

Flying low but on a high

Local authorities explore ways to make most of low-altitude economy

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Iran nuclear deal backed at UN meeting

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A tale of two cities

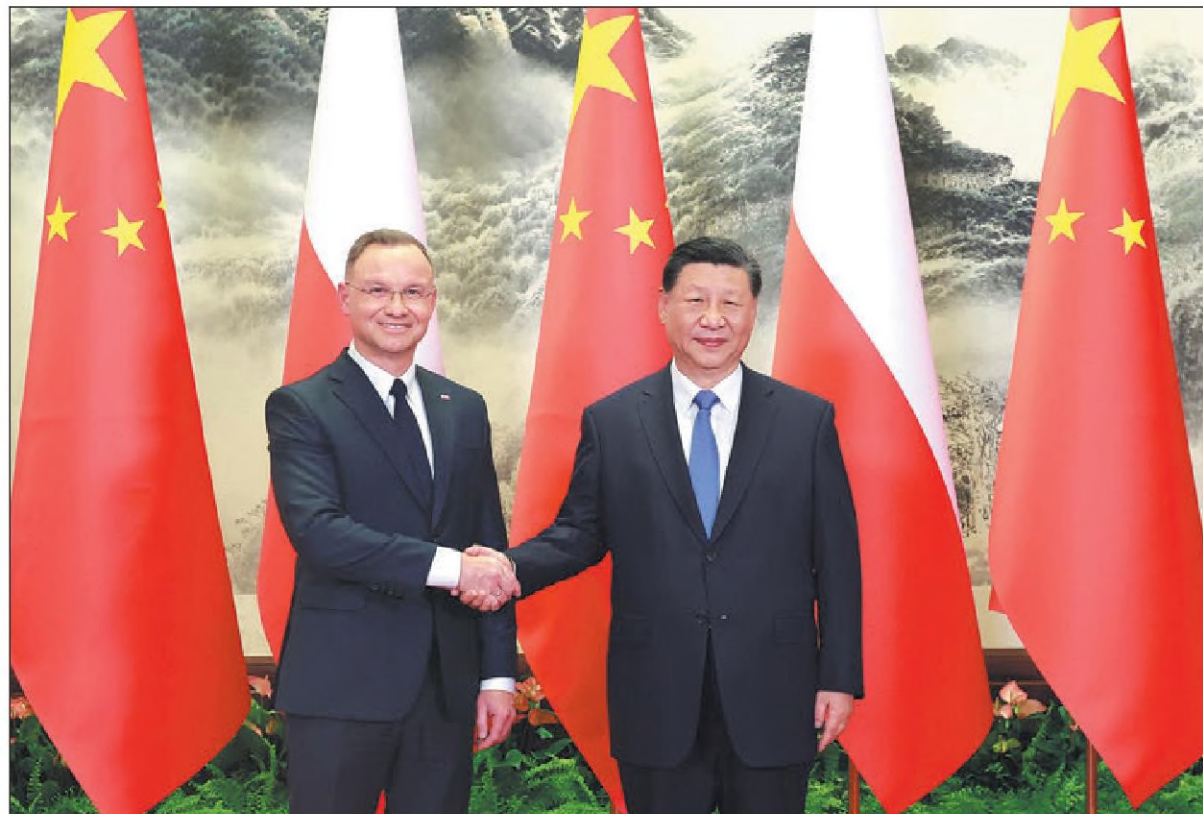
Oriental fashion meets Western style, blending culture, dynamism

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President Xi Jinping meets with Polish President Andrzej Duda at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Action plan issued to bolster Sino-Polish relations

By WANG QINGYUN wangqingyun@chinadaily.com.cn

China has decided to implement a 15-day visa-free policy for Polish citizens, President Xi Jinping said when meeting with visiting Polish President Andrzej Duda in Beijing on Monday, as both nations jointly issued an action plan to boost cooperation in trade and other fields.

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China and Poland should work together to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and push forward their cooperation on the China-Europe Railway Express and other major projects, Xi told Duda, who is on a five-day state visit to China.

Xi also called on the two countries to enhance cooperation on trade, agriculture, the digital economy, green industry and clean energy.

China welcomes the import of more high-quality agricultural products from Poland, and supports both

nations in expanding investment in each other's country, Xi said, adding that China hopes Poland will provide Chinese companies with a business environment that is fair, just and nondiscriminatory.

Duda said his country hopes to continue to promote Belt and Road cooperation with China, while deepening cooperation in areas including trade, agriculture and infrastructure.

Poland also looks to expand bilateral cooperation in emerging sectors, such as the digital economy and new energy vehicles, Duda said. Poland has been China's largest trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe since 2005, according to the Foreign Ministry. Bilateral trade in 2023 reached \$42.03 billion.

Both Xi and Duda expressed the two countries' hope to work together to promote China's cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, and its relations with Europe as a whole.

Poland is a member of the coopera-

tion mechanism between China and Central and Eastern European countries. The mechanism was launched when leaders of the countries met for the first time in Warsaw in 2012.

Promoting trade is among the major goals of Duda's visit, said Kong Tianping, a researcher at the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

According to the action plan issued on Monday, both sides said they will work together to grant wider access for Polish products to the Chinese market and promote and simplify exports of Polish products to China.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Poland, one of the first countries to recognize New China.

Duda's visit comes more than two years after his attendance at the opening ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Olympic Winter Games. He also met with Xi at that time.

Xi and Duda also exchanged views

on the Ukraine crisis on Monday.

Xi emphasized that China's position on the crisis promotes peace, talks and a political settlement. Parties should work to avoid the expansion or escalation of the conflict, de-escalate the situation and create conditions for peace talks, Xi said, adding that this is in line with the interests of the international community, including Europe.

China opposes some people's attempts to use normal China-Russia trade as an excuse to shift the blame and smear China, Xi said.

In addition, China encourages and supports all efforts that will help to solve the crisis peacefully, and promotes the building of a European security architecture that is balanced, effective and sustainable, Xi said. China will continue to play a constructive role in promoting the political settlement of the crisis in its own way, he added.

Premier Li Qiang also met with Duda in Beijing on Monday.

Xi calls for a strong sci-tech nation by 2035

President emphasizes self-reliance, openness and international cooperation

By XU WEI xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping set out a sweeping vision on Monday to build China into a strong nation in science and technology by 2035, calling for stronger steps to bolster the nation's self-reliance drive while enhancing openness and global cooperation.

In a landmark speech delivered to academicians, researchers and senior officials in Beijing, Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, stressed

the need for a stronger sense of urgency and greater strides in innovation to "seize the commanding heights in sci-tech competition and future development".

The speech was given at a meeting at the Great Hall of the People that combined the national sci-tech conference, the national science and technology award conference, and the general assemblies of the members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

During the meeting, Xi presented medals and certificates for the country's top sci-tech award to Li Deren, an academican of the CAS and CAE from Wuhan University, and Xue Qikun, an academican of the CAS from Tsinghua University.

"A nation thrives when its science and technology thrive, and a robust science and technology sector is the cornerstone of a strong nation," the president said in the 45-minute speech.

"Chinese modernization hinges on sci-tech advancement, and the



Li Deren



Xue Qikun

nation's high-quality development depends on building new momentum of growth through innovation in science and technology," he said.

Xi summarized China's key achievements in sci-tech development since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in November 2012, before putting forward key experiences drawn from development practices during the period.

Xi reiterated the need to maximize the decisive role of the market in allocating sci-tech resources while

enhancing government functions, and to boost enthusiasm across industry, academia and research.

He called for steps to drive the integration of technological and industrial innovation to boost the development of new quality productive forces, saying that the supply of high-quality technological products must be increased, with a focus on key areas and weak links in the construction of a modern industrial system.

He highlighted the significance of spawning emerging and future industries and actively using new technologies to upgrade traditional industries.

The priority is to train outstanding engineers, master craftsmen and highly skilled individuals, while strengthening the training of young scientific and technological talent, he said.

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Peru-China friendship rooted in shared understanding, common aspirations

Editor's note: Peruvian President Dina Boluarte Zegarra will kick off a five-day state visit to China on Tuesday, her first visit to the country since taking office in 2022. On the day of her arrival, China Daily is publishing her signed article, in which the president speaks highly of the Peru-China relationship and expresses her wish to strengthen cooperation in various fields to create a brighter future for the two countries.

Peru and China have cultivated a robust and deep friendship over many years, founded on mutual trust, respect and unwavering solidarity. Our comprehensive strategic partnership continues to strengthen and constitutes the resilient framework deeply rooted in the hearts of our peoples who share ancient civilizations and a unique wealth of biodiversity.

Through good and bad times, we have stood together, sharing both triumphs and challenges, embodying the true essence of a firm friendship, even though separated by sea and land. Rooted in shared understanding and common aspirations, our special relationship has transcended our distant borders, making Peru and China not only good partners but also trusted friends.

Our historical ties are deep,

spanning centuries of social, cultural and economic exchanges. Chinese ancestors migrated to Peru, fostering connections and cooperation, and blending their culture with ours, which has endured over time and can be widely felt today in all cities of Peru.

Peru's strategic location has historically facilitated trade and cultural interactions between China and South America, contributing to the development and prosperity of both regions. With the upcoming inauguration of the only deep-water mega-port in South America in the fishing city of Chancay, which is being built by the Chinese-Peruvian company COSCO Shipping and the mining company Volcan, maritime connectivity and logistics with China and other Asia-Pacific countries will be pro-



Peruvian President Dina Boluarte Zegarra

foundly modified. We even hope that this port will be the beginning of the construction of a technological and industrial development hub, following the example of the city of Shenzhen, for which I call on Chinese companies to be our partners in this great project.

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Premier's visit boosts Beijing-Canberra ties

Chinese Premier Li Qiang's recent visit to Australia was outstanding and unexpectedly successful. The outcomes signal a new phase in Sino-Australian relationship on the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries. The visit gives the relationship new momentum at a time when many observers expected only a continuation of stabilization in relations.

Premier Li identified areas of cooperation in existing trade rela-

WORLD WATCH

By Daryl Guppy

tionships, and both sides reaffirmed their commitment to supporting global trading rules of the World Trade Organization. This built upon previous cooperation where the two countries developed an alternative dispute resolution process in the face of the United States' continued refusal to confirm the appointment

of new appellate judges.

Unexpectedly for Australian observers, China extended the hand of friendship by confirming 15-day single-entry visa-free travel for Australian visitors on a non-reciprocal basis. Visa-free travel dramatically improves people-to-people contact and facilitates the faster development of business relationships and economic growth. This significant gesture is greatly appreciated by tourists and business travelers alike.

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GLOBAL GOVERNANCE SCHOOL SET TO AID COUNTRY'S ROLE ON WORLD STAGE

Program aims to prepare graduates for jobs with international organizations, redress imbalance

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai zhouwenting@chinadaily.com.cn

The Shanghai University of International Business and Economics inaugurated the School of Global Governance, the first of its kind in Shanghai, on May 27, with the aim of training young talented Chinese to work in the global arena.

For the first time in the country, a school will provide undergraduate, graduate and PhD degrees in global

In-depth

governance to respond to the nation's rising need to provide talent for international organizations.

The main academic courses will combine politics, economics and law, with instruction given in English. All graduates will be required to be fluent in English and French, two of the official working

languages of the United Nations.

Qi Ming, Party secretary of SUIBE, said the school is dedicated to cultivating professionals who are focused on international economic organizations, familiar with national guidelines and policies as well as international rules, and proficient in international negotiations. They must also understand China's national conditions, while having a global perspective.

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PAGE TWO

Training: Nurturing talent to enhance voice

From page 1

The world's economic and trade pattern is currently undergoing deep adjustments, experts said. As China increasingly moves toward the center of the world, it has an obligation to further participate in global governance.

"Such a situation raises an urgent need for the country to prepare a large number of talented people who have international vision, are familiar with international rules, and are capable of participating in international affairs and negotiations," said Yi Xiaozhun, former deputy director-general of the World Trade Organization.

At present, there is a considerable gap between the scale of Chinese staff at international organizations, their rank and influence, and China's international standing, said Yi, who worked at the WTO for eight years.

"In order to enhance China's voice in the international economic and trade arena, we must participate in more international economic and trade negotiations and have talent familiar with international rules and proficient in Sino-foreign negotiations and communication," said Hong Xiaodong, former director of the Department of WTO Affairs under the Ministry of Commerce.

Opening global economy

A report delivered at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2022 said that China's development should provide opportunities for the world, promote the construction of an open world economy, and build a new type of international relations.

"As one of the largest developing countries, China can push global governance in various fields forward in a more just and reasonable direction. This is not only for its own benefit but also for many other developing countries as well," said Yi.

Zhang Xiangchen, deputy director-general of the WTO, said the reshaping of international trade and investment rules will be quite important, especially when global trade is facing various difficulties, including the adjustment of global supply chains in the post-pandemic era, as well as the digital divide and climate change.

The Ministry of Education unveiled a work plan to optimize university majors in April last year, with support for universities to establish departments, such as those relating to global governance, based on their own advantages.

Qi said the new school of governance was founded in this context. The school is committed to becoming a training base to provide talent for international organizations, as well as a research institution and a think tank for global economic governance. It will also be a platform for communication and exchanges in international economic and trade negotiations.

Another tertiary institution, the Shanghai International Studies University, has sent more than 100 students to work as interns at international organizations, including the UN Headquarters, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN Volunteers, UNESCO, and the UN Refugee Agency, in recent years. From September 2023 to now, the number was 22. The interns have worked in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and other international cities.

Last year, the school also provided a training course for more than 260 tertiary students that focused on



Representatives from WTO Asia-Pacific member countries attend a training class at the Shanghai University of International Business and Economics in May. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China's underrepresentation in international organizations leads to restrictions on its right to speak in such organizations, and makes it somewhat difficult to exert influence on international affairs."

Yi Xiaozhun, former deputy director-general of the World Trade Organization



Clockwise from above: The SUIBE delegation participates in the 2017 Asia-Pacific WTO Moot Court Competition in Seoul, South Korea; officials from WTO Asia-Pacific member countries receive training at SUIBE; students from Shanghai International Studies University participate in a five-day simultaneous interpretation training session at the United Nations Office in Geneva.



Lack of representation

The number of Chinese staff at international organizations is still disproportionate to the country's standing as the world's second-largest economy, said several experts.

International organizations

Instructors with work experience at international organizations and in the foreign affairs and diplomatic sectors, gave lectures on diplomatic negotiation strategies, the growth path of Chinese diplomats in the new era, and the core values and abilities of international civil servants.

China, for example, accounted for more than 15 percent of United Nations' financial contributions from 2022 to 2024, second only to the United States. However, China has just over 1,300 people working in the UN system, accounting for only 2.3 percent of the total. The US, France, and Kenya, by comparison, have about 5,500, 4,400, and 3,700 people employed in the system respectively.

There are even fewer Chinese staff members working at non-language posts at the UN Secretariat, the lowest level among the five per-

manent members of the UN Security Council, according to Yi.

Most of the Chinese in the UN system do translation, conference affairs, and logistics work, among other tasks. Only a small proportion of Chinese work at senior levels, and have the opportunity to participate in management and decision-making.

"China's underrepresentation in international organizations leads to restrictions on its right to speak in such organizations, and makes it somewhat difficult to exert influence on international affairs. Such a

situation also makes it hard to effectively demonstrate the image of a responsible big country," Yi said.

"In the WTO, I've always hoped that young talent from China can join its legal department or work in dispute settlement. Several UN officials at senior levels told me that Chinese candidates usually have strong logical thinking and are very diligent. However, many of them have shortcomings when it comes to the drafting of legal documents," he said.

Ian Phillips, director of the news and media division of the

Department of Global Communications at the UN, said that he has witnessed a growing number of Chinese staff in the UN system, even though they might still be underrepresented.

"I see a growing Chinese influence, especially with young people, including interns. In our department, we have a Chinese team that creates news in formats of written stories and video pieces on a daily basis. They are very capable, innovative, and solution-focused. They do important work," Phillips said.

"Perhaps the underrepresentation of Chinese staff in the UN system is because China's growth has been rapid. It's just that the number of staff members has not increased as rapidly as that," he said.

Peter Dawkins, chief of the Web services section of the Department of Global Communications at the UN, said that the requirement of working languages at the UN Secretariat could be an extra barrier for candidates from China.

If a candidate from China applies for an information technology post, for instance, they will be competing against applicants from the United Kingdom, the United States and France who are fluent in English or French and have a natural advantage, he said.

Playing to strengths

Interdisciplinary competency is one way Chinese talent can prepare for international organizations, several experts said.

Lu Xiankun, who was formerly a Chinese counselor to the WTO, said that today there are diversified global challenges, such as climate change, public health, and food security, and many different international organizations are working in those fields.

However, when it comes to solutions they are also always concerned about economics and trade. Young talent, therefore, must have good knowledge in this area plus another major, Lu said.

Citing the WTO as an example, he explained that while it is a trade organization, the real work usually involves a combination of politics, economics and trade, and the law.

While WTO employees must have outstanding capability in their academic majors, they must also think outside the box and "consider the subject of negotiation from the perspective of international relations and national strategy", Lu said.

In addition to good professional skills, a global perspective, and the ability to adapt in a multicultural environment are also necessary for any applicant to international organizations, said Wang Xiaoyuan, a master's student from Shanghai and an intern at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

"I studied in Australia and New Zealand through exchange programs, which allowed me to get an in-depth look at the aquaculture industry in different countries. It laid a foundation for this internship in Rome," said the 24-year-old.

Hong, the former WTO official, said potential employees of such organizations must also be equipped with the ability to look into new subjects that require attention. "These may include digital trade, the environment and new energy, and empowering women," he said.

Dawkins from the UN said it is always good to have general skills, such as communication, teamwork, being able to think creatively, leadership, and data analysis, for young talented people to work for international organizations.

UN internship paved the way for bigger, better role

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai

Wang Weiwei, 34, who has been with international organizations for seven years, tells of the benefits of his overseas work experience.

During my graduate studies at a university in Shanghai, I worked as an intern at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization for six months in 2015.

After that, I was officially employed as a UN fisheries officer after two years.

In 2022, I joined the African Development Bank and was relocat-

ed to Cote d'Ivoire, where I was mainly engaged in agriculture-related government projects.

I believe the reason I got the fisheries job had a great deal to do with a project I did during my internship.

Integrating 50 years of data about 3,000 aquaculture species from different regions with information from the World Health Organization and the World Bank, I built a data model. The model compared economic indicators with life expectancy, and how many fish that people from different regions ate every day.

The project impressed some offi-

cial, as this "correlation analysis" provided data support that could be used at meetings of fishery directors from UN member countries, and could be used by the UN to make recommendations about aquaculture and set health advice for the public.

Compared with my previous internship experiences, which were often business-centered, I believe that working at an international organ of the UN gave me a strong sense of mission and made me more motivated. I also found the work much more fulfilling.

For example, some of the least-

developed countries had no fisheries facilities at all, and the department I worked for at the UN helped them build such facilities from scratch.

In some countries, we held seminars to promote good fisheries management practices. For example, China's fishing "off season", which is imposed every summer, was studied and copied by other countries.

While other good fisheries management practices were initiated by developed countries, international organizations like the UN agency promoted them at the international level. For instance, coastal provinces, including Zhejiang and

Shandong, have established a fishing quota system over the past decade. The quota sets catch sizes for boats and acceptable sizes for crabs and abalone that can be kept by fishermen.

This was also the practice of some developed countries at first, and we promoted it at the international level.

In 2018, with the help of China Fisheries Law Enforcement, I compiled the first market price report on China's aquatic products, which account for more than 70 percent of the world's total aquatic production.

I feel that jobs such as these link employees to international platforms and networks, and provide us with adequate resources to realize what we want to achieve through our work.



Wang Weiwei

TOP NEWS



Participants from the United States pose for a photo at the opening ceremony of Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-US Youth Festival in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on Monday. Over 200 youngsters from 29 states in the US were invited to take part in around 50 exchange activities during the festival, together with more than 300 young Chinese people in Fuzhou. HU MEIDONG / CHINA DAILY

Xi urges youths to bolster bonds

Hundreds of Chinese, US participants gather for exchanges at Kuliang summer retreat

By ZHANG YUNBI and HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou

Young people are energetic and full of dreams, and "the future of China-United States relations lies in young people", President Xi Jinping said on Monday.

Xi made the remarks in a congratulatory message he sent to the Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-US Youth Festival, which opened in Fuzhou, Fujian province, and for which hundreds of young people from both nations have gathered for exchanges. The event is scheduled to run through Sunday.

Kuliang is a famous summer retreat in the mountainous outskirts of Fuzhou, the capital of the southeastern coastal province.

Over a century ago, foreigners living in or near Fuzhou built villas in Kuliang, enabling harmonious coexistence with local villagers.

In his message, Xi noted that the century-old bond with Kuliang is a story of friendly exchanges between the peoples of China and the US.

The president said he is pleased to see young people from all walks of life in China and the US gather in Fuzhou to revisit the story of Kuliang, pass down the bond of Kuliang and help enhance exchanges and understanding between the two peoples.

“This event is the largest in scale and richest in terms of form and content (among the events of its kind) since the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations.”

Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries

It is hoped that Chinese and US youths will have in-depth exchanges, bolster friendship, get to know each other well and work hand in hand to carry forward China-US friendship, he said.

Xi added that he expects the young people to contribute to the sound and steady growth of China-US relations, and work with people around the world to build on peace, promote progress and create prosperity.

For the festival, more than 200 young people from 29 states and more than a dozen sectors in the US were invited to meet with over 300 young Chinese people in Fuzhou.

Around 50 exchange activities will be held during the festival, including dialogues, roundtable discussions, documentary screenings, art salons, concerts and friendly sports matches, as well as opportunities to experience intangible cultural heritage.

After listening to Xi's message, which was read out on Monday at the opening ceremony of the festival, Anna O'Connor, an undergraduate student at the University of Iowa and a festival participant, said that "it is very interesting to hear that he is very involved with this festival and how he cares to bring ties together with the US".

"It's really important for young people to be involved and pay attention to what's happening around the world and just foster bonds that will create peace," she said.

In order for young people to get along well in an era of social networks and artificial intelligence, it is crucial to "communicate and bond with people and make sure you're getting their stories in a face-to-face format", O'Connor said.

Yang Wanming, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, said, "This event is the largest in scale and richest in terms of form and content (among the events of its kind) since the establishment of China-US diplomatic relations."

The festival is also a signature program to fulfill the major propos-

al made by Xi last year to invite 50,000 young people from the US to visit China for exchanges and study over the next five years, he added.

Mira Vance, a US student at Peking University's Yenching Academy, said she "very much agrees with" Xi's high hopes on youth exchanges.

"As people get older, it's kind of more difficult to change perception and to adapt to something new", and it is a really wonderful opportunity to step in now before perceptions get cemented.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the festival in a prerecorded video message, Xie Feng, Chinese ambassador to the US, noted that various departments of the two sides have been earnestly implementing the consensus reached by the two heads of state, and China-US relations have shown a stabilizing trend, which "has been welcomed by all walks of life in the two countries and by the international community".

Lisa Heller, US consul general in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, told the young participants at the ceremony that her own life "has been dedicated to diplomacy, but for many of you, your future may be education, journalism or business".

"Whatever field you choose, China is almost certain to be an important asset of that undertaking," she said.

Contact the writers at zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Outcomes: Ties moving beyond mere stabilization, gathering new momentum

From page 1

The change in visa policy is a significant outcome of the visit because visa-free travel is fundamental to improving people-to-people links and exchanges at all levels. It is also an indication that the relationship is moving beyond mere stabilization and is gathering new momentum.

Other achievements of the Canberra meetings include additional discussions on free trade, expansion of the annual high-level economic dialogue and commitment to collaboration and exchanges in the fields of art and culture. These are important steps toward restoring cooperative momentum in what have been traditional areas of trade and tourism.

China and Australia confirmed plans to resume the strategic economic dialogue in 2024. The dialogue is significant because it enables discussion of high-level economic issues by governments and businesses. This builds on the diplomatic successes of the two sides.

China has continued to witness economic rebound with new growth drivers gaining momentum. The new agreements on cooperation in the areas of climate change, education and research take the relationship to a higher level.

Climate change cooperation focuses on tackling a range of challenges in the fields of research, supply chains and resource offtake agreements. These issues were pursued during the 7th China-Australia CEO Roundtable Meeting in Perth, Western Australia.

The positive message that emerged from the meeting was the successful exchange of viewpoints on a number of issues with a commitment to further discussion. Australian businesses are excited by China's economic growth outlook, particularly in the new economy areas of green energy and digital development.

Australia continues to seek Chinese investment in selected areas. Premier Li indicated that China is interested in further investment in resource development and other areas, but it wants to be treated fairly in a way that is consistent with the treatment of investment from other countries.

The positive message that emerged from the meeting was the successful exchange of viewpoints on a number of issues with a commitment to further discussion. Australian businesses are excited by China's economic growth outlook, particularly in the new economy areas of green energy and digital development.

It is clear that tax incentives for processing strategic minerals in Australia will remain off-limits for Chinese companies even though they established the lithium industry in Australia and Australia relies on Chinese expertise to develop the new processing facilities.

This was perhaps the most major issue that remained unresolved and will require more discussion. Businesses were satisfied that their concerns were noted by both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Premier Li.

Prior to Li's arrival in Australia, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Lin Jian said the objective is to "enhance understanding and mutual trust, deepen pragmatic cooperation and jointly build a more mature, stable and fruitful China-Australia comprehensive strategic partnership".

Premier Li's visit achieved those objectives, providing the momentum to move the Australia-China relationship in new directions beyond stabilization to participate in China's economic rebound.

The author is an international financial technical analysis expert and a former national board member of the Australia China Business Council. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Notice

Lu Liqing (deceased), Lu Jinqiao, and other farmers' residence land users of Brigade 4, Qinjian village, Heqing town, Pudong New Area, Shanghai [farmers' residence land usage certificate of Hu Ji Zhai (Chuan) Zi No 012864]:

According to the "Notice on the Compensation Schemes for Houses on the Expropriated Land" with the documents numbered Hu Pu Yu Zheng Di Gao [2023] No 381 and Hu (Pu) Zheng Di Fang Bu Gao [2024] No 26, the aforementioned property has been included in the land expropriation scope of the supporting land reserve project for Parcel D10B-04 in the Chuansha North Community area, Heqing town.

The project has entered the compensation phase for properties on the expropriated land. Because related rights holders of the aforementioned property cannot be contacted, related expropriation documents cannot be sent to them and negotiations cannot be conducted. Related rights holders of the aforementioned household are therefore required to contact the expropriation implementing unit within seven days from the date of publication of this notice and provide a valid property ownership (property rights) certificate, identity certificate, contact address and contact number to ensure delivery of relevant expropriation documents to negotiate compensation. Failure to contact us within the time limit will result in the company announcing relevant procedures concerning the expropriation and compensation of the properties in accordance with the regulations, through the bulletin board of this base.

Office hours: 9:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday
Contact address: Building 2, No 1500, Zu Chongzhi Road, Pudong New Area, Shanghai, China
Contact: Dai Yu
Tel: 86-17011860112
Supervision Hotline: 86-18001953800
Property expropriation implementing unit: Shanghai Pudong No 1 Property Expropriation Service Firm Co Ltd

Appendix:

Delivery Sent Notice (1)

Lu Liqing (deceased) and Lu Jinqiao (household):

According to the "Notice on the Compensation Schemes for Houses on the Expropriated Land" with the documents numbered Hu Pu Yu Zheng Di Gao [2023] No 381 and Hu (Pu) Zheng Di Fang Bu Gao [2024] No 26, the aforementioned property has been included in the land expropriation scope of the supporting land reserve project for Parcel D10B-04 in the Chuansha North Community area, Heqing town.

Notice is hereby given that relevant documents will in the coming days be directly delivered to co-owners who can be directly contacted. The co-owners who receive the documents are responsible for forwarding them to other co-owners, and negotiations should be conducted on a household basis.

Shanghai Pudong No 1 Property Expropriation Service Firm Co Ltd
June 25, 2024

Peru: Visit presents valuable opportunity to learn from China

From page 1

In the modern era, our partnership is expressed in various initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative, the high-level political dialogue, the free trade agreement, the economic cooperation dialogue, and of course the Peru-China comprehensive strategic partnership. These and many other initiatives aim to deepen political-diplomatic dialogue, promote economic development, increase bilateral trade, and foster practical cooperation in various sectors. As we embark on a new era of collaboration, we are committed to taking our bilateral relationship to new heights, fostering integration and mutual prosperity.

I sincerely extend invitation to President Xi Jinping to visit Peru, hoping the possible reciprocal visits this year will be a new historic moment in strengthening our bilateral relations, injecting new momentum into our cooperation and mutual trust. My visit is paving

the way for greater investment and cooperation in key sectors, benefiting both nations and peoples. We express our gratitude to President Xi and the Chinese government for their kind invitation. I sincerely hope President Xi can visit Peru in November, which will represent a new chapter in our mutual friendship and cooperation, a year after our first key meeting in San Francisco during APEC 2023.

The updated version of our cooperation promises a brighter future for Peru and China. Through joint efforts, we have identified priority areas that include infrastructure development, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, industrialization, clean energy, trade facilitation, e-commerce, and deepening people-to-people relations, including in culture, education and tourism. All this without discounting our firm commitment of Peru and China to fight climate change, preserve biodiversity, and achieve the United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals.

My visit to China presents a valuable opportunity to learn from China's experiences and knowledge, which in a few decades have made it the world's second-largest economic power. Currently, China is our main trading partner and one of the largest investors in my country. We hope that more Chinese citizens will visit Peru, appreciate the friendship of the Peruvian people, and learn about ancient Andean cultures, including the Inca civilization. Therefore, I call for one or more Chinese flag airlines to establish a direct route to Lima, the capital of Peru, where I will inaugurate in December the most modern airport in Latin America.

Since I took office, my government has been dedicated to advancing a comprehensive agenda to improve governance and promote inclusive and sustainable economic development and growth. Our priorities include promoting investment, fostering technology, science and innova-

tion, and improving economic resilience. We are committed to creating a favorable environment for business and foreign investment, especially including Chinese projects and initiatives in Peru, ensuring their success and contribution to our shared prosperity. The conclusion of the update of the current free trade agreement is another key link in our strengthened cooperation.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that Peru shares with China the vision of an international order based on international law, multilateralism, free trade, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and a world that is peaceful, safe and stable. Together, we are committed to building a brighter future not only for our nations but for all humanity. Warm regards to all the Chinese people.

The author is president of the Republic of Peru. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA

School rescue



Firefighters rescue children and teachers trapped by floodwater from a kindergarten in Changsha, Hunan province, on Monday. More than 220 people were safely transferred from the school after heavy rainfall flooded parts of the city. GUO LIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Researchers grow meat onto grains of rice

By YAN DONGJIE

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Chinese researchers have taken a bite-sized step toward the future of food with the development of "chicken rice" and "pork rice" — innovative dishes combining cell-cultured meat and staple grains.

The breakthrough, led by the China Meat Food Comprehensive Research Center and the Beijing Academy of Food Sciences, involves cultivating chicken and pork cells directly on rice and other crops.

"These dishes appear just like regular rice varieties — white, brown or purple," explained Wang Shouwei, the chief scientist behind the project. "But after cooking, they take on the aroma of both rice and meat."

Beyond taste, the technology offers exciting nutritional possibilities. "We can precisely control the content of protein, amino acids, fiber, carbs and other nutrients," Wang said. "This allows us to tailor these foods to specific dietary needs."

The key innovation lies in using rice as a "microcarrier scaffold". Traditionally, cell-cultured meat production relies on expensive, synthetic carriers.

"These carriers often raise food safety concerns and inflate production costs," Wang said. "Rice, on the other hand, provides a natural, edible alternative, rich in fiber and other beneficial nutrients."

The process involves pre-treating rice varieties to create a suitable environment for cell growth. For instance, "pork rice" is produced by cultivating separate batches of pork muscle and fat cells on modified rice grains. These are then combined to create the final product.

Professor Zhou Jingwen, from Jiangnan University, sees the development as a significant leap forward.

"Chicken rice and pork rice represent a new frontier in cell-cultured meat research, and China is poised to be a leader in this field," he said.

The research team is optimistic about achieving mass production in the near future.

Fitness coach Yao Xiangwei is intrigued by the potential. "High protein, high fiber and healthy carbs — that sounds perfect for people like me," he said. "Price will be a factor, but I'd definitely try it."

However, Yao acknowledges the need for public acceptance. "As a new concept, people will likely be curious but cautious," he said. "It might take some time for these 'cultivated' dishes to become mainstream."

Nation sees surge in blue-collar work

Younger generation embraces skilled jobs as tech sector creates new careers

By CHENG SI

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China's job market is experiencing a surge in blue-collar professions, fueled by the nation's economic transformation and a growing need for skilled workers.

Li Jianghao, a vocational school teacher with 15 years of experience in vehicle maintenance, said skilled workers' pay increases as their skills improve. "Vehicle maintenance requires patience and good skills, and superb skills can earn good pay to support an entire family," Li said.

Li, who now teaches at Jinan Technician College in Hebei province, said he is confident in his students' employment prospects, noting the high demand for blue-collar workers, especially those with technical skills.

This confidence is backed by a recent report from Zhaopin, a major recruitment platform in China.

The report reveals a significant rise in blue-collar job openings in recent years, with corresponding increases in pay. This trend aligns with China's pursuit of high-quality economic development and the modernization of its manufacturing and service sectors.

According to the report, job openings for delivery and logistics personnel have skyrocketed by over

800 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019. Positions for skilled workers, domestic service staff, drivers and security guards have all seen growth exceeding 200 percent in the same period.

Zhaopin attributes this growing demand to two key factors: the upgrading of China's manufacturing industry and the expanding service sector. National statistics show the service sector contributed 54.6 percent to GDP last year, necessitating a large service sector workforce.

The financial rewards for blue-collar workers are also on the rise. The report indicates an average monthly salary of 7,215 yuan (\$994) for blue-collar jobs in major Chinese cities during the first quarter of this year, a 36 percent increase

compared to the same period in 2019.

Jobs requiring higher skill sets, such as computer numerical control machine operators in manufacturing, command even higher salaries. The average recruiting pay for CNC operators on Zhaopin's platform was 8,281 yuan a month in the first quarter of this year, compared to around 5,500 yuan for the same period in 2019.

This diversification of roles and improved compensation for blue-collar professions is attracting a younger generation of job seekers. Zhaopin reports a 165 percent increase in applications from people under 25 for blue-collar jobs compared to 2019.

Li Qiang, vice-president of Zhaopin, views the trend as a positive development.

"More young people in blue-collar jobs can alleviate domestic employment pressures while acquiring valuable professional skills and experience, leading to better career prospects," he said.

However, Li acknowledges the remaining challenges. Social recognition for blue-collar jobs and limited promotion opportunities are ongoing concerns.

"The rapid development of smart manufacturing, modern services and the digital economy will create promising career paths for blue-collar workers," he said.

"Additionally, China is actively developing skills evaluation systems to create clearer paths for advancement."

Chinese light rail in Saudi Arabia carries over 2m pilgrims during Hajj

By LUO WANGSHU

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A rail service built and operated by China played a critical role in facilitating the annual Hajj pilgrimage this year amid scorching temperatures in Saudi Arabia.

The Mecca Metro, managed by China Railway Construction Corporation, transported over 2 million pilgrims during the weeklong event, offering a cool and efficient mode of travel between holy sites.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of State-owned CRCC's successful Hajj operations, with the number of passengers since its inception exceeding 25 million.

The Mecca Metro service, operational for seven days and nights from June 13 to Wednesday, covered a total of over 40,000 kilometers, with 2,206 train services running smoothly.

The pilgrimage unfolded during a severe heat wave, with temperatures reaching 51.8 C.

Saudi Health Minister Fahad Al-Jalal was quoted by the country's state television network on Sunday as saying that 1,301 people died during the Hajj this year. He said the deaths were caused by pilgrims "walking long distances under direct sunlight without adequate shelter or comfort," and that 83 percent of the fatalities were among people who were not authorized to make the pilgrimage.

The Mecca Metro provided a welcome respite from the scorching heat, with a desert air conditioning system on station platforms utilizing water vapor technology to maintain comfortable temperatures and humidity levels throughout the day.

The 18.25-kilometer rail line, featuring nine stations, connects three key pilgrimage sites. It is Saudi Arabia's first light rail system and the first such project undertaken by a Chinese entity in the Middle East.

Beyond facilitating the move-

ment of pilgrims, the project has fostered significant knowledge transfer. Over the past decade, CRCC has trained nearly 60,000 Saudi Arabian employees, including 600 mid- to high-level personnel, in rail transit operations.

Rayan Mhammed Atiyah, a 35-year-old station manager, exemplifies that success story. After joining as a station attendant in 2010, Atiyah's dedication and the opportunity to learn from Chinese colleagues equipped him with the expertise to excel in his role.

"It has fulfilled my career aspirations," Atiyah said, commending the project for fostering professional growth and cultural exchange.

Zhang Long, the project manager, highlighted the broader significance of the Mecca Metro in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

"Over a decade ago, this area was merely desert," he said. "Today, we have established a convenient pilgrimage route for Muslims worldwide."

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Weifang focuses on innovative growth

By SUN SHANGWU, JIANG CHENGLONG and ZHAO RUIXUE in Weifang, Shandong



Weifang, a coastal city in Shandong province with a population of over 9 million, is soaring to new heights with a focus on innovation-driven growth in its manufacturing and agricultural sectors, according to the city's Party secretary, Liu Yun.

The city's GDP last year was 761 billion yuan (\$105 billion), ranking fourth in the province, with manufacturing a cornerstone of its economic success story.

Weifang boasts a diversified industrial base encompassing 37 of the 41 major industrial categories, with its manufacturing output contributing a 10th of Shandong's total, Liu said in an exclusive interview with China Daily recently.

Four key industries in Weifang — power equipment, high-end chemicals, new-generation information technology and food — have each surpassed output of 100 billion yuan.

In recognition of its industrial prowess, Weifang was selected as one of the first 20 pilot cities for national manufacturing industry upgrades in April.

"This designation is a testament to our rich industrial heritage and solid foundation," Liu said.

The pilot program, approved by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, aims to empower enterprises through equipment upgrade, process improvements and digital integration, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Weifang's leadership is committed to steering the manufacturing sector toward high-end and intelligent production, capitalizing on the strategic merging of real and digital economies. Environmental sustainability is also a key priority, with the city actively pursuing clean and low-carbon manufacturing practices, Liu said.

Beyond manufacturing, Weifang takes pride in its thriving agricultural sector. The city's vegetable production totaled 13.6 million metric tons last year, leading the nation.

Weifang's agricultural prowess extends beyond vegetables. The city boasts robust industrial chains for livestock and poultry, flowers and agricultural machinery, each exceeding the 100-billion-yuan mark.

Technological innovation is also being harnessed to propel Weifang's agricultural sector forward. The city is home to 44 seed research and development enterprises, with domestic vegetable varieties capturing over 70 percent of the market.

Leveraging its historical significance as one of the eastern starting points of the modern maritime silk road, Weifang is actively fostering international economic and trade partnerships. The city's trade network spans 216 countries and regions, and it has ranked among the top three in Shandong for trade volume for nine years.

Liu said Weifang's leadership is committed to vigorously promoting new types of industrialization, nurturing emerging industries like new-generation information technology and machines used to make other machines, and strategically laying the groundwork for future industries such as artificial intelligence.

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Workers assemble gas-driven engines at Weichai Group in Weifang, Shandong province, in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Environmental emergencies decreasing, but risks remain

By HOU LIQIANG

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The number of environmental emergencies has declined, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said on Monday, while cautioning against complacency.

Though the number of emergencies each year has dropped from around 700 in 2013 to approximately 300, Li Tianwei, director of the ministry's environmental emergency response office, highlighted the ongoing threat.

"The underlying risk hasn't fundamentally changed," Li said at a news conference. "No province is immune, with central and eastern regions experiencing more incidents due to a concentration of chemical industries."

Production and transportation accidents remain the primary culprits. Chemical spills, tailings pond breaches, fires, explosions and hazardous chemical transportation mishaps account for over 80 percent of environmental emergencies. Illegal discharges contribute about 10 percent.

Li pointed to several factors hindering rapid improvement: China's reliance on heavy industry; its coal-dominated energy mix; and the predominant use of road transportation for hazardous chemicals.

The sheer scale of potential hazards adds to the challenge. The country has over 7,000 tailings

ponds and 165,000 kilometers of oil and gas pipelines.

The chemical sector poses a particular concern. China produces over 45,000 types of chemicals, with roughly 1,000 added each year. Nearly 3 million metric tons of hazardous chemical cargoes are transported on the country's roads every day.

"These chemicals pose a risk of leakage throughout their life cycle, from production and processing to consumption and disposal," Li warned.

Climate change further exacerbates the situation.

"China, like many other nations, is experiencing more frequent extreme weather events due to global warming," Li said. "These events, coupled with production risks, elevate the danger of secondary environmental emergencies."

He cited the 2021 example of extreme weather events triggering heavy metal pollution incidents in the provinces of Gansu, Shaanxi and Sichuan. Unprecedented downpours in Zhengzhou, Henan province, that year resulted in spontaneous battery combustion, explosions at aluminum electrolysis plants and landfill leaks.

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment's efforts to address these challenges will focus on stricter regulations, improved infrastructure and enhanced emergency response capabilities.

CHINA

Honoring scientists



Foreign guests participate in a meeting of scientists at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. Li Deren and Xue Qikun won China's top science and technology award for 2023 at the event, which combines a national science and technology conference, the award ceremony and the general assemblies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Cultivating talent is laureate's 'greatest source of joy'

By LI PEIXUAN
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A science laureate has emphasized the importance of nurturing talent, reflecting on his own long career as an educator alongside his achievements as a researcher.

Li Deren, who won China's highest science honor, the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, on Monday, said being a teacher brought him the most pride.

An academician, former university president and scientist, Li said, "Despite my various roles, my greatest source of joy comes from being a teacher."

Li, who spent four decades teaching students, underscored the critical role of talent in the global technological competition. His efforts have yielded results, with several of his former students becoming leading figures, including two academicians in the fields of geomatics and remote sensing.

To cultivate interest in the subjects, Li and other academicians launched a program called the "Academician's Class" that aims to enlighten undergraduates on the importance of geomatics and remote sensing for China.

The program highlights how the two fields contribute to national goals, such as President Xi Jinping's vision for self-sufficiency in food supply. For example, integrating Beidou satellites with remote sensing technology and drones can enable real-time monitoring of crops, a development that reduces manual labor for farmers.

The Academician's Class has attracted students and scholars for over 20 years, with each academician delivering regular lectures. The program, endorsed by the Ministry of Education, embodies the national focus on education, science and talent development.

Li's dedication to China was exemplified by his decision to return from Germany after earning

“Despite my various roles, my greatest source of joy comes from being a teacher.”

Li Deren, State Preeminent Science and Technology Award recipient

a doctorate from the University of Stuttgart in 1985.

His doctoral research achieved a breakthrough in error processing theory, earning him the prestigious Hansa Luftbild Prize, but he turned down lucrative offers from prestigious European universities to contribute to the development of geomatics and remote sensing in China.

Li advocated the development of a high-resolution Earth observa-

tion system using mainly domestically developed technology, a proposal that was eventually approved. China's remote sensing technology has since evolved significantly, thanks in part to the talent nurtured by Li and his colleagues.

China now ranks second globally in the number of remote sensing satellites, with their performance reaching an internationally advanced level.

Li's focus on talent development has positioned him as a leading scientist and educator dedicated to China's technological advancement.

The State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, established in 1999, reflects the top leadership's commitment to scientific and technological innovation.

Xi has attended all the award ceremonies since the 18th Communist Party of China National Congress in 2012, underscoring the nation's recognition and support for scientific and technological advances.

Top physicist in insulator studies hailed

Researcher who has 'contradictory traits existing in harmony' praised for diligence

By WANG XIAOYU
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Tales of Chinese physicist Xue Qikun in the words of his students and colleagues conjure up distinct personas.

There is the amiable researcher who often brings milk and snacks to share with laboratory workers pulling all-nighters, and there's the formidable instructor with a laser-sharp eye for details and a short temper for slackers.

The 61-year-old emphasizes adhering to email etiquette and showing respect for senior scholars, but at the same time revels in assailing orthodoxy and is never afraid of putting forward unconventional propositions.

"He embodies so many contradictory traits that surprisingly exist in harmony in himself," said Wang Yayu, a professor in the Department of Physics at Tsinghua University and a longtime collaborator.

It seems only fitting that the material that Xue has spent more than a decade tinkering with — insulators that conduct electricity on the surface but insulate the interior — also carries opposite properties.

On Monday, Xue, president of Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, was presented with the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award, China's top science award.

Also a professor at Tsinghua University and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xue led a team in 2012 to introduce magnetism into an insulator and observed an anomalous effect in the material. The discovery was published in the journal *Science* in early 2013 and recognized as a "milestone" and "one of the most awaited effects" by reviewers.

In his search, Xue said that his team made over 1,000 samples of thin insulators within four years.

"It would take about three to four days to finish preparing and measuring a single sample, so our team members together were deeply committed to completing such a massive workload," he said.

Despite varying descriptions of Xue, his coworkers were unanimously impressed by his diligence, perseverance and optimism.

Born and raised in a mountainous region in Shandong province in 1963, Xue said he considered himself "proficient in science since high school" but had only been an average student in college.

He failed the graduate program entrance exam twice before being admitted to the Institute of Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1987.

"I think my upbringing in a remote region nestled in hills toughened me up and propelled me to pursue a goal relentlessly," he said last week. "Confronting failure, I am always able to reset and quickly engage in the next step."

In the 1990s, Xue received doctoral training and carried out research in China, as well as at Tohoku University in Japan and the University of North Carolina in the United States, during which he honed his laboratory skills and internalized a rigorous attitude toward science.

One of the most difficult

“I am already grateful for being born into a great time that values and fosters innovation. Just by looking back at how far we've come, I feel inspired to keep going.”

Xue Qikun, recipient of the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award

moments that Xue often recounts to his students was when he was stuck during an experiment that involved using a scanning microscope to take an image of a flat surface of a semiconductor at the level of the atom.

"He compared his exertion to the desperation of getting lost at sea and gazing toward the blank horizon, with no sight of an island," said He Ke, a physics professor at Tsinghua University and a member of Xue's team.

"It was not until half a year later that Xue said he finally spotted a beautiful, clear image of the atomic arrangement of the material, and experienced a sense of joy like a castaway seeing a piece of land. Xue used his experience to encourage us to persist when encountering a hurdle."

Xue returned to China in 1999 and began working at Tsinghua University in 2005, where he stuck to a habit of clocking in at 7 am and not leaving until 11 pm.

Feng Xiao, an associate professor at Tsinghua University and a team member, said that creating and growing samples requires balancing a variety of parameters at the atomic level.

"Xue always requires us to pursue perfection and pay attention to the slightest details," she said. "When handling the extremely complicated and large equipment in our lab, Xue said that we should aim for utmost precision to the extent that experimenting with them is as easy as riding a bicycle on campus."

There is nothing that could enrage Xue more than seeing lab personnel wasting time or resources, Feng said.

A story circulated among his students about Xue severely chastising a student who idled around and browsed the internet for fun in the laboratory. "We understood that he was in pain at that moment, because when Xue was our age, he had no access to advanced equipment so he couldn't bear a waste of precious resources," she said.

With the increasing scientific and technological prowess of China, Xue said that as a Chinese scientist he feels a responsibility to present the highest quality data and research outcomes to the world and advance science together with global researchers.

"I am often asked where I draw my strength from and how I maintain my passion," Xue said. "That's actually very easy for me. I am already grateful for being born into a great time that values and fosters innovation. Just by looking back at how far we've come, I feel inspired to keep going."

Academicians: Role models for science encouraged

From page 1

Xi stressed that China must practice the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind and achieve self-reliance and self-improvement in the sci-tech sector through open cooperation.

"The more intricate the global landscape grows, the more crucial it becomes for us to embrace openness and inclusivity, while coordinating opening-up and security. By engaging in open cooperation, we can drive self-reliance and advancement."

According to the president, China has established sci-tech cooperation with 161 countries and regions, signing 117 intergovernmental agreements on cooperation in the sector, and the nation has participated in nearly 60

international mega-science programs and projects.

Xi said that, going forward, China will broaden channels of exchanges and cooperation at official and people-to-people levels, leverage platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and support joint research efforts by scientists from various countries.

He reaffirmed China's commitment to actively integrate into the global innovation network, deeply participate in global scientific and technological governance, jointly address global challenges, and use science and technology to better benefit humanity.

The president also encouraged academicians to serve as pioneers at the forefront of science and technology, and to take on major tasks, help young people to explore their potential, and become role

models for the scientific spirit.

The vision presented by Xi during the meeting also impressed international scientists who were invited to the event.

Abbas Firoozabadi, a distinguished research professor at Rice University in the United States, said the fact that President Xi himself conferred the nation's highest science award was proof of the emphasis that China's leadership places on the development of science and technology.

Soroosh Sorooshian, a distinguished professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of California, Irvine, said he was "most impressed by the leader of a great country putting emphasis on the importance of science and technology and international cooperation."

"Global challenges require

cooperation between major countries to work together," he added.

Dale Sanders, a plant biologist and a fellow of the Royal Society in the United Kingdom, said that Xi gave a comprehensive and thorough review of Chinese science in his speech.

"What particularly excited me was the commitment to collaborate internationally to help solve global issues such as global warming, health issues and agricultural issues," Sanders said. "It was an inspiring presentation."

Sanders expressed his belief that China's strong emphasis on self-reliance in science and technology "absolutely does not mean closing its own doors."

"The more China has opened its doors over the last decade, the more China has prospered from that and the more the rest of the world has."

Icebreaking ship for marine research delivered

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
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China bolstered its marine research and disaster preparedness capabilities on Monday with the delivery of a new domestically designed icebreaking survey vessel, *Ji Di*.

The state-of-the-art research ship, built by Guangzhou Shipyard International, a subsidiary of China State Shipbuilding Corp, will play a crucial role in scientific marine endeavors.

Measuring 89.95 meters long and 17.8 meters wide, the 4,600 metric ton *Ji Di* can break through ice up to 1 meter thick at a speed of 2 knots.

It has a cruising speed of 15 knots and a range of 14,000 nautical miles. Construction of the vessel, which can accommodate a crew of 60 for missions lasting up to 80 days without requiring resupply, commenced in November 2022.

Equipped with advanced marine survey equipment, *Ji Di* is designed for comprehensive observation and data collection of various marine

80 days

Time that the *Ji Di* can support a crew of 60 people

environments. That includes sea ice analysis, three-dimensional water body studies, geophysical surveys and atmospheric monitoring.

The icebreaking capabilities of *Ji Di* extend beyond scientific research. Its reinforced bow means it can operate in the Yellow

and Bohai seas during winter, allowing it to monitor ice conditions and perform rescue operations in icy waters.

The ship was delivered to the northern seas bureau of the Ministry of Natural Resources, which is based in Qingdao, Shandong province, and is in charge of managing oceanic resources in waters including the Yellow and Bohai seas.

Ji Di is also capable of engaging in scientific research expeditions in polar regions during the summer months.

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CULTURE

In 2015, Zubin Mehta and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing worked together on a production of Giuseppe Verdi's classic opera *Aida*. Along with the China NCPA Orchestra, China NCPA Chorus, and a lineup of international artists, the conductor had an unforgettable experience.

"It was the best *Aida* that I ever did," says Mehta, who conducted Verdi's opera many times in his long career, including a version he did with the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City in 1965.

In 2023, unfortunately, the conductor failed to join *Aida* at the NCPA due to ill health.

In a phone call with the NCPA, he said: "When I'm in good condition next year, I will definitely return to the NCPA no matter how busy my schedule is then."

On Friday, the 88-year-old conductor appeared at the NCPA, entering the room in a wheelchair and walking to a nearby chair.

"I rarely got sick. Last year, my doctor told me that if I traveled, I would die on the airplane. I had to cancel my trip to the NCPA. I can assure you that I am fully recovered now. So I am here," he says. "I am only 88."

From Friday to Sunday, Mehta and the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino performed at the NCPA, playing pieces including Chopin's *Piano Concerto No 2 in F Minor, Op 21*, Beethoven's *Symphony No 7 in A Major, Op 92* and Dvorak's *Symphony No 7 in D Minor, Op 70*. Before Beijing, they also performed two concerts in Tianjin on Wednesday and Thursday.

Founded in 1928, the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino premiered many composers' music pieces, such as Richard Strauss and Pietro Mascagni. Since the 1950s, the orchestra has made numerous recordings, which received major awards including a Grammy in 1990.

The orchestra's principal conductor from 1985 to 2017, Mehta was later appointed honorary conductor for life. Though moving with difficulty and conducting while seated, he showed great vitality onstage.

"I am a conductor who is faithful to the composers. I have worked with the orchestra for about 35 years. I always look forward to our rehearsals and concerts. My energy comes from what I love," the conductor says. He came to the interview after over three hours of rehearsal that day. "That's the strength and power of music. The public absorbs the music as we perform it onstage. They give us long standing ovations."

The conductor is also keen on working with young musicians. During his recent tour in China, Mehta performed with pianist Vanessa Benelli Mosell and violinist Amira Abouzahra. He says that since the musicians of the orchestra work with many conductors and soloists, they are flexible, and he respects their talents and personalities.

Before the concert opened on Friday, Mehta's presence was felt from the moment the stage doors opened. The crowd began cheering before the conductor could even be seen. By the end of the concert, the conductor returned to the stage and performed Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No 5* during the encore session. The audience gave a long ovation as an expression of admiration for the conductor.

"I love the Chinese audience and we have a bond," the conductor says.

Over the past 17 years, he has performed at the NCPA many times since the iconic venue opened in 2007. Besides the NCPA's production of *Aida*, Mehta has also per-



THE MAESTRO RETURNS

Iconic conductor once again treats Chinese audiences to his unequalled talent, **Chen Nan** reports.

Above: Conductor Zubin Mehta with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on Friday. **Below:** Mehta during a rehearsal at the NCPA in Beijing on Friday. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

formed at the NCPA with symphony orchestras, such as the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

"I have many unforgettable experiences in China," says Mehta, mentioning the New Year concert with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in 2008 that he performed at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and Puccini's *Turandot* that he did with famous film director Zhang Yimou at the Forbidden City in 1998.

"I remember with the greatest pleasure that we performed nine concerts with each one having audiences of about 4,000. The concerts were unique experiences that I will never forget," he says.

Mehta also notes that he loves coming to China not only as a musician but also as a tourist. Along with his wife, he saw pandas in Chengdu, Sichuan province, and the mural paintings of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, Gansu province.

"I grew up in India and my home was full of Chinese elements, such as Chinese silk and antiques," the conductor says.

"One of my father's elder brothers



worked in Shanghai during the 1930s. My grandmother once visited him in Shanghai and told us everything about the trip after she returned to India. Many years later, when my cousin (son of the uncle) visited us in Mumbai, he only spoke the Shanghai dialect," Mehta says.

Mehta was born into a musical family. His father was an accomplished violinist and founder of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. He left India to study music in Vienna

at the age of 18. Throughout the 1960s and '70s, he conducted the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic. In the 1980s, he served as music director for the New York Philharmonic and was named music director for life of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1990, set against the imposing backdrop of Rome's Baths of Caracalla in Italy, superstar tenors Jose Carreras, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti were joined by

more than 200 orchestra musicians. Under the baton of Mehta, they performed a spectacular event that made history and marked a permanent shift in the way classical music was consumed by the masses.

In 1990, 1995, 1998, 2007 and 2015, Mehta conducted the beloved annual concert featuring the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein.

When asked about what he loves besides music, the conductor says soccer, a sport that he has enjoyed since he was a child.

He mentions that the recent concerts in Beijing and Tianjin were arranged at the last minute and he is already planning to return to visit more Chinese cities in 2025 with the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

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Online
See more by scanning the code.

What's eatin' you, foodie? An outsider's tidbit takes

As a North American fortyish, decidedly non-gourmand, slowly fasting to become taller than I am wide, it's doubtful my take on China's niftiest dishes is going to cause a culinary tsunami. Most chefs worth their weight in salt and coriander agree that the country has eight major regional cuisines, all eponymous for provinces, save Cantonese.

Given space limitations, both in terms of this page and our alimentary canals, I will only discuss the two I am most familiar with, beginning with the one that doesn't even make the top eight: Beijing cuisine. Being based in the city makes me a default expert, I suppose, vis-a-vis the abovementioned regional palates at least, so you'll have to allow this city's menu a seat at the table.

In 1421, Beijing became the capital of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which succeeded the Mongol-dominated Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), and its cuisine ended up multiculturally informed over the eons. And with the rise and decline of the Manchu-ruled Qing Dynasty between 1644 and 1911, it



A. Thomas Pasek
Second Thoughts

becomes clear why China's modern-day capital has some of the most diverse cultural influences informing its victuals.

I reckon that among the capital's top-three culinary choices we must include boiled mutton (*shuan yang rou*), or lamb hot pot. The meat is sliced paper thin and often enjoyed alongside cabbage, bean curd, pickled vegetables and fungi — a popular winter warm-up choice.

Although I'm trying to steer clear of noodles and dumplings in this piece — because every region bar-none has their own style of these gluten-heavy hits — I can't help but include soy bean paste noodles (*zha jiang mian*). It's the everyman and everywoman noodle option in North China, garnished with pork, cucumber, chili and vinegar. Both cheap and ubiquitous, hot bowls of this mainstay are a must for foodies.

Finally ... drumroll please ... Quack! Quack! You guessed it, Peking roast duck (*bei jing kao ya*). This eponymously labeled fowl — my favorite Beijing dish — is anything but to the taste buds (subjective warning). The cute critters are roasted whole, with the succulent outcome being crispy outsides and tender innards, with chefs at more upscale joints carving fowl tableside for your photojournalistic content.

Second on the regional list is Cantonese cuisine, as I spent a fair amount of time in the south, both Guangdong province and neighboring Hong Kong. Sliced white chicken (*bai que ji*), stir-fried rice noodles with beef (*gan chao niu he*) — dang, there I go breaking my no-noodle rule again — and dim sum (*dian xin*) — my go-to Cantonese delicacy — are three leading fine South China fare.

The third candidate tops the list due to its laid-back, devil-may-care, leisurely variety that screams Sunday mornings with no hurry to vacate the eatery anytime soon. It's also a great chance to socialize with friends and family over bottomless teacups. Dim sum, literally "touch the heart" in Chinese, was, as the legend goes, created dynasties ago by court cooks to touch the hearts of emperors without fully satiating their hunger. That's the job of the dinner crew.

I must say that among these six bucket-list repasts, my favorite has to be ... dim sum as an appetizer before sitting down for roast duck. An honest but diplomatic answer, I suppose, written not far from the diplomatic compound in the nation's capital, which also allows me to duck the question.

Contact the writer at andrew@chinadaily.com.cn

Cuban cultural anthropologist's academic quest in China

SHIJIAZHUANG — For many years, veteran Cuban cultural anthropologist Jesus Guanche Perez viewed China as a distant and intriguing country, but it was only in 2018 that he was able to explore it for himself, thanks to an invitation from a private university.

His opportunity came when the Hebei International Studies University in Shijiazhuang, capital of North China's Hebei province, reached out to Guanche via email, asking the established scholar if he would consider joining the university as its vice-president.

Having sojourned and worked on several continents, including North America, Europe and Africa, the 74-year-old scholar is deeply invested in the field of cultural anthropology and has earned various titles from academic institutions such as the Cuban Academy of Sciences and

the New York Academy of Sciences. Propelled by a perfect match between his field of interest and professional experience in academia and the position offered by the university, Guanche accepted the tenure after several months' communication, finally embarking on the journey from his Caribbean hometown to the northern Chinese city.

He quickly adapted to the new cultural environment in China and continued his academic studies.

"From Monday to Friday, you always see him writing at his office desk, except for short breaks and the time to handle administrative affairs," says Yang Zhen, vice-president of the Hebei International Studies University.

Guanche has published a raft of academic works, including *Ethnographic Dictionaries on the Peoples of the World, Latin American and*



Jesus Guanche Perez, vice-president, Hebei International Studies University. XINHUA

Caribbean Studies on China, Cultural Identities and Diversity: Interculturalism vs Multiculturalism. In China, he also witnessed the country's rapid development and was impressed by the achievements of its reform and opening up drive, as well as its poverty alleviation efforts.

Gaining firsthand knowledge of

China's politics, economy and culture, Guanche became interested in the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and started to incorporate his BRI research into his studies on global history.

The BRI raised a new concept of cooperation and provided an equal platform for the development of different countries and different peoples, says Guanche. Under the initiative, China and Latin America continue to deepen trade flows and steadily increase the scale of trade. Since 2012, China has maintained its position as the second-largest trading partner of Latin America, data from China's Ministry of Commerce showed. In 2022, the trade volume between China and Latin America approached \$500 billion, maintaining rapid growth for six consecutive years.

Cuba was the first country in the

Western Hemisphere to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. For Guanche, the exchanges and cooperation between China and Cuba are not only an important subject of academic research, but also a cause in which he has actively participated.

From the establishment of a China-Cuba joint BRI research center at Hebei International Studies University to the promotion of academic exchange activities between Chinese and Cuban higher education institutions — Guanche has provided support and assistance to the best of his ability. In 2020, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the socioeconomic development of Hebei province, he received a friendship award from the provincial government.

XINHUA

Competition highlights role of Chongqing in BRI

Global participants showcase array of skills as city boosts its international standing

By SONG MENGXING
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Contestants from different countries and regions are showcasing their prowess at the second Belt and Road International Skills Competition held in Chongqing in Southwest China from Monday to Wednesday.

There are 18 competition categories, of which 11 are also part of the WorldSkills Competition, a high-level event of vocational education and skills. These categories include Digital Construction, Electronics, Information Network Cabling and Hairdressing.

The remaining seven categories are Automobile Technology (New Energy), Rail Signal Control Technology, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Maintenance, Industrial Robot System Operation, Internet of Things (IoT) Installation and Debugging, Coffee Making and Internet Marketing.

This competition has received widespread attention and active participation from countries and regions around the world. Compared to the first session that was held in Chongqing in 2019, this competition has a higher specification, a larger scale, wider influence and richer activities.

According to statistics, there were 590 skilled people from 61 countries and regions participating in and learning from the event, including 190 competitors, 183 judges, and 30 translators. Some countries involved in this competition also sent ministerial-level officials and technical observers to observe and learn from the competition in its entirety.

All competitors in the Electrical Installations and Automobile Technology (New Energy) skills were male, while all participants in the Beauty Therapy skills were female, with females accounting for more than two-thirds of the contestants in the Hairdressing item.

In terms of age, the average age of competitors was 22, with participants aged 30 and below accounting for more than 95 percent of the total, and those aged 20 and below accounting for more than 40 percent. The youngest participant is 15 years old, participating in the Industrial Robot System Operation item.

The opening ceremony was held on the evening of Monday, followed by contests on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the closing ceremony will take place on the evening of Wednesday where awards will be presented to the winners.

In addition to the 18 formal competition categories, there will also be activities such as dialogues, city tours and performances, visits and exchanges arranged for participating teams, and exhibitions to promote cooperation, agreements signing, and the commercialization of related results, striving to make this competition a skills-themed "carnival" with highlights, experiences, and interactions.

In recent years, Chongqing, the competition's host city, has fully integrated into the high-quality construction of the Belt and Road Initiative and the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The city has always considered promoting skills exchange and partnership as an important aspect of its opening-up and international cooperation.

It has expanded its "friend circle" based on skilled talents. Chongqing has established cooperation mechanisms with governments and industrial organizations from more than 30 countries and regions, including Singapore and Germany, introducing their talent training models and promoting comprehensive, multi-level, mutually beneficial international cooperation in technical education.

It has facilitated international cooperation with more than 20 key vocational schools, guided 30-plus technical schools to collaborate with foreign enterprises, brought in excellent international educational resources and conducted teachers' overseas training and exchanges.

Chongqing is weaving a dense "cooperation network" for skill training. It has promoted cooperation in running schools between key vocational training institutions and countries like Singapore, Canada and



WANG JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Malaysia, jointly developing more than 10 international vocational training course systems. It has built a smart learning platform, integrating

online self-study, live teaching, video conferencing, information release, and project management. This platform provides online live teaching to countries like Thailand, Cambodia, and Uganda, supports the develop-

ment of overseas projects for out-bound enterprises and facilitates the export of technical standards for enterprises.

It is establishing a "pilot area" for skill development. Relying on the Chongqing High-tech Industrial Development Zone, it has set up an international high-skilled talent coordination and promotion alliance.

The city is also extending the "service chain" of skills competitions. Taking the opportunity of hosting the Belt and Road International Skills Competition, it continuously enriches the supporting activities of the event, deepens the commercialization of competition results and maintains close interaction with participating countries and regions.

The exchange and cooperation not only strengthens Chongqing's ties with the international community but promotes the training and development of local skilled talents in Chongqing. The total number of skilled professionals in the city exceeds 5.36 million, with more than 1.7 million high-skilled talents.

It will intensify efforts to conduct

international skills exchange activities related to the BRI and international cooperation in skilled talent evaluation and establish an international cooperation pilot area for high-skilled professionals, hoping to gain more achievements in skills exchange and cooperation with distinct Chongqing characteristics and international influence.

CityDance 双城记

Editor's note: Amity between the people holds the key to sound state-to-state relations. China Daily will come out with a series of stories highlighting Chinese cities' special connections with sister cities, mutual understanding, trust and friendship between peoples of different countries and cultural backgrounds, and shining light on "city diplomacy".

SHANGHAI, MILAN – DESIGNED TO CONNECT

Oriental fashion meets Western style, blending culture and dynamism



By WANG XIN in Shanghai and ZHENG WANYIN in Milan

Shanghai native Shi Yue, a junior art director at McCann Worldgroup Italy who has been living in Milan for 10 years, is always amazed by the similarities shared between her hometown and the Italian city.

Open, inclusive, developed, international, and trendy are the words she used to describe the two cities, both serving as global hubs for many industries, in particular, fashion and design.

"The two cities are alike," Shi exclaimed. Her observation is echoed by two Italians now living in Shanghai – Gabriele Feza, an Italian architect, artist and curator, and Aldo Cibic, an Italian architect and designer.

"Everybody agrees that Milan and Shanghai have a special connection and there are many similarities – especially in the way that society and people act and think," said Feza, who comes from Alessandria near Milan and moved to Shanghai in 2000.

On this day in 1979, exactly 45 years ago, Shanghai and Milan joined hands to become the first pair of sister cities between China and Italy. The friendship has been particularly enhanced in light of the passing of the baton between the two World Expos, namely the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai and the 2015 World Expo in Milan, thanks to a memorandum of cooperation signed between the organizing committees of both sides.

Shanghai and Milan have fostered more cooperation after 2015, Feza said. "There have been a lot of initiatives on both sides. They are setting up exhibitions such as the Shanghai branch of the Salone del Mobile – a notable annual furnishing exhibition in Milan since ages ago. It has been a big success (since its inauguration in 2016) and we have seen Italian lifestyle elements promoted on many occasions in China."

That led to profound exchanges between the people of the two cities,



Chic clothing on display at Shanghai Fashion Week in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY.

Italy's fine products are on display at the Italy Pavilion during the World Expo in Shanghai in May 2010. PHOTOS BY LIU DAWEI / XINHUA

both listed in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

"Shanghai, like Milan, is the place where different people meet to know each other, to exchange and to produce. Then after that, you create new opportunities, new business, new design and new possibilities," said Cibic, an honorary professor at Shanghai's Tongji University, who had lived in Milan since 1977 and relocated to Shanghai in 2018.

As an internationally acclaimed designer and architect, and a pivotal contributor to postmodern design as the co-founder of the renowned Memphis Group, Cibic said Shanghai reminds him of Milan's vibrant atmosphere in the 1980s.

"I like incredibly how Shanghai is fashionable, as now here people are expressing themselves through the way they dress, which was the same thing happening in Milan in the '80s ... Shanghai and China are becoming now more self-confident with their past," said Cibic.

Mario Boselli, president of the Italy China Council Foundation, a Milan-based nonprofit association dedicated to promoting the development of Sino-Italian relations, has been dealing with China since 1978, the year that the reform and opening-up began. He agrees with Cibic.

Earlier this year, an exhibition organized by Shanghai Design Week landed in Milan for the first time. Themed "Designing Dragon, Fusion of Tradition & Innovation", the seven-day event in April featured 27 fashion consumer brands, including clothing, accessories, skin care products, and household items, primarily from Shanghai.

Luca Fois, the founder of Milan China Design Center, has been keeping an eye on Chinese design for years, and he said he is "very optimistic" about Shanghai's budding fashion community which offers contemporary design that is both innovative and steeped in Chinese heritage.

The latest generations are very modern, very open to international



Visitors look at designer items at the Shanghai Fashion Day event held in Milan in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY.

has raised eyebrows worldwide including in Milan, a city known for its vibrant fashion industry highlighting glamorous fashion shows and top luxury brands.

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The latest generations are very modern, very open to international

"Everybody agrees that Milan and Shanghai have a special connection and there are many similarities – especially in the way that society and people act and think."

Gabriele Feza, Italian architect, artist and curator



Chinese performers demonstrate their skills at the World Expo in Milan in June 2015. PHOTOS BY YE PINGFANG / XINHUA

reinterpreting ancient historical elements in a modern way. I find this to be the most positive aspect of Shanghai, as its products are accessible to the international market," said Boselli.

For Shi, who has been involved in the creative industry since 2014, both Shanghai and Milan can excel in industries symbolizing the spirit of creativity, innovation and pioneering. "Both Shanghai and Milan are very tolerant and inclusive places, and many talented individuals with advanced ideas prefer settling down there," she said. "Moreover, Shanghai and Milan consistently lead other cities in their respective countries in formulating progressive policies. These policies are also flexible, with the governments showing a willingness to adapt to different social and business environments."

Possibilities, opportunities

That's why Feza saw a lot of possibilities and opportunities in Shanghai. "Fashion is a good base to set up some good exchange between the two cities. Milan is a little bit like the temple of creativity and the capital city of design. These two cities can serve as the source of inspiration to each other," said Feza.

In Shanghai, he is not only able to use his specialty in lighting design – his works include the iconic The Bund 18 – but also actively explore arts with advanced digital technologies such as virtual reality and metaverse as the founder of the art gallery Preverse Italia.

"China is pushing more in new technologies and new things, while Italy is richer on a humanistic side," said Cibic, advising the two cities to enhance exchanges in both sectors to innovate "a new technology together with a humanistic feeling."

Song, who spent one month in Milan preparing for the Shanghai Fashion Day, also has high hopes for the potential of future collaboration between the two cities.

"Both the West and we are learning from each other and upgrading. Through the exchanges between



Models wear creations of a Chinese clothing brands' collection during a fashion event in Milan in June last year. PHOTOS BY JIN MAMENG / XINHUA

Shanghai and Milan, we expect to stand at a new starting point and find a new way to promote the communication and exchanges of cultures in our current contexts," said Song.

Bian Xiangyang, vice-chairman of the China Fashion Association and director of the Shanghai Promotion Center for City of Fashion, indicated that the complementary cooperation between Shanghai and Milan could "empower" each other.

"Milan fashion and design need to further expand its presence in overseas markets, while Shanghai is home to a large number of fans of Milan brands. And for Shanghai, Milan offers much to learn, such as its integration of the design, manufacturing and service industries within the fashion and design sector," said Bian.

"With exchanges in economic development and culture, both Shanghai and Milan will become flourishing and achieve a better future," he added.

"For Italian entrepreneurs, Shanghai has shown a more welcoming attitude. So, it continues to be an important gateway to China," said Boselli.

Boselli pointed out that the twinning between Shanghai and Milan could act as a link between China and Italy. "The relations between Shanghai and Milan are historically important, and I believe that we need to look at the history to predict the future. The warmth and intensity of the relations between Shanghai and Milan depict the strong connection between China and Italy, and the sister-city friendship will continue to be a bridge between the two great countries in the future."

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Watch the video by scanning the code.

Italian businesses use CIIE platform to expand in China market

By WANG XIN in Shanghai and ZHENG WANYIN in Milan

Italian businesses have been keen to seek entry to and expand in the Chinese market through the China International Import Expo, which takes place in November every year in Shanghai since 2018.

Raffaele Cattaneo, undersecretary with responsibility for international and European relations in Italy's Lombardy region, where Milan-based import Expo, where mutual benefits of the import expo. He noted that China has increasingly grown into an important destination market for Italian exports.

The presence of a growing middle-income group in China "desires quality products and designs that embody a sense of style and beauty, which is influencing tastes in Italy as well. This is something that we Italians don't often talk about," he said. "We are interested in, and we rely on initiatives like the CIIE."

Cattaneo also mentioned the sister-city relationship between Shanghai and Milan and described



Italian exhibitors prove to be a hit at the second China International Import Expo in Shanghai in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY.

the partnership as "important and strategic". The two cities joined hands in 1979 to become sister cities. Later, Shanghai also established friendly exchanges with Lombardy. Based on many similarities in the economic needs of both sides, cooperation can be strengthened in the areas of fashion, food, furniture, technology and more, he said.

Guido Damico, president of the Confimesse Italia federation representing Italian micro, small and medi-

um-sized businesses, said the expo can provide "revolutionary" opportunities, given the scale of the expo and the size of the Chinese market.

The federation and two Italian firms signed contracts or memorandums of cooperation with the CIIE Bureau, the expo's organizer, confirming their participation in this year's seventh CIIE at a promotional conference, which was held in Milan on April 19 and attracted representatives from nearly 150 Italian businesses and institutions.

At the event, Sun Chenghai, deputy director-general of the CIIE Bureau, said Italy, as a longtime friend of the CIIE, has participated for six consecutive years.

Noting that this year marks the 20th anniversary of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Italy, Sun expressed hope that the CIIE could contribute to consolidating and promoting Sino-Italian economic and trade relations.

Gong Lifeng, co-founder of Vetter, is a Shanghai-based dedicated to bringing in Italian jewelry to the Chinese market.

Back in 2018, Gong had the opportunity to attend the expo and made an attempt to sell some German and Italian products, most of which were quickly sold out.

"This initial success gave Gong lots of confidence. In the hope of organizing more Italian exhibitors to attend the second CIIE in 2019, Gong flew to Milan and collaborated with Confindustria Federoraff, Italy's national federation of goldsmiths, silversmiths and jewelry manufacturers.

Eying opportunities

Eying huge opportunities in the Chinese market, the federation also helped Gong obtain The Extraordinary Italian Jewelry authorization, a tribute to the excellence of Italian craftsmanship.

Gong, together with the Italian jewelry exhibitors, made a huge success at the second CIIE. Again, almost all of their products were sold out during the six-day expo.

and were the most popular exhibitors in the jewelry sector that year," Gong recalled.

"The CIIE provides a premier platform to test out Chinese consumers' tastes and demands ... We will double our booth size compared with last year," he said. "In addition to bringing in more new brands and products to the expo, we are also preparing for the opening of our new store at The Bund in September, to introduce more Italian products, craftsmanship and businesses to customers."

Bearing fruitful results from six editions of the CIIE and steady partnerships with Italian businesses, Gong is eyeing bolder goals.

"We have signed up for this year's CIIE, and will double our booth size compared with last year," he said. "In addition to bringing in more new brands and products to the expo, we are also preparing for the opening of our new store at The Bund in September, to introduce more Italian products, craftsmanship and businesses to customers."

"We were all so excited, as we have been billing (at the second CIIE) almost nonstop ... We ranked first

City helps spur lifelong passion of Sinologist in promoting bonds

By ZHENG WANYIN in Milan

For Alessandra Lavagnino, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Milan, those years in Shanghai during the 1970s shaped her career of devotion to China studies.

She first arrived in China in 1974, when she was selected as an exchange teacher to teach Italian at the Shanghai Foreign Language Institute, later renamed Shanghai International Studies University. She was also the first Italian foreign teacher the institute had ever received.

Her love affair with China was influenced by her father who visited the country in 1957 to film a documentary. At the age of 16, her curiosity and imagination were sparked, resulting in what she described as a "dream come true" moment.

Her father's fascination with China's architecture, art, sounds and people appealed to the entire family. "So, it was quite natural for me to choose to study Chinese when I

went to the university in Italy because I had so many insights to discover," she said.

From February 1974 until the end of 1975, the Italian in her mid-20s taught her first group of 18 students, who were roughly the same age as her, and sharing countless sweet, sour and bitter experiences of youth drew them closer and closer.

"I remembered living with four girls in a peasant's home for one month, where we shared simple and strict daily routines in the countryside. We did farm work every day, and we had Italian classes in the afternoon. I told them about Italy, its beauty, my family's stories, and my learning experiences. They shared with me their family stories, their dreams, and their past," she recalled.

"We still message each other almost every day. They ask me about the situation in Italy, and I send them my articles about China. We share both friendship and academic exchanges," she said.

"Saying that we are friends is not enough. We are family." The first term of office provided

Lavagnino with valuable friendships, while the second term, in the same position at the same institute from 1977 to 1979, enhanced her academic life by allowing her to focus more on research in classical Chinese texts.

It was during that period that she began studying and translating *Wenxin Diaolong*, or *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, a book on Chinese literary aesthetics by Liu Xie, a literary critic who lived during the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-581).

Scholarly career

Wenxin Diaolong was a constant presence in Lavagnino's scholarly career, and it took her 16 years to translate this classical Chinese work – which she considered similar to Aristotle's *Poetics* – into Italian.

"My years in Shanghai contributed very much to my life, my understanding of China, and my belief in the importance of understanding other cultures and recognizing that my civilization is not the only right one in the world," Lavagnino said.

My years in Shanghai contributed very much to my life, my understanding of China, and my belief in the importance of understanding other cultures."

Alessandra Lavagnino, director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Milan

China's global influence continued to grow following the reform and opening-up, and in this context, the vibrancy and openness of Milan were notably apparent, Lavagnino said. In 1979, Milan and Shanghai established a sister-city friendship. In 1985, Milan opened the first Chi-

nese consulate in Italy. During the 1980s, the University of Milan introduced Chinese language courses, pioneering the initiative in the Lombardy region.

The Confucius Institute at the University of Milan also continues to play a pivotal role in facilitating exchanges between Shanghai and Milan, as well as between China and Italy.

Milan, one of the most developed and lively cities in Italy, needs to have a Confucius Institute, she said.

"In this complex period, we must manage to keep all possible channels open to build a concrete intercultural dialogue. We must learn to know each other, without prejudice or preconceptions, and this means accepting differences, recognizing different roots, and realizing that there may be another way of doing things," she said.

"My experiences enable me to build a bridge, and this bridge must be built. Otherwise, we will have no future. We have to find a common path forward."

WORLD

22 die in S. Korea plant fire

18 Chinese among the dead in one of its worst factory disasters in years

HWASEONG, South Korea — Multiple powerful explosions set a lithium battery factory on fire in South Korea on Monday, killing 22 workers, most of them Chinese nationals, as it burned out of control for nearly six hours, fire officials said.

The blaze ripped through a factory run by primary battery manufacturer Aricell in Hwaseong, an industrial cluster southwest of the capital Seoul. It was eventually largely extinguished.

Local officials said 18 Chinese workers and one Laotian were among the dead. The nationality of the remaining deceased worker was not yet confirmed, fire official Kim Jin-young told reporters, citing information from company officials.

"Most of the bodies are badly burned, so it will take some time to identify each one," Kim said, adding that one person was still missing.

The Chinese embassy in South Korea confirmed the deaths of Chinese nationals in a statement on Monday evening, but said it had yet to confirm the final death toll.

China's Ambassador to South Korea Xing Haiming contacted the governor of Gyeonggi Province to arrange for the rescue and treatment of the Chinese people.

Xing will visit the site of the fire personally, it said.

The blaze began at 10:31 am after a series of battery cells exploded inside a warehouse with some 35,000 units, Kim said. What had triggered the explosion remains unclear, he added.

Initial investigations indicate that the fire spread in a matter of seconds, with toxic fumes quickly overwhelming workers in the area, said



Firefighters try to extinguish a fire at a lithium battery factory in Hwaseong, South Korea, on Monday. YONHAP

Cho Sun-ho, head of the Gyeonggi Provincial Fire Department.

"White smoke began to rise from a battery part, and it took only about 15 seconds to cover the entire space due to the sudden ignition," he said, adding that because it was a lithium fire, the workers' efforts to extinguish it would not have worked.

"It is presumed that the victims inhaled toxic fumes in a short time, which would have suffocated them quickly, and made them lose consciousness."

Live-TV footage showed firefighters spraying the damaged steel and concrete building. Parts of the upper level had collapsed, and large chunks of the building looked like they had been blown out into the street by explosions.

Aerial footage showed massive white smoke clouds billowing from the structure and explosions rolling through the building.

Kim Jae-ho, a professor of fire and disaster prevention at Daejeon

University, said the fire had probably spread too quickly for workers to escape.

"Battery materials such as nickel are easily flammable," he said. "So often, there is not enough time to respond, compared to a fire caused by other materials."

Wearing a green jacket that top officials don during emergencies, South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol visited the disaster site late on Monday, walking around the charred building in a hard hat and face mask before greeting firefighters at the scene.

No escape

Yoon said it appeared that "ignition material was positioned in front of the emergency exit, so workers could not escape and many people died."

He ordered authorities to check similar factories that handle chemicals and take "measures to prevent such accidents from happening again".

Interior Minister Lee Sang-min called on the local authorities to take steps to prevent any hazardous chemicals from contaminating the surrounding area.

Park Chul-wan, a professor at Seojeong University, said Aricell is known to use extremely toxic material, which could explain the high death toll.

"The fact that there were so many casualties when this was on only the second floor is because of the toxic materials and not so much because of burns," he said.

South Korea has made efforts to improve its safety record after several past accidents, many of which have been blamed on negligence.

Each year, dozens of workers are killed in industrial accidents, which prompted parliament to pass a law aimed at punishing the executives of a company in the event of a fatal accident with possible jail terms.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

At UN, call to restore nuclear plan for Iran

By MINLU ZHANG
at the United Nations
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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 (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: 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".

"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.

"Upholding the agreement helps maintain regional peace and stability, aligning with the common interests of regional countries," he said.

"Certain countries should stop using the Iranian nuclear issue to advance geopolitical agendas and refrain from linking the nuclear negotiations with other issues, as this will only disrupt the negotiation process and undermine diplomatic efforts regarding the Iranian nuclear issue," Fu said.

Rosemary DiCarlo, UN under-secretary-general for political and peace-building 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 imposed 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 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.

"Nuclear diplomacy must be restored," Lambrinidis said. He also called on Iran to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and adhere to the JCPOA commitments to rebuild trust.

Embracing the spirit of innovation and abundance

As we move on to even greener pastures, more farmers are reaping the benefits of digital technology. Internet-connected infrastructure and a future blossoming with opportunities for green growth. With the digital world at their fingertips, they can unleash the power of innovation to welcome a more bounteous harvest than ever before.

COMMENT

Editorials

Innovation key driver of country's sustained high-quality development

With a new round of technological revolution gathering pace and heralding seismic global transformations, it is imperative that China harness its science and technology forces to foster innovations.

President Xi Jinping has stressed the importance of the development of the country's science and technology sector on many occasions, saying that innovation has always been the primary driver of the country's development. This has been verified by what China has achieved over the past more than four decades.

Given the situation that the United States is trying to block the exports of advanced technologies and products to China to contain the country's rise, the country now needs to place even greater reliance on its own science and technology strengths.

The suppression, blockades and sanctions have motivated China to intensify its efforts to tackle key problems in science and technology with the country treading an independent path without excluding international cooperation.

China is not given enough credit for how far it has come as an innovator, but it still has far to go. That is why Xi once again emphasized the development of new quality productive forces and underscored the importance of innovation in his remarks at the national sci-tech conference, which opened in Beijing on Monday.

To these ends, the country's mechanisms must be reformed to make it easier for research institutes to attract talent and for talented researchers to devote themselves to their work. It is not just the pursuit of

breakthroughs in specific technologies but also innovations in the way talented researchers and technology personnel are cultivated that are needed.

That necessitates innovations in the way science and technology work is organized and managed so that bureaucracy and red tape do not hinder the country's science and technology endeavors.

China has a political system that makes it possible for the central government to mobilize resources nationwide to accomplish strategic science and technology projects and a vast market that demands a nimble approach to the commercialization of ideas. Both of which have been demonstrated by China's leading edge in many new energy technologies and new energy vehicles.

Yet further reform is needed in various fields to create an environment in which national resources can be mobilized in a more efficient manner, and the mobilized resources can be used in the most efficient and effective manner to catch up in science-based innovation in industries such as specialty chemicals, semiconductor design and branded pharmaceuticals, where the country still lags behind the developed countries, despite significant investment.

The country needs to build an innovation system that integrates science and technology, education, industries and the financial sector, and upgrade its industry chains, to sustain its development and advance its modernization. Hopefully, the conference will see the academicians make meaningful suggestions and opinions to advance these goals.

Visit taps potential of practical cooperation

President of Poland Andrzej Duda's five-day state visit to China starting on Saturday looks set to keep bilateral ties on the right track for future healthy development, and inject fresh vitality into the Sino-Polish comprehensive strategic partnership. That is evidenced by the series of cooperation documents signed during his trip, which taps into the potential of the structural complementarity of the two economies by covering a wide range of industries and sectors.

The Polish president's packed Shanghai-Beijing-Dalian itinerary in China consists of meetings with State leaders as well as business representatives and local governors. The agenda is much richer than his previous two visits to China in 2015 and 2022, demonstrating the European country's willingness to strengthen not only its pragmatic economic cooperation, but also strategic coordination with China.

Poland is among the earliest nations to recognize China, and this year marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between them. The two sides uphold the tradition of independence, respect each other's core interests and major concerns, and maintain communication on major international issues.

Sharing opportunities and seeking common development is a source of vitality for the China-Poland cooperative partnership. In the past five years, the average annual growth rate of bilateral trade has exceeded 10 percent, and the bilateral trade volume in 2023 is estimated to have reached \$42 billion. China has been Poland's second-largest

trading partner for many years, and Poland has remained China's largest trading partner in Central and Eastern Europe.

Poland was also one of the first European Union countries to take part in the Belt and Road Initiative. The operation of the China-Europe express freight train services have added great vitality to Poland's economy, strengthening its position as a regional economic and logistics center in Central and Eastern Europe. The upgrading and expanding of bilateral collaboration will see China opening its market wider to Polish products, and a marked rise in Chinese investment in the country as long as the latter can provide a fair and open business environment.

China-Poland cooperation is also a positive force for cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries. Over the past 12 years, China-CEEC cooperation has been continuously deepened and expanded. China expects Poland to give full play to its influence in the CEEC, realize mutual promotion and deepen bilateral and regional cooperation, further consolidate the all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging cooperation pattern between China and CEEC, and promote China-EU ties.

By strengthening their policy communication and strategic synergy, and advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, the two countries can foster new growth points for cooperation in green development, the digital economy and other fields, and elevate their relations to new heights.

Risk of all-out war looming in Middle East

For those who have been hoping for peace in the Middle East since the war broke out between Israel and Hamas last October, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks on Sunday will have brought little comfort.

This is because, despite saying the military operation in Gaza is "winding down", he indicated it could set the stage for Israel to send more troops to its northern border to fight the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, raising concerns that it could spark an all-out war in the region.

"We can fight on several fronts and we are prepared to do that," the Israeli leader said in an interview. Israel's army last week also said it had "approved and validated" a new plan for a Lebanon offensive.

Hezbollah began attacking Israel shortly after Hamas' Oct 7 assault triggered the war in Gaza, and the two sides have been trading fire across the border since then, with the Iran-backed group saying it will only stop if there is a truce in Gaza. Earlier this month, Hezbollah targeted Israeli towns and military sites with the largest volleys of rockets and drones used in the hostilities so far, after an Israeli strike killed the most senior Hezbollah commander yet.

A full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah could escalate the conflict in the region to an uncontrollable scale, given the military group is much larger in size — it claims to have about 100,000 fighters — compared with Hamas, which has between 20,000

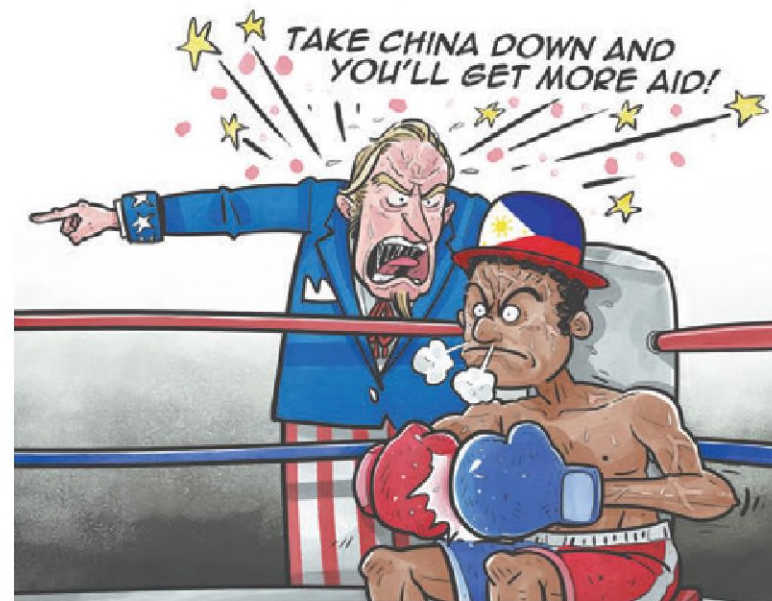
and 25,000 members — and boasts a more sophisticated military arsenal equipped with precision rockets and drones. It also risks drawing the United States and its allies and Iran and its proxies into a conflict.

Israel's offensive in Gaza has so far killed more than 37,400 people, most of them civilians, according to the Palestinian health authorities, and left nearly the entire population of the enclave homeless and destitute. It is hard to imagine how severe the humanitarian crisis would be if the cross-border attacks between Israel and Hezbollah turn into an all-out war.

That scenario has prompted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to warn of a catastrophe "beyond imagination". "The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza," he said on Friday, as he called for de-escalation in the hostilities between the two sides, which he believes is not only possible, but also "essential". Even US Air Force General Charles Brown Jr, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, cautioned that a Lebanon offensive "can drive up the potential for a broader conflict".

As the biggest supplier of weapons to Israel, the US has a moral obligation to use its sway over Israel to push for a cease-fire plan in Gaza, and prevent more suffering and more potentially catastrophic consequences from happening in the region. It is time for Washington to take action to end the crisis in the Middle East.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

By toeing Washington's line on China, Tokyo will harm itself

The Fumio Kishida government announced sanctions against some foreign entities, including several Chinese companies, for their alleged support to Russia in the Ukraine crisis on Friday. It was the first time that Japan has sanctioned Chinese companies for that reason.

About two weeks ago, the US announced new sanctions targeting more than 300 entities from Russia and China.

None of these sanctions have been authorized by any world body or international organization. These sanctions are the geopolitical tools of the US and its allies. Their lack of legitimacy in international law is self-evident.

Under the framework of international law, China has the right to carry out normal economic and

trade cooperation with all countries, including Russia. This is China's legitimate right and it should not be hindered or smeared by any country.

Neither Washington nor Tokyo has offered any credible evidence proving their charges against China over the Ukraine crisis. Instead, China has been actively promoting peace talks and pushing for a political settlement of the crisis. China is neither the creator nor a party to the Ukraine crisis, and it has never poured fuel on fire or taken advantage of the crisis for profit.

Weaponizing sanctions for one's own narrow end is a typical act of unilateral bullying and economic coercion.

China firmly opposes unilateral sanctions that have no basis in

international law, and that normal economic and trade cooperation China conducts with Russia on the basis of equality and mutual benefit is its legitimate right and should not be distorted.

In disregard of China's solemn position, Japan insists on following the US' lead in imposing illegal sanctions on Chinese companies, which will inevitably invite corresponding measures from China.

China and Japan are two neighbors that enjoy close and extensive economic and trade links, and Japan should cherish its ties with China, which is particularly important to Japan, plagued as it is by a lingering economic dilemma. Tokyo should immediately stop going further in destroying Sino-Japanese relations.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

Low-cost space trips on near horizon

It took just six minutes for China's first 10-kilometer-level reusable carrier rocket to undergo its vertical takeoff and vertical landing flight test in Jiuquan, Gansu province, on Sunday.

The rocket used three domestically developed Deep Throttling Liquid Oxygen/Methane Engines as the first application, similar to what Falcon Heavy, the world-famous reusable rocket developed by SpaceX, uses for its trips. Liquid oxygen and methane produce nothing but water and carbon dioxide on burning,

which, besides being clean, causes zero coking and carbon deposit that make it suitable for spaceships.

The liquid oxygen methane engines must be able to switch off and restart multiple times and adjust the thrust in order to support the rocket in all stages, accelerating while ascending, and then decelerating while ascending, descending and landing. According to reports, the central engine of the test rocket worked for around 380 seconds during the flight, proving its reliability and usability in future flights.

The engine is only one of the technologies the rocket employs. It also has a landing buffering system with four landing legs that can open when the rocket is about 50 meters above the ground, enabling it to land softly; a high-accuracy navigation system that guides the rocket to its landing site; and a health monitoring system for manned trips in the future.

China testing this reusable rocket lays the foundation for low-cost flights to the moon in the future.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

US demands filial loyalty from 'family members'

One day after Russian President Vladimir Putin ended his trip to Vietnam, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink arrived in the Southeast Asian country on Friday for a two-day visit.

Putin's visit to Hanoi triggered a sharp rebuke from the US embassy in Vietnam, which said that "no country should give Putin a platform to promote his war of aggression and otherwise allow him to normalize his atrocities".

Although the United States Department of State has claimed Kritenbrink's visit is to underscore the strong US commitment to "working with Vietnam in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region", and the mutual trust between the US and Vietnam is at an "all-time high", the haste with which the trip was arranged exposes Washington's anxiety at the prospect of losing Hanoi to Moscow.

By saying that "only Vietnam can decide how best to safeguard its sovereignty and advance its interests", the US East Asia envoy tried to pretend Washington respects

Hanoi's strategic autonomy. But the great lengths he went to later in a bid to remind Hanoi of the US' importance to Vietnam as the latter's largest exporting market sounded more like intimidation.

As predicted, Kritenbrink also took advantage of the trip to tighten the screws on Hanoi over the South China Sea issue, urging his Vietnamese hosts to realize that China's increasingly "assertive" actions in pressing its claims in the South China Sea were a cause of "great concern" for the region and the world.

"We think that China's actions, particularly its recent actions, around the Second Thomas Shoal (China's Ren'ai Reef), vis-à-vis the Philippines have been irresponsible, aggressive, dangerous, and deeply destabilizing," Kritenbrink said. He also stressed that the defense treaty between the US and the Philippines is "ironclad".

These China-related remarks, along with the palpable concerns Washington has shown over the flirtation of Hanoi and Moscow, belie the "centrality" of the Southeast

Asian countries that the US said it respects in handling regional affairs, as well as the US' commitment to regional peace and stability.

All regional countries, including Vietnam and the Philippines, see clearly that the US regards its mutual defense treaty with its allies as leverage to use force against any country that it deems threatens its allies' interests, if not its own.

Even the allies under the US' wings are well aware they are only pieces on the US' board of geopolitical games, and the mutual defense treaties are nothing but shackles and chains imposed on them to do the US' bidding.

In the eyes of Washington, the "free and open Indo-Pacific" means the US can freely intervene in regional affairs and all regional countries should remain open to its interventionist, coercive, bullying, divisive and warmongering behaviors. That's also why the US sees only the allies that surrender to its technical hijacking as "free and open" enough to be qualified members of its "Indo-Pacific" family.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT

Chen Liming

China makes innovation new engine of growth

Innovation is a key force driving global development and solving complex problems. Today, the world needs innovation and collaboration more than ever before to cope with challenges such as climate change, trade disputes and public health emergencies. However, the level of innovation is uneven around the world, with some regions lagging behind due to insufficient budgets, low education levels, inadequate infrastructure, and/or lack of conducive policies.

Lagging behind in innovation means lacking competitiveness and the inability to effectively respond and adapt to market changes, which results in low production efficiency and slow economic growth. This ultimately weakens overall development potential. Through measures such as technology transfer, financial assistance and talent training, the international community can help less developed regions to boost their innovation capability, as well as contribute to knowledge sharing and promoting balanced development among regions.

It's not that some significant progress has not been made. Some governments are playing an active role in shaping economic and industrial policies to bolster key growth areas such as technology and green industries in order to enhance competitiveness. For example, China has been the biggest driver of global growth for years, and is set to contribute over one-quarter of global growth in 2024.

From 2018 to 2023, China's research and development expenditure increased by nearly 70 percent, making a global impact by continuously advancing cutting-edge technologies. Last year, for instance, China applied for 921,000 patents, up 15.3 percent year-on-year. In fact, China has the largest number of valid domestic patents in the world.

According to the 2023 Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organization, 24 Chinese science and technology clusters made it to the list of top 100 science and technology clusters in the world, the highest of all countries.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

Also, China has been accelerating the application of research results to industries. This year, I visited a partner company of the World Economic Forum, which has achieved a remarkable level of digitalization and automation despite being part of a traditional industry. And I think there is reason to believe that a large number of Chinese companies have achieved similar levels of advancement.

While innovative technologies have transformed people's lives, from smart homes to mobile payments and healthcare technologies, people can find almost everything they need online, which has made people's lives much more convenient.

As a major champion of new energy technologies, China, thanks to its emphasis

on innovation, has improved energy efficiency, cut the cost of renewable energy, and reduced its reliance on fossil fuels, contributing to global environmental protection and sustainable development.

In 2023, the installed renewable energy capacity increased by 510 kilowatts globally, with China contributing more than a half to the increase. And Chinese-made wind turbines and solar photovoltaic panels have been exported to more than 200 countries and regions.

China is also working with more than 100 economies on green energy projects, while helping countries such as Kenya and South Africa with solar and wind energy technologies to develop their clean energy industry, and alleviate

their energy shortages.

In addition, Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs) are not only sold in China but also exported to many other countries. China exported 1.20 million EVs in 2023, up 77.6 percent year-on-year, which accounted for more than 60 percent of the global sales of EVs. Looking ahead, China continues to be the major global player in manufacturing clean energy technologies, according to World Economic Forum 2024 Energy Transition Index, and is significantly increasing its domestic renewable energy capacity with record-level solar photovoltaics.

Besides, China plays a crucial role in the global production and supply of minerals and materials which are integral to renewable energy technology. These factors have consolidated China's position as a key player in driving the world toward a sustainable and renewable energy future.

The World Economic Forum's 15th Annual Meeting of the New Champions will explore next frontiers for growth and unleash its growth so as to build a sustainable future through innovation. By leveraging its strength in R&D, China has become a new driver of innovation.

The meeting is also expected to act as a valuable platform for discussions on crucial issues, including China's expanding global technology footprint and increasing expenditure.

Since its inception in 2007, the Annual Meeting of the New Champions has gradually become an important platform for global leaders to engage in discussions on the economy and innovation. China has not only used this platform to get a better insight into the world of innovation, but also showcased its achievements as well as scientific and technological capability, and collaboratively advanced global scientific and technological progress.

We (at the World Economic Forum) look forward to welcoming more Chinese representatives on the World Economic Forum's platform, to get new insights into many issues, make new connections and engage in discussions, while promoting global cooperation and innovation, in a bid to build a better future for humankind.

The author is chair of Greater China, World Economic Forum. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

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Country roads help farmers lead a better life

Country roads take me home To the place I belong...

Many a time, I've found myself unconsciously humming this John Denver masterpiece while driving along China's country roads. Although the expressways across China have made travel easier and faster, whenever possible, I still prefer driving on country roads. Not to save toll fees but to enjoy the feeling of driving slowly and get a better taste of rural life.

Along such roads, one can see the crops change color with the season, bargain with peddlers in roadside markets, knock at a farmhouse door to see if the owner has some farm-raised chicken or duck eggs, fruits and vegetables to sell, or to use a public toilet — most villages now have public toilets at the entrance or exit.

Intensified country road construction and repair in the past decade have greatly changed villagers' lives, bringing them closer to towns and cities. Using these roads, villagers can transport their produce to markets and sell them for a higher price, and send their children to cities for better education.

The Ministry of Transportation data released in June show China now has 4.6 million kilometers of country roads, an 18.5 percent increase from 10 years ago. And about 4.2 trillion yuan (\$578.43 billion) has been invested during the period to build new roads and renovate the old ones, while more than 63,000 bridges have been built or repaired.

The roads have also helped boost rural tourism and attract outside investment. As a result, millions of jobs have been created in rural areas.

Building of country roads is an important part of China's plan to narrow the urban-rural development gap and eradicate rural poverty. Country roads in China refer to roads linking villages and towns with each other and with the county headquarters or nearby cities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said that by the end of last year, more than 99 percent of China's towns and administrative villages had bus services thanks to the development of road networks.

Some elderly villagers who had never left their village can now take free bus rides to county headquarters thanks to the preferential policies for senior citizens. They carry their harvests for sale in towns and cities for a better price. More roads and better road conditions have prompted many in rural areas to buy cars. According to surveys, about 30 percent of rural families now own cars and/or pickup vans. The roads have also helped boost rural tourism and attract outside investment. As a result, millions of jobs have been created in rural areas.

The construction of country roads will continue in the near future, according to senior Ministry of Transport officials, though some looming challenges demand immediate attention. The first challenge is how to attract sufficient investments for new projects. Usually, such investments were made by provincial-, city- and/or county-level governments, but now that the country's economy is slowing down and attracting new investments is becoming difficult, some local governments find themselves running out of gas so far as building country roads is concerned.

While the local governments should be aware of the strategic significance of building country roads and should do their best to fund the road construction projects, observers suggest that more investment channels such as non-government investment and donations be explored to complete the job.

The second challenge is how to maintain the existing roads. Country roads usually need better maintenance because they are not as sturdy as expressways. Without proper maintenance, they could suffer wear and tear in a few years. The local county and township governments which are responsible for maintaining these roads may not be able to prevent such damage if they don't have enough funds to properly maintain them. Driving along the country roads, I sometimes have to slow down to cross bumpy sections — the result of either poor building materials or lack of maintenance.

Many have suggested that special funds be set up to employ skilled hands and buy the necessary equipment and materials to maintain the roads, because a network of smooth country roads will not only help farmers lead a better life but also give urban residents easy access to the colorful country life and natural attractions.

Zhang Yongxiang

'Boiling world' should jointly fight climate change

The rising frequency of extreme weather events including intense heat waves across the world calls for urgent measures to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

Since June 7, the China Meteorological Administration has issued consecutive days of high-temperature warnings. Over the past ten days, more than half of the land area in the central and eastern parts of the country has experienced temperatures exceeding 35 C, especially in the North China Plain and the Huai River Basin, where scorching heat waves have persisted, reaching close to or even exceeding 40 C.

Amid the scorching heat came more bad news: reports from the Copernicus Climate Change Service founded by the European Commission and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States said the world had just experienced the hottest May on record.

The highest temperatures in Pakistan, northern India, Mexico, Guatemala, Iraq and many countries in Africa reached 45-47 C, exceeding 50 C in some places. In Brazil, eastern South Africa, southeastern Australia, northern Argentina, eastern US, and southwestern Canada, temperatures were close to or exceeded record highs.

High temperatures have not only had a significant impact on people's lives and health but also created problems for agriculture, water sources and urban infrastructure.

The World Meteorological Organization has said the surge in global temperatures in the first few months of 2024 was related to the El Niño effect, but judging by the inter-annual variability of extreme

Therefore, it needs to take effective measures to strengthen monitoring, improve its early warning systems, bolster its emergency management capability, and pursue low-carbon development.

heat, not only the frequency of extreme heat but also its duration has increased.

There are many reasons behind the frequent occurrence of extreme heat. The first is global warming. The massive burning of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution has led to a dramatic rise in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The GHGs, accumulated in the atmosphere, have intensified the greenhouse effect and raised Earth's surface temperature.

Second, the fast pace of urbanization, increasing population density, intensive infrastructure construction and rising traffic congestions in many parts of the world have exacerbated the urban heat island effect, making urban areas much warmer than even surrounding rural areas.

Third, changes in land use, including deforestation and transforming of grasslands and wetlands into agricultural land and urban areas, have resulted in the destruction of natural ecosystems, reducing surface vegetation cover and affecting the region's natural climate regulation capability.

And fourth, the changes in the climatic

cycle have increased the frequency of extreme weather events, including extreme heat. And natural climatic cycles such as El Niño and La Niña, which cause short-term temperature fluctuations, combined with global warming, have further exacerbated the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

Climate change is the result of increasing accumulated GHG emissions for more than 150 years, while heat waves are a warning to humankind to take immediate measures to address global warming. So, apart from reducing GHG emissions, we also need to adapt to climate change. To begin with, we need to more strictly monitor extreme weather events and improve the early warning system so that timely warnings can be issued and government departments can swing into action on time to save lives and property, and people can prepare for imminent extreme weather events.

There is also a need to strengthen the emergency response capability, chalk out plans to deal with extreme weather events including extreme heat, boost the reserve of emergency materials, carry out regular emergency drills and strengthen the emergency response capability to ensure rapid and effective response in the event of emergencies.

Besides, industrial sectors should vigorously develop renewable energy such as wind and solar energy to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, and cut GHG emissions. In fact, China has made significant progress in solar power generation, becoming the world's largest producer and user of solar energy. It has also been promoting green building technologies by using energy-efficient materials and designs, and curtailing the use of air con-

ditioning, thereby reducing energy consumption and GHG emissions.

While expanding urban green space and building more parks and green belts in urban areas can reduce urban temperatures and alleviate the heat island effect, developing smart agricultural technologies, more efficiently using water and strengthening water management can save water.

Moreover, public awareness about environmental protection and ecological conservation, too, should be enhanced. Educating students from a young age about the adverse effects of climate change and how to mitigate and adapt to it, in the long run, is a better way of creating mass awareness about global warming. And scientific research on climate change, especially on extreme weather events including extreme heat, can provide us with a scientific basis for formulating effective response measures.

As a developing country with a diverse climate and a large population, China faces even more severe challenges. Therefore, it needs to take effective measures to strengthen monitoring, improve its early warning systems, bolster its emergency management capability, and pursue low-carbon development.

Given that climate change is a common global challenge, the world is in this together. And China, on its part, should strengthen international cooperation, and work with countries around the world to tackle climate change.

The author is deputy director of the Climate Change Strategy Research Division and chief researcher of National Climate Centre. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

TANG XINHUA

Plugged in

From 'small yards with high fences' to 'digital solidarity', the US has intensified its efforts to maintain its tech primacy

Building a technology alliance is the main strategy for the United States to maintain its scientific and technological hegemony under its technopolitik strategic framework. After Joe Biden took office, the US implemented "small yards with high fences" strategy for scientific and technological competition



with China, as the first step toward building a technology alliance. The main goal is to restrict the flow of strategic emerging technologies and elements of innovation to rival countries.

However, the US and its allies have a conflict of interests in many areas, such as cross-border data flow asymmetry, digital market subsidies competition and economic security dilemmas. These have severely restricted the depth and stability of transatlantic digital connectivity.

Over the past few years, the US has expended a great deal of diplomatic resources on coordinating the positions of its allies to advance its "small yards with high fences" strategy, which is proving to be costly, difficult and unstable.

In this context, the US is gradually pivoting its strategic path toward building a "multipolar technology alliance", that is, to unite traditional allies, rope in nontraditional allies, and draw in emerging market countries and regions. Instead of controlling the flow of elements of innovation to its competitors, the main goal is to strive for hegemony in new technologies by laying out structural technological power in the context of major-power competition.

Structural technological power is a key variable for shaping the international power system and international landscape in the era of technopolitik and also the foundation for controlling future strategic space. The elements that determine structural technological power include key technological infrastructure, technological supply chain systems and technological ecosystems, and these are the key areas the US-led multi-polar technological alliance is focusing on.

First, at the June 2022 G7 Leaders' Summit, the US and the other G7 members formally launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which emphasizes the need to work with partners to strengthen investments in high-standard and high-quality infrastructure projects. The PGI's strategic purpose is to build and strengthen coalitions of partners from Asia to Africa to the Western Hemisphere to improve technology infrastructure in key economic corridors.

The 2023 G7 Summit proposed the construction of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and the Lobito Corridor in Angola, with a focus on new types of infrastructure such as undersea cables, clean energy grids, and next-generation telecommunication networks to promote connectivity from Europe to Asia.

To crowd out infrastructure investment in rival countries, the

G7 has also strengthened the formulation of security rules for critical infrastructure.

The 2023 G7 Summit emphasized the need to strengthen the security and resilience of ICT infrastructure in the digital sphere, including mobile, satellite and core networks, submarine cables, components and cloud infrastructure. It stressed that such infrastructure requires a rigorous evaluation of equipment, consistent with existing measures such as those outlined in the Prague Proposals, and the European Union's 5G toolbox.

Second, the US' goal in reshaping its high-tech supply chain system is to compete for the foundation of power in new technologies and to squeeze the development space of competitors in the new global techno-economic system.

In April 2022, the US proposed to build a "Chip 4 alliance" with Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Chinese island of Taiwan. In December 2022, seven countries including the US, Canada and Australia launched the Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance, which sets higher environmental standards for the critical minerals sector and promotes cooperation among the countries in the alliance. In October 2023, 14 partners of the Minerals Security Partnership convened to enhance cooperation, and a restructuring of the critical mineral supply chains is accelerating. On Feb 24, the "Indo-Pacific" Economic Framework Supply Chain Agreement entered into force.

From the perspective of strategic balance, the US is reshaping its hi-tech supply chain system under the rhetoric of "de-risking" and "friendly-shore outsourcing", which will severely disrupt the supply chain networks of major developed countries, regional countries and China, and result in a shift of key supply chains from "networked" to "hierarchical".

Against the backdrop of overgeneralization of security and intensified ideological confrontation, the US' "de-risking" of the technology supply chains, industry chains and value chains will further undermine the strategic balance that has long been established in the Asia-Pacific region.

Third, the technology ecosystem is "soft power" built on the technology infrastructure and technology supply chains. It affects the entire technology supply chain and determines the size of the technology market and industry.

Since the "small yards with high fences" strategy cannot cover all key technology categories, the US has turned to a multipolar technological alliance to compete for structural power in the technological ecosystem. Currently, the country is focused on competition over technology standards and the remodeling of values in technology, etc.

In May 2023, the Joe Biden administration released the National Standards Strategy for Critical and Emerging Technologies, stating that the strategy would strengthen the US leadership and competitiveness in international standard-setting, and that the fourth major goal is to use its

allies to advance the building of the international standard system.

The US strategy of building a technology alliance is pivoting toward a multipolar technology alliance, with the focus shifting from restricting the flow of innovation elements to competitors to scrambling for structural technology power in hi-tech supply chains, digital infrastructure, competition over technology standards, technical rules, etc.

In May 2024, the US Department of State released the US' International Cyberspace and Digital Policy Strategy, which formally put forward the "digital solidarity" strategy of technology diplomacy. This marked the official launch of the US strategy of a "multipolar technology alliance".

Going beyond the scope of a traditional security alliance network, the US strategy of building a multipolar technology alliance aims to choose different combinations of coalitions according to the characteristics of techno-political competition in different fields.

In particular, during the process of choosing specific partners and reshaping the economic security landscape amid supply chain restructuring, selective globalization may become a new trend in global governance.

As a matter of fact, the technology alliance promoted by the US is a combination of hegemony and power politics. The framework of the multipolar technology alliance is based on different political trust levels, which indicates an imbalanced and unequal technological power "food chain".

The "economic security" rhetoric of some Western countries under the banner of "de-risking" is a new manifestation of neoconservatism pursuing the securitization of international economic and technological cooperation. It is also a product of Cold War thinking, bloc politics and bloc confrontation. It will further widen the global technological divide and result in more unbalanced international development and more complex geopolitical relations.

Only by adhering to the concepts of universal security, openness and inclusiveness, promoting the building of a global sci-tech community with a shared future characterized by peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual appreciation, and mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, advancing sustainable global economic and social development through win-win cooperation in science and technology, and transcending differences between civilizations through scientific and technological exchanges and mutual learning, can we achieve lasting peace and common prosperity for the human society.

The author is an associate researcher with the Institute of International Relations and the Institute for Governance Studies at Tsinghua University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

HAN ZHAOYING AND LIU JIN

Backfire controls

High-tech export restrictions aimed at curbing China's technological advancements are hurting the US

The United States House Foreign Affairs Committee overwhelmingly passed the Enhancing National Frameworks for Overseas Critical Exports Act, or the ENFORCE act, by a vote of 43 to three, on May 23. This legislation aims to enhance the US government's ability to restrict the export of artificial intelligence

models, thereby preventing China from developing advanced AI technologies. Since Joe Biden took office, high-tech export controls have become a key tool in the US' strategy to curb China's technological advancements. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has described export controls as "a new strategic asset in the US and allied toolkit". In recent years, the US has significantly expanded its export controls targeting China, intensifying restrictions on both traditional competitive technologies and critical frontier technologies. This approach aims to transform the US' technological edge into permanent dominance, maintaining the nation's hegemony. However, these protectionist measures, instead of securing a competitive advantage for the US, will only backfire.

The continuous escalation of US export controls against China has indeed adversely impacted China's high-tech development. Various essential materials, components and equipment needed for next-generation technology research and development have been included in the export control list. US technical personnel are prohibited from participating in and assisting Chinese enterprises in developing related technologies, and technological exchanges and cooperation are restricted to a small, exclusive anti-China circle. This has created short-term obstacles for Chinese companies in securing tech breakthroughs and revenue. It has also brought uncertainty to China's efforts to realize industrial transformation and upgrading.

However, the actual consequences of arbitrarily imposing high-tech export controls are more detrimental to the US than beneficial. Export controls are a "double-edged sword"; moderate controls can help leading technology countries gain economic benefits and slow down the technological catch-up of latecomers. Excessive controls, on the other hand, weaken the technological innovation capability and industrial competitiveness of leading technology countries. Washington's excessive high-tech export controls against Beijing have already caused severe negative impacts for the US itself. First, these controls harm US business interests. According to a report by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, export controls have caused a significant reduction in the market value of US companies

and a substantial loss of jobs. It estimates that export controls cost the average affected US supplier \$857 million in lost market capitalization, with total losses across all the suppliers of \$130 billion, and the total number of employees in affected companies has decreased by 7.1 percent. On May 7, the Biden administration further tightened export restrictions on Huawei Technologies Co, revoking licenses for US chip companies Qualcomm and Intel to sell semiconductors to the company. Both Qualcomm and Intel saw immediate impacts on their second-quarter revenue, with Intel's stock price dropping 2.2 percent the next day. Statistics show that the Chinese market accounted for 27 percent of Intel's turnover and 62 percent of Qualcomm's turnover in 2023. Due to export controls in the chip sector, Intel's stock price had already dropped nearly 38 percent in 2024, and Qualcomm's business with Huawei is expected to shrink to zero soon. In the long run, US companies will lose the vast Chinese market as a result of the export controls.

Second, these controls have weakened strategic trust in the US among its allies. The US is attempting to shift the back-blow pressure of its high-tech export controls against China onto its European and Asian allies through long-arm jurisdiction measures such as the Foreign-Produced Direct Product Rule. However, these measures face resistance from allies due to their different levels of economic dependence on China and their different levels of advancement in tech industries. The Biden administration is currently pressuring allies such as the Netherlands, Japan, Germany and the Republic of Korea to take further steps to restrict China's access to advanced semiconductor technology. However, both the Netherlands and Japan have expressed resistance to these additional restrictions. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has stated his opposition to placing all exports to China under regulation, and the ROK government believes it should be cautious in participating in export controls against China. To maintain its dominance, Washington politicizes, instrumentalizes and weaponizes economic and technological issues, disregarding the economic and technological sovereignty of its allies and sacrificing their economic and security interests. The so-called export control alliance has not helped the US achieve its goal of containing China. Instead, it has prompted countries to introduce competing technological subsidy policies, damaging trust and cooperation between the US and its allies and increasing the coordination costs for the Biden administration.

Third, these controls reduce the US' competitive edge. While export controls can help the US restructure its industrial chains and limit China's access to certain emerging technologies in the short term, this only temporarily delays China's progress without long-term prevention of China's technological strength enhancement. If the US wants to maintain its technological edge, it should actively boost

domestic technological competitiveness and upgrade the R&D capabilities of high-tech companies. However, by implementing various containment measures on high-tech exports to China, the US is instead forcing China to seek self-reliant technological alternatives and industrial upgrades. Despite the targeted containment measures from Washington, Huawei still led the global patent application rankings in 2023. The company registered a revenue of approximately 178.45 billion yuan (\$24.6 billion) in the first quarter of 2024, a year-on-year increase of 36.66 percent. Moreover, Huawei has made breakthroughs in the MetaERP system, Harmony OS, Euler OS, EDA software, and 5G core components, achieving partial de-Americanization of its high-tech sector.

The US has abandoned maintaining "relative technological advantages" with other countries and instead strives for absolute dominance in key tech sectors. The US perceives China's technological innovation as a fundamental "threat" to its national security and will continue to expand the scope of high-tech export controls against China, imposing unreasonable unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction on Chinese high-tech companies. Although these high-tech export controls may seem profitable in the short term, they are essentially self-imposed shackles.

In light of this, China should try to further enhance the level of the dependence of US tech companies on its high-tech sector. It is important to leverage the strength of the nation's sound manufacturing system and its large market volume to attract greater US high-tech investment in China, thereby increasing the cost of "decoupling from China" for US companies. It is also important for the nation to actively integrate more into the global innovation network, explore new models of international cooperation, share more of China's development dividends, and promote global knowledge sharing. The differences between the US and its allies in technological development and industrial planning can be employed to break through the US technological blockade. Third, China must expedite its efforts to ensure its core technologies are independent and under its own control, form its own technological advantages, and help domestic companies in building an independent technological supply chain. Meanwhile, China must actively participate in the formulation of global technology standards, and enhance its discourse power in technological standards to precisely counteract the implementation of the US' unequal policy practices against China.

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US lens on investments to hinder AI, chip sectors

By MA SI
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Washington's latest proposal to restrict and monitor US companies' and individuals' investments in key technologies in China will jeopardize the global artificial intelligence and semiconductor supply chains, and increase the uncertainty of international economic recovery, officials and experts said on Monday.

The comments came after the US Department of the Treasury fleshed out a proposed rule on Friday that would restrict and monitor US companies' and individuals' investments in China for artificial intelligence, chips and quantum computing.

The proposed rule outlines the information that US citizens and permanent residents must provide while engaging in transactions in this area as well as what will be considered a violation of the restrictions.

A spokesperson for China's Ministry of Commerce said in a statement on Monday that the US repeatedly emphasizes that it has no intention of "decoupling" from China or hindering China's economic development. However, it insists on issuing such proposed rules to restrict US companies' investments in China and suppress the normal development of Chinese industries.

Such measures represent an overreach under the guise of national security, undermine the international economic and trade order, and disrupt the security and stability of global industrial and supply chains, the spokesperson said.

"China expresses serious concern and firm opposition to this and reserves the right to take cor-

responding measures," the spokesperson added.

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

"The move is the latest evidence that, to contain China's technological rise, the US government is leveraging all means, regardless of how much pain it will cause US companies," Wei said.

Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the latest US actions signify a strategic extension of export controls to investment restrictions, aimed at further decoupling from China in high-tech sectors.

Zhou said that these restrictions will disrupt normal trade and investment activities between Chinese and US firms, hamper bilateral technological exchanges, and undermine the global innovation ecosystem.

Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China, said the US government's intensified attempts to contain China's rise in the tech sector through export and investment controls will hurt the interests of US companies and accelerate Chinese companies' efforts for technological breakthroughs.

As the world's largest semiconductor market, the Chinese mainland consumes more than half of the world's semiconductors, which are then assembled into tech products to be re-exported or sold in the domestic market, according to research firm Daxue Consulting.

Briefly

SOEs see increasing revenue, profits

China's State-owned enterprises registered steady expansion in the first five months of the year, with both revenue and profits growing, official data showed on Monday. These companies generated 32.85 trillion yuan (\$4.61 trillion) in combined operating revenue in the January-May period, up 3.1 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Finance. Profits of these companies totaled 1.71 trillion yuan from January to May, with a year-on-year increase of 2.3 percent. Their debt-to-asset ratio reached 64.9 percent at the end of May, the data showed.

Station roads to be decongested

Hefei West Railway Station, a major transportation hub in Anhui province, received better infrastructure support as State-owned builders participating in the construction of an overpass connected with the station

reported big progress. China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp said the construction of an overpass on Qingxi Road, which will link the station with the main road network of the provincial capital, took a stride forward as the last box girder was launched recently. CR24 said in a construction report that the heavy traffic on roads linked to the station will be eased upon completion of the road.

PBOC adds liquidity via reverse repos

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, conducted 50 billion yuan (\$7.02 billion) of seven-day, 1.8 percent reverse repos on Monday to keep liquidity stable at the end of the first half of this year. A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



Participants exchange views at the "CEO: Grow with China" roundtable, held on Friday in Tianjin.

WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Forum stresses global efforts to tap top tech

Business leaders reject protectionism, underline win-win for economic growth

By LIU ZHIHUA, ZHENG YIRAN and OUYANG SHIJIA

All countries should intensify cooperation to exploit the full potential of new technologies like artificial intelligence, and desist from protectionism, in order to facilitate economic growth, said business leaders on the sidelines of the World Intelligence Expo 2024, which concluded in Tianjin on Sunday.

Such calls for closer global cooperation also marked the "CEO: Grow with China" roundtable, held as part of the expo on Friday that saw participation of multinational corporations from sectors like technology, finance, medicine and energy.

The roundtable was jointly organized by China Daily, the Publicity Department of the Tianjin Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, and the Tianjin Industrial and Information Technology Bureau.

Peter Merker, director of the German Chamber of Commerce in China for Tianjin and CEO of Schlote Tianjin, firmly opposes sanctions on new technologies, and advocated enhanced international cooperation for mutual benefit.

Commenting on certain suppressive measures of some countries against the development of new technologies by other countries, he said: "If we look at history, these sanctions, do you know any that have succeeded? I haven't seen any. "Sanctions are a tool that has significant side effects. For every 1,000 enemies killed, it also harms 800 of its own at the very least. It is lose-lose, not win-win."

The automotive industry strongly opposes tariff increases and sanctions, and most ordinary people share that view, he said.

Now, many Western governments are facing difficulties, so they use tariff increases and sanctions as leverage, but such a path is not good, he



Julian MacCormac



Gianni Di Giovanni



Peter Merker

said. "We should extend a hand and say, 'cooperation would be better.'"

Citing certain benefits brought about by AI and fintech applications like speedier banking services, Peter Jeng, vice-president of the UK Chinese Business Association, said applications of new technologies can reduce risk in overseas businesses for enterprises, and there is huge cooperation potential between Chinese and foreign companies in this regard.

Julian MacCormac, regional director of Rolls-Royce Greater China, stressed the importance of supply chain cooperation between the company and its Chinese partners.

"It's very clear that alongside the investment in capacity, we've seen the introduction of greater automation, as well as the application of digital manufacturing techniques. And we see that in our supply chain in China today," he said.

MacCormac is also chair emeritus of the British Chamber of Commerce in China. "We have supplies across many different locations and China has been and is an important part of our supply chain," he said.

Gianni Di Giovanni, chairman of Eni China and state representative of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, said applica-

tions of intelligent technologies in areas like energy have brought benefits to humankind. In two to three years, he predicted, life will be changed dramatically with use of more affordable and available AI technologies.

Lan Jun, general manager of Agela & Phenomenex China, an operating company of Washington-based Danaher, also highlighted the importance of global cooperation during the event.

"China Speed" will never go out of style. Over the last two decades, China has pioneered the manufacturing sector. Now, in the era of new technology, the country still takes a leading role. In the past four years, we have witnessed mounting investments in the country's artificial intelligence sector, and numerous investment opportunities await industry," he said.

"We see China as a fertile ground for innovation. Our development in China is also the result of continuous effort and innovation. Currently, Danaher has 14 research and development teams and nine manufacturing bases in China, including the Agela factory in Tianjin. These teams and bases play a crucial role in driving technological innovation, improving production efficiency and meeting customer needs.

"For Danaher, we have an '80/80 China Localization Goal', which aims for achieving that 80 percent of China market revenue are supported by our local factories; and 80 percent of the raw materials and components used in local factories are sourced domestically. By continuously deepening our cooperation with China, we hope to provide more advanced solutions to our customers and contribute to China's high-quality economic development and technological progress."

Zhou Lanxu, Zhong Nan and Zhuang Qiang contributed to this story.

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Amex bullish on China credit card biz

By ZHOU LANXU
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American Express sees great potential in China's credit card market and is ready to further increase investment in the country as needed, said the head of the global financial services corporation's joint venture in China.

Yamin Zhu, CEO and general manager of Express (Hangzhou) Technology Service Co Ltd, American Express's majority-owned JV with Chinese fintech company Lianlian DigiTech Co Ltd, said American Express has a long-term commitment to the Chinese market and is willing to further inject capital into the JV if needed.

"Our shareholders are upbeat about the Chinese market and have confidence in our management team, and are willing to support the joint venture in the long run," she said.

In 2020, Express (Hangzhou) received approval from the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, for a network clearing license. This made American Express the first foreign payments network eligible to clear renminbi transactions in the Chinese mainland, meaning that it can authorize banks to issue and accept American Express renminbi bank cards in the country.

American Express has increased capital in the JV three times since then. In December, the venture's registered capital rose from 5.06 billion yuan (\$696.8 million) to 5.76 billion yuan, data from the PBOC showed.

While recognizing that China's credit card market is now undergoing consolidation, Zhu said the market still boasts huge growth potential as the average number of credit cards held per person is about 0.5 in China, compared with approximately 3 to 4 in the United States and South Korea.

A report from the PBOC said that the number of credit cards as well as dual-function cards — which are combined debit and credit cards — in China stood at 767 million as of the end of 2023, marking a year-on-year decrease of 3.89 percent.

Despite the shrinking number of credit cards in circulation, Zhu said the JV has seen its revenue register continuous improvement over the past two years, although it has yet to turn a profit when accounting for initial investments.

"High-net-worth individuals' consumption behavior is actually hardly impacted by ups and downs in economic cycles," Zhu said, adding that the JV has a strategic focus on the premium credit market, cross-border payments and local merchant coverage.

While continuing to collaborate with banks to launch more credit cards, the venture will also provide value-added services to its bank clients, including issuing reports and offering training on accurately identifying the needs of high-end credit card holders.

American Express is not the only international credit card network that is eyeing the growth potential of the Chinese market as the country deepens financial opening-up. In November, Mastercard's JV also received a clearing license from the PBOC.

China's financial opening-up also benefited American Express in that the country's efforts to improve payment services for foreign visitors will help boost transaction volume made via foreign credit cards, Zhu said.

Zhu said American Express has cut its commission fees charged in China to a level comparable to domestic credit cards of less than 1 percent since 2020 to reduce the cost of accepting foreign cards and boost merchants' willingness to accept them.

Negotiations key to averting 'trade war'

By ZHONG NAN
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As trade frictions intensify and threaten a "trade war" between China and the European Union, experts and government officials said that initiating talks is an effective approach to prevent further escalation and resolve differences.

In response to media reports suggesting China's anti-dumping probe into imports of certain pork and pig by-products from the EU is a countermeasure against the European Commission's announcement of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, China's Ministry of Commerce emphasized last week that the current trade frictions with the EU are not what China desires.

Various industries in the EU have expressed concerns about escalating trade tensions potentially triggering a "trade war", said the ministry.

In recent years, with the profound and complex changes in the interna-

tional landscape and regional situations, the EU and some member countries have deliberately viewed China as a "geopolitical challenge". China has been portrayed as a so-called economic competitor to Europe, said Cui Hongjian, a professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University's Academy of Regional and Global Governance.

"Currently, trade frictions between the two sides are still at an initial stage, leaving a window for properly resolving disputes," said Cui.

Similar views were expressed by Wan Zhe, a researcher at the Belt and Road School of Beijing Normal University.

"With some time remaining before the EU's final decision on imposing tariffs on Chinese EVs, both China and the EU need to bring their economic and trade relations back to the track of dialogue and cooperation."

Although Chinese EVs account for just a small share of the EU's EV

imports, the European Commission in mid-June unveiled additional provisional tariffs ranging from 17.4 percent to 38.1 percent for Chinese EV manufacturers despite widespread market concerns and China's objections.

"The EU should overcome its protectionist mindset, staying true to the principles of free trade that it has always claimed to uphold," said Wan, noting there are no fundamental conflicts of interest between China and the EU, and their common interests far outweigh their differences.

The key question that both sides need to jointly address now is how to better adhere to the principles of cooperation and ensure their common interests amid these changes, she added.

During his meeting with Robert Habeck, German vice-chancellor and federal minister for economic affairs and climate action over the weekend, Chinese Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao said that China stands ready



China-made new energy vehicles await shipment to Europe in Xiamen, Fujian province. JIANG KEHONG / XINHUA

for dialogue and consultations on EVs if the EU is willing to sit down at the negotiating table with sincerity.

Noting that Germany and China are supporters and beneficiaries of globalization, Habeck said the German government is deeply concerned about the EU's anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese EVs,

which will negatively impact Europe's green transition and consumer interests.

Habeck believes that imposing tariffs is the worst approach as it could lead to a vicious spiral of trade friction escalations, stressing that dialogue and consultations are the only way to solve such problems.

BUSINESS

PATH TO MODERNIZATION



Visitors observe a Siasun robotic arm performing calligraphy at a company facility in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on June 12.
ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

Siasun cashing in on 'robot plus AI' for cutting-edge solutions

Shenyang-based firm integrates smart tech into more sectors

By WU YONG in Shenyang and ZHANG XIAOMIN

Leading Chinese robotics enterprise Siasun Robot and Automation Co Ltd, based in Shenyang, Liaoning province, is exploring rich "robot plus AI" application practices to cultivate and develop new quality productive forces in more specialized application scenarios.

"We'll deeply integrate artificial intelligence with various categories of robots in broader fields and deeper levels," said Han Tianwen, head of Siasun's AI research institute.

The company's exhibition hall in Shenyang showcased a diverse array of cutting-edge intelligent products. Among them, an AI robot can engage in real-time conversational interactions with people and accurately decipher

emotions or expectations behind its voice initiator through AI large model technology.

"It is one of the achievements where they deeply integrate collaborative robots with artificial intelligence technology. Empowered by AI, robots are poised to gain a deeper understanding of humanity," Han said.

"Previously, communication with robots necessitated the use of programming languages and the expertise of specialized engineers to facilitate interaction. With these models, interactions have become more direct and intuitive," he added.

Established in 2000, Siasun focuses on robot technology and intelligent manufacturing solutions. The firm has exported products to over 40 countries and regions globally and provided over 4,000 foreign enterprises with industrial upgrade services.

Siasun's presence spans various traditional manufacturing sectors such as petrochemicals, steel, automobiles and light industry. In recent years, the company has expanded its

reach beyond manufacturing into sectors such as healthcare, eldercare, emergency rescue and extreme environment applications.

The firm's industrial robots are designed to seamlessly integrate into production lines, utilizing innovative technologies to replicate human-like arm control. Mobile robots within factory settings leverage cutting-edge technologies such as multi-navigation integration, large-scale group control scheduling, and high-precision cargo positioning for intelligent and flexible transport.

Specialized robots featuring advanced technologies like super-redundant robot motion control, high-precision flexible cable transport and reinforcement in high radiation fields are tailored for tasks in high-risk environments like security maintenance, emergency response and operations facing extreme conditions.

Wang Yan, a professor of economics at Shenyang Academy of Governance, said the robotics industry is a prime example of new quality productive forces.

Through a steadfast commitment

to high-quality development, Siasun — which has established a comprehensive industry value chain that spans core technologies and components to industry-specific system solutions — exemplifies the seamless integration of technology and industry, said Wang.

Zhang Jin, president of Siasun, said the company will fully unleash the incremental role of robots as core support equipment for intelligent manufacturing, vigorously develop and upgrade advanced productive forces in traditional industries, foster and strengthen advanced productive forces in emerging fields, and lay out and construct advanced productive forces for future industries.

"We will promote the construction of a modern industrial system through value contribution across the entire chain, cultivate and develop new quality productive forces and drive sustainable momentum for high-quality development," he said.

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Hengli helps revitalize Northeast China

By ZHANG XIAOMIN and XU ZIMING in Dalian, Liaoning

Eyeing rising demand from the global market, Hengli Heavy Industries is constructing more than 30 vessels at its shipyard in Changxing Island, Dalian, Liaoning province, this year.

Once it commences full production, the company expects to deliver 60 vessels per year.

"In the past 30 years, we have become world-class in fields such as textiles, chemical fibers and petrochemicals. Now, advancing into the global top ranks in shipbuilding and high-end equipment manufacturing is our new goal," said Chen Jianhua, chairman and president of Hengli Group Co Ltd.

Chen said Hengli Heavy Industries has signed 70 shipbuilding orders valued at more than \$5 billion since it became fully operational in January 2023.

Headquartered in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Hengli Group is a Fortune Global 500 company that focuses on the full production chain in oil refining, petrochemicals, polyester new materials and textiles.

The shipyard, formerly known as STX Dalian, was once the largest foreign-owned shipyard in China. STX Dalian was founded in 2006 but declared bankruptcy and liquidation in 2015.

In order to revitalize its assets, the local government in Dalian extended offers to Hengli Group several times and Chen finally decided to take up the challenge.

In 2022, Hengli Heavy Industries, a subsidiary of Hengli Group, was established and acquired the shipyard, aiming to develop a world-class green shipbuilding and high-end equipment manufacturing hub.

In April, its first ship, a 61,000 deadweight ton bulk carrier, was delivered more than 40 days ahead of its scheduled delivery date.

On Changxing Island, one of the seven major petrochemical industry bases in China, Hengli Group is building green petrochemical, fine chemical and high-end equipment

In the past 30 years, we have become world-class in fields such as textiles, chemical fibers, and petrochemicals."

Chen Jianhua, chairman and president of Hengli Group Co Ltd

manufacturing clusters, with a commitment to sustainability and innovation.

The journey began in 2010 when Hengli officially partnered with the Dalian municipal government, initiating the construction of a petrochemical industrial park in Dalian Changxing Island Economic and Technological Development Zone.

Currently, the park boasts five PTA production lines with an annual capacity of 12 million metric tons, making it the world's largest PTA production base.

Innovations in water resource management at Hengli's industrial park include groundbreaking embedded sewage treatment technology, enabling complete gray water reuse.

In 2017, the industrial park embarked on a 20 million ton-per-year refining and chemical integration project. From the project's inception, Chen emphasized the integration of emission control efforts.

In recent years, Hengli has expanded its footprint on Changxing Island.

"In the past 14 years, we have steadfastly implemented the revitalization strategy for Northeast China and have cumulatively invested 280 billion yuan (\$38.6 billion) in Dalian," said Chen. "In the meantime, we have always put environmental protection at the very top."

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An aerial view of Hengli's industrial park in Dalian, Liaoning province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

'Golden touch'



State Grid employees check growth of "miniature peach trees" — dubbed "golden touch" by the locals — at a greenhouse in Caoniwa village, Yanchi county of Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on Thursday. Part of its efforts to improve services, State Grid Ningdong Power Supply Co sends teams to visit local growers and guarantee ample electricity use for production. GUO CHENCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chinese visitors to Dubai seen surging

By HE QI in Shanghai heqi@chinadaily.com.cn

There has been a significant surge in Chinese tourists to Dubai, the city's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) said during a roadshow in Shanghai last week.

According to Saud Hareb Al Mheiri, assistant manager of DET, the city welcomed 620,000 overnight visitors from China in 2023, and in the first four months of 2024, almost 290,000 overnight visitors arrived, a 101 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

"China has been one of the top source markets for Dubai's tourism sector," Al Mheiri said during the Shanghai leg of the DET Chinese mainland roadshow. "We are highly optimistic that this year's visitor numbers will surpass last year's figures."

The United Arab Emirates started granting visas on arrival to Chinese visitors in 2016. In 2017, over 764,000 Chinese tourists visited the UAE, representing a 41 percent increase year-on-year.

Qiu Weining, senior manager of international operations at the DET, highlighted Dubai's tourism achievements, noting that the city experienced its peak year in 2019

with 16.7 million international tourists. The number surged to 17.1 million in 2023.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, China was Dubai's fifth-largest tourist source market. After China's reopening of its borders, Dubai continued to implement a visa-free policy and other convenient measures to attract more Chinese tourists.

The roadshow, which was held in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Guangzhou from June 17 to Monday, is a strategic effort to promote Dubai's tourism development, and attracted 22 travel industry suppliers from Dubai, including airlines, hotels, attractions, shopping malls and destination management companies.

"The DET has long recognized the significance of the Chinese outbound tourism market, and the strong affinity visitors from China have already shown toward Dubai, making it a major contributor to our continued growth. We are committed to engaging with tourism professionals in China, and hosting roadshows like these is a critical part of our strategic approach to showcase Dubai's diverse destination offering," said Al Mheiri.

"We are deeply passionate about sharing our love for the city, showcasing the best of what it has to offer,

and encouraging more and more Chinese visitors to experience the same affection that we hold for it," he added.

Looking ahead, the DET has launched the "China Ready" strategy, continually refining measures to meet the needs of Chinese tourists.

With direct flights now available from 14 Chinese cities and widespread acceptance of Alipay and WeChat in Dubai, the city is well-prepared to accommodate Chinese visitors seamlessly.

"Recently, Alipay has been rolled out for tax refunds in Dubai, a service already available via WeChat, and both platforms are also accepted on transportation services such as metros and taxis," said Qiu.

To enhance engagement with Chinese consumers, the DET is intensifying in-market marketing campaigns, deepening collaborations with social platforms such as Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) and Douyin, and partnering with podcast platforms like Xiaoyuzhou and Ximalaya, he said.

"Several attractions are also waiting for tourists to experience and explore, especially Inside Burj Al Arab, Arte Museum in Dubai Mall, China Town in Dubai Mall, and Real Madrid World," Qiu said.

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Sky's the limit in UAV autonomous push

Domestic tech giants see bright future prospects on rising use of pilotless flights

By WANG KEJU
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In late May, an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to online services platform Meituan soared through the air, navigating its way to a designated drop-off point in Shenzhen Talent Park, Guangdong province, which sits in close proximity to the headquarters of such tech giants as Tencent, Alibaba and Baidu.

It seamlessly docked at its intended pad, efficiently placing a food order into a specially designed storage compartment. As one drone completed its delivery, another drone took off, ready to embark on a new airborne mission to satiate appetites and quench thirst.

"I ordered a Starbucks beverage valued at 36 yuan (\$4.96), which typically costs 39 yuan when ordered in person," said Cheng Zhe, a 28-year-old coder who opted to try out a drone delivery, adding that he not only saved a few yuan, but also enjoyed the added benefit of free delivery.

The application of drones in the delivery sector is just a fraction of the broader low-altitude economy. As the airspace opens up in a well-paced manner, a wide range of industries and sectors are exploring the possibility of utilizing UAVs for various purposes.

According to a report by the China Center for Information Industry Development released in April, China's low-altitude economy, worth 505.95 billion yuan in 2023, registered a year-on-year growth rate of 33.8 percent that year.

As the sector continues to expand along with improved infrastructure, it is poised to exceed the trillion-yuan mark by 2026, the report noted.

The low-altitude economy comprises 85 percent UAVs and 15 percent general aviation, said Yang Jincui, director of the Shenzhen Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Industry Association in Guangdong.

This emerging sector is a dynamic and creative one that operates below an altitude of 1,000 meters, with the possibility of extending to 3,000 meters under special circumstances, presenting a wide range of applications and operational scenarios, Yang said.

The development of the low-altitude economy has been constrained by airspace regulations. Taking Meituan's drone delivery service as an example, drones are required to fly along predetermined routes at a maximum height of 120 meters, limiting their operations to designated areas.

In response to this challenge, the Civil Aviation Administration of China announced plans in late May to collaborate with relevant depart-



Above: Online services platform Meituan's unmanned aerial vehicle delivers food orders in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in May.

Below: The booth of CITIC Offshore Helicopter is seen during an expo in Shanghai in May 2021. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



ments to initiate airspace classifications and low-altitude airspace management reforms, aiming to increase the availability of airspace for low-altitude operations.

The low-altitude economy is now making its way into everyday life, driven by the use of drones to enhance visitor experience in the tourism sector.

Traditional food delivery services often face challenges when it comes to accessing scenic areas due to restrictions. This inconvenience has forced visitors to walk

considerable distances to collect their orders, said Yang.

By utilizing drones, visitors can have their orders delivered directly to them within the park, eliminating the need for long walks to the entrance. This efficient delivery service has quickly become a popular and highly sought-after experience among tourists, Yang added.

Apart from the convenience of food delivery services, these aircraft are increasingly being employed to provide aerial tours, showcasing scenic areas from a unique vantage

point, offering tourists an immersive and unforgettable experience.

Luogang Park in Hefei, Anhui province, once an airport, has undergone transformation into the world's largest urban park. In addition to its scenic beauty, the park has become a prime location for the application of the low-altitude economy, particularly in the tourism and sightseeing sectors.

Chinese urban air mobility company EHang Holdings Ltd conducts daily flight tests of its passenger-carrying drones within the park, with

plans underway for commercialization. Luogang Park aims to establish internal air routes and develop "aerial taxi" hubs, allowing visitors to purchase tickets and enjoy panoramic views of the park from above.

According to recent data released by the CAAC, approximately 480,000 visits related to aerial sightseeing were made in 2022. Moreover, the administration estimates that the low-altitude economy in the tourism sector is poised to exceed 200 billion yuan by 2030.

Exploring potential applications in sectors beyond tourism — such as logistics, agriculture, environmental monitoring and infrastructure inspections — is crucial for the growth and sustainability of the low-altitude economy, analysts said.

By diversifying the use of low-altitude technology, businesses can unlock new revenue streams and contribute to the growth of the overall industry, said Bai Wenxi, vice-chairman of the China Enterprise Capital Union.

Unmanned aerial vehicles can be effectively employed in various sectors such as maritime security, surveillance, fishery patrols, forest inspections and oil pipeline monitoring, which capitalizes on the unique capabilities of drones to gather and transmit data from elevated positions, Bai said.

In addition, UAVs are particularly relevant for applications that require rapid and efficient delivery, such as medical supplies, urgent cargo shipments and emergency

response services, Bai added.

In May, CITIC Offshore Helicopter commenced operations on a helicopter route between Shenzhen and nearby Zhuhai. The new service offers passengers an efficient alternative to the traditional two-hour land journey, completing the trip in just 20 minutes. Priced at 999 yuan per ticket, the helicopter service has attracted a group of time-conscious travelers who prioritize speed over cost.

The development of the low-altitude economy relies heavily on advanced aerial vehicles and the support of information technology, network connectivity and communication systems.

The general aviation manufacturing industry plays a crucial role in providing the necessary equipment for growth of the low-altitude economy, said Shan Zhongde, China's vice-minister of industry and information technology.

China had more than 2,300 domestic companies engaged in civilian drone research and development by the end of 2023, with more than 1,000 drone models mass-produced, Shan said, adding that last year, China delivered more than 3.17 million civilian drones.

With a comprehensive supply chain encompassing R&D, component manufacturing, assembly and distribution, China has positioned itself as a global leader in drone production, said Tian Gangyin, founder and CEO of United Aircraft.

The vast network of suppliers, manufacturers and tech companies has contributed to the country's ability to deliver high-quality drones at competitive prices, Tian said, adding that China has played a pivotal role in shaping international standards for drone technology.

A future where multiple aerial vehicles, both manned and unmanned, operate in close proximity, requires precise coordination and communication to ensure safety and maximize airspace utilization, experts said.

The vision of achieving end-to-end and door-to-door services in the low-altitude economy requires the establishment of robust infrastructure capable of supporting high-precision operations, said Li Xiaohua, a researcher at the Institute of Industrial Economics, which is part of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

This infrastructure includes a network of sensors, communication systems and intelligent devices that work together seamlessly to ensure smooth and efficient operations across the entire airspace, Li said.

The low-altitude traffic system will realize more intelligent operational management, real-time monitoring and intelligent scheduling of low-altitude economic activities, gradually improving operational efficiency and management standards, Li said, adding that with such a network in place, regulatory agencies can effectively monitor and control low-altitude flights, ensuring a safe and well-regulated airspace environment.

Low-altitude economy hitting new heights

By WANG KEJU

As the low-altitude economy gains traction nationwide, local governments across China are exploring region-specific ways to leverage their unique strengths and create their own industry clusters.

Beijing recently unveiled a plan for promoting high-quality development of the low-altitude economy, outlining its vision to nurture such a sector as a key growth driver of coordinated development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province.

The capital city aims to become a hub for innovation in the low-altitude economy and a national demonstration zone for the sector. The action plan also sets forth a series of quantifiable goals, including the ambition to foster over 5,000 related enterprises within three years, which will contribute to over 100 billion yuan (\$13.8 billion) of economic activity in the city.

Shenzhen, Guangdong province, became the first city nationwide to introduce a comprehensive low-altitude economy law earlier this year.

This landmark legislation provides legal support for the development of the sector and positions the high-tech port city at the forefront of this high-potential area.

Data from the municipal government showed that the annual output of Shenzhen's low-altitude economy exceeded 90 billion yuan in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 20 percent. Moreover, Shenzhen ranked first in the country in terms of flight scale, launching 126 low-altitude routes and constructing 89 drone takeoff and landing sites as of the end of last year.

According to a report jointly released by National Business Daily and Zhejiang province-based big data platform Hsmap in late May, Beijing and Shenzhen have emerged as the leading cities in the low-altitude economy in China in terms of enterprise distribution, financing status, innovation resources and development environment.

While Beijing boasts significant advantages in science and technology resources for innovation,



A visitor learns about an electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft of EHang Holdings Ltd during an expo in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, earlier this month. LIU DAWEI / XINHUA

Shenzhen has gradually formed an industrial ecosystem by capitalizing on its favorable development environment, said Yang Hongfei, CEO of Hsmap. Recognizing the tremendous

potential of the low-altitude economy, in addition to Beijing and Shenzhen, various provinces such as Anhui, Sichuan, Jiangsu, Liaoning and Hubei have been actively formulating strategies and policies to

tap into this emerging industry.

As localities across China compete to establish themselves in the low-altitude economy, it is important to recognize that not every location possesses the necessary industrial foundations and supporting infrastructure, said Wang Guowen, director of the center for logistics and supply chain management at the China Development Institute, a think tank based in Shenzhen.

Development of the low-altitude economy requires cities to have a strong foundation in science and technology industries, a robust manufacturing sector and a variety of application scenarios supported by favorable policies. Cities must also identify their unique advantages and position themselves accordingly to thrive in this rapidly evolving sector, Wang said.

The low-altitude economy encompasses a wide range of applications, including but not limited to aerial photography, delivery services, surveying and mapping, agriculture and emergency responses.

However, there is still untapped potential for expanding its scope of applications and creating more

innovative scenarios, said Qin Rui, a professor at the Civil Aviation University of China.

Rather than starting from scratch, cities can focus on developing new use cases, and attracting and integrating established upstream businesses into their local ecosystems, Qin said.

Wuxi, Jiangsu province, which does not have a strong industrial chain in the low-altitude economy sector, has adopted an innovative approach by treating the entire city as a vast repository of potential scenarios that can interact with relevant activities.

By embracing open scenarios and exploring potential applications, Wuxi will build a low-altitude economy industrial base and operations headquarters for EHang Holdings Ltd, a Chinese urban air mobility technology company — the first electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft project in Jiangsu.

Rather than attempting to replicate the successes of early-adopter cities, these cities are focusing on identifying their unique competitive advantages and building upon them to carve out a strategic niche in the sector, Qin said.