



President Xi Jinping stands for a group photo on Thursday with leaders of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO at the Independence Palace in the Kazakh capital of Astana. JU PENG / XINHUA

Xi calls for bolstering SCO unity, cooperation

Belarus officially becomes 10th member state; China takes over rotating presidency

By XU WEI in Astana
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President Xi Jinping stressed on Thursday the necessity for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to bolster unity and cooperation, saying that the grouping must safeguard its security baseline, defend the right to development and build up its unity.

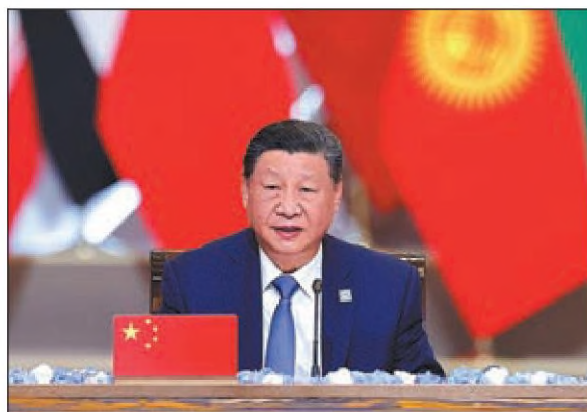
In a speech delivered at the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO in Astana, Kazakhstan, the Chinese president said it is critically important for the world that the grouping always stands on the right side of history and

Inside

- See more, [pages 2-4](#)
- Editorial, [page 11](#)
- Comment, [page 12](#)

upholds justice and fairness.

The SCO formally approved the accession of Belarus to the grouping during Thursday's summit, and decided that China will hold the rotating presidency of the 10-member organization for 2024-25. The other members of the grouping are India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



President Xi Jinping addresses the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at the Independence Palace in Astana on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi noted that the SCO, which was founded 23 years ago, has seen its family, including observer states and dialogue partners, expand to 26 countries, spanning three continents.

With more partners, the foundation of cooperation is more solid, he said.

The organization must ensure the bottom line of security "in the face of real threats of the Cold War mentality", he said, highlighting the need for member states to practice the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

The SCO must address complex and intertwined security challenges through dialogue and coordination, respond to the profoundly changing international landscape

with a win-win approach, and endeavor to build a world of lasting peace and universal security, he stressed.

Faced with the real risks of the "small yard, high fences" mentality, Xi called on member states to safeguard their right to development, saying that joint efforts must be made to advance scientific and technological innovation, ensure stable and unimpeded industrial and supply chains, and stimulate regional economic vitality to achieve common development goals.

The Chinese president also appealed for enhanced unity and strength inside the grouping in facing the real challenges of interference and division.

See [Unity](#), page 3

EU stands to lose the most with EV tariff hikes

WORLD WATCH
By Zulkafil Hassan Khan

made EVs in the global market. Not only is the action a blatant instance of protectionism but it also violates the trading rules of the World Trade Organization.

It is interesting to note that the European automotive industry has expressed severe discontent with the tariff increases, arguing that this can erode the competitiveness of EU enterprises in the EV sector on the global stage.

The "unfair subsidy" narrative was considered an integral element in Ursula von der Leyen's reelection campaign during the EU elections. Yet this move mirrors the United States strategy of "de-risking" and decoupling from Beijing, highlighting the growing instances of economic nationalism and isolation.

The exports between China and the EU account for over a third of world trade. The two economic powerhouses trade goods worth over \$800 billion annually, underlining the fact that the EU needs China for survival, that both sides are dependent on one another and the tariffs disrupt the vast cooperation between the two sides in green means of transport.

See [Tariff](#), page 11

Xi arrives in Tajikistan amid deepening relations

By XU WEI and REN QI in Dushanbe

President Xi Jinping arrived in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Thursday for his first state visit to the Central Asian country in five years, an event widely expected to inject fresh impetus into ties between the two neighboring countries.

A colorful welcome ceremony greeted Xi at the airport. Hosted by Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, the ceremony saw more than 1,500 young Tajiks, dressed in national costume, perform Chinese and Tajik songs and dances.

In a written interview upon his arrival, Xi said that he and Rahmon are expected to bolster the development of China-Tajikistan relations in light of the new circumstances and believe this visit will be a complete success.

China and Tajikistan are good neighbors who help each other, good friends who support each other, good partners enjoying mutual benefit and win-win results, and good brothers who treat each other with absolute sincerity, Xi said.

Noting that China has become Tajikistan's second-largest trading partner, Xi said their Belt and Road cooperation has yielded

fruitful results with two-way trade constantly setting new records.

Farhod Rahimi, chairman of the Committee on Coordination of Activities of the National Assembly of the Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Tajikistan, said Xi's visit will usher in a new era of cooperation between the two countries.

Calling the bilateral relationship a prime example of amicable neighborly ties and genuine cooperation between nations, Rahimi underlined the two countries' deep historical roots, consistent growth in ties and successful collaboration over the years.

The advancement of Tajikistan-China relations is a key focus area and strategic objective within Tajikistan's foreign policy framework, Rahimi said.

Xi landed in Dushanbe after attending the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana, and a state visit to Kazakhstan. Three Kazakh Air Force jets escorted Xi's plane after it took off.

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President Xi Jinping attends a welcoming ceremony hosted by Tajik President Emomali Rahmon at Dushanbe airport, Tajikistan, on Thursday. YAN YAN / XINHUA

XI'S VISIT



The Olympic City is under construction by China CAMC Engineering Co in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, on Jan 1. XINHUA

SCODA seeks investors to develop

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
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A demonstration area in Qingdao, Shandong province, is encouraging investors to participate in its development as it looks to further integrate into the Belt and Road Initiative to set up a platform that will facilitate major international exchanges and cooperation efforts.

To this end, the China-Shanghai Cooperation Organization Local Economic and Trade Cooperation Demonstration Area will further promote comprehensive reform in the months to come, said Chen Wansheng, deputy secretary-general of the Qingdao government at a news conference last month.

"SCODA welcomes investors from around the world to join hands in its construction, which is providing myriad opportunities," he said, adding that Qingdao would spare no effort in hastening the development of the demonstration area.

SCODA's construction is off to a good start, as it has become an important window for showcasing the achievements of China's opening-up, as well as the rapid development of Qingdao as an international metropolis, Chen said.

He said relying on the advantages of transportation modes of sea, land, air and rail, SCODA has built a "gateway" for SCO countries to the Asian Pacific rim over the years. It has opened up international logistics channels connecting Japan, South Korea, Eurasia, Mongolia, Russia and Southeast Asia.

SCODA has opened 32 regular China-Europe freight train routes, linking it to 54 cities in 23 countries and regions involved in the SCO and BRI.

It has also opened more than 10 cargo train routes to Europe.

With accumulated operation of more than 3,200 China-Europe freight trains in the previous six years, Qingdao has become one of the top three cities in China to operate China-Europe freight trains, and one of the top three running freight trains to central Asian nations, Chen said.

Meanwhile, Qingdao Jiaodong International Airport has opened 261 flights, connecting the coastal city with 146 domestic and international destinations, and Qingdao Port has established 42 sea freight transport routes to SCO countries.

The city's sea-rail intermodal container volume has consistently ranked first among coastal ports in China, Chen said.

SCODA also has opened China-Russia highway transportation channels, he said.

As of the end of May, SCODA has attracted more than 130 projects with a total investment of more than 270 billion yuan (\$37.5 billion).

SCODA has accumulated a total import and export volume of 21.34 billion yuan with SCO countries in the previous six years, with an average annual growth rate of 77 percent.

Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, said SCODA has effectively promoted economic and trade cooperation among SCO nations.

Meanwhile, the China-SCO Institute of Economy and Trade has organized more than 200 training courses, with more than 15,000 people having received special training.

Since the Shanghai Cooperation Economic and Trade Exchange Center was launched last year, the institute has further integrated high-quality educational resources into foreign trade and economic cooperation, and has collected talent to create a comprehensive and international exchange platform for economic and trade training and cultural exchanges for SCO countries.

SCO nations urged to strengthen ties

Sino-Kazakh relationship an example of how cooperation can be beneficial

By ZHONG NAN
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Since China National Chemical Engineering Group Corp announced the establishment of an integrated petrochemicals complex and infrastructure project in Kazakhstan last year, it has been providing crucial support in upgrading Kazakhstan's petrochemical industry and boosting the country's economic growth.

The project serves as a shining example of the increasing cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, and how such cooperation can be beneficial for members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Market observers said that, driven by the growth of the Belt and Road Initiative and their complementary industrial and trade structures, China and Kazakhstan are likely to expand business ties in areas such as transportation, finance, new infrastructure, clean energy, trade in services and manufacturing.

Unlike traditional infrastructure such as railways, roads and water conservancy, the concept of new infrastructure refers to critical facilities based on information technologies such as 5G, AI, the industrial internet and the internet of things. IoT describes networks of devices that can connect and exchange data.

China-Kazakhstan trade was worth 95.8 billion yuan (\$13.2 billion) in the first four months of this year, a 23.3 percent increase year-

on-year, China's General Administration of Customs said.

Crude oil, natural gas, minerals and agricultural products are Kazakhstan's main exports to China. China exports mainly manufacturing equipment, steel, vehicles, electronics, textiles, garments and household appliances to Kazakhstan.

Zhang Yongjun, secretary-general at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said that amid increasing global economic pressures, China and Kazakhstan have contributed to ensuring the stability of Eurasian production cooperation and the smooth operation of the China-Europe freight train service.

They have also effectively addressed global energy security challenges, Zhang said.

With improved connectivity projects such as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and new railway express services, China and Kazakhstan still have room to further strengthen their co-development strategies and seek new areas for collaboration, especially in big data, finance, cross-border e-commerce and green energy, he said.

The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route is a rail freight corridor linking China and the European Union through Central Asia, the Caucasus, Türkiye and Eastern Europe, according to the Asian Development Bank Institute in Tokyo.



Chinese builders work at the construction site of the Olympic City project in Tashkent on Aug 13 last year. XINHUA

"Improved rail and road transportation networks between China and Kazakhstan will benefit everyone," said Zhou Nianli, a professor specializing in foreign trade at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. "China's significant demand for imports from Kazakhstan will drive industrial upgrading in Kazakhstan."

As China will take over the rotating chairmanship of the SCO later this year, experts and business leaders emphasized that strong business ties between group members will further advance economic collaboration within the SCO framework.

Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said that initiatives such as

the BRI have aligned with the SCO's agenda, promoting infrastructure development, trade and investment across Eurasia. This integration has spurred economic growth and enhanced regional connectivity.

Member nations need to revitalize trade and investment, and expand openness and inter-connectivity, especially as the global economy faces geopolitical and geo-economic headwinds, Zhou said.

Established in 2001, the SCO has grown from six members into a robust platform with 10 member states, two observer states and 14 dialogue partners.

With all SCO members accelerating the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and rein-

forcing ties in areas of common interest such as production capacity, transportation, finance and telecommunications, the group's economic cooperation is poised to expand significantly.

Gao Lingyun, a researcher at the Institute of World Economics and Politics, affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, said these efforts will broaden the scope of trade and investment activities, which have traditionally focused on energy, natural resources, infrastructure and agriculture.

Digital trade, a crucial component of the digital economy, will help SCO member countries link information nodes across trade chains, minimizing information asymmetries and transaction costs, Gao said.

SCO member economies have joined the trend of digital development and reinforced regional economic cooperation in areas such as smart cities, telemedicine and manufacturing over the past several years, the Ministry of Commerce said.

Given that the economic growth of many SCO members heavily depends on the trade of commodities and agricultural products, it is practical for them to collaborate with companies in China to further diversify their trade portfolios, said Zhang Shaogang, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade in Beijing.

They can also work more closely together on environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation and developing low-carbon economies to identify new growth points in the years to come, he said.

Key Yangling base driving agricultural collaboration

By QIN FENG in Xi'an
and ZHAO RUINAN

A base in Yangling, Shaanxi province, has become a key platform for demonstrating advanced Chinese agricultural techniques, facilitating agricultural imports and exports, and hosting training programs and international exchanges.

On June 10, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Demonstration Base for Agriculture Technology Exchange and Training received a special congratulatory letter celebrating its fifth anniversary from the Kazakhstan's consulate in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi.

"Over the past five years, 66 Kazakh agricultural officials and technicians have been trained at the base, learning advanced Chinese agricultural techniques," the letter said. "Kazakh agricultural products have also entered China through the base and the China-Europe freight train."

Initiated in 2019, the base, which is part of the Yangling Agricultural Hi-tech Industries Demonstration Zone, has become a crucial platform for agricultural collaboration among nations and regions that are involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

It has hosted more than 40 significant events, including the SCO Forum on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development. It has

also trained agricultural experts and technicians who come from SCO member countries.

"We have trained more than 2,000 agricultural officials and technicians from SCO countries, held 37 remote training sessions on agricultural technology, and saw 37,000 people participate in online workshops to learn Chinese agricultural techniques," said Ma Jing, executive deputy director of the base.

Shortly after the Labor Day holiday in May, Zhang Zhengmao, a wheat breeding expert at Northwest A&F University in Yangling, traveled to an SCO agricultural demonstration park in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to teach farmers sowing techniques.

For several years, Zhang and his colleagues have traveled between China and Kazakhstan, fostering agricultural cooperation between the two countries.

Agriculture is a vital area of economic collaboration in the SCO region.

Zhang Ming, secretary-general of the SCO, has emphasized the importance of collaboration to achieve agricultural scientific and technological innovation, calling for the exchange of agricultural technologies, expanding agricultural trade and improving food production to ensure regional and global food security.

Over the past five years, the Yangling base has focused on meeting



Professor Zhang Dong from Northwest A&F University (right) trains farmers in Kyrgyzstan in April. XINHUA

the agricultural needs of SCO countries. It has sent 73 teams of more than 190 experts to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, where they have established modern agricultural technology demonstration parks to foster international collaboration in agriculture.

The demonstration zone and Northwest A&F University have established 10 overseas agricultural technology demonstration parks in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Australia, Russia and the United

States. They have completed trials and demonstrations of 115 high-quality crop varieties and efficient cultivation techniques, covering more than 2 million hectares combined.

Driven by the SCO base, the demonstration zone's imports and exports were worth a total of 1.1 billion yuan (\$151.5 million) last year, with an average annual growth of more than 20 percent.

In addition, Xi'an Aiju Grain and Oil Industrial Group has engaged in

contract farming on 100,000 hectares in Kazakhstan, importing 100,000 metric tons of grain and oil products last year and serving as a model of China-Kazakhstan agricultural collaboration.

SCO agricultural trade activities have also continued to thrive. In September 2022, the first SCO agricultural expo was held in Shaanxi. Canola oil from Kazakhstan, linden honey and pickles from Russia and Kyrgyz onions and grapes were among the star products featured.

SCO Deputy Secretary-General Sohail Khan said that given current global food security challenges, strengthening exchanges and collaboration in modern agriculture will promote sustained socioeconomic development among member countries.

Wei Feng, of Northwest A&F University, said: "In terms of food security, for example, their complementary advantages provide a solid foundation for collaboration. Opportunities lie in areas such as food production, foreign trade and agricultural talent and technological exchanges."

Covering about 135 square kilometers, Yangling is about 80 kilometers west of Xi'an, where the ancient Silk Road started.

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XI'S VISIT



President Xi Jinping addresses the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Unity: Need to build on strength highlighted

From page 1

SCO members should jointly resist external interference, firmly support each other, accommodate each other's concerns, and peacefully resolve internal differences, he said.

Xi underlined the importance of peaceful solutions in resolving internal differences, and pooling strength to address difficulties in cooperation, so that the destiny of SCO member nations and regional peace and development can be firmly grasped in their own hands.

The SCO has been able to withstand the tests of changing international dynamics thanks to its steadfast commitment to the traditions of unity and cooperation, the path of equal and mutually beneficial collaboration, the pursuit of fairness and justice, and a broad-minded embrace of inclusiveness and mutual learning, he pointed out.

Xi reiterated the importance of the SCO remaining true to its original aspiration, upholding the "Shanghai Spirit", enhancing mutual support and building the organization a reliable backbone for the common prosperity and revitalization of its member states.

Addressing the summit, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted that the SCO has become an effective mechanism of friendship, good-neighborliness, equality and mutual support, based on the "Shanghai Spirit". "The SCO has established itself as a unique platform, where the interests and arguments of the member states are equally taken into account," he said.

He highlighted the strengthening of mutual trust and cooperation in security as the priority for the organization, saying that the SCO has unique capacities to ensure security in the Eurasian region.

Tokayev also identified strengthening transportation network through the creation of efficient corridors and reliable transportation chains as the next direction for cooperation.

Solidarity, pooling wisdom highlighted

Xi says bridging differences, building consensus key to common-home vision

By MO JINGXI
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China put forward on Thursday a series of proposals for countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to pool their wisdom and courage to build a common home in response to a rapidly changing international landscape of growing insecurity, instability and uncertainty.

Speaking at the SCO Plus meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, President Xi Jinping said the gathering for the first such event showed that under the new circumstances of the new era, the vision of the organization is widely popular, and SCO member states have friends around the world.

The SCO Plus meeting brought together SCO member states as well as invited dialogue partners, observer states and international organizations.

"We need to stay firmly on the development paths that suit our respective national conditions and regional realities, and jointly build a more promising home of the SCO so that our peoples can live a peaceful, successful and happy life," he said.

To build a common home of solidarity and mutual trust, Xi said it is important to bridge differences, build more consensus, and enhance mutual trust through strategic

communication. He called on members of the organization to strengthen exchanges on governance experience and hold an SCO political parties forum at an appropriate time.

Noting that security is a prerequisite for national development, and safety is the lifeline to the happiness of the people, Xi said that no matter how the international landscape changes, the organization must hold the bottom line of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

"Real security is premised on the security of all countries," he said.

As the current chair of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, Xi said China will do what it can to ensure the success of the Interaction-2024 joint counterterrorism exercise and other events.

He also called for efforts to make the best use of the mechanism of coordination and cooperation among Afghanistan's neighbors and other platforms to increase humanitarian support to Afghanistan and encourage the country to establish a broad-based and inclusive political structure.

"Afghanistan is indispensable for the security in the region," Xi said.

Noting that modernization is the shared goal of all countries in the SCO, Xi said China proposes that 2025 be designated as the SCO

Year of Sustainable Development, in order to help foster new forces for growth.

He said China is ready to work with all parties to fully implement the eight major steps under high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and will expand local currency settlement and actively promote the establishment of an SCO financing platform.

China welcomes all parties to use the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and participate in the development of the International Lunar Research Station, Xi said.

As China has proposed establishing an SCO digital education alliance, Xi said China is ready to provide at least 1,000 training opportunities on digital technology to fellow countries in the SCO in the next three years.

"We should also modernize the governance system of our organization, improve its operation mechanisms and boost its effectiveness," he said.

Highlighting the increasing importance of dialogue among civilizations for world peace and harmony, Xi said China is ready to provide quality platforms for countries in the SCO to engage in such dialogues.

According to the Chinese president, China will give full play to the role of nonofficial organizations such as the SCO Committee on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation, and continue to organize events under

signature programs such as the Forum on Traditional Medicine and the Youth Development Forum.

China will hold a green development forum and a women's forum in Qingdao, Shandong province, the tourism and cultural capital of the SCO, he said.

"We welcome all parties to take an active part in these events," Xi added.

In the next five years, China will host 1,000 young people from countries in the SCO for exchange opportunities in China, he said.

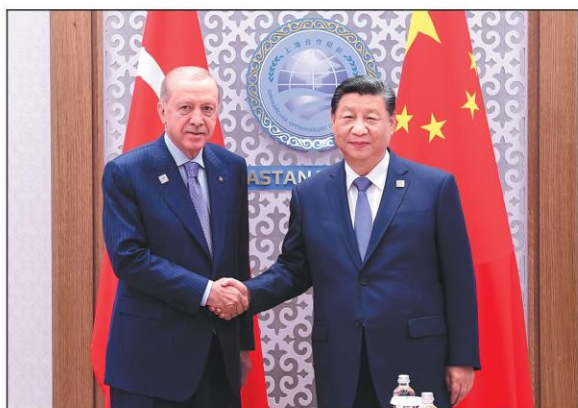
"I believe that with our joint efforts, there will be more robust interactions and mutual learning among regional countries as well as deeper understanding and friendship among our peoples," Xi said.

To build a common home of fairness and justice, Xi said the SCO countries should jointly advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, and should practice true multilateralism and make global governance more just and equitable.

After the SCO summit in Astana, China will hold the rotating presidency of the organization.

"We will work with SCO partners in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, and join hands with more countries and international organizations that identify with the Shanghai Spirit to strive for common progress and foster brighter prospects for a community with a shared future for mankind," Xi said.

Editor's note: President Xi Jinping held three respective meetings on Thursday with world leaders on the sidelines of the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. The following are highlights of their talks.



President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. PHOTOS BY PANG XINGLEI / XINHUA

Beijing, Ankara vow to boost mutual trust

China and Türkiye should support each other in defending their core interests, consolidate political mutual trust and advance high-level mutually beneficial cooperation, President Xi Jinping said when meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Noting that relations "have maintained a steady momentum", Xi emphasized that Beijing encourages the two countries to expand bilateral trade.

China supports increased investment by the nation's companies in Türkiye, seeks to advance cooperation in infrastructure projects in an orderly manner, and encourages more Chinese citizens to travel to Türkiye, he added.

Xi said the two countries share many similar or identical views on issues such as the Palestine-Israel conflict and the Ukraine crisis, and they should communicate more closely.

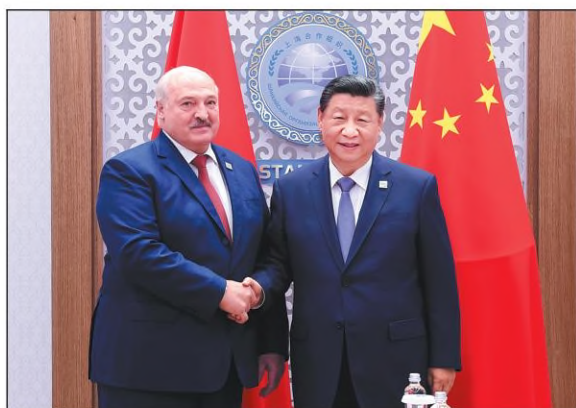
Erdogan said that Türkiye values the development of its relations with China, and it unswervingly adheres to the one-China principle and respects China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Türkiye welcomes more Chinese companies to invest in the nation and more Chinese tourists to visit, he said.

Ankara hopes that the two countries will further strengthen the synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative with Türkiye's development vision, and expand cooperation in areas such as the economy and trade, infrastructure and clean energy, he added.

Türkiye appreciates Beijing's important contribution to world peace, including its fair and just stance on the Palestinian question, and it looks to strengthen communication and collaboration with Beijing in the multilateral context, he said.

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President Xi Jinping meets with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

President congratulates Belarus on SCO status

China will always follow true multilateralism and support the United Nations in playing a core role in international affairs, no matter how the international situation may change, President Xi Jinping said when meeting with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Xi said that changes unseen in a century are accelerating across the world, and humanity is faced with unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

The UN is a core platform for implementing multilateralism and advancing global governance, Xi said, adding that its role should only be strengthened rather than weakened.

All countries in the world are a community with a shared future, Xi emphasized. The international community must pull together in times of trouble to ensure that humanity is going in the right direction, he said.

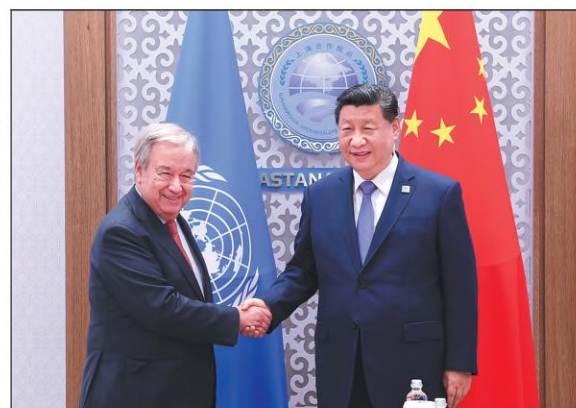
Xi said that China supports the UN in holding the Summit of the Future, adding that he hopes the summit will send a positive signal of following multilateralism and strengthening unity and cooperation, and will help global governance become more just and reasonable.

He also said China supports the UN in playing a leading role in reforming the international financial architecture and in the global governance of artificial intelligence.

Guterres said the UN will make all-out efforts to promote the international financial architecture's readjustment and the global governance of artificial intelligence, and push global governance toward a more just and reasonable pattern that will better facilitate the shared development of developing countries.

Guterres thanked China for supporting the UN's cause, following multilateralism and playing a key and constructive part in promoting world peace and development.

CHINA DAILY



President Xi Jinping meets with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Core role of UN in intl affairs emphasized

President Xi Jinping congratulated Belarus on becoming a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, during his meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

Xi recalled Lukashenko's two visits to China last year, saying that they had outlined a new blueprint for the development of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries.

He said that since the beginning of this year, there have been close exchanges at all levels between China and Belarus, and the consensus they reached have been effectively implemented.

With the joint efforts of both sides, the relationship between China and Belarus will continue to develop healthily and make great strides forward, Xi said.

Lukashenko expressed his gratitude for China's support for Belarus's formal accession to the SCO, and congratulated China on assuming the rotating chair of the regional organization.

He said that the performance of the guard of honor of the People's Liberation Army in Belarus on Wednesday was warmly welcomed, once again showcasing the friendship between Belarus and China.

Belarus supports the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, all proposed by Xi, as well as the six-point consensus on the political resolution of the Ukraine crisis, jointly proposed by China and Brazil, Lukashenko said.

Lukashenko added that he looks forward to further enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation and coordination between Belarus and China.

CHINA DAILY

XI'S VISIT

Envoy: Sino-Tajik ties reach new heights

Strategic vision pays dividends, boosts relations

By REN QI in Dushanbe
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With the strategic direction set by the leaders of China and Tajikistan, bilateral relations have entered a phase of rapid advancement, Beijing's top envoy in Dushanbe said.

Ahead of the third state visit by President Xi Jinping to the Central Asian country, Chinese Ambassador to Tajikistan Ji Shumin said during an interview that Sino-Tajik relations have reached new heights, with the strategic leadership of both heads of state playing a pivotal role.



Ji Shumin

The diplomat expressed China's readiness to collaborate with Tajikistan in fully implementing the agreements made by President Xi and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, aiming to bring mutual benefits to both nations and peoples.

Calling Tajikistan a valuable neighbor and a comprehensive strategic partner of China, Ji said the people of the two countries have a long history of friendly exchanges.

After the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, under the strategic guidance of Xi and Rahmon, bilateral relations have transitioned into a phase of swift advancement, Ji said.

In 2013, the two countries announced the establishment of a strategic partnership. In 2017, the relationship was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership. During Xi's visit to Tajikistan in 2019, the two sides agreed to jointly build a China-Tajikistan



A colorful welcome ceremony held by Tajik President Emomali Rahmon welcomes President Xi Jinping at the airport in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Thursday. Xi arrived here on Thursday for a state visit. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

community of development and security.

In 2023, the two presidents jointly announced the building of a China-Tajikistan community with a shared future featuring everlasting friendship, solidarity and mutual benefit.

Under the strategic leadership of the two heads of state, both countries have set the goal of building a community with a shared future, providing a clear direction for bilateral relations, Ji said.

Tajikistan was among the first countries to support the Belt and Road Initiative, which was proposed by President Xi in 2013, and to sign related cooperation agreements with China, he noted.

Thanks to the robust momentum of the BRI, a range of collaborative endeavors and assistance initiatives between China and Tajikistan have been carried out in crucial sectors such as infrastructure, metallurgy and energy. These projects have significantly contributed to Tajikistan's

economic and social progress, Ji said.

Between 2013 and 2023, trade between the two neighbors doubled, and China has emerged as Tajikistan's primary investment source and a key trading partner during this period, he added.

Against the backdrop of aligning the BRI with Tajikistan's National Development Strategy for the period through 2030, both sides aim to enhance cooperation in trade, finance, tourism, transportation, communication, ecology, culture

and artificial intelligence, Ji said.

Further steps will be taken to boost bilateral trade, diversify trade categories, explore trade potential, strengthen cooperation under the Silk Road e-commerce framework, and discover new opportunities for trade and innovation cooperation between the two countries, he added.

"The scope for tangible collaboration between China and Tajikistan is extensive, with promising prospects ahead," he said.

Legendary poet a bridge of friendship

A statue of the great Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher Abai Qunanbaily was created by a Chinese sculptor and has stood in Beijing's Chaoyang Park since March 2014.

On the base of the reddish-brown monument is engraved Abai's motto — Wisdom is the driving force of life.

Many Chinese got to know the great steppe country of Central Asia through this founder of modern Kazakh literature and enlightener of modern thought, and the statue in Beijing has become a microcosm of cultural and people-to-people mutual understanding between China and Kazakhstan.

As an important cultural symbol, Abai is increasingly known by the Chinese people. In the 10 years since the statue was erected in Beijing, many readers have gathered here on every Abai anniversary to recite his classic poems.



Ren Qi
Reporter's
Log

The poet built a bridge of cultural exchanges between China and Kazakhstan, and has been mentioned and affirmed by the leaders of the two countries

many times. In 2013, when President Xi Jinping gave a speech in Kazakhstan, he quoted Abai's famous saying, "The world is an ocean. Time, like the wind, drives waves of generations replacing each other." In 2022, when President Xi visited Kazakhstan, he once again mentioned this great poet in his signed article.

When I walked in the streets of Kazakhstan, I could see Abai everywhere, because there are lots of streets, theaters and schools named after the great poet. According to the data released by Kazakhstan's Bureau of National Statistics, nearly 20,000 citizens in the country have the same name as Abai. The Kazakh government also signed a decree to officially establish Aug 10 every year as the Day of Abai.

The great Abai is one of the many bridges connecting China and Kazakhstan.

More than 10,000 Kazakh students are studying in China, and thousands of Chinese students are studying in Kazakh universities. Five Confucius Institutes have been set up in Kazakhstan, and five universities in China offer Kazakh language majors.

I deeply felt during the interviews that the common language between Chinese and Kazakh people is increasing, and I met more Kazakh people who had been to China than on the last time I visited the Central Asian country.

"The interaction between the two countries is obviously more frequent this year, and more Kazakhs have the chance to travel to China. One of the main reasons is the two countries exempted visas from each other in November last year, allowing people from the two sides to visit each other as often," said Yang Lei, director of a Confucius Institute in Astana.

Kazakhstan is not only the birthplace of the Belt and Road Initiative, but also has deep connections with the ancient Silk Road.

The ancient Silk Road was a trade route, as well as a road for the integration of civilizations. In the future, China and Kazakhstan will further strengthen their cooperation across various sectors such as education, tourism, archaeology, art and media. They aim to enhance the scope and scale of cultural exchanges and offer increased opportunities for young people to engage and connect.

Standing at a new historical starting point of China-Kazakhstan relations, I feel that President Xi's visit has created a new atmosphere for Sino-Kazakh ties.

More Chinese tourists favor taking trips to Central Asia

By YANG FEIYUE
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A rising number of Chinese tourists have chosen Kazakhstan as their travel destination amid preferable visa policy, convenient flight arrangements and tourism promotion efforts, domestic travel agencies said.

Since tourists traveling between China and Kazakhstan began enjoying the visa-free privilege in November, Kazakhstan has become an increasingly popular destination among Chinese, said Liang Changhong, general manager of China CYTS Tours Holding Co's operations in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Chinese and Kazakh nationals are allowed to stay in each other's country for no more than 30 days for a single entry, and no more than 90 days in total for multiple visits within a 180-day period, according to their visa policies.

It grants visa exemptions for citizens of both countries covering private affairs, tourism, medical treatment, international transportation, transit and business purposes.

CYTS Tours organized a self-drive tour for mid-June from Xinjiang to Central Asian countries. The tour was quickly booked up.

"More than 40 people from across the country signed up," Liang said.

During the 16-day trip, the travelers were able to check in at the Horgos land port in Xinjiang, which was an important post on the ancient Silk Road. From there, they exited the country and headed to Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan, to have an in-depth experience of Central Asian culture.

"Kazakhstan and the rest of Central Asia have recently been in peak tourism season, which can be expected to continue until the end of the summer," Liang said.

Li Mengran, marketing manager at Utour, a travel agency in Beijing, said that Central Asian destinations, especially Kazakhstan, have gained



Members of a Chinese cycling club prepare to board an international bus for a trip to Kazakhstan in September. ZHOU HANGSHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

significant momentum after the full recovery of the country's outbound travel market in 2023, and especially since the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held in Beijing in October.

"Our products for Central Asia have received brisk bookings for June to September, with hundreds of tourists having gone to the five Central Asian countries for sightseeing," Li said.

With the launch of Kazakhstan Tourism Year in Beijing in March, more Chinese travelers have been made aware of the country's charm and have shown great interest, she added.

The company has developed a 23-day tour to the region and has received positive feedback from customers, Li said.

"We have incorporated premium hotel resources and more local experiences such as traditional song and dance performances, so tourists can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the charm of the Central Asian countries," she said.

Li said she expects that as bilateral exchanges increase, travel for business meetings and official visits will also continue to grow.

Since 2023, direct flights between China and Central Asia have been gradually resuming, with new routes being developed.

Travelers can currently fly directly to Kazakhstan from cities including

Beijing, Xi'an in Shaanxi province, Urumqi in Xinjiang, and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, or take road trips from Horgos.

Outbound travelers are mainly heading for such destinations as Almaty and the Kazakh capital, Astana, said Zhang Jun, an officer with the Horgos border checkpoint.

Zhang also noted that many foreign travelers who pass through the checkpoint have bought distinctive Chinese products to share with their friends and family members.

Last year, the number of Chinese travelers to Kazakhstan increased more than tenfold to 367,000, according to Kazakh authorities.

Kairat Sadvakassov, chairman of Kazakh Tourism National Co, said he expects the figure to reach 500,000 this year.

"We believe that Kazakhstan is one of the most attractive destinations for Chinese tourists, being not just a friendly and neighboring country with a visa-free regime, but also a strategic partner of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Sadvakassov.

He recommended space tourism for Chinese visitors and said the country will also promote agritourism and culinary tourism throughout the year.

There are plans to organize an off-road expedition to explore a cross-border route from Urumqi through the southeastern and southern regions of Kazakhstan and on to Astana, he added.

Three nations to expand collaboration

By ZHANG YUNBI
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At the latest trilateral foreign ministers' consultations among China, Russia and Mongolia, Beijing expressed its willingness to work with Moscow and Ulaanbaatar to stick to the original aspiration of their cooperation, pivot in the right direction, strengthen unity and collaboration, and block interference from outside.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi presided over the consultations held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Wednesday.

He discussed trilateral cooperation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Mongolian Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg.

China is willing to work with the two countries to "explore the effective path of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, build a prosperous and stable landscape in the region, and share the benefits of the region's development", he said.

The first meeting of the heads of state of China, Russia and Mongolia was convened in 2014.

During Wednesday's talks, Wang defined the three countries as "permanent neighbors sharing weal and woe and partners having a shared future".

Observers said the steady cooperation among the three countries has released positive signals on supporting multilateralism and building an open world economy.

President Xi Jinping attended the sixth meeting of the three countries' heads of state in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in 2022.

As part of the evolving trilateral collaboration, China, Russia and Mongolia held their first trilateral meeting of high representatives for security issues in Moscow last year.

Wang said in the meeting on Wednesday that in recent years, under the strategic guidance of the three heads of state, the three countries have seen progress in their practical cooperation, exchanges and dialogue in various fields as well as the construction of

the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor.

Mutually beneficial cooperation among the three sides enjoys inherent geographical advantages and deep traditions, and is "in the fundamental interests of the people of the three countries", Wang said.

Lavrov and Battsetseg spoke highly of the trilateral foreign ministers' consultation mechanism.

They said the mutually beneficial trilateral cooperation offers broad prospects and huge potential, and they are ready to work with China to implement the important consensus of the three heads of state.

Russia and Mongolia are willing to strengthen the synergy of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Steppe Road program with the Belt and Road Initiative, and accelerate connectivity buildup and construction of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, they said.

During the consultations, the neighboring countries expressed their willingness to build more landmark priority projects and take trilateral cooperation to a new height.

The three foreign ministers also exchanged views on international and regional issues of common concern.

They said the three nations "will strengthen coordination in the multilateral context, oppose unilateral moves, safeguard the region's peace and stability, and facilitate the region's integration and development", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

In another development, Wang met on Thursday with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar in Astana. He said the two countries should "look at bilateral relations from a strategic perspective", strengthen communication and properly handle differences.

Jaishankar said that India looks to work with China to carry out the ambitious vision agreed by the leaders of both sides, constructively resolve specific differences and turn a new page in India-China relations as soon as possible.

CHINA



By CAO YIN
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There was nothing in Hu Youping's past to suggest she had the makings of a hero, but after the Chinese woman saved a Japanese mother and son, unfortunately losing her own life in the process, she has been lauded by millions of people in both countries.

Hu, 54, was working for a Japanese school in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, when she stepped in to stop a knife attack at a school bus stop on June 24.

She died two days later due to her severe injuries. The news of Hu's death dominated Chinese media headlines, and triggered a wave of both grief and respect online.

As of Thursday, more than 100 topics on Sina Weibo involving Hu had received over 1 billion views, with some applauding her bravery and others saying her courage had boosted relations between the two countries.

On June 28, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed condolences for the "tragic passing" of Hu, saying that this Chinese woman embodied the "kindness and bravery" of the Chinese people.

The same day, the Japanese embassy in China flew its flag at half-mast to honor Hu, and issued a statement saluting her "noble actions" and also saying her courage represents the wider Chinese population.

On Tuesday, Hu was awarded the title Model of Righteousness by the Suzhou government. People from different walks of life spontaneously attended a memorial service held in the city to pay tribute to her.

While Hu and her story have found sympathy and respect with both the public and authorities, she has also been subjected to some negative online comments, with extremists attempting to stir animosity between China and Japan.

However, Wang Sixin, a professor of internet law at the Communication University of China, said, "These extremist remarks won't dominate public opinion, let alone overshadow the mainstream voice."

As a result, major internet platforms have vowed to punish accounts that encourage group hatred against Japanese people or denigrate Hu.

"The punishment will help more people clearly see the true face of those using hot issues to attract online views or vent personal grievances, and urge us to surf the internet in a more sensible manner," said Zheng Ning, professor and head of the Law Department at the university's Cultural Industries Management School.

Gratitude, respect

According to an official police statement, two Japanese nationals were injured in the attack, but not fatally. A 52-year-old suspect, surnamed Zhou and unemployed, was arrested at the scene

AN UNSUNG HEROINE IN OUR MIDST

Woman who sacrificed herself to save Japanese mother and son mourned, lauded by millions

and is under criminal detention.

The Japanese woman injured in the incident said Hu attempted to restrain the assailant who was targeting women and children, which allowed the Japanese woman's son to escape. The attacker then turned to Hu and stabbed her before being subdued by passersby and police patrol officers who rushed to the scene, Xinhua News Agency reported.

"If she hadn't tried to hold back the assailant, there could have been more victims," one eyewitness said, according to Xinhua.

The police statement said that when faced with a serious threat to others' lives, Hu selflessly stepped forward, and courageously confronted the attacker to prevent further harm. Her actions displayed the "noble qualities of bravery and justice" and effectively upheld "societal righteousness", it said.

On Tuesday, Suzhou city government said that it will establish a fund in Youping's name "to promote the spirit of righteousness".

News of Hu's death has received widespread attention from both Chinese and Japanese people, with many spontaneously mourning her both online and offline.

Over the past week, a steady stream of mourners from China and Japan went to pay their respects and lay flowers at the bus station where Hu was attacked.

Yu Shijun, a lawyer from Wuxi, Jiangsu, was one of them. He carried a bouquet of chrysanthemums last weekend and wrote on a card that "you were a light in the darkest moment."

Li Yanyan, a psychologist from Gansu province, expressed her gratitude and respect for Hu on WeChat, adding "I cried while reading the news of her death. She deserves to be remembered."

A Weibo user called Qiming Lieren posted a tribute to Hu, saying "she is a hero, as her actions showed the brilliance of humanity."

Ryo Takeuchi, a documentary filmmaker from Japan living in Nanjing, Jiangsu, also posted a statement on Weibo on June 28 to mourn Hu. "Hu is a great person because she saved the people, no matter what nationality they are. Many of my Japanese friends were worried about her (after the incident happened)," he wrote.



Hu is a great person because she saved the people, no matter what nationality they are. Many of my Japanese friends were worried about her (after the incident happened). I adore her, and will remember her."

Ryo Takeuchi,
Japanese documentary filmmaker

"I adore her, and will remember her."

The post had received more than 5,300 thumbs-ups and had been forwarded over 250 times as of Thursday.

In another post on Tuesday, Takeuchi said that there had been many reports about Hu on Japanese news websites, where numerous netizens had expressed their gratitude and condolences to her family.

Daiki Takahashi, 42, a Japanese employee at an internet technology company, said that Hu's courageous act should be appreciated, regardless of nationality.

Hu's family expressed sincere gratitude to people from all walks of life who offered their condolences, saying that anyone with a sense of justice and a loving heart would have made a similar choice.

The family added that they would not accept any donation and just wanted Hu to rest in peace.

Kind, hardworking

While many people are paying tribute to Hu, they are also curious to learn more about her personal life.

To her friends, neighbors and colleagues, she was an ordinary, typical Chinese woman who fulfilled her responsibilities as a daughter, wife and mother, and always worked hard for her family, according to Chinese media reports.

The most common words used to describe Hu were "easygoing, kindhearted, and hardworking", said people who knew her.

A report posted by iFeng.com on Monday said in 2016, when Hu was 46, she went to a domestic services company in Suzhou to apply for childcare and hourly casual work. She registered information stating she was 158 centimeters tall, weighed 56 kilograms, and was good at cooking and housekeeping.

Before that, Hu, a native of Jiaoling village in Huai'an, Jiangsu, worked at factories in Suzhou, the report said.

Wan Ting, a woman who worked with Hu at one of the factories, told the news outlet that they had remained friends.

"Last summer, we took a trip to Shanghai together," she recalled. "Hu wore a striped dress, and we took photos of each other on the Bund."

In 2020, Hu started her own business selling cosmetics, meal replacements and other women's products online.

To promote her business, she even posed for a professional-looking photo, wearing makeup, earrings and a blue suit, according to the report. Hu smiles confidently in the photo which is captioned with the words "Be yourself". The photo was her WeChat profile picture when she died, the report said.

But the COVID-19 epidemic had a major impact on her business venture. Within a few months, she switched to a part-time job as a school bus attendant at the Japanese school in Jiangsu, earning about 3,000 yuan (\$412) a month, the report added.

Cleaner Lyu Qin, 57, who knew Hu, told the website of Southern Weekly news outlet, that women of their age work to reduce the financial burden of their children, and rarely to earn money for themselves.

Hu often posted short videos and pictures on social media platforms of herself cooking, and she liked interacting with her family members and friends in this way, according to the Chinese reports.

She had a son who married two years ago, and she was due to celebrate her 55th birthday next month, the report said.

Not beyond the law

While Hu has been lauded and

mourned by the vast majority of people online, she has also been disparaged and attacked by a minority.

Several netizens spread rumors smearing Hu as a mole for Japan.

Others applauded the attacker for targeting Japanese nationals in the name of "patriotism" as a "delayed but righteous fight back" for the "historical debt" the Japanese owed to the Chinese people stemming from their aggression against China from the late 19th century to World War II.

The content, however, was promptly removed thanks to a crackdown initiated by major internet platforms, such as Tencent, Baidu, NetEase and Douyin in line with the law.

In their statements on the issue, the internet operators all praised Hu's righteousness and courage and stated that users who took advantage of the criminal case to post and spread extremist opinions or incite confrontations between the two countries must be condemned.

As punishment, the platforms have also blocked or shut down accounts containing such harmful information as punishment, and channels have been opened for netizens to report information on extremist remarks.

"As China undergoes the robust growth in cyberspace, it has not been rare to see some people make use of hot issues or criminal cases to invent their own anger or dissatisfaction to aggravate social contradictions," said Wang, the professor.

"Extremist remarks can bring more online views, which means great profits in the internet era, so some netizens are keen to post such content again and again," he said.

However, Wang is confident such content will not weaken the mainstream support for Hu, "as more and more netizens have enough understanding of such online marketing, and are also able to distinguish the harmful information."

"Hu's bravery in the face of the attack deserves respect, and should be learned about by more people," he added. "The closure of accounts that slandered or denigrated the woman is to adhere to the bottom line of human morality."

Zheng, the other Communication University of China professor, also praised the internet platforms' quick response, saying "it can prevent the harmful content from being further expanded, and also lead more people to see the incident more rationally."

She said that cleaning up the online environment is a major responsibility of all the internet operators.

"What they have done in Hu's incident was consistent with the cyberspace-related laws and regulations," the professor said.

China's punishment of accounts involving extremist opinions will also enhance mutual understanding between Chinese and Japanese citizens, and help deepen people-to-people exchanges, she added.



Name: Jinci Temple **Age:** 1,638 **Feature:** The oldest royal ancestral temple in China
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Name: Foguang Temple **Age:** 1,553 **Feature:** The largest and most complicated among the few preserved Tang Dynasty structures in China

By YUAN SHENGGAO

For those who have an interest in China's ancient buildings, Shanxi province in North China offers the perfect destination.

As one of the cradles of Chinese civilization, Shanxi boasts a history spanning millennia. Dating back to the period of the legendary Red Emperor some 4,000 years ago, the province has a wealth of historical and cultural heritage.

According to a national survey in 2011, Shanxi is home to 53,875 unmovable cultural heritage items.

Among the sites, Pingyao Ancient City, Yungang Grottoes and Mount Wutai are on the UNESCO list of World Cultural Heritage Sites.

In addition, there are 531 places in Shanxi recognized as relic sites on the national list of protection, ranking first nationwide.

Among the 50,000-plus unmovable cultural heritage items, there are 28,027 ancient buildings, accounting for about one-tenth of the nation's total.

The buildings cover a wide range of fields including government offices, gardens, temples, opera stages, pavilions, pagodas, towers and residences.

Nearly half of these are wooden structures. According to local statistics, Shanxi is home to 495 preserved wooden-structure buildings built before the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

It is worth mentioning that there are only three preserved wooden structures built in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) left in China — and Shanxi has all of them. The province has four of China's five wooden structures built in the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960), 150 of 183 such buildings built in the Liao (916-1125), Song (960-1279) and Jin (1115-1234) dynasties, and 338 of the 389 wooden structures in the Yuan Dynasty. These figures prove that Shanxi holds a privileged position in the country in terms of preserved ancient buildings.

Jinci Temple

The preserved structures in Jinci Temple in Shanxi's provincial capital, Taiyuan, are not the oldest in the province but the site is of great significance as it is related to the recorded history of Shanxi.

Jinci Temple, which is located 25 kilometers southwest of Taiyuan at the foot of Xuanweng Mountain, was built as a temple for Shuyu, the first monarch of the vassal state of Jin (1033-376 BC). This state was where the recorded history of Shanxi began.

The temple was later renamed the Ancestral Temple of Jin, or Jinci Temple for short. Jinci is the oldest ancestral temple complex in China. There are more than 100 preserved ancient buildings built from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). This number has earned it a reputation as a "museum of ancient Chinese buildings."

The precious wooden structures include the Memorial Hall for Yi Jiang — the mother of Shuyu — built in the Song Dynasty and the Hall of Sacrifice built in the Jin Dynasty.

The oldest objects in the temple are two 2,900-year-old cypress trees (one died in the early 1900s, leaving its huge trunk behind), which were supposedly planted by Shuyu himself.

Other precious relics in the temple include 300-plus stone steles with inscriptions writ-

A rendezvous with ancient buildings in Shanxi

Home to more than 53,000 ancient landmarks, this North China province boasts an unrivaled wealth of history



Name: Yingxian Wooden Pagoda (left)
Age: 968
Feature: The oldest preserved and largest wooden tower in China



Name: Xuan Kong Temple (right)
Age: 1,533
Feature: A hanging temple on cliff and a site worshipped by believers of multiple religions

ten by famous historical figures like Tang Dynasty emperor Li Shimin and empress Wu Zetian.

Foguang Temple

One of the most ancient temples in Shanxi that is still well preserved to this day is Foguang Buddhist Temple, near the renowned Buddhist holy mountain of Wutai.

This temple is not only one of the oldest in the province but one of the oldest in China, according to researchers.

Inscriptions found in the temple show that it was originally built in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) and was rebuilt during the late Tang Dynasty.

The preserved Grand Eastern Hall, the main hall of the temple, was built in 857. It has a history that rivals Nanchan Temple, which was built in 782 and is also in the Wutai region.

Foguang Temple's wooden structure, statues, murals and inscriptions are regarded as the four treasures of Tang Dynasty Buddhist arts.

However, if it were not for a discovery by renowned architecture researchers Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin in the 1930s, the historical and cultural value of the temple may still be unknown.

Before the 1930s, many researchers, especially those in Japan, asserted that there were no preserved Tang Dynasty wooden structures in China.

But when examining photographs of the Mogao Grottoes' murals in Gansu province, Liang and Lin noticed there were complete maps of temples in Wutai including Foguang.

The pair, who were also a couple, launched a search with other researchers for Foguang Temple. After several months, they found it in June 1937.

Their intensive research, including studying the architectural style, structural details and inscriptions, proves that the Grand Eastern Hall in Foguang is the largest among the few preserved Tang Dynasty structures in China.

In one report written by Liang, he said he was shocked by the number of Tang Dynasty statues in the hall.

The 34 statues, including the Three Buddhas of Past, Present and Future, and two Bodhisattvas and their followers, constitute China's largest group of colored statues created in the Tang Dynasty.

Decades after Liang and Lin's discovery, there are still new findings to prove the temple's long history. In the 1980s, archaeologists discovered Tang Dynasty tourists' inscriptions on the rear of the wooden gate of the Grand Eastern Hall. It shows that even the gate is more than 1,100 years old.

In addition to the grand hall, the temple is home to a number of buildings from the Jin and Song dynasties.

Xuan Kong Temple

Xuan Kong Temple in Shanxi's Hunyuan county is one of China's most stunning examples of ancient architecture.

Originally built in the mid-Northern Wei Dynasty and renovated in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the temple is made up of two three-story wooden-structured pavilions and a yard linked by staircases and steps. These line along the surface of a sheer cliff rising 50 meters above a stream at the foot of Hengshan Mountain.

Seen from below, Xuan Kong Temple, which literally means "temple hanging in the sky", appears perilous. It is supported only by a few thin wooden pillars stood on protruding rocks. For that reason, it was

selected by Time magazine as one of the 10 most precarious buildings in the world in 2010.

But local researchers refute the notion that Xuan Kong Temple is perilous. The temple seems precarious as the structure, which weighs dozens of metric tons, appears to be supported by dozens of wooden pillars.

In fact, researchers said 27 square beams made from hemlock wood sustain most of the building's weight. They added that a number of large, deep holes were dug into the length of the beams together with wedges were driven into each one. The beams form a strong lever structure that easily supports the weight of the temple.

Xuan Kong Temple is worshipped by believers of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. There are more than 80 statues of the three religions inside, showing how the Northern Wei Dynasty allowed different religions to coexist.

Yingxian Wooden Pagoda

In the Shanxi county of Yingxian, a wooden tower is the source of pride of many locals.

Sakyamuni Pagoda, which is commonly known as Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, is the oldest preserved and largest wooden tower in China.

Located in a Buddhist temple called Fogong in the northwest of the Yingxian county seat, the 67.31-meter-high tower is a wholly wooden structure built in the Liao Dynasty. The entire tower was put together with mortise and tenon joints, without using a single nail.

In 2016, it was included in the Guinness Book of World Records as the highest wooden tower in the world.

From the exterior, the pagoda seems to

have only five stories and two sets of rooftop eaves for the first story but its interior reveals that it has nine stories. Each story has 24 exterior pillars and eight interior pillars.

On each floor are Buddhist statues, including a statue of Sakyamuni on the first. The elegantly carved Sakyamuni statue is 11 meters tall. All the statues and paintings on the inner walls are works dating back to the Liao Dynasty.

Historical records show that the pagoda has survived seven earthquakes, including a severe one in the Yuan Dynasty that lasted on-and-off for seven days. The pagoda has stood firm and remained intact, a testament to its rational use of components, fine construction and sound quality.

Yongle Palace

In comparison with Shanxi's ancient landmarks such as Yungang Grottoes, Foguang Temple, Yingxian Wooden Pagoda and Jinci Temple, Yongle Palace is not among the oldest. However, it has significance when it comes to artistry.

Located in Ruicheng, a county in the southwest of Shanxi province, Yongle Palace is one of the top three Taoist temples in the country, along with Chongyang Palace in Shaanxi province and Baiyun Guan in Beijing. It is also China's largest Taoist complex in terms of floor space.

Yongle Palace, which started construction in 1247, was built to worship Lyu Dongbin (born in 796), the founder of the Taoist mainstream Quanzhen Sect. Construction, which spanned 110 years during the Mongolian reign in North China and the Yuan Dynasty, included beautiful Taoist murals.

There are murals covering more than 1,000 square meters preserved there. Among them, *The Painting of Heavenly Court* — or *Chaoyuan Tu* in Chinese — is the best known. Measuring 97 meters long and 4.4 meters high, it features 290 Taoist figures.

Art critics and historians have called the painting the greatest mural in China, saying that it is distinguished by its vivid figures, uninterrupted compositions, steady lines and vibrant colors.

They have said the mural's style shows distinctive characteristics of the Yuan Dynasty, representing the skillful and mature techniques of painters of that time. It marks a milestone in the history of ancient Chinese arts.

A roof-ridge ornament — which features a colorfully glazed dragon — is another symbol of the temple's artistic credentials.

Created during the Yuan Dynasty, the statue retains its original bright colors. This is due to the use of a glaze called Peacock Blue, which was fired with the highest technical level of that period.

Battered by wind and rain for more than 700 years, the temple has faced some severe challenges in the last century.

In 1959, the Chinese government decided to build a huge dam on the Yellow River in the southern part of Shanxi, which would flood the site of the Taoist temple. As a result, the temple had to be moved. It now stands nearly 20 km north of its original location.

Thanks to the painstaking efforts of hundreds of cultural heritage craftsmen and workers, the structures and murals were kept intact despite the relocation.

Li Yao contributed to this story.



Name: Yongle Palace **Age:** 777 **Feature:** China's largest Taoist complex and a treasure house of mural art

ADVERTORIAL

GLOBAL LENS

IN THE RUNNING

Refugee athlete living in Kenya defies odds, looks to shine at Paris Olympics



Runner Perina Lokure Nakang (in blue) trains with her teammates during a morning session in Nandi County, Kenya, on June 22. PHOTOS BY WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

Braving the cold, early morning weather, a group of athletes meandered across the Nandi hills, located about 350 kilometers northwest of Nairobi, Kenya, as part of their daily routine to build the stamina required for middle and long-distance races.

Perina Lokure Nakang, a refugee from South Sudan, is part of the group in its final preparations for the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris in late July.

Nakang, 21, was selected as part of the Olympic refugee team to compete in the 800-meter race.

The team, which first competed in Rio 2016, brings together refugee athletes from different countries and regions into a single team.

Nakang arrived in Kenya in 2010 after fleeing South Sudan with her aunt in search of a safe place from the civil strife in her homeland.

She said on June 22 that her life in Kenya began at the Kakuma Refugee Camp, located about 750 kilometers northwest of Nairobi.

Kakuma is the country's second-largest camp of its kind, hosting about 288,000 refugees from nine countries, including South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nakang engaged in various sporting activities to pass the time while she was at the camp, located in an arid zone characterized by extremely high temperatures and low rainfall.

"I really enjoyed playing football in the open fields, and I would see my colleagues running, and I thought they were just chasing the winds," Nakang said.

Eventually, one of her friends convinced her to start competing in the races organized in the camp, and she began to score a series of victories.

However, her turning point occurred when Janet Jepkosgei, who won a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics for the 800 meters event, spotted her during an athletic competition in 2022.

As a result of Nakang's excellent performance on the track and field, she won a scholarship to attend the Nandi Shoe4Africa All4Running Kapchorwa Secondary School, whose patron is Jepkosgei.

The school is located in a high-altitude region with many world-class athletic training camps that have produced many Olympic track and field champions.

Nakang said that the facilities at the sports school are much better than the harsh conditions she endured at the refugee camp.

"I am in an environment that is ideal for improving my performance in athletics as I continue preparations to compete at the Olympics," Nakang said.

Her personal best in the 800 meters is 2 min 12 sec but she aims to improve that to 2:07 by the time she competes in Paris.

Last year, Nakang competed in the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, where she finished eighth.

Jepkosgei, who is Nakang's coach, said that refugee athletes face numerous challenges compared to their peers because of the mental and financial constraints of being away from home.

Young female refugees are also discouraged from engaging in sports due to cultural barriers, Jepkosgei said.

"There is a notion that when girls engage in sports, they will grow muscles and will be unable to have children," Jepkosgei said.

Nakang is expected to be the best-performing refugee athlete at the upcoming Olympics due to her dedication to training, Jepkosgei said.



From left: Nakang (third from left) trains in a morning session in Nandi County on June 22. Nakang (front row, left) stretches after training in Nandi County on June 22.



"I am in an environment that is ideal for improving my performance in athletics as I continue preparations to compete at the Olympics."

Perina Lokure Nakang, South Sudanese refugee athlete living in Kenya

Nakang (in blue) trains with teammates during a morning session in Nandi County on June 22.



From left: Nakang (left) fetches water after morning training in Nandi County on June 22. Nakang (front row, second from right) attends an online class with her teammates in school in Nandi County on June 22. A view of the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County, Kenya, on June 19.

XINHUA

WORLD

Xi greets Costa on election as European Council head

By WANG QINGYUN
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President Xi Jinping sent a message on Thursday to Antonio Costa, congratulating him on being elected as the European Council president. China has always regarded Europe as an important pole in the multipolar

structure, Xi said. It highly values the role the European Union plays in international affairs and is committed to developing the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership.

Xi said he attaches great importance to the development of China-EU ties, and stands ready to work with Costa so the two sides continue

to see each other as partners, deepen strategic communications, advance mutual understanding and political trust, build broad consensus and expand exchanges and cooperation in various fields.

China and the EU established a comprehensive strategic partnership in 2003 and more than 60 consulta-

tion and dialogue mechanisms have been set up between the two sides.

Last year, China and the EU were each other's second-largest trading partners, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

Premier Li Qiang also sent a congratulatory message to Costa on Thursday.

US ports oppose tariff on China-made cranes

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
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US ports are pushing back against the recently proposed 25 percent tariff on Chinese-made ship-to-shore (STS) cranes, warning that the increased costs would have a "substantial negative" impact on the economy.

In a series of letters to the US Trade Representative (USTR), port authorities, terminal operators and industry groups across the country have called for the decision to be reversed or delayed, arguing that the tariffs will harm port efficiency, disrupt supply chains and ultimately raise prices for consumers.

The tariff, which was announced by the White House in May as part of a broader trade initiative targeting Chinese goods, is set to take effect on Aug 1. Despite mounting opposition, President Joe Biden's administration has defended the move as necessary to protect American manufacturers and rebuild domestic industries.

Critics argue, however, that the tariff will do little to achieve those goals, as there are currently no US manufacturers of STS cranes, and the global market is dominated by Chinese companies.

Currently, at least seven ports in the United States have 35 cranes on order from Chinese manufacturers, with an average cost of \$15 million per crane. According to the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), the ports now face at least \$131 million in new, unexpected costs if the tariff is implemented.

"The tariff, if imposed, will not meet its stated objectives," AAPA President and CEO Cary Davis wrote in a letter to US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on June 28. "Instead, it will only result in negative outcomes, including grave harm to port efficiency and capacity, strained supply chains, increased consumer prices, and a weaker US economy."

The Port of New Orleans, for example, is planning a major expansion of its container capacity. It estimates that the tariff would cost \$52 million for its new Louisiana International Terminal alone.

The Port of Virginia has already signed contracts for 12 cranes from Chinese companies at a cost of \$161.52 million and could face an additional \$40.38 million in costs due to the tariff.

The AAPA also noted that a recent survey suggested at least an

additional 61 cranes were expected to be ordered in the next five years to meet growing demand.

The new tariff targets STS cranes, which are used to load and unload containerships, amid claims by some officials and media reports that the cranes made by Chinese manufacturers may be vulnerable to data breaches due to remote control capabilities.

In February, Biden announced a \$20 billion investment to build STS cranes in the US, citing cybersecurity concerns around Chinese-made cranes.

Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries Co (ZPMC), the world's largest manufacturer of port equipment, has denied the allegations.

The US ports industry also has dismissed the claims as "largely unfounded" and points out that multiple federal agencies are already addressing any potential security concerns. "It's unnecessary to impose a tariff to secure US ports," said the AAPA.

That was echoed by another letter submitted by Port Houston and jointly signed by 14 other ports and groups. "Imposing tariffs on these high cost, low tech pieces of equipment would, in fact, damage an important strategic objective of modernizing and improving U.S. infrastructure and put the economic health of our communities and our country in jeopardy," they warned.

The opponents also highlighted the lack of viable alternatives to Chinese-made cranes. ZPMC dominates the global market, while Germany and Finland, the other two countries producing a small fraction of STS cranes, source most of their components from China, making their products subject to the 25 percent tariff as well.

Currently, there are no manufacturers of STS cranes in the United States, nor have there been for nearly four decades. Therefore, there is no timeline for when STS cranes might be available domestically, and the tariff on Chinese cranes "will do nothing to protect American manufacturers from unfair practices," said the AAPA.

Critics also noted that the tariff contradicts the Biden administration's commitment to infrastructure improvement and emission-reduction. Delays in port investments, including those in zero-emission equipment, would negatively impact the domestic green economy and the industries the tariff aims to protect, they said.



A file photo shows cranes made by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries at the company's Changxing base on Changxing Island, Shanghai on May 25. GONG BING / XINHUA

CHINA LINK

Editor's note: As the People's Republic of China celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding this year, China Daily asked prominent international figures to reflect on their relationship with the country and to talk of the direction in which they see it going.

Retracing China's journey of 'remarkable' transformation

Witnessing reform and opening-up, Sinologist continues to illuminate minds with his passion

By LIA ZHU and CHANG JUN
in San Francisco

When Thomas Gold arrived in Shanghai in February 1979, just two months after China started its reform and opening-up, the 30-year-old graduate student found himself in a country of new beginnings.

While at Harvard University, Gold was among the first group of US exchange students to study in China, spending a year at Fudan University from 1979 to 1980.

"China's in my head all the time," he said. "I have been working for decades to try to understand China and help other people to understand China."

A professor emeritus of sociology at University of California, Berkeley, where he taught from 1981 to 2018, Gold also founded the Berkeley China Initiative and served as chair of the Center for Chinese Studies.

He has published widely on issues such as youth, entrepreneurship, civil society and popular culture in China. He is working on a memoir of his early years in China.

Reflecting on the social changes over the past four decades, he said the contrasts between then and now are "extraordinary".

"The sun was coming out and the long period of darkness and confusion was ending," recalled Gold, referring to the end of the "cultural revolution" (1966-76). "One of the things that impressed me was beginning in 1979, there was a sense that a new dawn was coming, that a new world was going to open up for the people of China."

His encounters with Chinese people were particularly striking. He met university students, many in their 30s, who had lost years of education because of the "cultural revolution". Their hunger for knowledge and desire to contribute to China's revival were palpable, he said.

He also formed friendships with people outside the university and Shanghai, gaining a broader perspective on life in China.

Before he went to China, Gold had worked as an interpreter for the US State Department and the National Committee on US-China Relations, beginning in 1974. During that period, he interpreted for many Chinese visi-



Above: Former Chinese consul general in San Francisco Wang Donghua (left) shows a photo of Thomas Gold (right) studying at Fudan University in Shanghai in 1979, at an event in the Bay Area in 2019. LIA ZHU / CHINA DAILY
Left: Photos of Thomas Gold when he was studying at Fudan University in Shanghai from 1979 to 1980. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tors, including athletes, performers and officials, accompanying them around the United States.

When he went to China, he looked many of them up.

"My contacts in Chinese society were broader than just the university, and I felt that I got a more well-rounded picture of what life was like," he said. "I really missed some of the things in the old days, even though there was so much inconvenience."

For Gold, the path to a lifelong passion for Chinese language and culture began with a simple dare. As a freshman at Oberlin College in Ohio in the 1960s, a captivating Asian history course sparked his curiosity.

His professor, a veteran of China himself, painted a vivid picture of a nation steeped in history. Inspired, Gold, along with a group of classmates, decided to embark on a seemingly outlandish journey at that school — learning Chinese.

"Because of Oberlin's ties with China in the 1960s, they offered Chinese language, which was very, very rare in those days. A group of us loved the course on Chinese history, and we

said: I'd really like to study Chinese, but it seems so crazy. So we dared each other — I'll do it if you do it," Gold said. "So I studied Chinese ... I've never been so passionate about anything than studying the Chinese language. It opened up a whole world to me of things I'd never thought about before. And till this day, I can't get rid of it — my sort of passion for Chinese language and China."

Firsthand experience

He advised his graduate students to go beyond textbooks, experience the country firsthand, make friends and have a sense of China as "a real living place".

"You have to have experience in the field; you have to have real Chinese friends that interact with you. You can't just read books or look at documents. You really have to engage with society and experience," he said.

Witnessing China's transformation firsthand, Gold reflected on the profound social changes that have swept the nation over the past four decades.

One of the important things that has happened since the opening-up

was that "a lot of the lid which had been put on Chinese people's creativity and entrepreneurship was removed," Gold said.

"We saw this explosion of creativity and entrepreneurship contributing to the modernization of the country. People could bring their talents into full play. Over the course of more than 40 years, there's extraordinary and rapid economic development, and what's also important is China's integration into the global society."

The increasing social integration of Chinese people into global society was "a major change" and "extremely important," he said.

"For instance, here at Berkeley, every semester we have hundreds, if not thousands of Chinese students coming for short-term or long-term educational opportunities. In summer, we also have a lot of Chinese students who come here to work on their English and just experience global society," said Gold. "I think this is really a major positive development."

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White House says zero chance Biden will withdraw

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden is "absolutely not" pulling out of the US presidential race, his spokeswoman said on Wednesday, as pressure mounted following his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump.

Panic has gripped his Democratic Party in the wake of last week's TV debate, and internal rumblings about finding a replacement candidate before November's election have been amplified by polls showing Trump extending his lead.

The New York Times and CNN reported that Biden, 81, had acknowledged to a key ally that his reelection bid was on the line if he failed to quickly reassure the public that he was still up to the job.

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre rejected those reports outright, insisting Biden

has no intention of withdrawing.

"The president is clear-eyed and he is staying in the race," she told reporters.

Biden told a call with campaign and party staffers that he is going nowhere.

"I'm in this race to the end and we're going to win because when Democrats unite, we will always win. Just as we beat Donald Trump in 2020, we're going to beat him again in 2024," he said, according to a source close to the campaign.

Biden has admitted he performed poorly in the debate, and was blunt in a radio interview recorded on Wednesday with Wisconsin's Civic Media.

"I screwed up. I made a mistake. That's 90 minutes on stage. Look at what I've done in 3.5 years," he said. He echoed that sentiment in an

interview with Pennsylvania's WURD radio on Thursday, saying, "I had a bad debate."

Biden may be tested on his ability to think on his feet when he sits with ABC News on Friday for his first television interview since the debate, and he will also hit the swing states of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania in the coming days.

'Almost fell asleep'

The president has cited fatigue as a new explanation for his poor debate showing, saying that he was unwise to travel "around the world a couple times" before the debate and "almost fell asleep on stage".

But he had been back in the United States for nearly two weeks and spent two days relaxing and six days preparing for the debate.

The Biden campaign has been

desperate to reassure Democratic donors and voters that the president's performance against Trump was a one-off.

But party figures have voiced bafflement over what they see as deflection and excuses from the president and his aides.

Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings, one of the Democratic Party's biggest donors, told The New York Times that Biden should withdraw.

"Biden needs to step aside to allow a vigorous Democratic leader to beat Trump and keep us safe and prosperous," he said in an email to the paper.

The concern was compounded by a New York Times poll conducted after the debate that showed Trump with his biggest lead ever over Biden — 49 percent to 43 percent of likely voters.

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BUSINESS

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Excise tax reforms probably on agenda

Subject to elicit close attention from upcoming third plenary session

By LIU ZHIHUA and ZHU WENQIAN

Implementation of excise tax reforms in China will likely be part of the country's broader efforts to promote a new round of reforms of the fiscal and taxation system, experts said on Thursday.

They said more endeavors are needed to rationally allocate the expenditure responsibilities of the central government and local governments while curbing those unnecessary and ineffective local government investment, therefore facilitating fiscal balance toward a more sustainable and healthy status.

Their comments came after some market observers said they expected China will advance excise tax reforms, as the third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee will focus on further deepening reform and promoting Chinese modernization.

Excise taxes, sometimes referred to as "sin taxes", are indirect levies imposed by tax authorities on the consumption of specific products or services considered to be harmful to consumers' health and the environment, or luxury goods.

In China, excises apply to 15 types of products such as tobacco, alcohol,

high-end cosmetics and refined oil, and tax revenues derived wholly belong to the central government.

Fu Yifu, a researcher at the Star Atlas Institute of Finance, said excise taxation can help improve industry structure, promote healthy and green consumption manners, and narrow income gaps between certain groups.

In addition, reform measures currently being discussed by market observers could help local governments increase revenues if implemented, Fu said.

In 2019, a reform plan released by the State Council clarified the directions of excise reform and asked to move the collection of excise taxation from the production and import link to the wholesale and retail link, and "stably" allow local governments to have related revenues.

A recent macro research report by Guotai Junan Securities predicted that reforms of excise taxation will likely expand the items subjected to the tax and adjust excise tax rates during the process of promoting the taxation on the sales links, allowing local government to retain some of the revenues.

However, Luo Zhiheng, chief economist at Yuekai Securities, said:

"Such reform measures need time to get implemented, because they will

largely expand the number of payers of excise taxes, and therefore impose higher tax collection efficacy requirements on tax authorities. Besides, allowing local governments to levy excise taxes on some items, such as tobacco, will likely encourage the production of these products, offsetting efforts to curb such undesirable consumption."

Shi Zhengwen, director of the Center for Research in Fiscal and Tax Law at China University of Political Science and Law, said it is likely that more products with intensive carbon footprints will be subject to excise taxes, while such taxes on some products will be lowered or removed to promote consumption upgrades.

Experts also said solving fiscal challenges facing some local governments should not be the main purpose of excise tax reforms.

Luo said what is more important now is properly allocating expenditure responsibilities between the central and local governments.

Qiao Baoyun, dean of the China Academy of Public Finance and Public Policy at Central University of Finance and Economics, said local governments should curb ineffective investment to improve their fiscal status, rather than trying to increase revenue to support unreasonable spending.

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Auto firms leverage BRI to expand

By ZHONG NAN, LI JIAYING and LI FUSHENG

At Khorgos Land Port of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, a large number of trailers and dump trucks carrying both electric and fuel-powered passenger vehicles are lined up, ready to be exported across the border.

These vehicles are destined for countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, such as Russia and Uzbekistan, with a significant number heading to Kazakhstan, where demand for Chinese vehicles is surging.

That is in line with the latest data. China's vehicle exports to Kazakhstan surged 12.4 percent year-on-year to 36,348 units in the first five months of the year, while the total export value grew by 15.2 percent on a yearly basis to 5.49 billion yuan (\$755 million), statistics from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Experts and business leaders said Chinese manufacturers are leveraging the opportunities provided by the BRI to expand their market reach. The export of vehicles, especially environmentally friendly EVs, reflects China's commitment to promoting sustainable development and cutting carbon emissions.

Kazakhstan's fast urbanization pace, expanded road length and young consumers' preference for smart technologies have made these markets more proactive in embrac-

ing Chinese EVs, said Wan Zhe, a researcher at the Belt and Road School of Beijing Normal University.

After selling 8,824 vehicles in Kazakhstan last year, Shi Qingke, president of Great Wall Motor's international business unit, said the company is confident about the Kazakh market.

"As China-Kazakhstan economic and trade ties continue to deepen, Chinese automobile brands will have broader prospects and a promising future in the Central Asian country," Shi said.

The Baoding, Hebei province-based company has established 28 dealerships in Kazakhstan, covering 20 major cities. It plans to add new dealerships in Almaty and Astana in the third quarter of this year.

As the number of its vehicles in Kazakhstan has exceeded 1,000 units, leading to significant after-sales service demand, Chinese new energy vehicle startup Li Auto Inc will open its first self-operated service center in Almaty this month.

Passenger vehicle manufacturers are not the only beneficiaries of Kazakhstan's growing demand for new cars.

By 2023, Zhengzhou, Henan province-based Yutong Bus Co Ltd had sold over 5,000 buses in Kazakhstan. The company found that its demand for new energy buses has soared notably in recent years. The Chinese bus maker exported more than 200 new energy buses to

Kazakhstan in 2023 alone.

Li Qingwen, board chairman of Chaoyang Long March Tyre Co Ltd, a Chaoyang, Liaoning province-based tire manufacturer, said this has further driven the company's tire exports to Kazakhstan.

The Chinese company shipped tires worth 2.96 million yuan to Kazakhstan in 2023. In the first half of 2024, its export value to the country soared 35 percent year-on-year, reaching 2.54 million yuan.

Northeast China's Liaoning province saw its vehicle exports to Kazakhstan jump 408 percent to 386 units during the January to June period, statistics from Shenyang Customs showed.

China's automotive industry, particularly new energy and intelligent connected vehicles, along with its charging infrastructure, supply chain systems and related standards, are at the global forefront, said Xu Haidong, vice-chief engineer of the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Eying more exchanges and joint development between China and Central Asian countries in the automotive sector, Xu said that the Beijing-based CAAM is also actively promoting the establishment of a vehicle export base in Khorgos. The preparatory work for this facility is currently underway.

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A view of the booth of Tesla Inc during an expo in Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Tesla rolls into Jiangsu tenders, sparks buzz on future orders

By CHENG YU and WANG KEJU

Tesla Inc and other foreign brands are expected to participate in government procurement across China as the US electric vehicle giant has been included on a local government procurement list for the first time, said experts and industry insiders on Thursday.

Despite factors like rising protectionism, the European Union's plan to impose tariffs on Chinese EV imports and the United States' accusation that China's new energy industry has overcapacity, China has again sent a clear signal that it is further opening its doors to multinational corporations for healthy competition and mutual gains, they said.

According to an online tender of East China's Jiangsu province, the local government plans to buy new energy vehicles, including sedans, SUVs and buses, worth 73 million yuan (\$10 million) this year and next.

Local government authorities, government-related institutions and organizations could buy a range of NEVs, including Tesla's Model Y, for the first time.

The Model Y, with a starting price of 249,900 yuan in China, is currently Tesla's most popular SUV. Its price is less than the 250,000 yuan limit specified for SUVs in the e-tender.

Three batches of over 200 vehicle models made by domestic and joint venture EV-makers, such as BYD and SAIC Volkswagen, were included on Jiangsu's purchase list.

"Tesla's entry into the government procurement process shows a

clear attitude of the Chinese government to encourage the development of intelligent connected vehicles, irrespective of whether the manufacturer is Chinese or foreign. As long as they comply with the requirements, they will be included in the government procurement process," said Sun Xiaohong, general secretary of the car unit of the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, a national organization responsible for foreign trade of machinery products. The chamber is representing China in the counter appeal against the EU's decision to impose additional tariffs on Chinese EVs from Friday.

In April, Tesla, along with five Chinese carmakers, cleared a key data security test in China conducted by the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers and a national computer network center.

"The entry into the government procurement process in one province is just the start. More provinces and regions will open up for foreign cars as long as they meet the specified requirements," Sun said.

Agreed Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences. Tesla and other foreign automakers, he said, are likely to land more government orders in the future.

"As China is currently spurring the NEV industry through opening-up, other provinces and regions will follow this trend and gradually allow foreign brands in their procurement process," said Wang.

He said Tesla's successful application to participate in Jiangsu's procurement process indicates that

China's NEV policies are becoming more open and inclusive. Focus is shifting to market competitiveness and technical strengths.

In May, Tesla founder Elon Musk also proposed to test its robotaxi in China and the Chinese government will partially support its trial, as China Daily was the first to report.

"As the NEV market continues to grow rapidly, the Chinese government may consider introducing more foreign brands to compete and cooperate for more mutual gains and healthy development.

"It's an obvious contrast to rising protectionism of Western markets like the EU and the US, which are trying to suppress China's NEV industry," Wang said.

In the latest development, China and the EU, based on facts and rules, will expedite consultations over the bloc's decision to impose hefty tariffs on Chinese-made battery electric vehicles, with the aim of reaching a solution that is acceptable to both sides as quickly as possible, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

Wang said government procurement of NEVs will help support the NEV industry and accelerate the adjustment of the energy structure.

Last year, Chinese authorities said that government agencies and organizations should gradually increase NEV proportion in their fleets. Shandong province, for instance, noted that its new government-related vehicle purchases, except for some special work, should all be NEVs by 2025.

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Briefly

PBOC adds liquidity via reverse repos

The People's Bank of China conducted 2 billion yuan (\$280.49 million) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent on Thursday. The move aims to keep liquidity reasonable and ample in the banking system.

McDonald's invests in Xiaogan, Hubei

US fast food chain McDonald's has teamed up with four bakeries and food suppliers, including Bimbo and Tyson Foods, to jointly launch a food supply base in Central China's Hubei province. The smart indus-

trial park in Hubei's Xiaogan, put into operation on Wednesday, is expected to produce nearly 300 million loaves of bread, 30,000 tons of meat products, 30 million pastries and 2 billion packaging products annually.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Shanghai sees moves to make AI benefit all

By WANG YING and SHI JING in Shanghai

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization's global alliance on artificial intelligence for industry, and the manufacturing center of excellence, were officially launched in Shanghai during the annual World Artificial Intelligence Conference on Thursday.

The city also released the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance during the event. These moves signify Shanghai's efforts to build a highland of AI, official sources said.

Gerd Muller, director-general of UNIDO, announced the establishment of the center at the opening ceremony of the WAIC & High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance on the theme "Governing AI for Good and for All".

"The center will enable developing countries particularly to benefit from the best practices in AI and from manufacturing in China ... It is in all of our interests to develop this pioneering technology responsibly and to enable developing countries to use and benefit from it as well," said Muller.

"UNIDO will continue to be a voice of the Global South in the global AI government debate and digital forums worldwide. UNIDO, we are grateful for the collaboration with the Chinese government on the application and use of AI developing countries in the Global South, grateful to be your partner," Muller said.

During the opening ceremony, application cases of "AI from China benefits the world" were released, covering a wide span of sectors, including translation, education, pharmaceutical R&D, weather

350

number of AI companies in Shanghai

forecast, agriculture, finance and tourism.

Chen Jining, Party secretary of Shanghai, officially released the Shanghai Declaration on Global AI Governance at the opening ceremony.

With an aim to promote the development and security of AI, joint governance and sharing of benefits of the technology, the declaration is committed to promoting the healthy, orderly and safe development of global AI, Chen said.

"We look forward to the positive response of governments, the scientific and technological community, the industry and all parties involved, so that we can work

together to promote AI to benefit mankind."

On Monday, the 78th session of the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution proposed by China and co-sponsored by over 140 countries on strengthening international cooperation in the capacity building of AI, said Dai Bing, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, during a special briefing on the sidelines of the Global AI Governance Forum on Thursday afternoon.

"It is fair to say that this document showcases the unity and cooperation of various countries and their determination and confidence in promoting some orderly and inclusive development of AI. It is a milestone in global AI governance, especially in promoting capacity building. It has far-reaching influence on shaping the future of the world," Dai said.



An AI-enabled robot on display during the annual World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai on Thursday.

GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Shanghai, which is home to nearly 350 AI companies with a respective annual sales revenue of at least 20 million yuan (\$2.8 million), has prioritized AI governance by advancing the innovations

in technology platforms, laws and regulations, and other related services.

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BUSINESS

Digital revamp boosting financial development

By LIU YUKUN
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Further efforts are expected to drive the digital transformation of the financial sector, in order to ride the global digitalization wave and better support the development of real sectors like manufacturing, officials and business executives said.

Future trends in digital finance include increased use of mobile banking, digital employees, AI-driven risk control, edge computing in the internet of things and green finance. This transformation will require multiskilled professionals with both financial knowledge and digital skills to convert socioeconomic needs into financial products, they said.

Liu Weiliang, deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, said: "Digital technology is reshaping the financial sector's service patterns, operational models, and industry paradigms. Digital finance can boost the real economy by lowering service costs, reducing information asymmetry and enhancing service efficiency."

"While many institutions still rely on branch networks and professional employees for customer acquisition and service, future competitiveness will depend on the scale of financial databases and computing power, rather than asset size, numbers of regional branches or workforce," Liu said at the Digital Finance Forum, an event during the ongoing Global Digital Economy Conference.

Wu Lianfeng, vice-president at International Data Corporation's China branch, also shared his views on the future characteristics of digital transformation in the financial sector. "We will see more use of mobile banking, where a smartphone functions as a fully equipped mini-bank, handling over 90 percent of work. Digital employees will manage 90 percent of customer service and financial asset management tasks. Artificial intelligence-driven risk control is crucial, with 90 percent of banks adopting AI for effective risk management."

"Edge IoT will revolutionize microfinance, making financial services more inclusive and supporting the real economy. Additionally, green finance will also see substantial growth. By 2025, 25

percent of loans from leading global banks will be linked to sustainability," he said.

Edge IoT refers to the practice of processing data near the source of data generation, rather than sending it to a centralized cloud or data center, to improve real-time decisionmaking.

Experts also called for further efforts to leverage leading industries, enterprises and megacities to drive the digital transformation in the financial sector.

Song Xiaojun, vice-chair of a research institute that is part of China Construction Bank, noted that digital technologies like AI began to be applied in the financial sector over a decade ago. Banks, as a major force within the financial sector, have made significant strides in digital transformation, utilizing digital tools for information management, precise customer need analysis, risk prevention and control, and differentiated interest rates on different industries and clients.

"China has the largest user base globally and significant fintech hardware investments. However, there is a shortage of multiskilled professionals who understand finance, relevant industries and internet technologies, capable of converting socioeconomic needs into financial products," Song said.

"China's digital economy is worth 40 trillion yuan (\$5.5 trillion), yet the financing amount of data asset mortgage is only 169 million yuan, indicating substantial growth potential and a need for data asset support," he added.

Talking about the role of megacities in leading digital transformation of the financial sector, Xu Xinchao, deputy secretary-general of the Beijing municipal government, said the city is piloting numerous supportive policies and measures, and building data infrastructure, promoting data aggregation and application in key industries, and ensuring the efficient realization of data asset value.

Li Xin, government head of Shijingshan district of Beijing, said the district is advancing a digital renminbi pilot zone. It has also set up an innovation center for data asset circulation and an intelligent computing power center. The district has signed partnership agreements with 10 institutes and businesses to incubate a batch of digital finance projects at the just-concluded Digital Finance Forum.



A foreign student pays bills using Alipay at a dessert shop in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in April. XINHUA



An employee arranges packages at a warehouse of Kilimall, a Chinese e-commerce platform, in Mlolongo, Kenya, in November. LIU WANQING / XINHUA

Overseas warehouses seen as key to supporting exporters

Shipping cost hikes, container shortages forcing firms to think outside the box

By WANG KEJU
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Amid the escalation of shipping costs and container shortages, Chinese exporters have been seeking viable alternatives for their overseas shipments, with establishing more overseas warehouses emerging as a promising solution, industry experts said.

With the support of government policies and the active participation of related businesses, the development of overseas warehousing capabilities is expected to contribute to the growth and resilience of the world's second-largest economy's export sector in the face of evolving global trade dynamics, they added.

Major international shipping giants, including Maersk, DHL and Mediterranean Shipping Company, announced price hikes for July, raising worries among Chinese foreign trade enterprises about the timely delivery of overseas orders.

Effective from July 1, MSC has announced an upward adjustment in shipping rates for its European routes, with prices reaching up to \$9,800 per forty-foot equivalent unit. Similarly, Maersk has informed customers of a \$2,000 increase in shipping rates for its European routes, with prices potentially reaching up to \$9,400 per FEU.

As the foreign trade sector grapples with the challenges posed by

“Expanding overseas warehouses is not without its challenges, and concerted efforts from government support and business participation are needed.”

Li Yi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

rising costs and container shortages, overseas warehouses — a vital component of the cross-border logistics supply chain and an intermediary hub for Chinese goods — have emerged as a solution to ensure logistics stability and enhance supply chain resilience.

Miracle Miles, a footwear and clothing firm based in Central China's Hunan province, has distributed its footwear brands to over 10 countries in North America, Europe and Asia, and it owes much of its success to its self-owned overseas warehouses located in Chicago and New Jersey in the United States, covering a total area of over 25,000 square meters.

The proximity of the overseas

warehouses to key markets — such as North America and Europe — facilitates faster order processing and lower shipping rates, especially in the face of a shortage of shipping capacity, said Ma Ning, director of the company's government affairs department.

Traditional shipping methods often involve a lengthy process of Customs declarations, clearances and international transport, which can take anywhere from five to 10 days for the delivery of goods after an overseas buyer places an order. However, a growing trend in direct fulfillment from overseas warehouses allows customers to receive their items within one to three days, Ma said.

The investment in overseas warehouses means having control over inventory storage and management, which enables the company to respond swiftly to changing market demands and fluctuations in customer preferences, said Wang Jingwen, director of the Macro Research Center affiliated with the China Minsheng Bank Research Institute.

This flexibility allows businesses to adapt product offerings and maintain a competitive edge in the global market, Wang said.

The number of Chinese overseas warehouses exceeds 2,500, covering a total area of over 30 million square meters. Among these, more than 1,800 are specifically dedicated to serving the needs of cross-border e-commerce, with a combined area surpassing 22 million sq m, data from the Ministry of Commerce showed in mid-June.

The Ministry of Commerce, along with other departments, rolled out well-focused policy measures in June to push ahead the construction of overseas warehouses in a market-driven approach, with emphasis placed on encouraging private sector participation in supporting businesses in the overseas warehouse sector.

"Expanding overseas warehouses is not without its challenges, and concerted efforts from government support and business participation are needed," said Li Yi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Overseas warehouses require substantial upfront investment, regardless of whether they are built from scratch or leased from existing facilities. These expenses, coupled with ongoing operational costs, pose significant financial challenges for enterprises, Li said, adding that easier access to financial support on this front should be provided.

Moreover, the complexity of overseas warehousing operations calls for professionals who possess a deep understanding of e-commerce trends, digital platforms and consumer behavior to optimize order fulfillment processes. The industry's rapid growth has outpaced the availability of qualified individuals with expertise in multiple domains, Li said.

To address this talent gap, industry stakeholders, educational institutions and governments must collaborate to develop comprehensive training programs and educational initiatives, Li added.

Metito Group to undertake water projects in Dalian

By ZHANG XIAOMIN
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Dubai-based Metito Group, a global provider of intelligent water management solutions, will set up a regional headquarters in Dalian, Liaoning province, and build water projects on Changxing Island, according to agreements signed in the Northeast China port city on Monday.

Under the agreements, the initial investment by the regional headquarters will be \$20 million, with additional investments planned based on the scale and progress of the seawater desalination project.

Metito will also collaborate with Xizhong Island Petrochemical Park to construct its industrial water, seawater desalination, and supporting pipeline projects. The total investment is about 1.2 billion yuan (\$165 million).

1.2 billion yuan

investment in industrial water, seawater desalination, and supporting pipeline projects in Xizhong Island Petrochemical Park undertaken by Metito

"The projects are expected to significantly boost infrastructure construction on Changxing Island," said Zhao Dong, head of the Dalian Changxing Island Economic and Technological Development Zone.

Zhao highlighted the similarities between Changxing Island and Singapore's Jurong in terms of resource endowment, industrial structure and geographical environment.

As one of the seven major petrochemical industry bases in China, Changxing Island is moving to

establish a world-class green petrochemical industry base, necessitating top-tier companies and suppliers, said Zhao.

Rami Ghandour, co-CEO of Metito, emphasized the strategic importance of the seawater desalination project on Xizhong Island Petrochemical Park as a new starting point for the group's entry into the Chinese market.

Ghandour said Metito is committed to making it a benchmark project for its expansion in China and strengthening ties between UAE enterprises and Dalian's economic and trade networks.

He praised Changxing Island's achievements in developing a huge green petrochemical industry base and acknowledged Dalian's remarkable achievements in economic and social development, which instills confidence in enterprises choosing to invest in the city.

The high level of attention paid

by Dalian and Changxing Island to project cooperation was deeply felt during his visit, he said.

Xiong Maoping, Party chief of Dalian, expressed optimism about Metito's role in fostering deeper economic, cultural and tourism cooperation.

While meeting with Ghandour, he expressed hope that Metito will actively help more high-quality enterprises invest in Dalian and facilitate more products and technologies from Dalian to enter the Middle East region.

Dalian boasts a strategic location, robust industrial foundation, efficient shipping and logistics, notable advantages in science and technology innovation and a sustainable urban ecosystem, said Xiong.

The city will continue to improve its business environment, providing better services and conditions for various enterprises, including Metito, to invest and thrive in Dalian, he said.

Healthier future



An image shows the construction site of a hospital in Kunming, Yunnan province. Construction of the hospital has been undertaken by China Railway 23rd Bureau Group Corp as a key local livelihood project as it is the first comprehensive hospital in the Kunming Airport Economic Zone. The project is close to completion and is undergoing interior decor work. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

COMMENT

Editorials

SCO's practical cooperation exemplifies new type of spirited international relations

It is the Shanghai Spirit and a shared recognition of its goals and objectives that have knitted together countries with different political systems, cultural traditions and levels of socioeconomic development in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It is good to see that the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Wednesday and Thursday, has harvested new fruits in that spirit.

The leaders of the member states signed and issued the Astana declaration, presented the SCO initiative on countries uniting to promote world justice, harmony and development and suggestions on improving the SCO operating mechanism, and released a statement on the principles of good-neighborliness, mutual trust and partnership, as well as a series of resolutions involving cooperation in areas such as energy, investment and information security.

The reason why the SCO has been able to withstand the test of the ever-changing international situation is that it has always adhered to solidarity and cooperation, cooperation based on equality and mutual benefit, upheld fairness and justice, demonstrated broad-minded tolerance and encouraged mutual learning.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out at the SCO summit, the organization was established at the turn of the century, when the confrontation and division left over from the Cold War had yet to be bridged. The founding members of the SCO made a historic choice to pursue peaceful development, to commit to good-neighborliness and friendship, and to build a new type of international relations.

The SCO family now covers 26 countries in three continents, with the Shanghai Spirit the common bond and action guideline for the member states. The world stands once again at a crossroad of history. The SCO is on the right side of history and on the side of fairness and justice, which is of vital importance to the world.

In the face of the Cold War mentality, which is the real threat to global peace and stability, the SCO family maintains the bottom line of security. It therefore adheres to the practice set out in the Global Security Initiative of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, responds to complex and intertwined security challenges through dialogue and cooperation, and reacts to the profound adjustment of the international pattern with a win-win mentality.

In the face of countries trying to build "small courtyards with high walls", the SCO family is safeguarding its right to development by adhering to universal inclusiveness, jointly promoting scientific and technological innovation, maintaining the stability and smoothness of the industrial chain and supply chain, stimulating the endogenous driving force of the regional economy, and promoting the realization of common development goals.

In the face of some countries' interference and sowing of the seeds of division, the SCO family is continuing to consolidate its unity, working together to resist external interference, and firmly grasping the future and destiny of the nations concerned and the peaceful development of the region in their own hands.

AI must be harnessed to serve the greater good

The four-day 2024 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance opened in Shanghai on Thursday. The conference co-hosted by nine government ministries and agencies in collaboration with the Shanghai municipal government, stands as a premier platform for deliberating on the latest breakthroughs, hurdles, and prospects in the realm of artificial intelligence.

Reflecting the dual intentions of the event — to establish an open, inclusive, and equitable international platform for exchange and cooperation, and to facilitate comprehensive discussions on AI development, security, and governance issues across various sectors and stakeholders — the theme of the conference is "Governing AI for Good and for All".

This was stressed in his opening speech by Premier Li Qiang, who urged countries to adopt "more open mindsets" and promote international cooperation on AI, saying that "each country has its own advantages in its AI technology, data and market, so we should engage in mutual cooperation and join forces".

As the dedicated high-level meeting shows, being among the forerunners in global AI development, China is shouldering the responsibility of playing a leadership role in garnering broad participation for discussions aimed at reaching a consensus on AI governance through negotiation. As part of these efforts, it proposed a resolution on AI that

was adopted at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Monday.

As Li said in his speech, AI is "common wealth" that can benefit all on the proviso that it is "safe, reliable and controllable" and the intelligence gap is bridged so that no country is left behind. At the same time, he warned that AI represents a "common challenge" that calls for countries to conduct in-depth discussions to build consensus on an international governance mechanism. A fragmented approach toward AI, and digital technology in general, "is not going to benefit anybody", he cautioned.

Calls for strengthened global AI governance have been rising since Shanghai hosted the first WAIC in 2018, as the rapid development of AI and its growing ubiquity in daily life have heightened concerns about the challenges and inherent risks associated with the technology, which, while having great capacity to serve the greater good, has the potential to cause great harm. Not to mention that the widening gap in AI technology between the developed countries and developing ones is aggravating the existing divide between the haves and have-nots.

With all this in mind, the WAIC and high-level meeting are public goods that China is providing with the aim of addressing the potential risks associated with AI, exploring its opportunities, and driving AI to empower global economic and social development for the benefit of all humanity.

Palestinian space being single-mindedly squeezed

With Israel's war in Gaza creating an ever-worsening humanitarian disaster and drawing ire and opposition from the world, the Jewish state's latest land appropriation in the occupied West Bank will only stoke Palestinian animosity and trigger condemnation worldwide.

Peace Now, an Israel-based settlement watchdog, reportedly said on Wednesday that the Israeli authorities have approved the appropriation of 12.7 square kilometers of land in the occupied West Bank, marking the largest single appropriation in about three decades. Israeli settlements in the West Bank have for years been a major obstacle for resolving the decades-long Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Palestinians view the settlements as preventing any possibility of a cohesive state and most members of the international community consider the settlements the main barrier to any lasting peace agreement.

Late last month, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the fighting against Hamas was "very close" to an end. But tension on the Israel-Lebanon border has subsequently flared higher, marking a dramatic turn in Israel's strategy and drawing growing worries that the conflict will spread beyond Gaza.

With the Israel-Hamas war drawing near to its 10th month, the Israeli authorities may feel compelled to adjust their strategy amid the mounting pressure from home and abroad. To date, the war

has deprived the lives of more than 37,800 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to Hamas sources.

Though being reluctant to scale down the military offensive in Gaza, Netanyahu may have already set his eyes on the post-Gaza conflict era, and the latest land theft in West Bank could be part of Israel's attempts to squeeze the space for the Palestinians. But such an approach will only result in a strong backlash.

Over 2 million people are living in what amounts to an open-air prison, without adequate access to water, electricity, food, medication, and fuel. This man-made humanitarian disaster and serious breach of international law must end, and Israel must heed the international community's call to ensure the rapid and safe entry of humanitarian supplies into Gaza.

With the war in Gaza showing multiple signs of spilling over and involving more players in the region, Tel Aviv should exercise more restraint and stop making any irresponsible moves that may exacerbate confrontation and enmity with the Palestinian side. It should fulfill its obligations under international humanitarian law and fully implement United Nations Security Council resolutions on expanding humanitarian access and implementing an immediate cease-fire in Gaza.

Influential players in the region, the United States in particular, should also use their arts of persuasion to convince Tel Aviv to implement the relevant UNSC resolutions so that a cease-fire can be realized.

Luo Jie

Which one is likely to come true first?



Opinion Line

Law enforcement in Chinese waters is nothing to make a fuss about

From all accounts, the *Tu Chin Man 88* fishing boat from the Taiwan island has violated the Chinese mainland's fishing laws.

In April, the local government of Quanzhou, Fujian province, announced an annual fishing moratorium from May 1 to Aug 16, during which all fishing activities except angling were forbidden. And yet the Taiwan fishing boat was caught undertaking trawling operations in the Quanzhou waters, while the mesh size of the net they used was much smaller than the national standard.

That the island's media claims the boat was caught 27 miles (43.4 kilometers) northeast of Kinmen changes neither the fact that it was caught in Quanzhou waters nor the

fact that Kinmen, like the island itself, is part of China where Chinese laws apply and the Chinese police hold jurisdiction.

What turned a normal law enforcement case into a tension-invoking incident is the Taiwan "coast guard" vessels' attempt to "help" the law-breaking trawler. When the Fujian Coast Guard issued warnings and drove them away in accordance with the law, certain media outlets on the island hyped up the incident to claim the island's fishermen were "bullied".

Their hyping up of the incident is so absurd that Julian Kuo Jeng-liang, a former member of Taiwan's "legislative yuan", said in an interview to a local TV channel that their local "official" documents

mentioned the mainland's fishing moratorium and the fishermen had long known that. Even Taiwan analysts asked why the fishing boat insisted on fishing in the area during a moratorium.

So the claim by Hsieh Ching-chin, spokesperson of Taiwan's "coast guard", that the mainland has been applying stronger law enforcement during the fishing moratorium and there are "political factors" behind, is absurd. The Fujian Coast Guard is enforcing a Chinese law in Chinese waters and nobody from Taiwan, which is part of China, should interfere in it. Contrary to Hsieh's claims, it was the Democratic Progressive Party that was overstepping its limits.

—ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

Tax reform imminent for fairer society and growth

The National Audit Office recently proposed that the country intensify its tax and fee collection and management, improve departmental data sharing, and plug the existing system loopholes, to consolidate the growth of its fiscal revenue.

For a long time, some local governments have used tax incentives, financial subsidies, rebates and other means to attract investment.

In the context of reduced land income and increased financial pressure, strengthening tax and fee collection and management can not only increase local financial revenues, but also help the survival of the fittest and contribute to the building of a unified national market.

As China enters a new stage of development, its previous fiscal and taxation systems already cannot align with the new development situation. After bidding farewell to the high-speed growth stage and entering the era of high-quality development, the growth rate of tax and land transfer revenue have begun declining.

At present, the market is concerned about how to adjust the central and local fiscal relations. As land revenue continues to decline and local governments' debt pressures increase, a sound and sustainable local tax system is needed to meet local government spending needs.

The country thus needs to clarify the relationship of power and responsibilities between the cen-

tral and local governments, and promote the reform of consumption tax as a means to increase tax sources for local governments.

It also needs to narrow the gap between rich and poor and establish a fairer personal income tax system. The reform of personal income tax should be launched based on comprehensive income to give play to the role of the tax in adjusting income distribution.

The new fiscal and tax reform should help improve the efficiency of resource allocation and promote a fairer society, so that a basic institutional framework and strong support should be provided for the country's high-quality development.

—21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

Tariff: Hikes to disrupt growth of EV sector

From page 1

Furthermore, an addition of 10 percent tariffs costs the EU importers around \$1 billion which further highlights that the decision would have severe economic repercussions and disrupt the growth of a sector that is already struggling with falling prices and slowing demand.

As production, energy and labor costs in Europe are higher than in China, the tariffs will only exacerbate these differences. The value of EU imports of Chinese EVs has increased significantly from \$1.6 billion in 2020 to \$11.5 billion in 2023. These tariffs are likely to impede the progress made in the transition to electric vehicles and disrupt achieving the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030, under the EU's Green Deal.

The tariffs will certainly have an impact on the Chinese EV industry in terms of both profits earned and employment generated. But it

would have an even worse impact on the EU as it would result in increasing the prices of the EVs because of which domestic automobile producers would face less competition and this would disrupt the transition from highly polluting automobiles that operate on fossil fuels to clean energy vehicles.

Simultaneously, the tariffs would open new markets for Chinese EV manufacturers as by shutting the Chinese EVs out of the EU markets, the demand for Chinese exports will increase elsewhere. This would result in benefiting the consumers of countries other than European ones, and would aid their transition to cleaner transportation, thus achieving carbon neutrality goals.

Chinese firms have also started picking up shares in countries with small domestic auto industries, such as Australia and New Zealand, which shows that the EU is the obvious loser in this case. Some experts argue that the decision to impose tariffs on foreign goods is an act of subsidies on domestic EV produc-

tion because the EU is already burdened with a high level of debt.

However, Beijing's willingness to resolve the issue through dialogue should not be taken as a sign of weakness as Beijing has indicated that it is ready with retaliatory measures in the form of an anti-dumping investigation into European pork imports and an anti-subsidy investigation into European dairy goods and tariffs on large-engine petrol cars if the EU does not back down.

In summary, it is a good omen that both sides have agreed to resume talks to propose a solution to the tariffs problem and hammer out their differences, and it would be in the best interest of both parties that the tariffs are removed through constructive dialogue.

The author is president of *The Society of International Relations & Law, TILS*, and director of *Pak-China Corridor of Knowledge, Pakistan*. The views do not necessarily reflect those of *China Daily*.

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COMMENT

Liang Haiming and Da Hsuan Feng

Kazakhstan a mutually beneficial BRI partner

In a speech he delivered at Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Sept 7, 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed that the two countries jointly build the "Silk Road Economic Belt", which together with the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road now makes up the Belt and Road Initiative.

Kazakhstan has been an active participant in the Belt and Road Initiative since then, with the two countries establishing cooperation in infrastructure, energy, agriculture and other fields. The establishment of the China-Kazakhstan Khorgos International Border Cooperation Center has further deepened Sino-Kazakh cooperation in logistics and trade, while the Sino-Kazakh oil and gas pipelines have strengthened mutually beneficial cooperation in the energy sector.

In terms of cultural exchanges, too, the two sides have made significant achievements. Every year, a large number of Chinese students travel to Kazakhstan for higher studies, and vice versa, while art exhibitions and cultural exchanges have helped deepen mutual understanding. For example, traditional Kazakh music and dance are popular in China, and Chinese calligraphy and martial arts are popular in Kazakhstan.

Despite all this, Sino-Kazakh ties face several challenges. First, communication barriers due to cultural differences persist, and although people of both countries have overcome many obstacles through friendly exchanges, differences in language and culture still exist.

Second, the differences in the two countries' economic structure create obstacles when it comes to trade exchanges and investment, especially because China's is a relatively advanced economy and Kazakhstan's economy mainly relies on its oil and mineral resources.

And third, the fast-changing international situation and geopolitical factors have increased uncertainties, making cooperation between the two sides more difficult.

However, China can use its technological and financial prowess and Kazakhstan can employ its resources to advantage to deepen cooperation in fields such as infrastructure, new energy, the digital economy and high-tech and other areas.

Working together under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and Kazakhstan can further improve logistics and cross-border transportation networks.

In particular, the further development of the China-Kazakhstan Khorgos International Border Cooperation Center will smooth trade and personnel exchanges between the two sides. There is huge potential for cooperation between China and Kazakhstan in the field of new energy, too. Kazakhstan has abundant wind and solar energy resources, while China has significant advantages in new energy technology and funding, making them ideal partners in clean energy generation.

The digital economy is an important

area of development. China is a global leader in 5G, artificial intelligence, big data and other fields, and Kazakhstan can learn from China's experience to build its own digital infrastructure. The two countries can also establish cooperation in areas such as the digital economy in their pursuit of high-quality development.

High-tech industries, including biomedicine, new materials and aerospace, are another important area of cooperation for the two sides. In particular, in the field of biomedicine, the two sides can jointly conduct research to develop new pharmaceutical drugs and medical equipment.

Besides, Kazakhstan can learn from China's rich experience in smart city construction to promote its own smart city construction. The two sides can also work together in international and regional organizations such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to help reform the global governance system and develop a fair and just world order, while upholding multilateralism, and opposing unilateralism and trade protectionism.

By strengthening their cooperation on regional security issues, the two countries can jointly counter terrorism, extremism and transnational crimes. Through intelligence sharing, joint exercises, and other forms of cooperation, they can enhance

the level of regional security cooperation and maintain regional peace and stability.

Furthermore, cultural exchanges are an important part of Sino-Kazakh relations. For instance, Ruslan Tulenov, a Kazakh youth studying at Hainan University, realized he had Rh negative blood when donating blood at a medical camp in Hainan province in 2009. Since then he has donated the rare "panda blood" many times, saving many lives in the process.

In the same spirit, the two countries can boost educational exchanges, encouraging students to study in each other's country and deepen mutual understanding. By regularizing teacher and student exchange programs, and organizing academic seminars and conferences, the two countries can cultivate more talents with international perspectives.

Tourism is another area that has huge development potential. The two sides should open up more attractive tourist routes and offer better, richer tourist experiences to attract more visitors from the other side, increase people-to-people exchanges and deepen mutual understanding.

Moreover, cooperation between China and Russia can help balance international relations and develop a truly multipolar world order, as opposed to a unipolar world order. The coordinated actions of

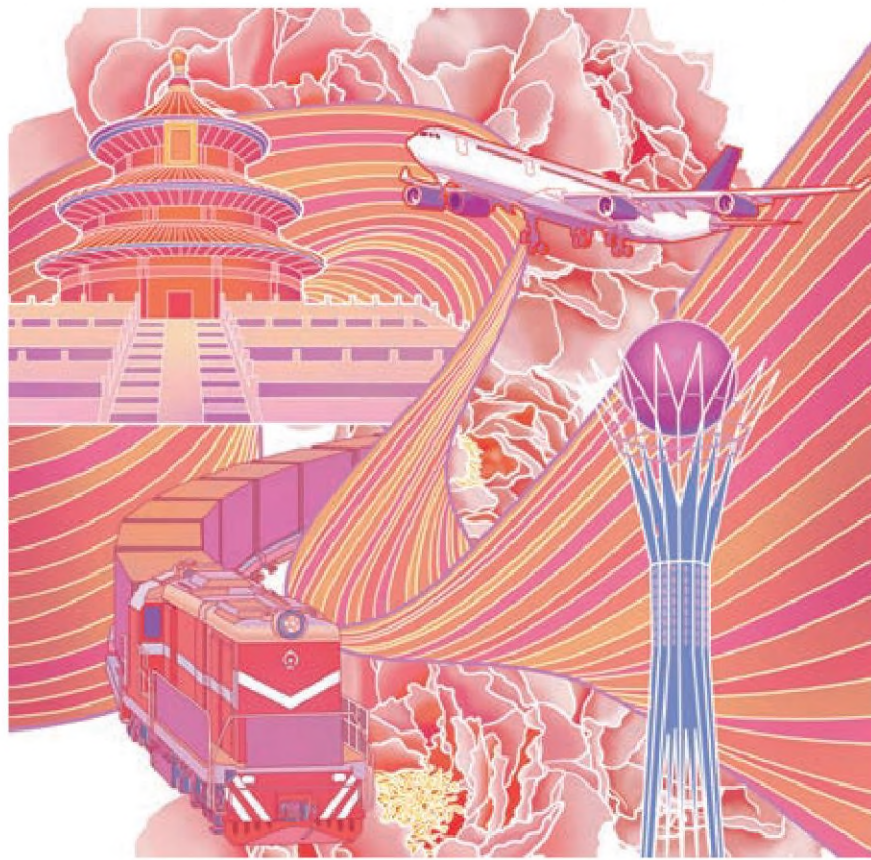
the two countries in international organizations such as the United Nations can help address global crises, resolve regional conflicts and maintain world peace. And trade between the two countries can promote development and contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region.

While cooperation between the two countries in Belt and Road projects and the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative with the Eurasian Economic Union can boost infrastructure construction, promote cross-border trade and investment, collaboration between China and Russia in areas such as counter-terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation and biosecurity can help reduce global security threats and maintain global security.

As for cooperation between China and Kazakhstan, it will bring more benefits to the people of both countries and make positive contributions to regional and global peace and development.

China and Kazakhstan need to "work together with one heart", advance hand in hand, and jointly embrace the opportunities and challenges of the future.

Liang Haiming is the dean and Da Hsuan Feng the honorary dean of the Belt and Road Research Institute at Hainan University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Cao Xiaoheng

ECFA not an obligation-free boon for Taiwan

It's time for the Taiwan authorities to truly focus on the island's economy and residents' livelihood. A survey on consumer behavior trends among Taiwan residents, released by Mastercard on Wednesday, revealed that under inflationary pressures, 70 percent of the island residents will reduce the frequency of non-essential spending to save on expenses.

This year the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan entered its 14th year. The agreement, which is based on the 1992 Consensus that there is only one China and allows for mutual trust and negotiations on an equal footing to resolve economic issues, has been central to the accords facilitating cross-Taiwan Strait economic collaboration.

Starting from June 15, the mainland suspended zero-tariff benefits for 134 items on the Early Harvest List of ECFA. The island's association of machinery industry estimates that the annual export value of machinery and equipment from the island will decrease by over \$100 million, leading to a 4 percent to 5 percent decline in its share of Chinese mainland market.

In the past 14 years, the trade volume between the two sides of the Strait has reached a staggering \$3.07 trillion, with Taiwan enjoying a trade surplus of \$1.65 trillion. This represents 76.1 percent of the total cross-Strait trade and 80 percent of the surplus since trade between the two sides of the Strait resumed in 1979. In particular, Taiwan has benefited from the tariff reduction plan under the ECFA framework, gaining NT\$30 billion (\$921.94 million)

and supporting 260,000 jobs every year.

The ECFA's original aim was to foster comprehensive economic exchanges through a mutually beneficial cooperative mechanism, and promoting economic integration between the two sides of the Strait.

However, recent moves by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which refuses to acknowledge the 1992 Consensus and advocates "Taiwan independence", have weakened the political foundation of the ECFA. In fact, the DPP's divisive rhetoric has prompted the mainland to suspend the tariff reduction arrangement for some ECFA items, though these measures do not target ordinary Taiwan residents.

Despite these challenges, Taiwan's influential industry groups, mainstream public representatives, and entrepreneurs' organizations on the mainland, such as the "Taiwan Federation of Industries", the "Third Wednesday Club", the "Taiwan Association for Cross-Strait Agricultural and Fishery Exchanges, Development and Investment", and the "Association of Taiwan Investment Enterprises on the Mainland" have continued to visit the mainland.

While expressing concern over the ECFA and emphasizing that both sides of the Strait belong to one China, these representatives, enterprises and organizations have urged that cross-Strait dialogue and cooperation be resumed for the benefit of both sides.

As a matter of fact, in response to Taiwan residents' call for peace, development, economic exchanges and

cooperation, the mainland has reaffirmed its stance, emphasizing that it welcomes more and more Taiwan compatriots to participate in cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation, and help realize national rejuvenation.

In fact, despite the drastic changes in cross-Strait relations, Beijing hopes to pursue peaceful cross-Strait development and deepen economic exchanges through the ECFA.

First, the two sides must work together to remove the obstacles preventing the improvement of cross-Strait ties. Since the DPP came to power on the island in 2016, normal cross-Strait economic cooperation has been disrupted by the DPP authorities. More importantly, by supporting Washington's divisive policies, which are aimed at destabilizing the Asia-Pacific region to maintain the United States' hegemony, the DPP has severely hindered cross-Strait collaboration in trade, investment and technology.

Also, the DPP administration has politicized economic exchanges in a bid to decouple the mainland and Taiwan economies. But since more than 60 percent of the mainstream public opinion in Taiwan is against souring ties with the mainland, Taiwan residents should compel the DPP to take measures to improve cross-Strait economic ties.

Second, cross-Strait negotiations, including normal economic and trade talks, should be resumed immediately so as to address emerging issues. Given the changing global economic landscape and deepening cross-Strait economic ties, the increasing flow of goods, capital, people

and information calls for enhanced cooperation to expand the market, upgrade industry standards, better protect intellectual property rights, and conduct joint research and development.

These pressing issues require both sides to discuss how to facilitate the flow of elements and elevate economic cooperation to a higher level.

And third, the focus of both sides should be on deepening cooperation. Cross-Strait economic integration has entered a new phase, with both internal and external factors influencing the advancement of high-quality cooperation. Faced with emerging industries, networks, facilities and platforms on the mainland, along with the burgeoning demand for information consumption, the two sides of the Strait should jointly explore ways to deepen economic cooperation in a more optimized manner.

In other words, it is vital for all sectors to heed Taiwan residents' call for peace, development, and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. By balancing firmness and flexibility, the two sides can shape cross-Strait relations. For that, however, there is need to resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence", maintain peace, increase cross-Strait exchanges, and promote cooperation to drive some sense into the island's leaders, with the goal of restoring normal economic interactions.

The author is director of the Institute of Taiwan Economic Research, Nankai University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Liang Yuchun

West should stop spreading rumors about Xinjiang

Once again, the US has pointed fingers at China's domestic affairs, tarnishing Xinjiang's records in its latest so-called religious freedom report released by the US State Department. This repetitive action is nothing new but an age-old tactic of slander, much like the unfounded rumor of "forced labor".

Labor is a human activity on which society is based and development pursued. People need to work to fulfill their or others' needs and wants, which contributes (along with other factors of production) the most toward the goods and services in an economy, and improves the lives of individuals. How can people be forced to seek a better life?

The International Labour Organization describes "forced labor" as all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.

Whether employed locally or seeking work elsewhere, Xinjiang's workers are motivated by a deep understanding of working values. In June, my research in Xinjiang confirmed that members of minority ethnic groups were working in different enterprises of their own volition.

"My work, my choice" aptly describes the independent decision-making by Xinjiang's ethnic groups when it comes to employment. They opt for jobs based on their desire, skills, preferences and career aspirations without any external influence. For instance, in my survey, Abdurehim Tulyak, an employee at Kashgar Xinyue Textile Co. in Yuepuhu county, Kashgar prefecture, found a job through a WeChat group three years ago. Turaik said that: "We choose our jobs based on our interests, and the company tries to meet our preferences."

Xinjiang promotes equal labor rights and employment opportunities, fair labor rules, and legal protection for employees.

In fact, Xinjiang's workers have the freedom to choose their careers, reflecting the provisions of China's Employment Promotion Law, which guarantees equal employment and the right to choose one's career. The region's high-quality economic development has created a large number of jobs, allowing workers to choose which enterprise or institution to work for based on their interests and capabilities without any racial, gender or religious discrimination.

Xinjiang promotes equal labor rights and employment opportunities, fair labor rules, and legal protection for employees. Local labor protection laws complement national regulations, fostering an inclusive environment, and prohibiting racial, gender and religious discrimination in employment.

Way back in 2014, regulations were implemented to prevent discrimination in recruitments for State-owned enterprises. Recent recruitments by local branches of SOEs such as the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and China Unicom, and private companies like TBEA Xinjiang Sunoasis Co. don't reveal any ethnic discrimination, demonstrating that the job market in Xinjiang is free from ethnic discrimination.

Last year, Xinjiang reached a significant milestone by creating 482,200 new urban jobs and 1.09 million jobs for those people lifted out of poverty. And while there are mechanisms to protect workers' right to fair wages and ensure their pay is increased as and when needed, regulations ensure workers get enough rest and leave, including paid annual leave, statutory holidays, and female workers get special leave.

Also, measures have been taken to ensure all workers are covered by social insurance programs, and to prompt companies to provide social welfare benefits such as annuity and supplementary health insurance for all workers.

Besides, while workplace safety measures, which align with the ILO's standards, are strictly enforced in Xinjiang, religious beliefs and practices, and dietary preferences of workers from minority ethnic groups are respected and protected. Not to mention that the quality of employment in Xinjiang has improved with more workers employed in technology-intensive and high-tech industries.

Western criticism can't overshadow the reality of Xinjiang's labor landscape, where the rights and dignity of workers are respected and protected. And Xinjiang is committed to building harmonious relations through collective bargaining and employment contracts, and by developing fair and safe working conditions.

The author is dean of the Institute for Advanced Study of Ethnicity and Society, Xinjiang Normal University. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS



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

CHEN ZHAOYUAN

Producing development knowledge

The Dar es Salaam Consensus not only contributes knowledge support for the development of the Global South, but also proposes solutions to major global issues

Development is the eternal theme of human society, a common pursuit shared by all countries, and an important measure of the progress of our times.

In recent years, China has been driving the return of development topics to the center of the international agenda. In order to jointly address the global development deficit, the international community needs to block out the



noise from some countries attempting to politicize and marginalize development issues, and it also needs to produce more consensus and more development knowledge.

At the China-Africa Think Tanks Forum held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in March, scholars from China and 50 countries in Africa jointly released the Dar es Salaam Consensus, an exciting achievement in producing new development knowledge and innovating traditional development economics.

As the first international consensus born in the South rather than imposed by the North, it is an example of how, with enhanced awareness of autonomy and development capabilities, the Global South will help African countries and other developing nations find the right path to modernization and gain more international support and resources.

First, the consensus blazes a trail to find a development model endorsed by both China and Africa. One of the highlights of the Dar es Salaam Consensus is its emphasis on giving priority to development and exploring independent, people-centered paths of mutual respect

and mutual learning.

Both China and Africa recognize that each country comes with its unique historical and cultural background and therefore needs to explore a modernization model based on its cultural characteristics and development needs. This flexible and pragmatic approach to development not only respects the sovereignty of each country but also avoids the pitfalls caused by the "one-size-fits-all" pattern.

Notably, the consensus calls for people-centered development, which ensures that development is for the people, by the people, and that the fruits of development are shared among all.

This idea aligns with China's people-centered development approach and African countries' goal of inclusive growth. Both China and Africa are well aware that people should not be seen as abstract concepts existing only in statistics and indicators, nor should human rights issues be used as a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. Instead, people's rights to live and pursue a better life should be protected through development.

During the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2023, China released the Initiative on Supporting Africa's Industrialization, the Plan for China Supporting Africa's Agricultural Modernization, and the Plan for China-Africa Cooperation on Talent Development, which aim to step up efforts in knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and developing high-caliber talent, particularly through training youth and women.

For example, to support the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, China has helped train over 3,000 rail-

way technicians, provided over 50,000 jobs in Ethiopia and Djibouti, and handed over the project in May 2024.

Second, the consensus promotes a development model suitable for the Global South. It calls for activating domestic development through effective markets and proactive governments, which addresses the needs and challenges faced by the Global South countries on their development journey.

Western liberal economic theories often suggest a degree of opposition between government and market, believing that in a market economy the government is only responsible for correcting market failures by providing public goods and services. While this view has its merits, it oversimplifies the interplay between the government and the market. In reality, the government plays a far bigger role in promoting economic development.

As stated in the consensus, building efficient, incorruptible and law-based governments helps optimize macroeconomic regulation and public services to stimulate market vitality, and facilitate the industrialization and modernization of agriculture in Africa.

Countries in the Global South increasingly recognize that support from a proactive government is indispensable for new financing models such as public-private partnerships, investment-construction-operation integration and loan-investment coordination, as well as for industrialization pathways such as industrial policies, economic special zones and infrastructure connectivity.

Among all its international development cooperation programs, China pays high attention to the state capacity building of African coun-

tries and other developing economies. By providing support in technology, financing, and training, China helps Global South countries better participate in the international division of labor, and secure more advantageous positions in global supply chains, thus enabling industrial and structural upgrades.

Standing at the beginning of the current wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation, creating a development model featuring positive interaction between government and market will inject new momentum into emerging markets and developing countries to achieve leapfrog growth.

Third, the consensus sets out proposals to reform global development governance. Committed to extensive consultation and joint contribution for shared benefits, the Dar es Salaam Consensus not only points out the direction for global development governance but also provides actionable reform suggestions.

The consensus calls for promoting the building of an equal and orderly multipolar world and advancing universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization.

This helps reduce global disparities in wealth and urges developed countries to fulfill their commitments in development aid and climate financing, so that all countries, all social strata, and all groups can share the opportunities brought by economic globalization and benefit from fairer and more reasonable global governance.

Specifically, China and Africa agree to increase capital for multilateral development banks, such as



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

the World Bank, to improve their financial conditions and enhance their financing capabilities. They will also increase the share and voting rights of emerging markets and developing countries in the International Monetary Fund, establish a third executive director seat for African countries, and fully consider the interests of the least developed countries in Special Drawing Rights allocations.

Additionally, considering the potential biases and unfair evaluations by Western rating agencies, the consensus proposes exploring the establishment of a fair and objective international credit rating agency within the frameworks of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, BRICS and other cooperative mechanisms.

These measures will support developing countries to better participate in shaping global development governance and enjoy the

benefits of global development.

The Dar es Salaam Consensus not only contributes knowledge support for the development of the Global South, but also proposes solutions to major global issues and challenges. Moving forward, it is imperative to further amplify the influence of the Consensus so that collaborations on development knowledge will turn into collaborations on development actions, and ideas will turn into policies and projects so as to advance the high-quality, sustainable development of the world economy.

The author is an assistant researcher with the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 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.

PAUL FRIMPONG

Concurrence of choice

The Dar es Salaam Consensus is an effective road map for deeper collaboration between Africa and China

The China-Africa Dar es Salaam Consensus, jointly released by scholars from 50 countries at the 13th Meeting of the China-Africa Think Tanks Forum held in Tanzania's port city of Dar es Salaam in March, is playing an important role in



shaping the relationship between Africa and China by offering a framework to enhance collaboration and ensure mutual gains. Complementing existing platforms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, it serves as an avenue for Africa to ensure it has a voice in its dealings with China. Rooted in the principles such as mutual respect, solidarity, win-win cooperation, openness, and common prosperity, the Consensus underscores the importance of fostering inclusive partnerships and shared prosperity on a global scale.

The Dar es Salaam Consensus emphasizes the critical importance of prioritizing development and adopting a collaborative and respectful approach to achieving it. It asserts that development goals must be at the forefront of all decision-making processes and actions. By doing so, we can significantly improve the economic, social and political well-being of people. Development is not merely about economic growth but encompasses an improvement in people's living standards and sustainable development.

Focusing on growth that benefits everyone, while respecting each country's unique needs and experiences, is a fundamental principle of the Dar es Salaam Consensus. It encourages think tanks, policymakers, and other stakeholders to work

together to develop strategies that align with their unique contexts and priorities. This collaboration is essential for creating a global order that is equitable and just. By advocating for a development paradigm that respects the sovereignty and unique circumstances of each country, the Consensus aims to create an environment where all nations can thrive.

The Dar es Salaam Consensus is pivotal for South-South cooperation as it offers a comprehensive framework for fostering collaboration among developing countries. It emphasizes the importance of shared development goals, encouraging countries in the Global South to pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to tackle common challenges such as poverty, health and infrastructure development.

Africa-China relations exemplify South-South cooperation, showcasing strategic alliances that drive mutual growth and development. Chinese investments in Africa mobilize resources for projects aligned with South-South cooperation goals, enhancing economic development and regional integration. Both Africa and China advocate for policies that support the interests of the Global South, promoting a more balanced global economic and political order. The partnership between Africa and China sets a model for other South-South collaborations, emphasizing the benefits of strategic cooperation and shared development objectives.

Leveraging the Dar es Salaam Consensus to strengthen South-South cooperation can extend its



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

benefits beyond Africa and China. Sharing experiences and best practices with other developing regions and collaborating on global issues can amplify the impact of the Consensus. Engaging with international organizations and agencies can provide additional support and resources, ensuring that the goals of the Consensus are met effectively and sustainably.

To effectively implement the Dar es Salaam Consensus, a multifaceted approach is required, starting with policy alignment, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, public diplomacy and sector-specific collaboration.

By aligning national policies with

the principles of the Consensus, countries can ensure that their cooperation frameworks and strategies are designed to benefit both sides equitably and sustainably. Investing in the development of local think tanks and research institutions in Africa and China is crucial for enhancing analytical capabilities and proposing effective solutions that address shared challenges.

Capacity building is crucial for the success of the Consensus. Investment needs to be done in the development of local think tanks and research institutions in both Africa and China. Workshops, seminars and conferences that bring

together experts from both sides to share knowledge and best practices for the building of think tanks need to be organized. Strengthening think tanks and research institutions in Africa and China will enhance their ability to analyze complex issues and propose effective solutions. Promoting joint research projects, workshops and knowledge-sharing platforms can foster a deeper understanding of shared challenges and opportunities. This collaborative effort will ensure that both African and Chinese think tanks are well-equipped to support and guide the implementation of the Consensus.

Sector-specific collaboration is a pivotal approach to effectively implementing the Consensus because it addresses key areas essential for sustainable development and mutual growth. By focusing on specific sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare and education, both Africa and China can leverage their strengths and resources to tackle pressing challenges and promote inclusive development. The Consensus can ensure that efforts are targeted and effective, addressing the most critical areas for development.

Public diplomacy and communication efforts are necessary to promote positive narratives about the Consensus. Highlighting successful cooperation projects and initiatives to showcase the benefits of Africa-China collaboration can foster greater public support for the Consensus. Think tanks must work together to actively address misconceptions and negative stereotypes about Africa-China relations. This involves providing accurate

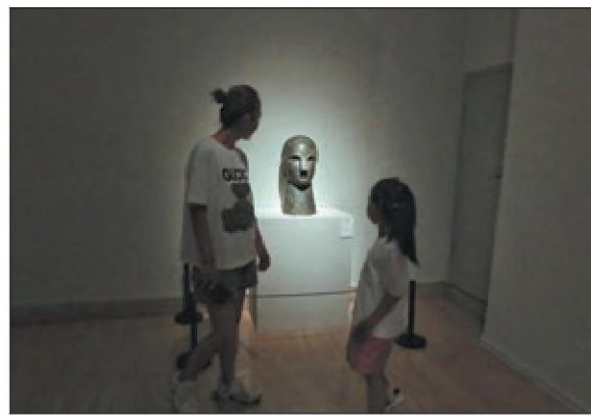
information and engaging in open dialogue with critics. Engaging with media, civil society and the public through various communication channels to create a broader awareness and appreciation of the collaborative efforts and develop support for strengthening Africa-China relations.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential for tracking progress and ensuring the effectiveness of the Consensus' initiatives. Developing clear performance indicators, conducting regular reviews and establishing robust mechanisms to monitor and assess the impact of projects will help maintain accountability and identify areas for improvement. Transparency in project implementation is critical to building trust and ensuring that the benefits of the Consensus are widely recognized and appreciated.

In conclusion, the Dar es Salaam Consensus stands as a beacon of hope and cooperation in a world marked by complex challenges and uncertainties. By embracing principles of mutual respect, solidarity, win-win cooperation, openness and common prosperity, this collective wisdom offers a road map for deeper collaboration between Africa and China, as well as a blueprint for advancing global development initiatives. Through inclusive partnerships, shared prosperity, and a commitment to people-centered approaches, the Consensus inspires us to work together toward a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

The author is executive director of the Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory. 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.

CULTURE



Left: Statues of Renaissance legend Leonardo da Vinci and Chinese artist Qi Baishi, created by Wu Weishan, on show at the National Art Museum of China exhibition, *Thoughts in the Heart*. Wu is also an academic of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno. **Middle:** Works by Pier Giorgio Balocchi on display. **Right:** A bust by Antonio Violano attracts attention. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Art inspires stronger China-Italy ties

From Florence to Beijing, between figurative and abstract, creative talent blazes its own paths, **Lin Qi** reports.

In 1715, Giuseppe Castiglione, a young man from Milan, Italy, arrived in Macao. His ultimate destination was the imperial court of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in Beijing, where he was to serve the emperor as a painter.

At that time, Castiglione didn't expect that his service at the court would last for decades until he died in 1766. As one of Emperor Qianlong's favorite artists, he left paintings depicting the ruler, his activities and imperial life. Meanwhile, he helped train several Chinese pupils to master Western painting techniques.

Better known by the Chinese name he took after arriving in Beijing, Lang Shining, Castiglione is recognized as a cultural envoy between China and Italy.

Now, not far from the Palace Museum where Castiglione's art is housed, a dozen artists from Castiglione's home country have assumed the role as envoys bridging the two cultures by showing their works to the Chinese public.

The National Art Museum of China exhibition, *Thoughts in the Heart*, running until Sunday, gathers several paintings, sculptures and installations of 13 academic artists at the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Florence, of which the establishment in 1563 was proposed by Renaissance painter and writer Giorgio Vasari and the art-loving Benedictine priest Don Vincenzo Borghini.

The first academic of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno was Michelangelo, the artist whose best-known works include the frescoes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, according to Cristina Acidini, president of the institution.

She says their work reveals solid training under a group of mature artists against the background of feverish art movements following World War II.

"Many of them started from a figurative style but later deviated to blaze their own paths, venturing into areas quite personal and experimental, where they found opportunities and confronted challenges."

She says the artists sought inspiration by investigating the relationship between man and nature and found freedom in exploring abstract forms.

The results of their endeavors, the works, give audiences "a sense of assurance, stability and delicate balance", according to Giuseppe



Clockwise from above: Works by Antonio Di Tommaso, head of the sculpture academy at the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno in Italy. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY *Harmonious Inner Development 13*, by Piero Gensini; *Form*, by Giuseppe Calonaci; and *Witnesses*, by Mimmo Paladino. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Calonaci, one of the artists showing at the exhibition at the National Art Museum of China.

Calonaci's *Form* illustrates his belief that a piece of art is the unity of form and color and to achieve perfection, the proportions of the work should be appropriate.

Granted such freedom in the creation process, the artists have built a bridge to connect the past and future, the figurative and abstract, their native culture and Eastern aesthetics.

"While people coming to the National Art Museum of China exhibition will see Western abstract art, they will also find fine works showing the semiabstract *xieyi* ("drawing the spirit") of traditional Chinese ink paintings," says Wu Weishan, director of the museum and a sculptor.

Xieyi is a unique, highly expressive style of classic Chinese painting in which a decrease of details and rather loose brushstrokes jointly render a mood of spirituality.

"It is an interesting dialogue," says Wu, also an academic of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, who shows at the exhibition the statues of Italian Renaissance legend Leonardo da Vinci and modern Chinese artist Qi Baishi to create a spiritual dialogue across time and space.

The two institutions have been at the forefront of cultural exchanges between China and Italy.

In 2019, a group of two bronze sculptures titled *A Dialogue Across the Time*, created by Wu, was installed at the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno. The work, depicting Da Vinci and Qi, was added to the academy's permanent collection to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Da Vinci's death.

On Jan 17, 2020, a larger version of the two statues were unveiled in Da Vinci's birthplace of Vinci in Italy.

In May 2023, Antonio Di Tommaso, the head of the sculpture academy at the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, donated one of his sculptures to the National Art Museum of China, which was shown at exhibitions to commemorate the Chinese museum's 60th anniversary.

Several of Tommaso's works, including this one, are now on display at the exhibition, *Thoughts in the Heart*.

Twelve works will be added to the collection of the National Art Museum of China after the exhibition ends.

Contact the writer at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

What's on



Reflections of history

Bronze mirrors once played an essential role in ancient Chinese life. The earliest examples of this have been found in the activities from archaeological sites of Qijia Culture in the late years of the Neolithic age. Not only were they used and adorned the interior spaces of homes, but they were also embedded with rich meaning, as the

backs were often cast with patterns and characters to remind one of morality.

History Reflected in Mirrors, an exhibition running until Sept 18 at the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum, shows the workmanship, cultural traditions and social etiquette embodied by the bronze mirrors.

More than 240 objects are on display from the collection of the National Museum of China in Beijing, which is an effort to make the collections more accessible to the public through touring exhibitions outside the capital.

The intricate relief patterns on the backside of a bronze mirror have been a major attraction for visitors to appreciate. The various motifs and characters give rich clues to the economic development, folklore and social mentality of the

time and trade between China and the world.

10 am-6:30 pm, closed on Mondays. 581 Xibei Lu, Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. 0991-4552-826.

Imagery with ease

Born in Aurillac, France, Isabelle Cornaro spent the early years of her childhood in the Central African Republic before moving to Paris. She is an artist, art curator and educator. The rich cross-cultural, cross-disciplined experiences of her life have rendered her work with diverse perspectives and depth of history.

Cornaro's namesake solo exhibition is taking place at the Today Art Museum in Beijing until July 14. The exhibition displays 24 works that introduce her exploration of the boundaries between daily objects, especially those for



decoration, and art.

She has used various materials, such as small things purchased at antique shops and flea markets.

Her work exhibits her intense research on classical art. She attempts to translate the elements into the modern context to challenge people's experiences and established understanding of knowledge.

10 am-6 pm, closed on Mondays. 32 Baiziwai Lu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-5876-0600.

City outlook

Moments of Passion, now underway at Tsinghua University Art Museum until Aug 25, gathers the paintings, sculptures and installations of four artists who live and work in Shanghai and have created an abstract method to present the city's characters.

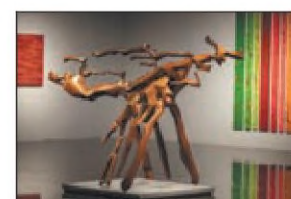
Curated by Xu Hong, the show examines a broad picture of Shanghai's history and culture that nourishes the featured artists and their roles in spearheading the abstract movement in the country over the past four decades.

Ding She's works are characterized by the use of Chinese character strokes with which he has created scenes of fantasy for viewers to explore. Li Lei's paintings often capture people with vibrant colors and a carefree way of layering shades.

Yang Dongbai uses stainless steel to make landscape sculptures of which the smooth, reflective surface reminds one of the vigorous, ever-changing city life. Pan Wei also integrates character strokes into his work to deliver the mysterious and express the weight of history.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. Tsinghua University, Haidian district, Beijing. 010-6278-1012.

CHINA DAILY



LIFESHANGHAI



A visitor gets a close look at a piece on display at the Gallery for Ancient Chinese Sculpture at the Shanghai Museum East on Tuesday. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Pudong expansion of museum continues apace

Addition of six new permanent galleries since February vastly increases institution's scope and appeal, **Zhang Kun** reports.

Shanghai Museum East reopened on June 26 after being closed for just over a month, with new galleries and more objects, and artifacts that invite visitors to touch and feel them.

The new wing of the Shanghai Museum had its soft opening on Feb 2 with the exhibition *Stars Over China: The Ancient Shu Civilization of Sanxingdui and Jinsha*. Upon its conclusion on May 20, the museum closed doors to carry on with the construction, decoration and preparation of additional galleries and spaces.

Including the Gallery for Ancient Chinese Sculpture and the Ancient Chinese Bronze Gallery, which opened in February, six permanent galleries of ancient Chinese art are now open in the east wing. The four new galleries are dedicated to ceramics, jade, seals, and numismatics.

Also open are two themed galleries, one on the history of Shanghai, and the other called *China and the World: Ceramics and Exchanges*, which explores the role porcelain played in the development of international trade and communications.

Four interactive spaces have also been introduced: Curio-City, an amusement-park-style gallery for young visitors, The Digital Gallery: Poetic Jiangnan, the Conservation Lab, and new merchandise shops. "This is the second phase of the grand opening of the Shanghai Museum East," says Chu Xiaobo, director of the institution. "So far, we have finished 80 percent of the planned exhibition space, with 10 new galleries and interactive spaces open to the public."

Construction of the new wing of the Shanghai Museum has taken seven years. It received 1.05 million visitors during the first phase of its soft opening from Feb 2 to May 20. "This was far beyond our expectations. We are greatly moved and encouraged by people's love and support for the Shanghai Museum East," Chu says.

With the additional galleries and new exhibitions, the Shanghai Museum East will be able to receive more visitors every day. "People have complained about how difficult it was to secure a reservation to visit the new facility, so we have doubled the daily quota to 20,000. I believe this will largely relieve the pressure on the reservation system." People can log into the museum's



In the museum's ceramic hall, visitors can touch a blue-and-white porcelain vase dating to the Kangxi period to better appreciate its detail and craft.

WeChat mini program, and make a reservation to visit the Shanghai Museum up to 14 days in advance.

The Shanghai Museum was founded in 1952 and had its first home at 325 Nanjing Road West, the location of the Shanghai Race Club in the 1930s. In 1959, the museum moved to 16 Henan Road South, another historical building dating to 1934.

In 1996, the new Shanghai Museum opened on People's Square. The building, with its square-shaped base and circular top is reminiscent of an ancient Chinese caldron. It has floor space of 39,300 square meters, with individual galleries dedicated to categories such as bronzes, sculpture, ceramics, paintings and calligraphy.

The new wing in Pudong New Area has a total floor space of 113,200 square meters, which has allowed the galleries to expand significantly in terms of the number of objects on display.

The ceramic hall is one of the four new galleries open to public. It contains 558 objects, about half of which are on display for the first time. "We decided to remove one of the exhibits from its glass cabinet and allow visitors to touch it," Chu says. "This is rarely done in museums in China, but we believe the multisensory experience of artifacts is important. It helps people better appreciate the detail and the craft of porcelain."

tem, which makes use of micro spotlights on the side of star exhibits. The new system not only improves visibility of the patterns on surface of objects, but also helps visitors take better pictures.

"In the past, we thought of a museum as an academic institution mainly for the research and protection of artifacts. Now we realize more and more that it is an educational center, where people can experience and learn more about art," says Tang Shifen, Party secretary of the Shanghai Museum.

To enrich the visitor experience, the Shanghai Museum East has opened a new gallery for young visitors called Curio-City. There, children can use shovels and brushes to "unearth" objects on a simulated archaeological site, and place objects in scanners or under microscopes to view their internal structure, inscriptions and other details.

The museum has also moved part of its conservation lab to the new facility, where visitors are allowed to observe progress through a window, and are sometimes invited in to observe restorers at work. Over the coming three months, Zhang Peichen, a specialist in bronze objects at the Shanghai Museum, will be working on the restoration of a gilded Buddha statue dating to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) period.

"We have always worked behind the curtain. I hope people will be able to see that the restoration of artifacts is an interesting job that combines traditional techniques with modern technology," Zhang says.

In collaboration with the Jiushi Group, the Shanghai Museum has introduced a special bus route connecting the two branches of the museum. Visitors can take the bus from either venue at 11 am, noon, 1, 2 or 3 pm between Wednesday and Sunday for the same cost as the metro ride.

The Shanghai Museum on People's Square is currently presenting *The Glory of Ancient Persia: Treasures from Iran* until Oct 7, and the widely anticipated exhibition, *On Top of the Pyramid: The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, will open to public on July 18 and run until August 2025.

Contact the writer at zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn



Wallace Chan elaborates on his artwork at the Shanghai Museum East's ongoing exhibition featuring his 200 pieces of fine jewelry. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Chan's gems put on a sparkling display

By **ZHANG KUN**

The Shanghai Museum East is currently presenting the first solo exhibition for a living artist. *Wallace Chan: Half a Century*, ongoing from Wednesday to Oct 7, includes more than 200 pieces created by the Hong Kong-raised Chinese jewelry designer, juxtaposed against artifacts from the collections of a number of prestigious institutions.

The Shanghai Museum has a focus not just on ancient art, but also on modern and contemporary art, according to its director, Chu Xiaobo. It has begun a new exhibition series, *Drawing Inspiration from the Past: Masters of Modern and Contemporary Art*, that seeks to highlight modern and contemporary artists from both the domestic and international arenas.

"Ultimately, the goal is for us to explore the unknown, challenge ourselves and embrace the future," Chu said at the opening.

The featured artist in the inaugural exhibition was born in Fuzhou, Fujian province, in 1956, and began to work as a gemstone carver in 1973 at the age of 16.

He is now one of the most prestigious jewelry artists in the world, recognized for numerous innovations in the processing of gemstones and other materials, and his work can be found in the permanent collection of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Beijing's Capital Museum, and the Shanghai Museum.

Known as "the formidable Chinese" by European jewelers, Chu says that Chan has used a variety of gemstones and metals over the course of the last five decades, guided by his profound appreciation for nature.

The exhibition is organized in three sections, and includes jewelry and other objects lent from the collections of institutions such as the Shanghai Museum, the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Schmuckmuseum Pforzheim in Germany, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The first section Engraving and Embodying focuses on Chan's scientific approach and lifelong dedication to learning. "His pursuit of mastering gem carving and his pioneering work on the fourfold

symmetry reflection effect, culminating in The Wallace Cut (way of processing gems Chan created), epitomizes his approach," Raquel Alonso-Perez, curator of the Mineralogical and Geological Museum at Harvard University, writes in her introduction to the exhibition.

The second section, Entangling and Enchanting, and the third section Enlightening and Empowering, demonstrate "the metamorphosis of raw gemstones into wearable works of art through mastery of the elements," Alonso-Perez writes.

The highlight of the exhibition is a transformable bangle made of diamonds, jade and titanium, called *Return of the King*, which has been donated to the permanent collection of the Shanghai Museum.

While the circles and sparkles on the bangle are inspired by van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, the white jade carving underneath is a motif from the Warring States Period, Chan explained to guests during a preview of the show on Tuesday.

"I hope that many years later, people will still come to see the object at the Shanghai Museum," Chan says.

"I didn't have much education or artistic training, but through working hard over 50 years, I have managed to create something, and communicate with others through my work.

"I hope my creations outlive me, and may inspire others to create, too. I have chosen to work with materials that are close to eternal, such as titanium and gemstones. I hope to turn them into things that can last long, and be passed down through the generations," he says.

"We live with Chinese civilization, which spans five millennia, and I hope we can leave something behind us too, when we leave this world," he adds.

IF YOU GO

Wallace Chan: Half a Century
July 3-Oct 7, 10 am-6 pm,
closed on Tuesday
Bright Dairy & Food Exhibition
Gallery 1
Shanghai Museum East, No
1952, Century Avenue, Pudong
New Area, Shanghai



A view of the exhibition, *Wallace Chan: Half a Century*.

From left: Three pieces by Chan: butterfly brooch, necklace and pendant in shape of a pea pod.

LIFE



From left: Niels Peter Thomas, managing director of Books, Springer Nature, during the 2024 Beijing International Book Fair in June. A scene from the 2024 International Publishing Forum, one of the key events during the book fair. High technology, AI included, is among the major topics at the fair.



As digital technology, especially artificial intelligence, quickly advances, it poses great challenges to the worldwide publishing industry while providing new methods, tools and paths for its development.

At the 2024 Beijing International Book Fair last month, domestic and foreign publishers gathered to share their experiences and ideas at the fair's 2024 International Publishing Industry Forum themed "Digital Intelligence Empowers Education Publishing and International Cooperation".

Since 2016, the forum, jointly organized by the Publisher Association of China, the International Publishers Association and China Publishing Group, has held eight editions during the Beijing International Book Fair and the London Book Fair, attracting more than 1,000 publishing professionals from more than 40 countries and regions.

The theme of this year's forum is highly enlightening for the development of our publishing industry as it stands at a critical crossroads, particularly evident in China, says Huang Zhijian, chairman of China Publishing Group.

People's reading and consumption habits, book distribution channels and marketing methods, as well as the industry's competitive landscape and growth drivers, have all undergone significant changes, he says.

"Digital intelligence technology has become an unavoidable choice," Huang says.

"Of course, many issues remain unclear and need further observation. Whether we embrace or wrestle with digital intelligence, what we change, what we let go of and what we gain are all questions we must consider and plan for," he says.

It has been proven that each scientific and technological progress brings about revolutionary changes in the patterns of cultural development and modes of dissemination, which means "the publishing industry will have a bright future as long as we keep pace with the times," says Wu Shulin, chairman of the Publishers Association of China.

"High-quality content and advanced dissemination technologies are two important levers for promoting the prosperity of international publishing," Wu says.

For Liu Chao, president of one of the leading education publishers, Higher Education Press, the current generation of technologies, represented by generative AI, deeply impacts the education and publishing industries.

"Overall, we believe that AI technology presents more opportunities than challenges for education, but for

AI is bringing revolutionary changes to publishing

Digital intelligence poses opportunities and challenges to education, say experts in the sector, **Yang Yang** reports.



Left: Visitors enjoy a creative corner at the 30th Beijing International Book Fair in the country's capital in late June. Right: A kid "reads" a touchable book on a screen during the book fair. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



the traditional content industry of publishing, it poses more challenges than opportunities," he says.

To confront such situations, HEP began cooperating with digital and AI research institutions in 2023, applying intelligent proofreading to the whole editing process, Liu says.

"This year, there will be many textbooks empowered by AI," he says.

As a significant part of the industry, educational publishing plays a crucial role in society, especially in addressing major challenges people face globally, says Karine Pansa, president of the International Publishers Association.

At the policy level, access must be enhanced to open educational resources and address issues related to copyright protection for these resources to give wider access to more teachers, Pansa says.

However, people also need to reflect on digitalization and artificial intelligence, especially regarding copyright protection, she says.

Some reports show that many

unauthorized books are used to train generative AI without paying the copyright owners, which should not be the basis of advancement. It is not sustainable for the market, she says.

Catriona Stevenson, general counsel and deputy CEO of the Publishers Association, shares the same vision, saying that AI presents a tremendous opportunity for the industry, but it can also be a threat.

Headquartered in London, the Publishers Association represents more than 170 British enterprises of various sizes and areas, including consumption, higher education and continuing education.

With innovation and development, Britain's publishing industry contributes 11 billion pounds (\$14-billion) to the general economy. The export value of the British publishing industry reached 6.5 billion pounds, surpassing all other countries in this respect. China is the third-largest export country of British books, with the export value reaching 37 million pounds.

Britain's publishing industry creates more than 84,000 jobs and hundreds of thousands of writers and researchers, providing source materials for film, TV series, theaters and video games. The success of British publishing industry is thanks to its robust copyright regime, Stevenson says.

When it comes to the application of AI in academic research, Stevenson used global academic publisher Elsevier's Scopus AI as an example.

Scopus AI is an intuitive search tool powered by generative AI, which helps researchers and institutions quickly access accurate summaries and research insights, fostering collaboration and societal impacts.

Developed and tested in the research community, Scopus AI combines the world's largest scientific literature database with AI, encompassing core content from over 7,000 publishers and more than 27,000 academic journals, with citations exceeding 1.8 billion.

"There are huge opportunities in

our industry for applications like this," she says, adding that "it also presents a threat".

For large language models like ChatGPT that are trained on huge quantities of content to create humanlike texts, hundreds of thousands of book copyrights are within the training data, she says, which poses significant and related threats to human creativity and intellectual property.

Facing these threats, "we strongly reject the false dichotomy between a robust IP regime and AI innovation", she says.

If built on high-quality, accurate and appropriately licensed information, AI can enhance human understanding, creativity and productivity. It is less likely to produce inaccuracies and biases common in models with opaque data and processes. This is especially true in higher education publishing, she says.

"We call for governments to ensure four things," she says.

First, rights holders must have the

option to prevent their work from being used by AI; second, they need transparency about what content is used for AI training, both past and future; third, adherence to copyright laws and transparency should be integral from the beginning; and finally, if rights holders license their work to AI developers, they must receive appropriate remuneration and attribution, she says.

"International cooperation will certainly be fundamental to how we respond to the opportunities and threats brought about by AI for the benefit of higher educational publishers," she says.

Analyzing trends in the publishing industry, Wang Fang, president of Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, says publishers are increasingly engaging with readers who have grown up in the internet age.

Printed books are no longer the sole reading tool. Digital resources are becoming more prominent, personalized, ecological, intelligent and integrated.

However, Niels Peter Thomas, managing director of Books, Springer Nature, says although publishing is going digital, printed books sometimes do help students study more efficiently. As a result, it is necessary to combine digital with print so students can choose, he says, which is one trend he observed in educational publishing.

Other trends in educational publishing, he says, include more personalized content to reflect the complex reality with trans-disciplinary publications and building a network of knowledge by connecting educational resources and backgrounds, theories and case studies, disciplinary solutions and localized applications.

Publishing more than 1,000 books each year, Springer Nature, one of the world's largest publisher of academic books, has cooperated with nearly 100 Chinese publishers.

To create top educational publications for students of different countries, publishers need to fully understand the local markets and borrow technology and experience from mature markets, which means cooperating with publishers worldwide, Thomas says.

Wang, from the top Chinese educational publisher with more than 700 international partners, stresses that "international cooperation is more important now than ever before. No single publisher can meet all the demands and personalized requirements on their own".

Contact the writer at yangyangs@chinadaily.com.cn

Ethiopian endeavors to enhance language, cultural exchanges

ADDIS ABABA — On a typical Saturday morning, a diverse group of Ethiopian-Chinese language enthusiasts from varied walks of life are eagerly immersed in practicing Mandarin dialogues inside one of the small yet vibrant classrooms that are colorfully decorated with Chinese characters and cultural elements in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

This unique institution, called Ni Hao Habesha Language Training School, is the first of its kind in Ethiopia, established with the overarching goal of spearheading Sino-Ethiopian cultural and language exchanges.

At the heart of this fast-growing ambition is Kaleab Zelalem, a 27-year-old Ethiopian with an "intense passion and admiration" for Chinese culture and language. It all started when Zelalem traveled to China in 2017 where he studied international law for four years in the city of Huangshi, Central China's Hubei province.

Following his return to Ethiopia, Zelalem noticed the ever-growing demand among fellow Ethiopians to learn Chinese. Aware of the gap in

addressing this demand and fueled by his newfound admiration for the Chinese culture and language, the young man founded the language training school in 2022, becoming the first private language teaching institution in the East African country, solely specialized in teaching the Chinese language.

"I saw the gap and the demand. Many government officials and business people were looking to learn Chinese, because most Chinese people would be happy if they communicated in their native language. That is when I felt it was time to open a Chinese language school," he says.

His vision was simple — "to not only teach the language but to introduce and impart the unique perspectives and customs that shape the Chinese worldview".

One Chinese lesson at a time, starting some two-and-a-half years ago and further expanding its reach, the school is now transforming how Ethiopians view China and its people, while in the process, discovering a newfound appreciation for the richness of Chinese culture.

The school, as part of its ambition

to promote language and cultural exchanges between the two peoples, also offers short Amharic, Ethiopia's working language, training courses to Chinese nationals who are interested in uncovering Ethiopia's culture and language.

"The unique thing about this school is that we not only teach the language, we teach the culture, norms and the way Chinese people perceive the world, which is unique," Zelalem says.

"If we don't understand the language at its heart, we will not be able to communicate effectively. We need to understand the culture to understand China and the Chinese people."

This holistic approach has attracted a diverse set of Ethiopians — government officials, business people, tour guides and college students.

Bethlehem Abera, a business management graduate currently working as a customer relations officer at a local import-export firm, is one such student who believes that the decision to learn Chinese is already paying dividends professionally and personally.

"In my time working with Chi-

nese people, we communicated in English at first. But now, after I started my Chinese class, somehow, we communicate some words in Chinese, which makes them happy. I see the happiness on their faces and I feel proud, too. That is why I feel like I need to learn more every day," she says.

For Abera, her growing ambition to learn the Chinese language and know more about China, its people and its culture is enshrined in the teaching-learning approach implemented at the school, an embodiment of the founder's dream to promote Sino-Ethiopian cultural exchanges.

Senay Alemnew, a 22-year-old graduate student at the Addis Ababa University School of Commerce, is another enthusiast who has been learning Chinese at the school for the past two years.

Echoing the sentiment, Alemnew speaks in awe about the opportunity presented to uncover China and its culture.

"The class is interesting. It has history classes as well, which is nice. My fascination with China is because of its history. It has amazing



Kaleab Zelalem talks with his Chinese-language students during a class in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in June.

LIU FANGQIANG / XINHUA

people and culture. The level of development that they have achieved is very impressive, and I look forward to going to China," he says.

In its two-and-a-half years of operation, the school has taught Chinese to more than 500 students who are not only Ethiopians, but Chinese enthusiasts from different nations, such as Austria and Tanzania. In doing so, Zelalem has amassed heartwarming compliments and memories from his students.

With his unwavering passion for bridging the cultural divide, Zel-

em and his fast-growing Chinese training school, which now employs three qualified Chinese language instructors, are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the next chapter of Sino-Ethiopian relations.

As Zelalem looks to the future, he is confident that the demand for Chinese language education in Ethiopia will continue to grow.

"I am pretty sure that for the next few years, the demand for the Chinese language will increase. I do not doubt it," he says.

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