, the Spanish government continues to regard Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence in 2008 as a violation of international law.

Similarly, while some Western countries have cast doubts on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's autonomous status within the People's Republic of China, they have remained virtually mum on the Indian government's revocation of the special autonomy status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019.

According to the guidelines jointly issued on Friday, "criminal acts include advocating for Taiwan's entry into international organizations limited to sovereign states or engaging in official exchanges and military contacts abroad to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan' in the international community".

Supported by a number of foreign countries, the Taiwan authorities have for years tried in vain to join the World Health Organization, the governing body of the World Health Organization.

A spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council said on Friday that "it is a common practice for countries around the world to use criminal justice measures to punish criminals who conduct secession and safeguard the core interests of the state".

Indeed, there are a number of countries that have implemented laws criminalizing separatism and/or secessionist activities, such as NATO member Türkiye and ASEAN

member Indonesia.

In my opinion, the guidelines are a warning to intransigent separatists in Taiwan, particularly those backed by foreign governments, parties and think tanks, that their actions entail potentially dire consequences.

I grew up just a few kilometers from the border that divided my home country Germany which, thanks to the powers that be, has been reunited since 1990. Though the situation of the Chinese mainland and Taiwan is different from that of the two Germanys before 1990, I do sincerely hope to be able to witness the peaceful reunification of China in my lifetime.

In order to achieve this goal, two main conditions must be met: Taiwan's "diehard" separatists must come to their senses and accept the historic reality that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, while foreign powers must keep their promise they made when they established diplomatic relations with Beijing that there is only one China and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China — and they must accept the fact that cross-strait relations are a domestic matter of the Chinese nation.

I believe anything else can be discussed within the framework of the 1992 Consensus by the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, necessarily without foreign meddling.

The author is director of the Macau Post Daily. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

PETER MOCK

German car manufacturers under pressure

There is still time for the EU and China to avoid new tariffs and agree on local content requirements that serve all

In mid-June, after months of investigation, the European Commission announced potential import tariffs on battery electric vehicles from China in the range of 17 to 38 percent, differentiated by manufacturer. This would be on top of the current standard tariff of 10 percent.

The decision is preliminary and needs to be confirmed by the commission by July 4. The new tariffs are the subject of much debate among EU policymakers. In particular, the German government, and automakers headquartered in Germany, are positioned against higher import tariffs.

After growth in recent years, China-headquartered manufacturers today account for about 3 percent of all new passenger car registrations in Germany. Brands of Japan and the Republic of Korea make up 8 percent and 6 percent of the market respectively, and manufacturers of the United States are another 7 percent. The remaining three-fourths of Germany's new car sales are provided by German brands (about 50 percent) and other Europe-headquartered manufacturers (about 25 percent).

However, when we look at battery electric vehicles only, Chinese brands already account for 8 percent of new car registrations in Germany. China-headquartered manufacturers recognized early how important it is to invest in battery technologies and vehicle electrification, and they are now benefiting from economies of scale and strong supplier networks. German manufacturers, meanwhile, have remained heavily reliant on combustion engine vehicle technology and are now perceived as late in offering attractive and affordable electric models.

The German government's purchase incentives for electric vehicles ended rather suddenly in late 2023, and the market share of battery electric vehicles has been stagnant at around 13 percent. But in 2025, the next level of car carbon dioxide standards that will come into effect in the European Union is expected to sharply increase electric vehicle market shares again. Some worry that a large fraction of this additional European demand will be met by vehicle imports from China.

European import tariffs may be perceived as a viable protection mechanism at first sight. But they present a dilemma for German automakers for two reasons.

First, it's not actually easy to put a stamp of origin on a manufacturer. A good example is the Smart brand. Originally fully part of Mer-

cedes-Benz, it is now half owned by Geely and half by Mercedes-Benz. Not a single Smart model is produced in Europe — the vehicles all come from China. According to the EU Commission's plans, a duty of 21 percent would be levied on Smart vehicles. Other models from manufacturers that are at least in part German would be similarly affected. This shows how the tariffs under discussion could affect Europe's domestic industry, as well.

Second, if the Chinese government decided to respond with increased tariffs on vehicle imports from Europe, German automakers would be hit especially hard, as they have a long history of sales activity in China. Today, about 17 percent of all new car sales in China are by German brands.

Those impacted the most by

increased tariffs might be consumers, though, in Europe and in China. Increased import tariffs would artificially increase vehicle prices, and consumers would have to pay in the end. At a time when we must urgently speed up the deployment of electric vehicles, this would be a step backward and risks losing precious time.

From what we know today, battery electric vehicles are the only technology that can deliver enough carbon dioxide savings for road transport to decarbonize within

the time frame of the Paris Agreement. This is on top of other benefits such as drastically reduced air and noise pollution, and avoided oil imports.

Combustion engine vehicles have served German brands well in previous years, but ultimately this technology doesn't have a future. There is no question that German manufacturers are increasingly feeling the pressure to transition to cleaner technologies more rapidly. Premium brands such as BMW and Mercedes already got hit by sur-

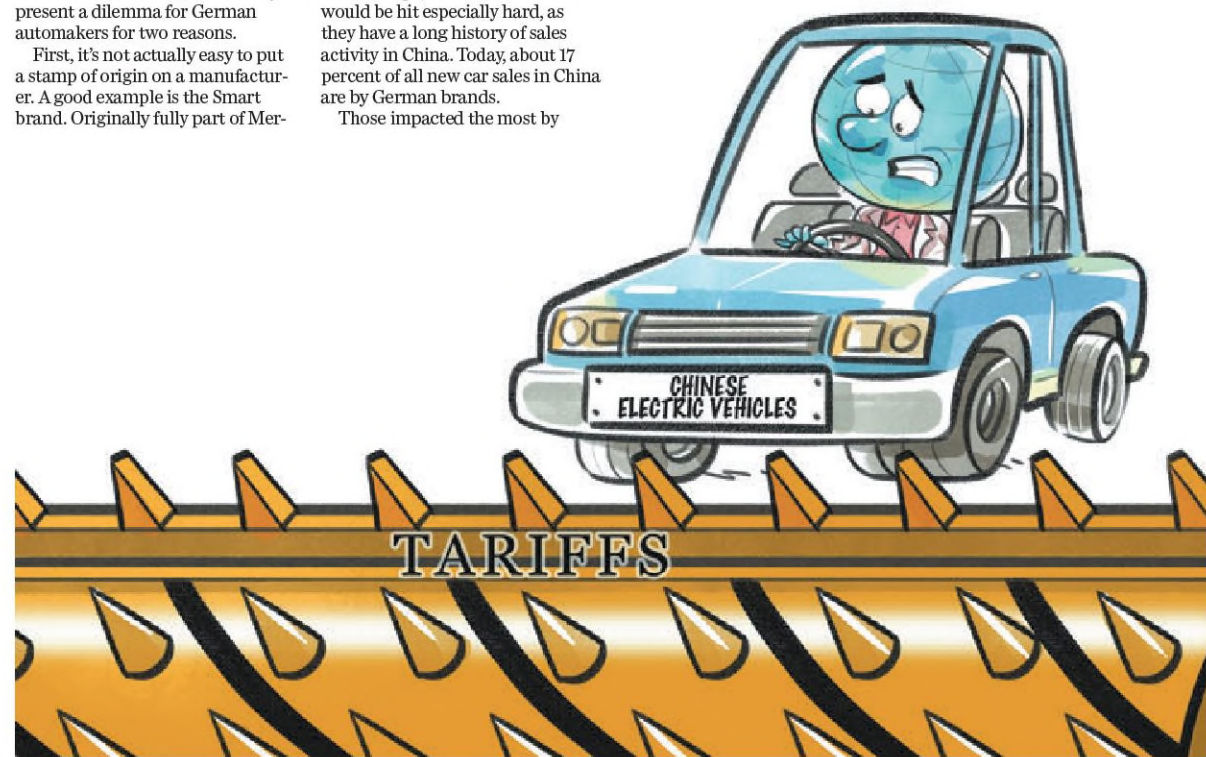
prise when Tesla sales skyrocketed some years ago. Now it is up to mass-market brands, such as Volkswagen, to better prepare to compete with affordable, right-sized battery electric vehicles manufactured by Chinese companies.

A fear regularly expressed is that the German car industry could find itself marginalized like the German solar panel industry was in the 2010s. Back then, German companies were leading in developing innovative solar panels but were then displaced by Chinese brands selling at very competitive prices. Today, about 90 percent of solar panels in Germany are imported from China. In Germany, this is a lesson remembered not only by policymakers and the industry, but also one that lives on in the public memory and influences public opinion.

Increased import tariffs on cars are not the only option. The EU and China could instead agree on local content requirements for electric vehicles. For many years, foreign vehicle manufacturers have had to produce locally in China, usually in collaboration with a Chinese manufacturer, to gain market access. A similar requirement in the EU could help ensure that Chinese manufacturers develop local production capacities that create jobs in Europe.

The clock is ticking, but there are still a few weeks before July 4. That means there is still time for a solution that serves all, including our climate and the environment, as well as consumers and industry in the EU and China.

The author is managing director of the European entity of the International Council on Clean Transportation. 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.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

ZHOU TAIDONG

An ongoing endeavor

China will continue to cooperate under the South-South Cooperation framework for global implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda

The United Nations 2030 Agenda remains an ambitious and uniting framework for global sustainable development. Yet, none of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are on track to be achieved by 2030, and only an estimated 16 percent of the SDG targets are progressing, according to the 9th edition of the Sustainable Development Report released on June 18, 2024, by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Global sustainable development is at a crossroads. The world faces great global challenges, including rising poverty and hunger, dire ecological crises, widening inequalities, disruptive technologies, worsening conflicts and deglobalization, to name just a few.

Since its adoption in 2015, China has attached great importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and has been pursuing development in line with the economic, social and environmental goals of the agenda. The following are some of the highlights.

China has placed development front and center. Its macroeconomic fundamentals have remained stable, and the Chinese economy has proved to be highly resilient. From 2015 to 2023, China's economy grew at an average annual rate of 5.8 percent, contributing more than 30 percent to global economic growth. The leading role of technological innovation has been enhanced. China ranks 12th among the 132 economies featured in the Global Innovation Index released by the World Intellectual Property Organization in 2023.

China has adhered to the people-centered development philosophy. It has achieved poverty reduction, and the maternal and child health targets of the 2030 Agenda ahead of schedule. The income level of the poor has increased significantly, the level of protection in such areas as education, medical care and housing has been remarkably improved,

so has infrastructure in roads, electricity and the internet. The net enrollment rate in primary schools and the gross enrollment rate in junior high schools reached almost 100 percent.

China has followed green and low carbon development. It continues to control pollution and has launched three campaigns against air, water and soil pollution. The air quality in cities at and above the prefecture level continues to improve, making China the country with the fastest improvement of atmospheric environmental quality in the world. The energy consumption per 10,000 yuan (\$1,377) of GDP fell by 15.5 percent compared with 2015, the fastest decrease in energy intensity in the world. China also plays a vital role in global renewables manufacturing. Solar batteries, lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles have replaced apparel, home appliances and furniture to become the new "three major ones" underpinning China's exports.

China, as the largest developing country, is also committed to global development cooperation and the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative are both aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The BRI has stimulated investments worth nearly \$1 trillion, launched more than 3,000 cooperation projects, created 420,000 jobs for participating countries, and lifted nearly 40 million people out of poverty. The GDI Group of Friends now has more than 80 members, and its project pool has more than 200 projects. The Center for International Knowledge on Development has also launched the Global Development Report and the Global Knowl-



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

edge Network for Development to serve as platforms for promoting knowledge and experience sharing among the Global South countries.

The 2030 Agenda has a bearing on the building of a community with a shared future and has passed

the halfway point. All countries should deliver on their responsibility to make as much progress as possible on all SDGs up to 2030. Some of the Chinese practices are worth further consideration in translating the concepts of the 2030 Agenda

into actions.

First, incorporating systems thinking about SDGs and the national decision-making and policymaking process can boost progress on the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs are indivisible, meaning progress on all 17 goals is necessary for building a sustainable future. Because many of the goals are interlinked, one or a handful of goals may have the capacity to "push progress" and make development more sustainable across many or even all the goals. The interplay between the goals matters. Systems thinking can help set priorities for actions on the SDGs by showing interactions, both synergies and trade-offs between the goals. For instance, China has striven to maintain a balance between development and protection, between overall and local interests, and between the present and the future. The country has worked to coordinate industrial restructuring, pollution control, eco-environmental conservation and climate response. It has endeavored to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, expand green development and pursue economic growth.

Second, China has adopted a holistic approach, by implementing integrated development strategies, cross-sector coordination, whole-of-society participation, as well as pilots of innovative solutions. For instance, the 2030 Agenda is integrated in the country's 13th (2015-20) and 14th Five-Year (2021-25) plans. China has established an inter-agency coordination mechanism involving 45 government departments. The 17 goals and 169 targets were divided and assigned to different departments according to their administrative responsibilities. The Progress Report on Imple-

mentation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the Center for International Knowledge on Development releases every two years, is itself an outcome of inter-agency coordination and participation, demonstrating the importance and effectiveness of an implementation mechanism.

Third, innovative local solutions based on local conditions should also be encouraged. China has adopted the National Innovation Demonstration Zone for Sustainable Development since December 2016. Shenzhen in Guangdong province is the most dynamic metropolis. Taiyuan, Shanxi province, is a resource dependent city seeking transformation. And Guilin in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region is known for its natural scenery. These cities were the first three to explore sustainable development-tailored development paths. For example, Taiyuan, where coal is the backbone of the economy, has been focusing on air and water pollution solutions and the circular economy since being chosen as a national pilot for resource-based cities. So, China has approved 11 cities as pilots to form a series of replicable innovative demonstration models.

Sustainable development is an ongoing endeavor. China is still confronted with an uphill battle for development in the shift of growth drivers as well as structural adjustment and upgrading. China is determined to keep pushing development forward in a more efficient, equitable and sustainable way. Sustainable development is also a joint human endeavor. China will continue to actively participate in international development cooperation under the South-South Cooperation framework and make more contributions to the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The author is vice-president of the Center for International Knowledge on Development. 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.

LIFE



Social Media Digest

Living in balance

Victoria Beckham recently celebrated her 50th birthday. Over the years, the pop star and fashion designer has built a reputation for strict self-discipline, maintaining a consistently fit physique and elegant image. However, in a May interview with Grazia fashion magazine, Beckham revealed her decision to ease up on calorie control and shared her newfound perspective on life. In the conversation, she reflected on often being portrayed as a "stern-faced ice queen". While she believes this image doesn't truly represent her, she has become less concerned with others' opinions as she ages. She remembered a newspaper photo after her first childbirth that had arrows pointing to areas where she needed to lose weight. "Those things can affect how you feel and conduct yourself in public," she said. "Now it doesn't bother me in the same way." Beckham is now embracing her complete self, finding a balance between strict routines and relaxation. "I'm very disciplined with the way that I eat, the way that I work out, and the way I work. That's just who I am," she said. "But I do like to have a drink, and I'm not going to be one of these 'Ah, there are too many calories in a glass of wine' types. Whatever. Life's too short. Let's have a nice time."



Victoria Beckham reveals in a recent interview that she plans to ease up on calorie control. VCG

Unmasking love's secrets

A wave of videos analyzing potential matchmaking candidates has recently emerged on Chinese social media platforms. The creators of these videos present themselves as experienced analysts in the matchmaking industry. They often display brief information about matchmaking candidates, submitted by their audience, on a whiteboard, and then start analyzing the hidden aspects behind these descriptions. In one video, for example, a female client shares details about a 31-year-old man who is 1.78 meters tall and runs his own business. While initially appearing decent, the analyst reveals various possible shortcomings of the man: the absence of weight information could hint at potential health concerns, and his entrepreneurial venture indicates an unclear financial situation, which may bring monetary risks. Many viewers react to these revelations with amusement, enjoying the unexpected twists in the storyline, while many are also eager to learn techniques for uncovering deception in intimate relationships through these videos. However, as reported by The Paper, some videos use a pre-written "script" to create dramatic turns. "Evaluating whether someone is suitable for a lifelong commitment cannot rely solely on brief text," psychologist Chen Zhilin told Yangtze Evening Post, a newspaper in Nanjing. "Attempting to draw definitive conclusions through standardized analyses is unreliable."

MENG WENJIE



Many young people seek out "matchmaking analysts" for advice on romance. VCG



Young people from across the globe pose for a photo on Jingsan Road, a historic road in the Ronghui old commercial area in Jinan, Shandong province, on June 22. DONG MING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Young explorers embrace Jinan's past

Jinan, with its blend of historical charm and modern opportunities, inspires young people worldwide.

By MENG WENJIE
mengwenjie@121st.cn

In 1904, Jinan, the capital city of Shandong province in East China, received approval from the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) government to open a commercial port. This decision positioned Jinan as the first major inland city in modern Chinese history to proactively engage with the outside world, marking a new chapter for this city. Fast forward 120 years, a group of nine young individuals from the initial investing nations following the port's opening, including Germany, the UK, Japan, and the US, visited Jinan from June 21 to 23. During their three-day stay, they explored the historical charm and contemporary vibrancy of Jinan, reflecting on the city's past while embracing the confidence and hope it instills in the present day. Caspar William Zialor, a 32-year-old from the UK, is familiar with Jinan. Currently pursuing a master's degree in journalism and communication at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, he first began his long-term study in China at Qingdao University, also in Shandong. Zialor noticed a significant similarity between Jinan and his hometown of London: both cities highlight their waterways, rivers, and canals as essential infrastructure for local economic growth. He observed how Jinan has effectively used these advantages to engage in trade with international businesses. "This allows Jinan to grow from a traditional Chinese city into a more modern and dynamic one that creates the global opportunities it enjoys today," he said. The long history of international exchange and cooperation has not only established a strong commercial foundation for Jinan but also cultivated an open mindset that embraces new products, technolo-

gies, and ideas. This openness continues to drive the city's economic development and industrial structure today. As the Jinan industrial cluster features advanced green and low-carbon technologies, these young individuals have been exposed to the concept of local sustainable development, which integrates with cutting-edge industries like modern finance and the digital economy. Antonia von Klot-Heydenfeldt, a 26-year-old mechanical engineering student from Germany currently pursuing a master's degree at Tsinghua University, found inspiration in Jinan's green industry. "I hope to work in this creative setting to learn from their advanced technologies and forward-thinking ideas," she said. Leopold Martin Chen Lind, a 19-year-old from Germany, pointed out that Jinan's focus on low-carbon and zero-carbon development corresponds with international development trends. He noted that young people worldwide prioritize

eco-friendly brands and are more likely to support environmentally conscious businesses. "This is why Jinan can attract young people from around the world; it aligns with what the younger generation values," he said. Even 120 years later, Jinan's former commercial port district has not faded into history. Instead, it remains relevant and has evolved into a bustling modern business hub. Today, this area combines its storied past with contemporary vibrancy, offering a fusion of tradition and modernity. Yuo Miri, a 19-year-old Japanese student at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, was captivated by the historic charm of the area. As an international student, she primarily relied on online resources for information about Jinan. While exploring Jinan travel guides, she noticed consistent mentions of the old commercial port. This district breathes new life into historic buildings with modern art, creating a vibrant space that appeals to young people worldwide. "The blend of ancient and contemporary architecture and innovative business concepts here is truly remarkable," she said. "It's a fantastic spot for young individuals to chill out, enjoy afternoon tea or brunch, and immerse themselves in the city's laid-back atmosphere." The establishment of the commercial port has also sparked cultural growth in Jinan. For example, the city witnessed the emergence of its first natural history museum, theater, and professional cinema. These facilities, which have stood since the city's period of opening up, served as the cultural heart of that era, and they continue to stand as symbols of Jinan's commitment to preserving traditional culture and ancient architecture to this day. During their travels, these young

visitors explored the former site of the city's first cinema, the Xiaoguanghan Cinema Museum, established in 1904. They also had the opportunity to watch a segment from the classic Chinese film *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Klot-Heydenfeldt was particularly fascinated by Xiaoguanghan's use of reels — a traditional technique — for screening movies. Li Jianjun, the museum director, explained to her that Xiaoguanghan is the oldest surviving cinema in China and that the decision to use film reels aims to deepen people's understanding of the historical evolution of the Chinese movie industry. "I think it's great how this place preserves tradition and helps people who come here to see the old machines and cameras," Klot-Heydenfeldt said. "It shows the development of these early devices to where we are now, which is great for people to understand how we came to this point in digitalization today." Lind, familiar with the renowned literary work *Dream of the Red Chamber*, learned from Li that Xiaoguanghan cinema not only expands the horizons of Chinese audiences through film but also promotes outstanding Chinese works on a global scale. Exploring the museum, Lind discovered that during the era of film reels, Xiaoguanghan stood out as one of the few cinemas in Jinan. Many viewers often requested the projectionist to replay the film after watching it because they were reluctant to leave. "This realization highlights the profound human touch beneath technology," Lind said. "I believe that this is the most significant aspect of this journey — not just acquiring knowledge about Jinan from books or online sources, but actively connecting with the people here in person."

LIFE

Breaking 'barrels' and glass ceilings

Shi Feng, a determined female distiller, challenges gender norms by mastering the craft of distillation and progressing from apprentice to workshop director.

By LIU KUN in Wuhan and GUI QIAN

At a workshop of the Yellow Crane Tower Distillery in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei province, numerous large steel barrels are filled with fermented sorghum mash — the essential ingredient for producing *baijiu*, a Chinese spirit. Next to these barrels, giant steamers and pipes aid in the distillation process, transforming the grain into liquor, which is then stored for aging.

At 30 years old, Shi Feng possesses the ability to tell the moisture content of sorghum simply by squeezing it, with an accuracy margin of less than 1 percent. By handling the mash, she precisely assesses the temperature within a deviation of just one degree. After distillation, she can also determine the alcohol content by observing the size, dissipation rate, uniformity, and longevity of the *baijiu*'s bubbles.

It took Shi five years to master these skills. Joining the distillery in 2016 after graduating from university, she started her journey from the ground up, eventually rising to become workshop director by 2021.

Proficient in every aspect of the brewing process, she supervises the entire production workflow. Among the 36 employees in the workshop, Shi is the only female distiller and the youngest, yet she now serves as a mentor to all the other distillers.

Historically, distillation was considered a "man's job." "Distilling was once physically demanding, so women were not typically involved," Shi explained. "However, with technological advancements, more women now participate in the craft. But still, female distillers are rare."

Every morning, distillers must inspect each step of the brewing process to ensure everything follows the set standards. Shi walks over 20,000 steps daily in the workshop's high-temperature environment. On one occasion, she even fainted while working because she was too busy to eat breakfast.

Given the stringent hygiene protocols in the food industry, Shi has consistently worn plain work clothes, refrained from using makeup, and avoided applying hair products over the years.

"This industry requires a stable mindset and a humble heart," she said.

As the only woman in the workshop, Shi faced skepticism and unjust criticism at first. In response, she held herself to even higher standards, earning respect through her expertise and performance.

"I have never sought lighter duties due to my smaller stature and strength. Instead, I actively assist my colleagues," she said.

Shi believes that female distillers possess unique strengths. "Women are meticulous in handling precise tasks. Proficiency in this field comes with experience — the longer we practise, the better we get," she said. "Women are also strong communicators, which helps resolve conflicts and manage the whole workshop efficiently."

From a novice to a technical expert, and now a manager and mentor, Shi's evolution and growth are evident. Specializing in bioengineering with a concentration in fermentation technology during her university studies, she entered the distillery through campus recruitment. Despite her academic background, most of the practical skills had to be acquired from scratch.

Distillation, as a traditional industry, relies on the apprenticeship model for the transmission of skills and knowledge. Shi's mentor, Qian Yanlin, is a distinguished inheritor of Wuhan's intangible cultural heritage, renowned for his mastery of light fragrance *baijiu* production.

Baijiu is unique for its distinct taste and aroma, categorized into four primary "fragrances": light, strong, rice, and soy sauce. Shi specializes in crafting light fragrance *baijiu*, known for its clear, transparent appearance and clean, refreshing aroma.

Nurturing craftsmanship

Over the span of seven years, Master Qian imparted crucial skills and techniques to Shi, such as sensory methods: feeling moisture differences by touch, assessing sorghum's texture by squeezing it, tasting acidity to evaluate fermentation quality, smelling to identify prominent aromas, and observing bubbles to determine alcohol content.

Additionally, Master Qian established an intangible cultural heritage preservation division within the distillery which collaborates with research institutions to investigate various metrics of *baijiu* using quantitative data. Shi actively engages in these initiatives, frequently shuttling between the workshop and the laboratory.

Beyond technical skills, Shi learned the significance of a craftsman's spirit from her mentor.

"Master stressed that work ethic and mindset are crucial for professional success. He taught me to fully commit to work, maintain a clear boundary between work and personal life, and focus solely on work during working hours," she recalled.

Gradually, Shi overcame her anxiety and impatience. "A proficient distiller must endure solitude and commit wholeheartedly to their craft without ever thinking of giving up," she said. "It may take a decade, two, or even longer to master this industry!"



From top to bottom: Shi Feng inspects the consistency of the fermented sorghum mash at a workshop of the Yellow Crane Tower Distillery in Wuhan, Hubei, on May 16. Shi checks the temperature and moisture levels of the mash on June 7. Shi (left) briefs one of her team members on the day's tasks on June 24. GAO PENGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY



TUCHONG

As veteran distillers retire one by one, a new wave of young talent is entering the distillery, much to Shi's delight. Seeing an increasing number of young people joining this age-old industry brings her hope and motivation.

Simultaneously, young consumers are taking a central role in the *baijiu* market. According to a white paper on the China *baijiu* industry in 2023, released by the China Alcoholic Drinks Association, there is a generational shift in the primary consumer demographic for *baijiu*.

Data indicates that individuals born between 1985 and 1994 are emerging as the predominant consumers, taking up 34 percent of the market. Meanwhile, the post-1995 generation (excluding those under 18) accounts for 18 percent of the market share.

To attract younger consumers, many renowned *baijiu* companies are adopting the "baijiu+" model,

introducing innovations like *baijiu*-infused ice cream, liquor-filled chocolates, *baijiu*-flavored coffee, and beauty products derived from distillery by-products.

"Young people are full of energy and creativity. I aspire for the new generation of distillers, me included, to break free from conventional constraints and come up with innovative ideas and solutions," Shi said.

"From a solitary grain of sorghum to a refined glass of *baijiu* on our tables, the grain undergoes so many transformations," Shi reflected on her career, likening her journey to that of a grain. "Distillation is a realm where diligence surpasses born talent. Whatever profession we choose, we should love it, and ultimately, excel in it."

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Overseas Report



Above: Chen Simo poses for a photo beside a poster of *The Legacy of the Qin and Han Dynasties* exhibition at the Archaeological Museum of Alicante, Spain, on Jan 13, 2024. Bottom: A giant statue of a Terracotta Warrior stands by the seaport in Alicante. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Cultural marvels unite nations

The highly anticipated exhibition, *On Top of the Pyramid: The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, is set to open in Shanghai in July, featuring 788 precious artifacts from Egypt.

This event has attracted considerable attention, with many netizens expressing their excitement, saying, "It's truly amazing to view nearly a thousand ancient Egyptian artifacts without leaving the country."

This exhibition brings to mind last year's *The Legacy of the Qin and Han Dynasties*, held at the Archaeological Museum of Alicante in Spain, as part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Spain.

The exhibition caused a sensation in Spain. I was lucky to participate in this event, witnessing the brilliant sparks of cultural exchange between China and Spain and feeling the deep interest and mutual respect both countries hold for each other's cultures.

I had the privilege of organizing a visit to the exhibition for local Chinese students. Upon entering the museum, a documentary detailing how Chinese and Spanish experts dismantled, packed, and transported the Terracotta Warriors and other artifacts from China to Spain immediately caught everyone's attention. The audience watched in awe, marveling at the complexity and precision of the cross-border transportation of cultural treasures.

Inside the exhibition hall, the museum created an immersive display area using advanced technology in lighting, music, and even scent, allowing visitors to explore history and ignite their imaginations.

As visitors entered the final exhibition hall and laid eyes on the lifelike Terracotta Warriors, they couldn't help but exclaim in admiration.

Many Spanish visitors traveled by train to Alicante just to see the Terracotta Warriors. They told us that posters of the exhibition were nearly everywhere on the train, and there was also a giant statue of a Terracotta Warrior by the seaport in Alicante.

These visitors not only praised the craftsmanship of the artifacts but also gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for China, vowing to explore the rich Chinese culture firsthand in the future.

Timeless connection

For many Chinese students, it was also their first time seeing the Terracotta Warriors in person. As described in our childhood textbooks, each warrior a highly exquisite artistic treasure. Upon close observation, each figure has a unique expression: some with bowed heads, deep in thought, as if strategizing to defeat the enemy; others with bright eyes and solemn faces, as if determined to fight for the unification of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC); some clenching their fists, as if waiting for the call to battle; and others gazing into the distance, as if missing their families back home. Standing close to them, one could almost feel their gentle breathing.

These precious artifacts are not just static artworks but bridges across time and space. They connect the past with the present, breaking down barriers of nationality and language, subtly eliminating misunderstandings and prejudices and reshaping attitudes and views on other cultures.

Culture is a shared treasure of humanity. Whether it's the exhibition of ancient Egyptian artifacts in Shanghai or the display of Qin and Han Dynasties artifacts in Alicante, these cultural exchange activities fully demonstrate the unique charm and powerful influence of culture to promote world peace and enable people to jointly address the challenges and opportunities brought by globalization so that we can achieve shared prosperity and progress of all countries.

As a Chinese student studying abroad, I strongly believe that cultural exchange is not just governmental interactions; it is a personal responsibility for each of us. We all have the opportunity to serve as ambassadors for Chinese culture.



Written by Chen Simo, a 20-year-old Taiwan student at Shanghai International Studies University, who is currently participating in an exchange program at the University of Alicante in Spain.