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# CHINA DAILY

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XI'S VISION | REFORM AND OPENING-UP

## Rule of law lifts business environment

Specialized courts play big role in advancing high-quality development, opening-up

By CAO YIN  
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Thanks to the establishment of specialized courts, including those involving finance and intellectual property, disputes in relevant fields have been resolved more efficiently, demonstrating that China's efforts to optimize the business environment by rule of law have been further strengthened, legal experts said.

The effective operation of such courts has also played a big role in advancing high-quality development and high-level opening-up, they added.

In the world's second-largest economy, building a sound business environment to attract more investors and providing them with equal and strong protection, whether they are domestic or foreign, State-owned or private, have always been a top priority, as required by the central leadership.

In the past decade, various reforms and measures in the realm of legislation and law enforcement have been put in place to boost law-based governance in China.

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Adhering to comprehensive rule of law and deepening reform on the track of rule of law are also among topics of the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which opened on Monday in Beijing.

The third plenum will deliberate on a key policy document on deepening reform across the board and advancing Chinese modernization, the CPC's core leadership has said.

President Xi Jinping has highlighted the significance of the business environment on multiple occasions, emphasizing the need to continuously deepen reform.

On Feb 25, 2019, Xi, who is also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, underscored that law-based governance represents the best business environment, requiring implementation of the principle of equality in sectors ranging from legislation and enforcement to judicial protection and the observance of laws.

The remark was made by Xi while he was presiding over a meeting of the Commission for Overall Law-Based Governance of the CPC Central Committee.

"Xi's speech not only emphasized the importance of the business environment, but also showed that the construction of the business environment is a systematic project," said Song Yahui, a law professor at Nanjing University in Jiangsu province, in a recent article published by Chinese Social Sciences Today, the official newspaper of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Noting that the project involves many aspects, such as fair competition, protection of property rights, market supervision and international trade, Song said that all these areas "need to address a fundamental issue, which is the rule of law".

Only rule of law "can uphold the transaction security that businesspeople value the most", he added. While suggesting that the country optimize the business environment through sound legislation, he added that fulfilling the goal also relies on a high level of judiciary.

In the past 10 years, China has set up a number of specialized courts to pool high-quality judicial resources and gather legal talent, aiming to better resolve disputes through more professional adjudication.

The Beijing Financial Court is among them. As a chamber specializing in tackling finance-related civil and administrative disputes, such as those involving insurance and securities, the intermediate-level court was established to keep up with the country's rapid financial growth, as well as to bolster the business environment and enhance financial governance capability by rule of law.

Data showed that from March 18, 2021, when the court was launched, to May 31 this year, it heard more than 23,500 cases involving a total of more than 830 billion yuan (\$114.3 billion).

The court also partnered with the Beijing Federation of Industry and Commerce to build an office in July 2022 to focus on optimization of the business environment.

"Our job is to discover struggling but potentially viable businesses through evaluation, and then help reshape their market vitality," said Xu Nan, an official responsible for the office in the court.

For instance, a dispute between a photovoltaic power enterprise and a Beijing-based financial leasing company was successfully resolved with the aid of the office.

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### Call to save the world



Climate activists march to the State House on Sunday in Boston, Massachusetts, the United States. The activists called upon the state legislature to pass climate related laws to help protect people and the environment. JOSEPH PREZIOSO / AFP

## China's jobs situation stabilizes in first half

By ZHAO YIMENG  
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China's surveyed average urban unemployment rate stood at 5.1 percent in the first half of the year, down 0.2 percentage point year-on-year, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Monday.

The average unemployment rate in the first quarter stood at 5.2 percent, down 0.3 percentage point compared with the same period last year, while the rate in the second quarter decreased 0.2 percentage point year-on-year to 5 percent, said Wang Pingping, director of the bureau's population and employment census department.

In the first half of this year, the surveyed unemployment rate in 31 major cities was 5 percent, a decrease of 0.6 percentage point from the same period last year, and the rate stabilized at 4.9

percent in the second quarter. "The unemployment rate in big cities is lower than the overall rate nationwide, which indicates a stable and improving trend in employment for major cities," Wang said.

Employment in the service sector, particularly in sectors such as accommodations, catering and sports, showed significant growth in the second quarter, which contributed to the increase in nonagricultural and urban employment nationwide, she added.

"Employment support for key groups such as migrant workers and university graduates has been strengthened, while targeted assistance for vulnerable groups has been effective, ensuring a stable employment situation," Wang said.

The jobless rate of migrant workers in the second quarter

stood at 4.6 percent, seeing a drop after the Spring Festival holiday, the data showed.

Despite pressure, China's employment situation was generally stable in the first six months of the year, supported by a recovery in the labor-intensive service sector, pro-employment policies, and the creation of new types of jobs driven by new industries and new business models, Wang said.

"More efforts should be made to actively cultivate new employment growth points and promote higher-quality and more adequate employment," she said.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security launched a one-week online recruitment campaign, involving the new energy, healthcare, fast-moving consumer goods and courier sectors.

More than 5,000 employers participated in the campaign,

including leading companies such as BYD and SF Express, offering a total of 68,000 job vacancies.

The Ministry of Education said that targeted measures have been taken to improve employment opportunities for university graduates, with 12 online recruitment activities being held this month on the national employment service platform for college students.

Data from recruitment portal Zhaopin shows that part-time positions on the platform increased 30 percent year-on-year in the first six months, while new flexible work in fields such as shared transportation services increased 10 percent.

The portal said it is increasing efforts to support flexible employment by offering vocational skills training for flexible workers.

## Mutual respect leads to smooth bilateral relationships

WORLD WATCH  
By Jonathan Geldart

Working around the world undoubtedly has its challenges. Multiple languages, legal and regulatory differences and the sleep deprivation of travel and time zones add a complexity, which can wear down, as well as baffle, the best of the global C-suite. However, all these become unimportant if you can appreciate that mutual respect of culture overrides everything. After working with China and Chinese colleagues for many years, I have learned that respecting one another's culture is a critical pathway to trusted and enduring personal and business

relationships. During my years working in, and traveling back and forth between China and the United Kingdom, spending a little time to learn the basics of the language was important. However, what made all the difference to how successful I managed to be was my effort to better understand the culture of the place I came to see as my second home. In this regard, I set aside time to learn about Chinese history, visit important and historical places of interest, read some Chinese classical literature and immerse myself in the wonderful variety of food and drink that China has to offer. Most of all I became deeply aware of the spirit and need for harmony in all things as a core cultural component of the Chinese way of being.

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## CHINA'S RISING STARS SERVE NOTICE ON TENNIS WORLD

Professionalism of next-generation players drives ascent up pro ranks

By SUN XIAOCHEN  
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Twenty years since its golden breakthrough at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, Chinese tennis has come a long way toward reaching the sport's top echelons, with this year's Wimbledon Championships bearing witness to the rapid progress.

Highlighted by its biggest representation at a Grand Slam and a young star making it into the second week, Chinese tennis is celebrating a remarkable campaign at this year's Wimbledon, where the country's next-gen talents served notice they are a rising force.

Li Ting and Sun Tiantian, now both retired, lit the spark by winning an unexpected gold in the women's

### In-depth

doubles at the Athens Olympics.

The nation's most famous tennis player Li Na then ignited interest in the sport in China by winning Asia's first individual Grand Slam title at the 2011 French Open, followed by another at the 2014 Australian Open.

Her heroics inspired a tennis boom that has grown exponentially over the past decade, with more players cracking the sport's elite ranks, more courts and facilities being built, and a larger number of international tournaments being played in China.

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### Fight for change



Student activists push police barricades during a protest rally on Sunday in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Later, the students submitted a memorandum to the country's president seeking quota reforms for civil service jobs. HABIBUR RAHMAN / ABACA / NEWS.COM

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INSIDE  
Building a community  
with a shared future  
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# PAGE TWO



Zheng Qinwen in action during her first round match against New Zealand's Lulu Sun at the Wimbledon Championships, southwest London, on July 1. LI YING / XINHUA

## Tennis: Home-grown heroes rally new passion



Zhang Zhizhen of China plays a backhand return to Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany at the Wimbledon Championships in London on July 3. KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH / AP

From page 1

At this year's Wimbledon, 11 Chinese players featured in the men's and women's main draws at the All-England Club — the most the country has had to compete at any of the four tennis majors.

### Professional approach

Talent development is at the core of the revolution, and it has evolved profoundly in China. But players have also embraced professionalism, managing their careers on their own supported by a crew of coaches, fitness trainers, physios and agents, who are outside the traditional State-run sports system.

The result of this new professional approach has been quite encouraging, especially on the women's side.

Spearheaded by world No 7 Zheng Qinwen, China this week has six players ranked in the top 100 on the Women's Tennis Association Tour. Only the United States, Russia and the Czech Republic have more players than China in the women's top 100 with 13, 12 and eight respectively.

Their predecessors' legacy has paid dividends for China's current generation, who have benefited from early exposure to professional tennis and more access to international events.

"I think players now know better, and earlier, about what it is like to live, breathe and play as a pro than what we did in the beginning," said retired star Zheng Jie, who won the 2006 Wimbledon women's doubles with Yan Zi.

"When we started we had no clue at all about being a professional tennis player, a very limited number of high-level tournaments to play at home, and did not know how to develop our game in the right way.

"I am really proud of how far the game has come in China. Sometimes I envy the current generation very much for the advantages they have now," said Zheng Jie, who was invited back to London to play in a legends' exhibition doubles tournament last week.

### New breed

China's world No 36 Wang Xinyu was one of the highlights of the women's draw last week after she fought her way into the fourth round, her best performance at a major and

the furthest an individual Chinese player advanced at this year's Wimbledon.

The 22-year-old, a winner of the 2018 Wimbledon girls' doubles, said her deep run in London was a great learning curve.

"My whole experience of fighting into the second week for the first time here was priceless," Wang said after losing to Ukraine's world No 21 Elina Svitolina 6-2, 6-1 in the round of 16 on July 8.

"Although the result didn't happen as expected today, I still finished this year's tournament with a lot of positive takeaways, knowing better where I should push for further improvement," Wang said.

"The chances of competing against the more established international opponents and measuring my game against them were a great lesson."

Born into a sporting family, Wang's development has mirrored many of the game's international stars. She started practicing tennis at the age of 6 influenced by her father, a former national team coach. She trained overseas and honed her skills on the International Tennis Federation's junior circuit before breaking onto the world stage as a teenager.

After winning a wild-card playoff in December 2017, Wang earned direct entry into the 2018 Australian Open. At the age of 16 she became the youngest Chinese mainland player to ever play in the main draw at Melbourne Park. To add to the luster, she won the girls' doubles title with partner Liang En-shuo of Chinese Taipei the same year.

The 1.83-meter power hitter, who has inherited her father's touch and the height of her mother, a former basketball player, has since emerged as a rising star on the WTA Tour.

Her support team includes Croatian coach Miro Hrvatin, a full-time fitness trainer, a physio, and an agent from IMG, the Florida-based sports marketing giant that has signed most of China's top players.

### Modern methods

Modern talent development methods are also behind the success of China's top woman Zheng Qinwen, a finalist at this year's Australian Open, and winner of the WTA's Most Improved Player of the Year award in 2023.

Encouraged by her parents, Zheng picked

up a tennis racket for the first time at the age of 6 in her home province of Hubei, where Li Na also hails from.

She later moved to Beijing to develop her talent at an academy run by Argentine mentor Carlos Rodriguez, who coached Li to her second major victory in Melbourne in 2014.

Now based in Barcelona and training with Spanish coach Pere Riba, a former ATP world No 65, Zheng has set her sights on diversifying her arsenal beyond her blistering forehand and serve in order to mix it with the world's best.

Since her breakout season in 2022, Zheng has completed one of the fastest ascents of the women's tour rankings. In January, she reached a career high of seven, following her Australian Open heroics, climbing all the way from 125th at the end of 2021.

Despite elimination in the first round at Wimbledon, the 21-year-old aggressive baseliner, represents the future of Chinese women's tennis together with her peers Wang Xinyu and Bai Zhuoxuan, all top-150 players born after 2000.

Their collective strength, and the diversity of their game styles and personalities, have sparked comparisons to the "Golden Flowers" generation of the early 2010s, when Li Na, Zheng Jie and Yan Zi made the nation proud on the pro circuit.

"Obviously, 15 years ago in China, tennis was just beginning," said Zheng Qinwen, winner of two WTA singles titles. "So we didn't have much opportunity to improve our system of coaching," she said.

"Now after 15 years, we know more about the world, we know how everybody is playing, and we try a lot of different coaches to really improve our games. So all of us are starting to have more knowledge about tennis."

### Home court advantage

Organizers and promoters have also played their part in bringing more high-level tournaments to China to keep pace with the on-court breakthroughs.

From hosting only three professional tournaments before 2010, China has seven WTA tournaments and five men's Association of Tennis Professionals events scheduled this year, and has become one of the busiest destinations on the professional tennis calendar.

The China Open, already the biggest men's and women's combined tournament

in Asia, is getting bigger and better this year, thanks to the growing domestic appetite for elite tennis.

In April, the tournament organizers announced the women's tournament will be upgraded to a two-week format with 96 draws, up from 64 last year, joining Indian Wells, Miami, Madrid and Rome as the fifth top-flight WTA1000 tournament.

On the men's side, the ATP500 tournament is expected to continue serving up high-quality players. Grand Slam champions Carlos Alcaraz of Spain, Daniil Medvedev of Russia and Italy's Jannik Sinner have all confirmed that they will return to Beijing this fall, after having featured in last year's star-studded men's draw.

The total prize money for the tournament, which runs from Sept 23 to Oct 6 at Beijing's National Tennis Center, will be increased to a record \$13.14 million this year.

As the country pushes the sports sector as a new economic pillar, the growth of businesses around events such as the China Open, has coincided with the central government's call to increase sports industry revenue to 5 trillion yuan (\$688 billion) by the end of next year.

During the National Day holiday, visitors to the National Tennis Center in Beijing, where the tournament has been held since 2009, flocked to numerous merchandise outlets, tennis academy booths, equipment stores, and restaurants, signaling growing public demand for sports-related activities and products.

The 2023 China Open, the first event held after a three-year pandemic hiatus, saw multiple records broken. Total attendance for the event hit 250,000, with an on-site consumption of 18 million yuan (\$248 million). The total viewership in Europe also increased by 33.9 percent.

Now, with China's own top players holding court, the sport's popularity, facilitated by an array of home tournaments, will only grow bigger, said China Open's co-director Lars Graf.

"It will be a huge advantage for spectators to have a chance to see the Chinese players in action," said Graf, a former vice-president of the ATP tour, who's been closely following the sport's growth in China.

"They're doing very well internationally, and now they're coming home to play. I think that tennis is booming right now in China."

## Male players emerge from shadows of female stars

By SUN XIAOCHEN

Chinese men's tennis has turned heads at this year's Wimbledon Championships after appearing to finally catch up with its female counterpart at the sport's elite level.

The historic achievements included the first and second wins by players from the Chinese mainland in the men's main draw of the world's most famous tournament since the open era began in 1968.

July 1 saw double delight for Chinese tennis fans. First from teen star Shang Juncheng in a straight-sets victory over Chile's Cristian Garin, followed by Zhang Zhizhen's defeat of French qualifier Maxime Janvier. The wins sparked joy across China's tennis community. Unfortunately, both players were knocked out in the next round.

Zhang, China's highest-ranked male player at No 34, hailed the breakthroughs as a collective confidence boost. "Gradually, I feel like I belong to this tournament and to the elite stage of men's professional tennis," said Zhang, who in October 2022 became the first player from the Chinese mainland to crack the men's top 100.

"I feel more comfortable and more confident playing at this level, whereas in the past I'd felt quite nervous, or intimidated, facing a much higher-ranked opponent on the tour," Zhang said after losing to German power hitter Jan-Lennard Struff in the second round.

Zhang, a 27-year-old Shanghai native, is the first Chinese man to reach the second round at all four Grand Slam tournaments, with quarterfinal appearances at the 2023 Madrid and 2024 Rome ATP1000 tournaments among his career highlights.

At just 19, Shang has attracted even more attention than his compatriots for his untapped potential. His fast-paced, aggressive game and composure beyond his years, were on full display in a close five-setter against Bulgaria's 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov in the second round, despite losing 3-2 after taking the first two sets.

"The loss was a tough one but a memorable one as well," said Shang, who broke into the top 100 in May after making his first ATP semifinals appearance in Hong Kong in January.

The teenager conceded he still doesn't have what it takes physically at the highest level in a five-set match.

"It's all positive though, because I know my game works well and I just need to improve my physical strength," said Shang, who is only playing his second full season on the ATP tour.

Another youngster, the country's first and only ATP male singles titlist Wu Yibing, is hoping for a strong comeback from an injury that has sidelined him for over six months.

Wu, who is currently in the United States recovering from foot surgery, won the ATP250 title in Dallas, Texas, in February 2023, the first ATP Tour-level title won by a Chinese male player.

A former US Open boys' champion, he reached a career-high ranking of 54 in May last year.



Wang Xinyu hits a forehand at Wimbledon on July 6. HAN YAN / XINHUA



Left: Bai Zhuoxuan hits a return during the 2024 Wimbledon Championships on July 2. LI YING / XINHUA



Right: China's Zhu Lin serves to Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu during their women's singles tennis match at Wimbledon on July 1. HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP

## TOP NEWS

# First-half figures offer solid base for future growth

Countercyclical, cross-cyclical adjustment of macro policies needed to prop up economy

By OUYANG SHIJIA,  
LIU ZHIHUA and ZHOU LANXU

China's economy grew by 5 percent in the first half of this year despite challenges such as still-weak demand and a complex external environment, providing a solid base for achieving the whole-year growth target this year, analysts said on Monday.

However, they cautioned that the weaker-than-expected second-quarter performance indicates that the foundation for economic stabilization is not yet solid, highlighting the need to strengthen both countercyclical and cross-cyclical adjustment of macro policies to prop up the world's second-largest economy.

Countercyclical adjustments focus more on short-term remedies to put the brakes on the current trend, while cross-cyclical adjustments aim to bolster long-term, sustainable growth with long-term solutions to tackle problems across multiple economic cycles.

The policy focus should be on

stronger fiscal and monetary stimulus to boost domestic demand, alongside measures to tackle structural issues and foster new growth drivers, they said. This should include more property easing steps to support the ailing real estate sector, further unleashing services consumption potential, the analysts added.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday that China's GDP grew by 4.7 percent from a year earlier in the second quarter, cooling from 5.3 percent growth in the first quarter of the year.

China's industrial output grew by 5.3 percent in June from a year earlier, while fixed-asset investment grew by 3.9 percent year-on-year in the January-June period.

Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said: "The second-quarter growth fell short of market expectations mainly due to the slump in retail sales growth, while the robust investment in infrastructure and manufacturing and better-than-expected foreign trade provided strong support for economic stabilization."

Statistics from the NBS showed

that despite the low growth of retail sales, a key measurement of consumer spending, which stood at 3.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, retail sales of services registered relatively strong growth, expanding by 7.5 percent year-on-year.

Zhou remained optimistic about the consumption recovery and economic growth in the second half, given the steady rebound in demand for services domestically, stabilization in the employment market and continuous improvement in personal incomes.

"China's consumption and domestic demand will likely pick up steadily in the remainder of the year, with the help of stronger policy stimulus, spending sprees during holidays and gradual stabilization in the property sector," Zhou said.

NBS data showed that China's property investment fell by 10.1 percent in the first six months of this year, compared with the same period a year earlier, which was flat compared with the figure in the first five months.

The country has recently taken a slew of measures, such as cutting minimum down payment ratios for individuals' commercial housing mortgages, in order to boost the property market.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said he believes China is heading in the right direction in terms of addressing the housing woes.

"The country has already pivoted from building public housing to ensuring the delivery of numerous pre-sold homes to rebuild buyers' confidence, marking a significant step forward toward reducing the woes of the property sector," he said.

Despite the stimulus policies nationwide to prop up the real estate sector, Darius Tang, associate director of corporates at Fitch Bohua, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fitch Ratings in Beijing, said that while the property sector may still be a drag on the economy, China's economic driver for the rest of the year will come mainly from resilience in exports, strong manufacturing investment and more aggressive policies to boost consumption growth.

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Foreign travelers choose phone plans on June 27 at a China Mobile outlet on Wangfujing Street in Beijing. Currently, foreign nationals from 54 countries are eligible for the 144-hour visa-free transit facility that is effective at 37 ports across China. JU HUANZONG / XINHUA

## 3 ports added to visa-free transit policy

By YANG ZEKUN  
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China has expanded the implementation of its 144-hour visa-free transit policy to three more entry ports, bringing the total number of such ports to 37, the National Immigration Administration announced on Monday.

The entry process for foreign nationals has also been streamlined to facilitate their short-term activities related to tourism, business and family reunions within the country.

The three new ports

on the list are Zhengzhou Xinzheng International Airport in Central China's Henan province, and the Lijiang Sanyi International Airport and Mohan railway port in Southwest China's Yunnan province, the administration said in a statement.

Starting on Monday, eligible foreign nationals can enter China visa-free through the Zhengzhou airport, with their visit and stay limited to Henan.

Those entering China visa-free through Yunnan are allowed to visit nine cities or prefecture-level areas in the province including Kunming, Lijiang, Dali, Yuxi, Pu'er and Xishuangbanna, according to the administration. Previously, foreign nationals

### Cities where the 37 ports of entry are located

- Beijing
- Tianjin
- Shijiazhuang, Hebei
- Qinhuangdao, Hebei
- Shanghai
- Nanjing, Jiangsu
- Lianyungang, Jiangsu
- Hangzhou, Zhejiang
- Ningbo, Zhejiang
- Wenzhou, Zhejiang
- Zhoushan, Zhejiang
- Guangzhou, Guangdong
- Shenzhen, Guangdong
- Jieyang, Guangdong
- Shenyang, Liaoning
- Dalian, Liaoning
- Qingdao, Shandong
- Zhengzhou, Henan
- Chongqing
- Kunming, Yunnan
- Lijiang, Yunnan
- Xishuangbanna, Yunnan
- Chengde, Sichuan
- Xi'an, Shaanxi
- Xiamen, Fujian
- Wuhan, Hubei

SOURCE: NATIONAL IMMIGRATION ADMINISTRATION

could only stay in Kunming. Foreign nationals from 54 countries, including Austria, Belgium

and the Czech Republic, who hold valid international travel documents and onward tickets with confirmed dates and seats are eligible for the 144-hour visa-free transit.

Since its implementation in January 2013, the policy, which was first valid for 72-hour transit and then extended to 144 hours, has played an important role in enhancing China's high-level opening-up efforts, facilitating people-to-people exchanges and promoting international cooperation, the administration said.

Adding more entry ports to the visa-free transit list will offer foreigners alternative travel options in China, the administration said, adding that it will continue to improve and optimize the policy to welcome foreigners with a more open attitude.

China's visa-free transit policy has been hailed across social media platforms, acknowledging its key role in facilitating international travel, dispelling misconceptions and promoting global connectivity.

Robert Willis, from the United Kingdom, said the policy will be very useful to him because he runs a business in China. Previously, Willis had to apply for a two-year multiple-entry visa to visit China. He said the new policy will make his future trips more convenient.

Elena, from Russia, who has visited China twice, said she learned about the policy from her

boyfriend, who works in Tianjin.

The policy will have a positive impact on travelers from 54 countries, enabling them to visit China more often and more easily and to explore new cities and cultures, Elena said, adding that she hopes the duration of visa-free transit would be extended in the future.

In the first half of the year, immigration authorities nationwide recorded around 14.64 million foreign nationals entering China, up 152.7 percent year-on-year. Among these visitors, 8.54 million utilized the visa-free policy, marking a 190.1 percent year-on-year surge.

The National Immigration Administration said a surge in foreign visitors is expected in the second half of the year, given the growing enthusiasm for the visa-free transit policy and the swift implementation of various other initiatives.

Xu Xiaolei, chief brand officer of Beijing-based CYTS Tours Holding Co, praised the significant impact of the policy in driving inbound tourism, which he said has been particularly evident in recent months.

The policy has streamlined the entry process, reduced visa costs and provided greater certainty for foreign travelers wanting to explore China, he said.

Furthermore, the policy has catalyzed the growth of associated domestic industries, particularly the inbound tourism sector, which has faced tough challenges, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, he said. To expedite the recovery of the sector, government bodies and tourism enterprises have collaborated on innovative solutions, he added.

Xu also emphasized the role of the policy in dispelling misconceptions about China, saying that many visitors who experienced the country firsthand realized how different such experiences are from preconceived notions propagated by the Western media. He underlined the potential of travelers sharing their experiences on social media to counter misinformation more effectively.

"The policy is expanding gradually. ... Yunnan and Henan have their distinct attractions, with Yunnan renowned for its natural beauty and Henan celebrated as a cradle of Chinese culture, blending tradition with modernity. This is enhancing the impact of the policy," he said.

Xu stressed the importance of developing tailored inbound tourism products that resonate with foreign visitors, while showcasing Chinese culture and progress.

## Law: Resolutions stabilize interests of investors

From page 1

The photovoltaic power enterprise obtained more than 700 million yuan in financing from the Beijing company for upgrading its power generation equipment in 2022. However, due to the breakdown of the capital chain, it was unable to repay the loan on time, leading to the Beijing enterprise suing it in the court. After trial, the power enterprise was ordered to pay off the loan.

When the court urged the photovoltaic power enterprise to comply with the ruling, "we found its equipment upgrading was in response to the country's low-carbon policies, and it had collaborated several times with that financing company, with a good credit reputation," Xu recalled, adding that a rescue of the company seemed possible.

"Therefore, we decided to conduct a thorough evaluation of the photovoltaic power enterprise, asking some judges and new energy specialists to visit the defendant and talk to local government to learn more about the previous business operation, resulting in the compilation of

an evaluation report," he said.

According to the report, the trust between the two companies could be repaired, and the upgraded equipment could generate electricity revenue, meaning the photovoltaic power enterprise would have the ability to repay the loan.

In addition, the report said that the nation's low-carbon policies presented development opportunities for the new energy industry, indicating that there was room for an increase in the market valuation of the photovoltaic power company.

"Compared with rigidly pressuring businesses to repay debts or go bankrupt, the office's goal is to provide a better solution for both sides involved in a case, benefiting their long-term development," Xu said.

"In the office, judges should ensure that the way to rescue companies complies with laws, while experts need to explain the current situation and trends of the industries to guarantee the implementation of solutions," he added, describing this as a legal innovation in financial governance.

So far, the office has resolved 62

cases this way, covering various fields such as new energy, modern logistics, private healthcare and advanced technology. The resolutions not only safeguarded the jobs of over 80,000 people, but also stabilized the interests of more than 2.3 million investors, according to the office.

Specialized courts are not a recent phenomenon. Even earlier, the establishment of maritime courts had contributed much to solving disputes and serving a market-oriented, internationalized and rule-of-law business environment.

Among them is the specialized Ningbo Maritime Court, which opened in 1992 to hear maritime and commercial cases in Zhejiang.

As China has further opened its doors to the world, the number of foreign-related maritime disputes has been rising, which prompted courts in China to attach greater importance to optimizing the business environment, said Du Qian, president of the Ningbo court.

In September 2022, for example, a Liberian container ship and a large Panamanian oil tanker collided near Malaysia, causing severe damage to

both vessels, which were owned by two companies registered in the Marshall Islands. After the accident, the Panamanian vessel underwent repairs in Zhoushan, Zhejiang.

The container ship's owner subsequently submitted a request to the Ningbo court for detention of the oil tanker, and the two sides agreed to have the dispute handled by that court.

The court ruled in December 2023 that the oil tanker's company was primarily responsible for the accident. It ordered the company to pay 34 million yuan in compensation to the other side.

According to international treaties, several countries, including Malaysia and Panama, had the jurisdiction to handle the case, but the two litigants ultimately chose the Ningbo court and agreed to abide by its judgment. "It reflected the trust of the foreigners in our handling of maritime disputes," said Du, the court president.

"Improving the quality and efficiency of handling such international maritime disputes helps promote the building of fair, open and transparent market rules," she said. "It is also conducive to boosting the confidence of businesses at home and abroad."

## Mindless violence



People inspect the damage caused by a car bomb blast outside a cafe on Sunday in Mogadishu, Somalia. Nine people were killed and 20 others wounded when the bomb went off in the place that was packed with soccer fans watching the Euro 2024 final. HASSAN ALI ELMI / AFP

## Culture: Shared common experience builds unbreakable bond of trust

From page 1

From *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Journey to the West* to the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *The I Ching*, I spent time absorbed in what became, for me, some of the best and enjoyable literature I have ever read. The Monkey King, an impish and lovable character directly lifted from the classic book of *Journey to the West*, provided me with stories which everyone in China knows by heart from an early age.

It might seem strange that a senior Western C-suite executive might 'waste his time' reading Chinese fictional literature. However, in my

view, this was time very well spent. It was as equally important as my Chinese friends and colleagues understanding the British culture and psyche by studying the likes of Shakespeare or Charles Dickens. It was, and remains, simply a matter of respect. In addition, my regular trips away from my base in Beijing made for great conversations in the office, and around the dinner tables I frequented. From the karst scenery of Guilin and the Lijiang River to the Inner Mongolian grasslands and the Mausoleum of Genghis Khan in Ordos, I visited many places other than the usual tourist spots of the Great Wall and the Forbidden City in Beijing. I became as

interested in the small objects of history as I was in the grand buildings and mountains of China.

Was I a tourist? Yes of course. But I was also a learner of the deep and rich culture of the place I was working in and with. Equally I would encourage Chinese colleagues and friends visiting the UK to travel outside London to places such as York, Edinburgh, the Lake District and the mountains of Wales.

The richness of a shared and common experience built, and continues to build, an unbreakable bond of trust and understanding. This shows both respect and care which is appreciated, as well as a much deeper level of emotional

connection than the immediate and often transactional aspects of business and sales.

Appreciating and sharing food together is also an important part of creating a common experience, which binds humanity together across the divide of language. Laughter also makes for an incredible removal of barriers and misunderstanding. Humans have a well-developed sense of the ridiculous deeply ingrained in our very beings. Sharing in a funny situation, including laughing at ourselves sometimes, maybe aided by a little alcohol, creates a level playing field in relationships.

Why am I so interested in build-

ing cultural appreciation and understanding as well as business? In my experience, individual business transactions may provide for short-term revenues, but enduring relationships, based on a deeper understanding of culture and mutual respect, deliver long term profitability both in business and friendships which can weather the ups and downs of changes in circumstances, geopolitics and economic shocks.

With a sound underpinning of mutual cultural understanding and respect, we can flex and bend our strategies and operational approaches as business leaders, much more effectively than by

choosing to complain and moan.

2024 is a year of global upheaval, with many nations voting for change and others subject to the turmoil of climate events and conflict. In this time of complexity and challenge, C-suite leaders must navigate a clear pathway through it all to ensure their businesses progress and thrive even in adversity.

I believe that maintaining a clear-sighted strategy with a long-term vision, underpinned by a mutual respect across borders and cultures, will serve us all well into the future, whatever it may have in store for us.

The author is director-general of the Institute of Directors, a community of business leaders and directors based in London. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA

## Terracotta Warriors celebrate 50 years of discovery

By WANG RU in Beijing and QIN FENG in Xi'an

Activities ranging from an immersive digital experience to the release of new documentaries are being planned to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the groundbreaking archaeological work that led to the discovery of the Terracotta Warriors.

An archaeological team began excavating Pit No 1 of the mausoleum of Emperor Qinshihuang, the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on July 15, 1974. The excavation unveiled a vast underground army of life-size Terracotta Warriors, crafted to accompany the emperor in the afterlife.

The warriors, modeled after real soldiers, were found alongside numerous bronze weapons, recreating the powerful Qin army that unified the country over 2,000 years ago.

In 1987, the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum announced at a news conference on Monday that it will host a variety of activities to showcase recent progress in archaeological excavations, cultural relics protection and research.

"Over the past 50 years, archaeologists have excavated pits containing Terracotta Warriors, bronze chariots and horses, acrobat sculptures and bronze waterfowl, ritual architecture and an accompanying tomb west of the main tomb," said Li Gang, the museum's director. "We have also conducted comprehensive archaeological surveys and scientific explorations of the above-ground mound and underground palace of the mausoleum.

"The cultural connotations, values and humanistic ideas contained in the complex and the Terracotta Warriors are continuously being revealed."

Wang Yuanjin, the museum's deputy director, said a digital station at the mausoleum will begin trial operations late this month. Covering 1,600 square meters, it will use digital technology and interactive facilities to offer visitors an immersive experience, highlighting the unity of the Qin Dynasty, its major construction projects, and the layout of the mausoleum and its satellite tombs.

In August and September, several major books on the Terracotta Warriors and the archaeological work at the mausoleum will be published. They will elaborate on recent archaeological studies, the technological protection of cultural relics, and communication and exchanges.

A number of documentaries and programs will also enhance understanding of the site.

*Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors*, a Netflix documentary, has aired in more than 190 countries and regions since June, and a six-episode documentary will be shown on CCTV-10 in September.

"The production and broadcast of these programs have not only enriched people's understanding of the archaeological discoveries at the mausoleum but also showcased the profound historical heritage of Chinese culture," Wang said.

In September, a conference will be held in Xi'an to commemorate the 50th anniversary, review the achievements over the years, and promote the development of cultural relics and archaeology in the new era. An exhibition on the discoveries at the mausoleum will open at the same time, Wang added.

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## Learning about history



Members of a Japanese delegation visit the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Sunday. The 14-member delegation toured the exhibition and engaged in discussions to learn about the history of Japanese aggression against China. After the Japanese Imperial Army captured Nanjing on Dec 13, 1937, the Japanese invaders brutally killed approximately 300,000 Chinese civilians and unarmed soldiers over a six-week period. YANG BO / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Civil aviation industry continues recovery in first half of the year

By LUO WANGSHU luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's civil aviation industry demonstrated resilience and progress in the first half of the year, which witnessed 350 million passenger trips, the Civil Aviation Administration of China said.

That is an increase of 23.5 percent year-on-year and up 9 percent from 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. According to data and experts, the international passenger market has shown ongoing recovery, while the global cargo sector has rebounded even more robustly than the domestic market.

About 30 million passenger trips were via international routes, up more than 250 percent year-on-year, with international passenger volumes rebounding to over 80 percent of the same period in 2019.

The demand for air cargo transportation remains strong, particularly on international routes. During the first half of the year, domestic and international deliveries handled a cargo and mail transport volume of 4.17 million metric tons, up 27 percent year-on-year and an 18.7 percent increase on the same period in 2019.

International routes accounted for 1.65 million tons, a 34 percent year-on-year rise, and up by 44 percent from the same period in 2019.

"Based on a comprehensive analysis of the internal and external development environment of civil aviation and the industry's recovery, it is expected that the civil aviation transportation market will maintain a steady growth trend in the second half of the year," said Xu Qing, deputy director of the administration's transportation department.

She said the international passenger transportation market is poised for further recovery.

"As the summer holiday approaches, the volume of international passenger flights has been steadily increasing, with a total of 6,045 international passenger flights operated by domestic and foreign airlines from July 1 to July 7, representing nearly 80 percent of the volume in 2019," Xu said.

These flights connect to 72 countries, with passenger services from China to 30 nations, including the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates, surpassing the 2019 levels. Flights to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Hungary, Greece, Kenya and Portugal have more than doubled compared to 2019, and six countries have been added to the list of accessible destinations: Bahrain, Kuwait, Serbia, Tanzania, Luxembourg and Papua New Guinea.

As the summer travel season kicks off, Xu anticipates a surge in interna-

tional tourism and study abroad trips. Popular international routes are expected to focus on traditional tourism markets such as Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asian countries.

Flights to France have increased, driven by major events like the Olympics, and there are also more to Denmark, Hungary and Greece, among other countries.

Commenting on the market trends, Li Xiaojin, a professor of aviation economics at Civil Aviation University in Tianjin, highlighted the difference between the domestic and international passenger aviation market recoveries in the first half of the year. While domestic markets have surpassed 2019 levels, the international sector has maintained steady growth.

However, flights to North America — specifically Canada and the United States — have struggled, with a recovery rate of less than 20 percent.

In terms of cargo transportation, Li emphasized that the international sector has outperformed domestic operations, attributing that success to the expansion of cross-border e-commerce.

Companies like Shein, a popular online fast-fashion retailer, and Temu, an online shopping platform, have excelled in their international expansion efforts, he said.

## International educational ties fortified

BLCU's branch campus in Kazakhstan to receive its first batch of 100 students

By ZHAO YIMENG zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing Language and Culture University will keep strengthening educational ties with countries in Central Asia and cultivate global talent with proficiency in Chinese, university president Duan Peng said in a recent interview.

BLCU's branch campus in Astana, Kazakhstan, a new higher education institution jointly established by BLCU and Astana International University, was inaugurated on July 3.

Teaching materials provided by BLCU Press and its branch in the United States — Phoenix Tree — have been sent to Astana, including 35 sets of undergraduate textbooks. Original cultural products have been delivered to the branch campus to attract students during the enrollment process.

In September, the first batch of 100 students will start their new semester at BLCU Kazakhstan in two undergraduate programs: Chinese language (economics and trade) and international Chinese language education.

A team of six professors and several volunteers from BLCU will be assigned to the branch campus, with a system of international Chinese education developed by the university expected to help international students understand China through learning Chinese.

Students from neighboring countries such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan can also apply for places at BLCU Kazakhstan with their college entrance exam scores. Those who have no Chinese learning background can attend a one-year preparatory course before entering the university.

"The number of inquiries has been overwhelming, and many students have applied," Duan said.

The interaction between the main campus in Beijing and the branch campus in Astana will be enhanced, Duan said. Outstanding students from the branch campus will be able to further their studies in Beijing, while doctoral candidates at the main

The number of inquiries has been overwhelming, and many students have applied."

Duan Peng, president of Beijing Language and Culture University



campus could serve as intern teachers in Astana.

The branch campus aims to offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs over the next five years to students across Central Asia, he said.

During the inauguration ceremony, BLCU gave the Astana campus a wooden pavilion designed like ancient Chinese architecture to provide a place for teachers and students to relax. Construction of the pavilion will be completed this month.

The name of the pavilion, *Tang-di*, comes from the *Book of Songs*, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry. It means brotherhood in Chinese and symbolizes the friendship between the two countries, Duan said.

BLCU has signed cooperative contracts with eight higher education institutions in Kazakhstan, including the joint establishment of the Kazakhstan Research Center with Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty.

Over 4,000 Kazakhs have studied at BLCU, including Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who learned Chinese at the university in 1983 and 1984, and Shakhmat Nuryshev, Kazakhstan's ambassador to China.

A large number of Kazakh graduates have promoted the friendship between the two countries, contributing to multiple fields including diplomacy, education and cultural communication, and trade, Duan said.

## Sanfu moxibustion not for everybody

By WANG XIAOYU wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

As hospitals have begun providing a variety of *sanfu* moxibustion services — a traditional Chinese medicine treatment applied during the hottest days of summer to boost immunity against winter chills — officials and experts stressed that the therapy is only recommended for people with certain respiratory conditions and weak immunity and is not suitable for everybody.

*Sanfu* in Chinese refers to the hottest period of the year.

Liu Qingquan, president of Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said that *sanfu* moxibustion — which involves plastering warm herbal patches onto acupuncture points — dates back to a traditional Chinese medicine formula in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and mainly comprises white mustard seeds and dried ginger.

"The therapy was originally used to treat asthma and would leave blisters and marks on acupuncture points on the skin," he said. "But now we have upgraded the formula so that blisters will be reduced while the effects in stimulating acupuncture points are strengthened."

Liu said that *sanfu* moxibustion is among a series of TCM approaches aimed at enhancing overall health to prepare for the cold season and protect against winter diseases. Components of the patch also vary based on an individual's health condition and local climates.

"But not all people are suitable. These treatments are recommended for people who tend to suffer asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic



Patients receive *sanfu* moxibustion patches at Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Monday. FANG FEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

obstructive pulmonary disease, allergic rhinitis and recurrent colds, as well as people who have cold hands and feet," he said.

This year's Chinese lunar calendar points to a longer-than-usual hot period that started on Monday and will last for 40 days.

The Beijing Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine said earlier this month that more than 800 medical institutions across the city are certified to deliver *sanfu* moxibustion services.

"The treatment mainly targets people with chronic respiratory illnesses or allergic rhinitis, as well as children, the elderly and those who feel lethargic, catch a cold or cough frequently," it said.

It added that there is a variety of moxibustion plasters, such as a phlegm-dispelling patch used for toddlers aged 2 and above and adults and a cough-relieving patch designed for those aged 4 and above.

It said that all biological products used for *sanfu* moxibustion therapies should be registered with local drug regulators.

"Medical institutions are forbidden from unreasonably expanding the target population suitable for receiving the treatment for the sake of economic benefits," it said.

Hospitals are also banned from using patches that do not contain TCM ingredients, such as infrared patches or magnetic therapy patches, as part of *sanfu* moxibustion treatment, it said.

Zhao Yingwen, a 61-year-old Beijing resident, received his first *sanfu* moxibustion patch on Monday.

"I heard that the therapy can help relieve allergic rhinitis," he said. "Now that I am retired and have some free time, I decided to give it a shot."

Zhao said that the doctor asked him about his illness and checked his tongue before issuing a prescription.

## 'Rocket street' project launched in Beijing

75 percent

of China's private rocket makers are located in the E-town of Beijing.

Beijing has launched a "rocket street" project, aiming to establish a national-level scientific research and production hub to support China's commercial space development.

The "Beijing Rocket Street" project will be located in Beijing E-town, an economic and technological development area in the southeast of the capital, with a total floor space of 140,000 square meters.

A common technological platform, a high-end manufacturing center and an innovation research and development center are some of the major facilities. It also plans to build an interactive exhibition hall for science and technology that will offer visitors immersive virtual reality experiences.

The local government anticipates that the project will assist rocket enterprises in exploring new technologies and expanding their application scenarios. Meanwhile, it has spearheaded a commercial space alliance, bringing together businesses, universities, institutions and cooperatives.

Beijing E-town hosts a cluster of over 70 aerospace companies including 75 percent of China's private rocket makers, covering various fields such as launch vehicles, satellite development, satellite applications, ground equipment, and technology applications.

Beijing E-town has gradually become one of the main battlegrounds for commercial space innovation, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts in China, according to its management committee.

The country's private commercial rocket enterprises, all headquartered in Beijing, carried out 13 space launches last year.

Since this year's Government Work Report highlighted the inclusion of the commercial space industry as a significant driver for new growth, many regions such as Shanghai, and the provinces of Hunan and Sichuan have also released development plans to boost the industry.

China's commercial space market has experienced rapid growth since 2015, with an average annual increase of over 20 percent since 2017. This year, the country's commercial space market is expected to be worth 2.34 trillion yuan (\$322 billion).

XINHUA

## CHINA



Lake Sarez in eastern Tajikistan is located in the seismically active zone of the Pamir Plateau.  
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# Beidou helping Tajikistan prep for temblors

Navigation system used to monitor dam at lake in quake-prone zone

By YAN DONGJIE

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Along with providing stable navigation services worldwide, the Beidou global satellite navigation system developed by China has been monitoring the deformation of Lake Sarez in the seismically active zone of the Pamir Plateau in eastern Tajikistan for nearly three years, predicting potential earthquakes.

"Forty donkeys, 10 scientists and 30 others spent 10 days transporting the necessary equipment up to the dam at the lake. Finally, over the beautiful lake, we received signals from China's Beidou Navigation Satellite System," said Tu Rui, dean of the College of Geodesy and Geomatics at the Shandong University of Science and Technology.

The monitoring system started operating in October 2021, and since its expansion the following year, the Beidou monitoring network at Sarez has been consistently monitoring millimeter-level deformations on the dam and providing data.

"After more than two years of observation, we have noticed a certain degree of deformation in the dam. As the region has entered a dangerous period for the outbreak of a new round of major earthquakes predicted by seismologists, this real-time monitoring and analysis data are of great significance."



From left: Members of the Chinese-Tajik scientific team climb to the Lake Sarez area in 2021. A monitoring tower on the bank of the lake collects data on deformations on the dam.

said Tu, the project leader and a former researcher at the National Time Service Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Sarez is a natural barrier lake that was formed by a landslide after a strong earthquake in 1911. On its northwest side, the Usoi Dam, with a height of 567 meters, was also formed due to a landslide, making it the world's tallest natural dam.

Over the past century, concerns about a potential disaster at Lake Sarez have been growing among Central Asian countries. The Pamir Plateau is in a seismically active zone, and in recent years, incidents of rockfalls on the shores of the lake have occurred due to earthquakes and other factors. So far, no major disaster has occurred.

Currently, there is a 2,000-meter-long structural crack along the right

bank of the lake, following the Muzkol mountain range. If the mountain collapses, it could cause flooding, rapidly devastating villages within hundreds of square kilometers, submerging crops and vegetation, according to Wang Weisheng, an expert who also participated in the project.

In 2021, the CAS Research Center of Ecology and Environment of Central Asia organized a joint effort with the CAS National Time Service Center and the CAS Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography to bring domestic technology and analytical methods to Tajikistan. They used Beidou technology to monitor deformations in the Lake Sarez dam.

Tu said that in the initial stages of the project, there was no electricity, roads, or internet connectivity around the lake, and the



Chinese-Tajik scientific team had to work step by step to resolve these problems.

In early April 2021, the CAS Research Center of Ecology and Environment of Central Asia organized a technical team to construct a simulation system and conduct tests at the Fukang Desert Ecosystem National Field Scientific Observation and Research Station in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. They conducted tests simulating special scenarios such as prolonged power outages and the loss of communication links, repeatedly analyzing reasons for any issues and updating the software and hardware, Wang said.

"In terms of equipment, we focused on lightweight and low-energy consumption to adapt to the

extreme local environment," Tu said.

To address the power supply issue, the research team capitalized on the strong sunlight on the plateau for photovoltaic power generation, storing the energy in batteries to ensure continuous power supply that could persist in cloudy, rainy, or snowy weather for as long as three months.

The team also built a local network on the dam, enabling data exchange within the devices. Through a satellite communication platform, aggregated data was transmitted via satellite to the Dushanbe subcenter of the Research Center for Ecology and Environment of Central Asia of the CAS, as well as Tajik emergency departments. The subcenter then conducted a comprehensive analysis of the deformation data, achieving real-

time reporting of deformation warnings, Wang said.

"In fact, the technological breakthrough did not happen overnight this year. It was a concentrated effort of our accumulated technology over the past decades," Tu said.

In 2019, the first China-Central Asia Beidou Cooperation Forum was held, laying the foundation for satellite navigation cooperation between China and Central Asia, Tu said.

Apart from disaster prevention, the Beidou system has also been integrated into transportation, public safety and weather forecasting in the Central Asian region.

"From the Silk Road in history to the Belt and Road Initiative, China has established a solid foundation of trust with Central Asian countries, and cooperation in economics, technology, culture and security continues to deepen," Tu said. "The extensive application of the Beidou system will undoubtedly further facilitate the deepening development of this cooperation."

Against this backdrop, the joint Chinese-Tajik team conducted research on the development of integrated data collection equipment and networking communication strategies in complex environments, as well as research on high-precision positioning data processing and deformation analysis techniques using Beidou technology.

The team ultimately established a Beidou deformation monitoring system suitable for specific conditions at Lake Sarez, achieving high-precision deformation monitoring of the Usoi Dam and international disaster reduction cooperation.

## Islanders work to protect sea turtles

HAIKOU — Huang Cheng's patrol was an ordinary one, until he came across a sea turtle crawling on the beach and its nest. He was so excited by the discovery that he took a video and sent it to his father. "Look dad! The first mother sea turtle of this year has come ashore on Beidao Island and laid eggs," he said.

Huang, 42, is the director of the residents' committee of Beidao residential community of Sansha city on the island province of Hainan. His father, Huang Hongbo, has been protecting sea turtles for more than five decades.

At age 15, the junior Huang started following in his father's footsteps and has been assisting with sea turtle protection on the island.

"Perhaps my father saw her off through the waves when she was just a baby turtle, and now that she has returned as a mother, it's my turn to welcome her home," he said.

In fact, a sea turtle's life journey is fraught with danger.

According to Huang, out of every 1,000 sea turtle hatchlings that swim into the ocean, only one will make it to adulthood. Despite traveling thousands of miles, turtles that survive still return to their nesting grounds to breed, relying on Earth's magnetic field to guide them.

Statistics show that over the past seven years, 637 sea turtle nests with eggs have been found on Beidao, which is part of the Xisha Islands. The Beidao nests account for 37 percent of the total discovered on the islands.

The Xisha Islands are an important habitat for green sea turtles. In China, 90 percent of its sea turtle population resides in the South China Sea, and more than 80 percent are green sea turtles. Beidao is considered to be the largest green



A conservationist releases a green sea turtle on Yongxing Island in the Xisha Islands, Hainan province. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

“With the support and help of the local government, we have conducted research on 11 islands and reefs in the Xisha Islands.”

Zhang Ting, a sea turtle researcher from Hainan Normal University

sea turtle nesting ground in China.

Since the 1980s, due to factors such as long-term overfishing, illegal trade, marine pollution and climate change, the number of sea turtles and their habitats have declined worldwide. All sea turtles have been listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix I.

In February 2021, China's revised national list of key protected wild animals included five species of sea turtles as national Class-A key protected wild animals.

For decades, many local people like the Huang family have endeavored to protect sea turtles.

In addition to the daily maintenance of island facilities and dealing with community work, they perform tasks such as patrolling the islands and reefs, planting trees, cleaning sea garbage and feeding rescued turtles.

Zhang Ting is a sea turtle researcher from Hainan Normal University who is considered by the fishermen on the island to be one of the "local experts" on sea turtles.

"I follow the sea turtles every day to learn about their living habits and to see them lay eggs," she said.

The various experiences shared by "experts" like herself have enriched her knowledge about sea turtles.

One of the other "local experts" is the elder Huang. Zhang still remembers how he would carefully prepare food each day to feed baby sea turtles in poor health.

"Every day, he carried seawater to clean the rescued turtles, changed the water in the pool and gave them medicine," she recalled.

Zhang brought special medicines to the island to treat ailing turtles. She also taught local fishermen scientific methods they could use to rescue and protect the reptiles, and how to avoid injuring them as they fish.

In 2021, the Beidao sea turtle protection center was established. Scientific research teams from Xiamen University, Sun Yat-sen University, Hainan Normal University and the South China Sea Fisheries Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences have set up laboratories or research bases on the island, where experts have conducted research on the status of the green sea turtle population, sea turtle ecology and conservation biology.

"With the support and help of the local government, we have conducted research on 11 islands and reefs in the Xisha Islands," Zhang said. "We have comprehensively surveyed the survival situation of sea turtles and obtained a lot of precious data and samples."

Over the past few years, Sansha has gradually established a scientific system for sea turtle protection, and has formulated and issued several protection plans and regulations. Authorities have implemented a 24-hour monitoring and protection mechanism for sea turtles that come ashore to lay eggs. According to official figures, after years of protection and ecological restoration, 1,734 nests with green sea turtle eggs were found in Xisha Islands from 2017 to last year.

XINHUA

## Homegrown robot helps increase corn yields

By LI PEIXUAN in Beijing and MAO WEIHUA in Urumqi

The first domestic intelligent robot developed to detassel corn recently began operating at a demonstration base in Changji city, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Detasseling is the act of removing pollen-producing flowers, or the tassels, from the tops of corn plants and putting them on the ground. This controlled form of pollination creates hybrid corn, whose yields are much higher than that of corn cultivated by other normal pollination methods.

Equipped with the Beidou navigation system, high-precision laser radar and image recognition technology, the new robot detassels corn autonomously with excellent precision.

Its efficiency is 10 to 15 times higher than traditional manual detasseling methods, significantly reducing work time and enhancing seed quality.

Luo Shixu, vice-president of Joinhope Seed Co, which administers the demonstration base, explained that in corn seed production, detasseling can effectively reduce the nutrient consumption of corn plants. This allows nutrients to be concentrated towards the ears, thereby increasing corn seed production and improving seed quality.

The robot, which was developed by the Xinjiang Jiuyu Technology Co, can detassel as much as 0.7 of a hectare of corn per hour, according to Luo. A person working manually could detassel less than 0.067 of a hectare of corn per hour, and

the labor costs are higher.

Moreover, the robot examines leaf and ear positions to determine the probing distance, extracting corn tassels without blind spots and adapting to plant heights ranging from 1.5 meters to 2.3 meters. The average detasseling rate is above 85 percent, reaching over 90 percent at its peak, Luo said.

The robot is electrically powered, which allows its arms to be adjusted more precisely compared to traditional hydraulic systems, resulting in lower leaf damage and failure rates, Luo stated.

The price of the robot and its components, as well as its maintenance costs, are much lower than that of traditional detasseling machines, said Ma Bo, general manager of Xinjiang Jiuyu, adding that it has entered mass production.

During operation, the robot consumes only 6 kWh per hectare, equivalent to about 3 yuan (\$0.41) for electricity. It has a battery life of up to 2,000 cycles.

Wang Yuxi, chief expert of the National Agricultural Technology Extension Service Center, said, "Replacing traditional manual detasseling with mechanical methods can help realize full-cycle mechanized seed production, minimize damage to corn plants, maximize labor productivity, seed yield and quality, and make the production more scientific and efficient."

"This is of great significance for promoting high-quality development in the seed industry."

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## WORLD

## Oli heads new Nepal coalition government

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong  
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As KP Sharma Oli, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), or CPN-UML, was sworn in to head a new coalition government on Monday, experts said the incoming administration may offer the mountainous country the stability needed to boost development.

The nation's newly appointed prime minister also formed a 22-member cabinet. Nepali President Ram Chandra Paudel administered the oath of office to Oli, the two new deputy prime ministers and 19 ministers during a ceremony at the president's office in the capital of Kathmandu.

"The president has appointed CPN-UML chairperson Oli as the prime minister under Article 76 (2) of the Constitution," read a statement issued by the President's Office after he was appointed by Paudel on July 14, following the collapse of the previous coalition government.

Prakash Man Singh of the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML's Bishnu Prasad Paudel have been inducted as deputy prime ministers who will also head the Ministry of Urban Development and the Finance Ministry, respectively. Arzu Rana Deuba, wife of Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepali Congress party President and former prime minister, becomes the foreign minister.

The 25-member cabinet is short of three state ministers. Several local media sources said Oli is expected to further expand the cabinet with members from the coalition's partner parties.

The CPN-UML joined hands with the main opposition Nepali Congress (NC) to command a majority in the lower house. The two parties are expected to rotate leadership until the next general election scheduled for 2027, according to The Kathmandu Post.

Oli becomes the head of a four-party coalition government under a deal reached with the Nepali Congress party on the night of July 1.

Prem Raj Joshi, chairman of the BP Koirala School of Public Policy, a leading think tank in Nepal, told China Daily that the country can expect a stable government, which can boost development.

## Comfortable majority

Joshi said that is because the coalition is being formed by two big parties, which means they have a comfortable parliamentary majority.

According to Joshi, the major economic challenge facing this government is building the confidence of local businesses.

He said that trade has increased as a business sector in Nepal but manufacturing has not made significant progress over the years.

"For service industries like tourism, there needs to be proper infrastructure development for connectivity as well," Joshi said.

Oli has become prime minister for the fourth time in a decade. He was first appointed prime minister in October 2015 and served until August 2016. He returned to the office from February 2018 to May 2021 and again from May 2021 to July 2021.

Xinhua contributed to the story.



KP Sharma Oli (center), chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), meets his supporters after being appointed as prime minister in Kathmandu on Sunday. NIRANJAN SHRESTHA / AP

## Project boosting high quality BRI cooperation

CAIRO — Located some 50 kilometers south of the Suez Canal, the China-Egypt TEDA Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, or TEDA, has given a once barren desert a fresh look, emerging as a flagship project connecting China's Belt and Road Initiative and Egypt's Suez Canal Corridor.

Built in 2008, the cooperation zone has attracted more than 160 companies spanning a range of sectors including new building materials, petroleum equipment, high and low-voltage gear and machinery manufacturing, creating jobs for more than 70,000 locals.

"Since the beginning of this year, up to 60 business delegations have visited TEDA," said Wei Jianqing, deputy general manager of China-Africa TEDA Investment, the developer of the cooperation zone.

With the advancement of the joint construction of the BRI, more and more Chinese manufacturing enterprises are going overseas and the cooperation zone provides a platform for these enterprises to invest and expand their businesses, he added.

"In the first half of this year, the commercial sector of TEDA has ushered in a number of major projects, and the momentum of investment is encouraging," Xu Qifeng, executive director of Egypt-TEDA Investment Company, which is responsible for the operation of the zone, told Xinhua.

In late March, China's Xinxing Ductile Iron Pipes signed a land lease contract with TEDA, bringing in a project that produces 250,000 metric tons of ductile iron pipe annually, said Ma Ye, head of the Egypt project of Xinxing Ductile Iron Pipes.

With an investment of approximately \$145 million, the project is expected to generate nearly \$200 million in foreign exchange earnings for Egypt annually and create more than 500 job opportunities for locals, Ma added.

"The successful landing of the project is significant to promote the industrialization of Egypt and further strengthen the regional economy, promote industrial restructuring and accelerate the industrialization process," Waleid Gamal El-Dein, chairman for the General Authority of Suez Canal Economic Zone, said at the groundbreaking ceremony of the project's plant.

## Strong desire

"Egypt has a strong desire for new energy, new materials and environmental protection industries," said Qu Defu, chairman of TEDA Investment Holdings.

TEDA has cultivated many local talented workers for Egypt during its development.

The company provides practical training and opportunities to study in China in order to improve the competencies of local employees and management, said Ahmed Radwan, who joined TEDA in 2008.

While helping enterprises in TEDA to increase production, the cooperation zone has also diversified its services and consultancy offerings, sharing the successful practices of China's economic and trade zones with other firms and industrial parks, Xu said, adding that TEDA aims to inject more impetus into high-quality BRI cooperation.

XINHUA



A boy stands amid the rubble following an Israeli military bombardment of a shelter in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday. OMAR ASHTAWY / POLARIS

# Hamas says cease-fire talks haven't paused

Truce negotiations continue as Israeli leader reiterates conditions over Gaza

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong  
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Palestinian militant group Hamas has dismissed reports that it has withdrawn from Gaza cease-fire negotiations amid continued Israeli attacks, which killed about 90 civilians in strikes over the weekend, with the excuse it is targeting Hamas military commanders.

Meanwhile, families of Israeli hostages have slammed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for putting the progress of truce talks at risk, following the massive strike that was directed at the Al-Mawasi area near Khan Younis in southern Gaza on Saturday.

Israel and Hamas have been trying to reach a cease-fire deal for months through mediators Egypt, Qatar and the United States. The parties reconvened in Doha and Cairo last week.

Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said in a statement on Sunday that reports of a decision to stop negotiations in response to the Al-Mawasi massacre were "baseless", accusing the Netanyahu government of "trying to obstruct reaching an agreement to stop the aggression on Gaza".

The Times of Israel reported that thousands of people rallied outside Netanyahu's office in Jerusalem on Saturday, calling for a hostage deal. Einav Zangauker, mother of 24-year-old hostage Matan Zangauker, accused Netanyahu of "time after time, trying to separate me from Matan".

Netanyahu's office released a statement on Saturday reiterating the

prime minister's conditions before halting the fighting with Hamas.

"Victory will be achieved when we eliminate the military and governing capabilities of Hamas, bring all of our hostages back home, ensure that Gaza will never again constitute a threat to Israel, and return our residents in the south and the north securely to their homes," Netanyahu said.

He appealed to the families of the hostages for their patience and understanding, while acknowledging their "suffering".

The Israel Defense Forces confirmed in a post on X that Rafia'a Salameh, whom they said was one of the masterminds of the Oct 7 attack against Israel, has been "eliminated". It was also reported that 90 Palestinians were killed and 300 others were wounded in the process.

Among the casualties initially reported were Mohammed Deif, commander of Hamas' military wing, and Salameh, commander of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade. Both were said to have been the target of the strikes. But a Hamas official insisted that Deif was "fine".

## Shocked by loss

Following the deadly weekend strikes, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Saturday that Guterres was "shocked and saddened by the loss of lives".

Dujarric noted reports that the attack had taken place in a densely populated area "designated as a humanitarian zone sheltering displaced people", underscoring there

was nowhere safe in Gaza.

Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council, denounced in a statement "the brutal bombardment by the Israeli occupation forces on the Al-Mawasi area", stressing that this shelling is "evidence of the series of systematic and ongoing Israeli crimes against the brotherly Palestinian people".

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation said the "massacre" on Saturday was "a continuation of the crime of genocide the Israeli occupation has been carrying out against Palestinian civilians in flagrant defiance of the UN resolutions and the injunctions of the International Court of Justice". It renewed calls on the UN Security Council and the international community to assume their responsibility toward ending the nine-month conflict.

"The war has reached a point where there is a universal desire for peace. ... Mediation efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States have thus far failed to secure an agreement for the release of hostages," Arhama Siddiq, a research fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in Pakistan, told China Daily.

She said Netanyahu's recent call for Israel to retain control along the Gaza-Egypt border, in the belief that Hamas is weakening, "is seen as an irresponsible move likely to squander a potentially unrepeatable opportunity for peace".

"Such tactics are viewed as diversionary efforts to stall the peace process and force Hamas into submission, allowing Netanyahu to save face and possibly retain some semblance of political clout," Siddiq said.

# Agreement raises peace prospects in Colombia

By JIMENA ESTEBAN  
in Buenos Aires

For China Daily

In another step forward to realizing Colombian President Gustavo Petro's plan for "total peace", Segunda Marquetalia, one of the country's main armed groups, has agreed to a unilateral cease-fire during peace talks in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas.

The group, one of the largest factions within the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and headed by Ivan Marquez, agreed to a cease-fire, de-escalate military operations and return hostages during talks that included Otty Patino, Colombia's high commissioner for peace; Armando Novoa, the government's chief negotiator; and Marquez.

The group broke out with the FARC after rejecting a 2016 truce agreement. It is one of several armed factions that Petro's administration is engaging as it seeks to end armed conflict in Colombia.

The government is in peace talks with multiple guerrilla groups, but negotiations have sputtered at times. The deal with Segunda Marquetalia could give momentum to an ongoing effort to de-escalate conflict in territories such as Catatumbo, and parts of Antioquia, where FARC offshoots have resurged, said Carlos Medina Gallego, a political analyst and professor at the National University of Colombia.

"In general, there are expectations with (Segunda Marquetalia), but the route is entirely different from what could be followed with the Central General Staff, an organization facing significant problems in maintaining the peace process, or with the National Liberation Army (ELN), which is experiencing a crisis due to the organization's decision to create a state of stagnation in the (peace) process," Gallego said.

Segunda Marquetalia may have been most prone to agree to a deal because it is seen as one of the weakest of the various active groups, Colombian Senator Ariel Avila said.

While the agreement announced on June 30 is a positive development, hurdles remain in completing the peace negotiations with Segunda Marquetalia, not least in terms of securing legal assurances.

"Legally, the path is very difficult because Ivan Marquez signed the 2016 peace agreement with the extinct FARC, and all of them have problems receiving legal benefits," Avila said.

Negotiations are ongoing, with one cycle of talks held so far, said Avila. Ultimately, however, a final deal may not go beyond that achieved with the FARC eight years ago.

More talks are already scheduled, including a planned meeting in Tumaco, Colombia, on July 20 to present the deal. Gallego suggested that during that meeting, contacts could be established between the group and the government.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

# Voting begins in Rwanda to elect president

By EDITH MUTETHYA  
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Rwandans across the country and the diaspora turned up on Monday to cast their votes in a presidential election that is expected to extend Paul Kagame's 24-year governance.

Kagame, 67, is facing two contenders in the presidential race — Frank Habineza, 47, chairman of the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda, and Philippe Mpayimana, 54, independent candidate and a journalist by profession.

Many Rwandans said they would vote for Kagame, calling him a transformative leader who has steered Rwanda's economy to growth after the 1994 genocide that left the country in ruins. Rwanda is currently one of the fastest-growing countries in Africa.

According to the World Bank, Rwanda's economy is projected to grow by an average of 7.2 percent in 2024-26.

Kagame has been enjoying wide



A voter casts her ballot at a polling station in Kigali on Monday during Rwanda's presidential and parliamentary elections. GUILLEM SARTORIO / AFP

support since he took power in 2000. He won nearly 99 percent of the votes in the previous election in 2017.

Ismael Buchanan, dean of the College of Business and Economics at the University of Rwanda, expressed confidence that Kagame will be reelected.

He said Kagame's popularity among the Rwandans is largely due

to the fact that he is seen by many as a hero who united Rwandans following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and is a champion worldwide on matters such as gender equality.

Buchanan said Kagame's expected reelection is a signal of further stability not only in Rwanda, but also for neighboring countries.

"Kagame campaigned on a promise to sustain inclusive development, security and change people's livelihoods for the better without leaving anyone behind," he said.

Buchanan also said Kagame has a track record of transforming the country into a regional financial hub. Additionally, Rwanda has been recognized as one of the cleanest countries not only in Africa, but also globally with a stable economy.

"The Rwandans want to continue enjoying security, political stability, unity and economic development, which are the core issues concerning Rwandans," Buchanan said.

He said Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front party enjoys the support of major opposition groups that formed a coalition to support his candidacy, hence an assurance that he will be reelected.

The United States and several Western countries have accused Rwanda of human rights abuses.

However, Buchanan disputed the claims saying that those who are accusing Kagame should present concrete and tangible facts, adding that the accusers' motives may undermine what Rwandans have achieved through spreading disinformation.

## WORLDUS

## Trump chooses Vance as running mate

By AIHEPING in New York  
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Former US president Donald Trump announced Monday that he has chosen Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio as his running mate.

Trump made the announcement on Truth Social as delegates were formally voting to name him the GOP presidential nominee in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the four-day Republican National Convention started on Monday.

"After lengthy deliberation and thought, and considering the tremendous talents of many others, I have decided that the person best suited to assume the position of vice-president of the United States is Senator J.D. Vance of the Great State of Ohio," Trump wrote.

In the post, Trump pointed to Vance's potential appeal to voters in the Midwest.

"J.D. has had a very successful business career in Technology and Finance, and now, during the campaign, will be strongly focused on the people he fought so brilliantly for, the American workers and farmers in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, and far beyond," Trump wrote in his post.

Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania helped propel US President Joe Biden to victory in 2020.

Vance, who will turn 40 (Trump is 78, Biden 81) in August, was once a strong critic of Trump. In 2016, he suggested Trump could be "America's Hitler".

But as he began his 2022 Senate run, Vance deleted critical comments about Trump, said he was wrong, and credited Trump for the work he did in office as president. Trump then endorsed him in the Republican US Senate primary in Ohio.

Vance has been one of Trump's most vocal supporters, appearing outside the New York City courthouse during Trump's criminal trial this year and on cable TV.

Biden posted a fundraising appeal on social media about the Vance selection, saying that the Ohio senator "talks a big game about working people" but wants to raise taxes on the middle class while cutting them for the rich. "Protect democracy. Defeat Trump-Vance," it says.

The convention started just two days after Trump narrowly survived an assassination attempt during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. Trump was struck by a bullet in the ear, and one attendee died after being shot



Republican vice-presidential candidate, Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, is introduced during the first day of the Republican National Convention on Monday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE / AP

by the gunman, who was killed by Secret Service snipers.

There were widespread calls for unity from Republicans and Democrats after the assassination attempt.

Two hours after shots were fired during the rally, Vance wrote on X that he believed the Biden campaign's rhetoric directly contributed to the shooting attempt.

"Today is not just some isolated incident," Vance wrote. "The central premise of the Biden campaign is that president Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs. That rhetoric led directly to president Trump's attempted assassination."

Vance is an investor, venture capitalist and best-selling author of his 2016 memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, in which he chronicled growing up in a family beset by drug addiction and poverty.

Vance was born in Middleton, Ohio. He served in the US Marine Corps for four years, including a six-month deployment to Iraq, before studying political science and philosophy at Ohio State University and going on to graduate from Yale Law School. He went on to work at a large

corporate law firm and then as a principal at an investment firm in San Francisco.

Vance and his wife, Usha Chilkuri Vance, have three children. His wife is the daughter of Indian immigrants and grew up in the San Francisco area. They met as students at Yale Law School and got married in 2014, one year after they graduated. She also has a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Cambridge.

She was a corporate litigator at a San Francisco law firm and has clerked for Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, and Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh when he was an appeals court judge.

J.D. Vance was elected to the Senate in 2022 after defeating former Democratic representative Tim Ryan for an open seat in Ohio.

Vance has opposed US aid to Ukraine and opposes abortion, saying the government should find ways to encourage people to have children.

Vance changed how he discussed abortion after Ohio and other states voted in favor of abortion access last year. In a December CNN interview, he said Republicans must "accept that people do not want blanket

abortion bans". He recently said that he supports access to the abortion drug mifepristone.

In the Senate, Vance has pushed both bipartisan and conservative legislation. He introduced a rail safety bill with Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown, Ohio's senior senator, after the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. Vance also worked with Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts on legislation to hold executives accountable for failed banks.

Vance's other bills reflect conservative views. He introduced legislation to ban gender-affirming care for minors and a bill to eliminate government diversity programs.

Before the V-P announcement, Trump learned that a judge had thrown out a federal classified documents case filed against him by special counsel Jack Smith.

A federal judge in Florida dismissed the case, siding with defense lawyers who said the special counsel who filed the charges was illegally appointed by the Justice Department.

Hours later, Smith's office said it would appeal the order.

Agencies contributed to this story.

## Mayorkas calls security at Trump rally 'a failure'

By HENGWEILI in New York  
hengweili@chinadailyusa.com

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Monday that a gunman — one of whose volley of shots hit former US President Donald Trump in the ear — never should have reached his rooftop position.

"We are speaking of a failure," Mayorkas told CNN. "We are going to analyze through an independent review how that occurred, why it occurred, and make recommendations and findings to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Mayorkas said that he still has "full confidence" in Secret Service's leadership.

The top of Trump's right ear was torn by a bullet in the shooting at a rally Saturday in Butler, Pennsylvania, in which one of his supporters was killed and two others wounded before Secret Service agents shot dead the 20-year-old suspect, Thomas Crooks.

Trump had turned his head slightly clockwise to look at a chart just before the bullet struck, which likely saved his life.

At the rally, police had received a report of a suspicious man pacing near magnetometers. Witnesses pointed and shouted at an armed man on a nearby roof.

When a Butler Township police officer climbed up to the roof to investigate, the gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him. But the officer did not — or could not — fire a single shot.

Investigators are trying to determine how an armed man with no military background managed to reach high ground and get the jump on Secret Service agents.

At least a dozen police officers and sheriff's deputies were assisting the Secret Service and Pennsylvania State Police with rally security.

The Butler Township officer was hoisted by another officer so he

could grab the edge of the roof, local officials said.

The officer dropped back down to safety when the gunman turned and pointed his rifle at him, according to Butler County Sheriff Michael Slupe.

Slupe, who did not witness the encounter, said the officer could not have wielded his own gun under the circumstances.

"I think all law enforcement on site did everything that they could, especially the local law enforcement," Slupe told The Associated Press on Monday. "I hope they're not made a scapegoat, because they did their job to the best of their abilities."

Butler Township Manager Tom Knights said the officer lost his grip and was not retreating when he fell 8 feet to the ground.

"He was literally dangling from the edge of a building and took the defensive position he needed to at that time. He couldn't hold himself up," Knights said.

The officer, who was not identified, severely injured an ankle in the fall, Knights said.

A former fire chief, 50-year-old Corey Comperatore, was killed in the shooting. A GoFundMe campaign for the man's family has raised more than \$1 million.

A law enforcement official told AP on condition of anonymity that investigators believe Crooks purchased 50 rounds of ammunition on the day of the shooting.

Authorities said they believe the gunman's AR-style rifle was purchased by his father.

Kevin Rojek, FBI special agent in charge in Pittsburgh, said investigators do not yet know if Crooks took the gun without his father's permission.

The FBI believes Crooks, who had bomb-making materials in the car he drove to the rally, acted alone.

The roof where Crooks lay was less than 150 meters (164 yards) from where Trump was speaking, a

distance from which a decent marksman could reasonably hit a human-sized target. That is a distance at which US Army recruits must hit a scaled human-sized silhouette to qualify with the M-16 rifle.

The FBI said on Monday it had gained access to Crooks' phone as it searched for a motive.

"FBI technical specialists successfully gained access to Thomas Matthew Crooks' phone, and they continue to analyze his electronic devices," the bureau said in a statement. "The search of the subject's residence and vehicle are complete."

The AR-style 556 rifle used by the shooter was legally purchased by his father and officials said there was no indication that the suspect suffered from any mental health issues.

They added that a preliminary review of Crooks' calls and texts did not shed any light on his motive.

In the aftermath of the shooting, President Joe Biden directed the Secret Service to protect independent presidential Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Mayorkas said Monday.

Kennedy's campaign has been urging the president to provide him with the protection for months and has sent multiple requests.

Kennedy's uncle, President John F. Kennedy, and his father, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, were both assassinated less than five years apart in the 1960s.

On Monday, Trump urged the government to provide the Secret Service detail to Kennedy, who had repeatedly been denied the protection.

"Given the history of the Kennedy Family, this is the obvious right thing to do!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

"Thank you, President Biden, for extending me Secret Service protection," Kennedy said in a statement.

In October, a man was arrested after trespassing twice in one day

at Kennedy's Los Angeles home, and a month earlier, an armed man accused of impersonating a federal officer was taken into custody outside a Kennedy campaign event.

Kennedy also thanked his private security firm, Gavin de Becker & Associates, "for keeping me safe for the past 15 months of my presidential campaign."

Though Kennedy is a long shot to win Electoral College votes, much less the presidency, his campaign events have drawn large crowds of people interested in his message.

Amid calls for a toning down of political rhetoric in the US, Biden said in an interview Monday that it was "a mistake" to say that he wanted to put Trump back in "a bullseye", but also stood by his depictions that the former president is "a threat to democracy".

"How do you talk about the threat to democracy, which is real, when a president says things like he says?" Biden said to NBC's Lester Holt in an excerpt from the interview.

"Do you just not say anything because it may incite somebody?" he said.

"He talks about there'll be a blood bath if he loses," Biden said. Trump has maintained that he was referring to the economy.

Just last week, Biden faced intense scrutiny and calls for him to step aside as the Democratic candidate from within his own party. The pressure began following Biden's listless performance in a debate against Trump on June 27.

But Biden has dismissed the uproar and has vociferously maintained that he would continue as the candidate. Saturday's shooting has refocused media coverage.

Ai Heping in New York and agencies contributed to this story.

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## PBS sparks outrage over shelving of film

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
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Krista Chan, a San Francisco Bay Area resident, often contemplated the striking contrast between the region's affluence and the persistence of homelessness. That led her to seek answers in the documentary *Voices from the Frontline: China's War on Poverty*, now a focal point in a censorship controversy.

"How can we learn from what they did?" Chan asked. "After watching this documentary, I can tell you it took a lot of innovative business models, anti-corruption efforts, planned relocation, and incredible sacrifice and hard work on the part of the Chinese people."

Produced by PBS in 2019, the film, a collaboration between investment banker and China expert Robert Kuhn and Emmy-winning director Peter Getzels, documented China's methods to lift 800 million people out of extreme poverty in the past 40 years.

The film crew traversed China, engaging with locals for in-depth discussions and exploring bottom-up poverty-alleviation programs that played a crucial role in eradicating poverty for the final 100 million people impoverished.

However, after its initial release, the documentary faced harsh criticism from anti-China politicians, who accused it of portraying China in an overly positive light. Their pressure led to PBS taking down the film after a single showing.

PBS didn't respond to a request for comment from China Daily.

"I have seen this documentary and also traveled to China since I was a young child, witnessing firsthand how China has modernized and uplifted the poorest," said Chan, a volunteer with the "China is not our enemy" campaign of the anti-war group CodePink.

She cited the World Bank's 2022 report, which revealed that China contributed "close to three quarters of the global reduction" in extreme poverty over the past 40 years. "That's pretty incredible," she added.

One of the key takeaways for Chan from the film was the unwavering political will demonstrated by the Chinese government.

From young cadre in small villages to Chinese President Xi Jinping himself, "this has been their priority — to dedicate themselves to serving people through poverty alleviation," she explained. "Maybe that's the little secret PBS doesn't want us to know. They don't want us to know that China is working hard to meet people's needs while Americans grapple with student debt and a soaring cost of living."

The censorship of the documentary has sparked growing concern among peace and human rights activists. CodePink has been actively raising awareness of the film, hoping to

encourage broader discussion among Americans.

The group stressed that the documentary provides not only insights into successful poverty alleviation but also a deeper understanding of China, a country often demonized in the public eye in the US.

"Censoring the documentary only serves those wanting to escalate divisions between the US and China," warned CodePink on its website. "By censoring *Voices from the Frontline: China's War on Poverty*, they also deprive the public of the opportunity to learn about poverty-alleviation policies that have changed millions of lives. Right now, amidst an increasingly dangerous climate crisis and high poverty rates, we need understanding and cooperation instead of censorship and fear."

The organization encourages the public to contact it for access to the full film. Last month, they delivered a petition with more than 5,800 signatures to PBS national headquarters in Virginia, demanding the release of the documentary. Similar petitions have been delivered to local PBS stations across the country, including in Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, New York, Maine and New Hampshire.

In San Francisco, peace groups, including CodePink, Pivot to Peace, ANSWER Coalition, and Veterans for Peace, rallied on Saturday in front of KQED, a PBS affiliate, demanding the airing of the documentary.

"People deserve to see the positive things that are going on in China," said CodePink San Francisco organizer Cynthia Papermaster at the rally. "PBS is supposed to be an educational broadcasting company. So, show the film and have discussion."

Richard Becker, West Coast coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition, noted that poverty, once a prominent topic in US presidential campaigns, has been sidelined.

"Maybe there's a fear of the elite that if they showed something about how this miraculous transformation has happened in China — alleviating poverty for 800 million people — that you might have to start talking about poverty in the United States," he said.

Julie Tang, a retired San Francisco Superior Court judge and co-founder of Pivot to Peace, recounted her own experience witnessing China's transformation. When she visited China 20 years ago, she saw people living in shabby houses next to mountains in a dangerous environment. "Today, those things are no more. We see beautiful houses lined up," she said.

"People are prevented from seeing the truth of what's happening in China. It is a shame because a documentary like this can help ameliorate a lot of the tensions that are going on in the US-China relationship right now," said Tang.



Activists from peace groups CodePink, Pivot to Peace, ANSWER Coalition, and Veterans for Peace, rally on Saturday in front of KQED, a PBS affiliate in San Francisco, demanding the airing of the documentary *Voices from the Frontline: China's War on Poverty*. LIA ZHU / CHINA DAILY

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## BUSINESS

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# Flexible H2 money policy foreseen

Despite weaker-than-expected Q2 data, hopes rise for cuts to rates, RRR

By ZHOU LANXU  
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China's monetary policy is likely to stay accommodative in the second half of the year as the latest economic and financial indicators point to the need for further policy support while growing expectations of US interest rate cuts create more room for easing, market analysts said on Monday.

They said there is quite a strong possibility of cuts to both loan interest rates and the reserve requirement ratio — the amount of deposits that banks must keep as reserve — in the rest of the year.

On Monday, China unveiled its first-half economic growth figure of 5 percent year-on-year, in line with the country's GDP growth target for the full year. However, the country's second-quarter GDP growth slowed to 4.7 percent, lower than expectations and down from 5.3 percent in the first quarter.

Financial data also pointed to tepid credit demand. The increment in aggregate social financing — the total amount of financing to the real economy — stood at 18.1 trillion yuan (\$2.49 trillion) in the first half, down by 3.45 trillion yuan compared with the same period last year, the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said on Friday.

"The issue of insufficient domestic demand turned prominent in the second quarter, as residential consumption and private investment performed anemically amid a continuous adjustment of the real estate sector," said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International.

"With that, policymakers are expected to intensify growth stabilization efforts in the second half, and there is room for cuts to both interest rates and the RRR," Wang said.

An improving external policy environment may also gradually expand the scope for cutting the policy benchmarks of interest rates, especially the rate of seven-day reverse repos (currently at 1.8 percent), said Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities.

The PBOC kept a policy benchmark of interest rates — the one-

year medium-term lending facility rate — unchanged at 2.5 percent on Monday. This followed the offshore renminbi plumping the 7.31 mark against the US dollar earlier this month as delayed US interest rate cuts kept the greenback strong.

The expectation of the US Federal Reserve cutting interest rates within the year has grown stronger after the US consumer price index for June increased slower than expected, Ming said. "The possibility of a reduction in loan prime rates deserves attention against this backdrop."

The loan prime rates are China's market-based lending rate benchmarks.

The one-year LPR has stayed unchanged since August at 3.45 percent and the over-five-year LPR stood at 3.95 percent for five consecutive months as of June.

The PBOC vowed at a meeting late last month that it will unleash the effectiveness of the LPR system and a market-based mechanism of deposit rate adjustments to reduce financing costs for enterprises and households, as part of its efforts to focus more on easing cyclical downward economic pressures.

Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, said factors that have kept the PBOC from cutting interest rates this year include commercial banks' low net interest margin, a strong US dollar and the central bank's intention to keep long-term government bond yields from dropping too fast.

"As some of the constraints abate, the possibility of cutting the interest rates and the RRR in the third quarter is rising," Lou said.

Lou further said that if the PBOC implements an interest rate cut, it can reduce the RRR at the same time to provide long-term low-cost funding to commercial banks, which will help ease their pressures of narrowing net interest rate margins — the difference between the interest income they earn and interest they pay.

Meanwhile, the new tool of overnight repos, which withdraws short-term liquidity from the banking system, can be used simultaneously to prevent an excessive supply of liquidity, he said.

# Beidou system set for large-scale applications

By MA SI  
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The Beidou Navigation Satellite System developed by China is poised to enter a critical phase of large-scale application, with plans of pilot projects unveiled for its wider use in areas such as consumer electronics and industrial manufacturing, experts said.

The comments came after the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China's top industry regulator, last week released a notice regarding the selection of pilot cities for the large-scale application of Beidou in the industrial and information technology sectors.

The goal is to foster new business forms, models and dynamics through innovative applications and research, creating exemplary pilot cities with advanced Beidou industries and significant application results that can influence nationwide development.

Stating that Beidou provides positioning, navigation and timing services, Hong Yong, an expert from the China Digital and Real Economy Integration 50 Forum, a Beijing-based think tank, emphasized the importance and timeliness of MIIT's move.

Government guidance and preferential policies can incentivize enterprise innovation, expedite the development of Beidou products and services, and enhance market competitiveness, Hong said.

According to MIIT, the pilot projects will focus on three areas: consumer applications, industrial manufacturing and integrated innovation.

In the consumer sector, pilot cities will prioritize the use of Beidou in smart devices, wearable technology, tablets, shared mobility and low-altitude drone applications, encouraging enterprises to develop and produce Beidou products and continuously improving product supply capabilities.



An autonomous-driving tractor pulls a wheat seeder in Zhangye, Gansu province, with the help of the Beidou Navigation Satellite System. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

In industrial manufacturing, the emphasis will be on promoting Beidou applications in automobiles, ships, aircraft and robots, leveraging regional characteristics and conditions to explore new industrial manufacturing scenarios powered by Beidou.

For integrated innovation, pilot cities will explore new industrial technology systems and application models, establishing innovative application platforms across various industries to foster "Beidou plus" integrated innovation applications.

Yuan Shuai, deputy secretary-general of the Z-Park Internet of Things Industry Alliance, highlighted the need for multiple measures to build a complete Beidou system industrial chain and promote high-quality, high-value development.

These include nurturing competitive enterprises, enhancing

product supply capabilities and technological levels, strengthening upstream and downstream industry chain collaboration, and driving technological and application innovations to create new economic forms and business models, Yuan said.

The total output value of China's satellite navigation and positioning services industry reached 536.2 billion yuan (\$73.8 billion) in 2023, up 7.09 percent year-on-year, according to a white paper published by the Global Navigation Satellite System and Location-Based Services Association of China, which goes by the abbreviation GLAC.

According to the white paper, the digital transformation and intelligent upgrade of various industries released demand for satellite navigation equipment and data, injecting vitality into the development of the Beidou information application

and service market.

Industry experts said they view the selection of pilot cities for Beidou's large-scale application as a significant milestone in China's development of the satellite navigation system.

This initiative will broaden the application of the Beidou system across various fields, and better contribute to China's economic and social development.

However, they also said there were challenges and opportunities ahead, and emphasized the need for collective and sustained efforts from all sections of society.

Greater efforts are needed to establish a comprehensive service support system for Beidou to demonstrate its value, said Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, a telecommunications industry association in China.

# Ordos uranium project seen boosting energy security

By ZHENG XIN  
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The construction of China's largest natural uranium production project in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, will further increase nuclear fuel supply while ensuring national energy security, said industry experts.

Developed by China National Nuclear Corp, the Ordos uranium project started construction recently. It is set to become a natural uranium production base with the highest standards, featuring green, economical, intelligent and efficient operations, according to the China Atomic Energy Authority.

Natural uranium is the material foundation for the development of China's nuclear industry and an important strategic resource and energy mineral for ensuring national security, the CAEA said.

Once completed, the project will further enhance China's capacity for natural uranium supply and improve the independent innovation capability of the natural uranium industry as well as its international competitiveness, it said.

Zhao Xiangbin, chief strategist at Beijing Gold and Forex Fortune Investment Management, said the project is strategic and will ensure sufficient supply of uranium and strengthen energy security.

By boosting domestic uranium production, China aims to reduce dependency on foreign sources while mitigating geopolitical risks, Zhao said.

The Ordos project will further support the expansion of the country's nuclear power sector while contributing to its long-term energy independence and sustainability, he said.

In the past few years, China has

been developing its nuclear power industry actively, safely and in an orderly way, which will create market demand for the natural uranium industry.

As a result, uranium exploration and development efficiency in China has significantly increased. The country's natural uranium industry has also come up with a complete industry chain in more than 60 years, covering geological exploration, mining, refining and processing. It has also established a natural uranium supply system that combines domestic development, overseas growth, international trade and strategic reserves.

According to the CAEA, the project will adopt an advanced mining process that employs carbon dioxide and oxygen leaching. Unlike traditional underground mining methods, the process can extract uranium through a closed-loop cir-

ulation of the uranium solution without lifting the ore to the surface for processing.

Through this approach, natural uranium production can achieve zero emissions of water, gas and solid wastes, promoting sustainable operations with low carbon emissions.

The project will integrate advanced technologies like automation, remote and centralized control and big data analysis to realize intelligent operation analysis and precision mining.

The advanced and sustainable technologies will not only help boost its uranium production capacity but also set a benchmark for environmentally responsible mining practices, it said.

Nuclear power generation on the Chinese mainland reached 440,000 gigawatt-hours last year, accounting for nearly 5 percent of the total national electricity output.

# Drone brings glad tidings to students

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou  
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An unmanned aerial drone with four college letters of acceptance in tow took flight from the South China University of Technology in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, around 11 am on Monday, a day marking the official airborne distribution of the first batch of such letters across the province.

Half an hour later, the letters arrived at a residential community in the city's Huangpu district and were immediately issued to upcoming freshmen, becoming the first such futuristic delivery across the province completed entirely by drones.

The innovative and efficient delivery method not only showcased technological innovation but also gave students a unique sense of anticipation as they prepare to dive headfirst into a world of innovation and learning. As the drone slowly descended, Wang Yunyi received the long-awaited acceptance letter.

"I never expected to receive my

college acceptance letter in this way, so it's both exciting and innovative," said Wang, a graduate of Yuyan Middle School in Huangpu.

The first batch of college acceptance letters delivered by drones was included in a list of typical cases of application scenarios for the low-altitude economy in Huangpu, which was announced during a news conference on Monday.

Authorities in the district also launched an opportunity list for low-altitude economy's applications in the province to comprehensively promote the growth and development of the booming sector.

By establishing a platform for application scenarios, local authorities aim to further increase the volume of such uses, aiming to drive the development of the low-altitude economy through innovation.

The list of typical cases constitutes the first batch of 16 promising application scenarios that have been put into use or are about to be used in the district, including production operations such as drone-based agricultural precision

seeding and pesticide spraying, blood sample rapid delivery for testing, urban aerial traffic operations and low-altitude electric vertical takeoff and landing flight experiences.

Typical cases on the list are all application scenarios that have already met the conditions for formalized operations, authorities said.

The opportunity list covers three major categories of application scenarios — production operations, public services and aviation consumption.

Specifically, the list includes a total of 55 specific application scenarios in fields including agriculture and forestry, surveying and mapping, meteorology, emergency response, firefighting, logistics, urban management, urban transportation and low-altitude cultural tourism.

"We will further strengthen coordination with civil aviation administration and other airspace management departments to guide the landing and operation of various low-altitude application scenarios



A drone helps deliver college letters of acceptance in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Monday. PARKER ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

and to systematically build a low-altitude ground take-off and landing point infrastructure network in the future," said Meng Lijuan, a researcher with the housing and urban-rural construction bureau of Huangpu.

Following the successful delivery of the first batch of college acceptance letters, express delivery companies said they will enable more new technologies and products in the low-altitude field to be applied

and promoted in the delivery business.

"We will explore incorporating low-altitude drones into the transportation system on top of the existing aviation, railway and road networks, aiming to create a comprehensive and three-dimensional transportation network," said Zou Liwen, general manager of the government and enterprise center of the Guangzhou Postal Administration

## Briefly

### PBOC adds liquidity via reverse repos, MLF

China's central bank injected liquidity into the banking system through reverse repos and a medium-term lending facility on Monday. The People's Bank of China conducted 129 billion yuan (\$18.1 billion) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent. A total of 100 billion yuan was also injected into the market via the MLF, which will mature in one year at an interest rate of 2.5 percent.

### China's natural gas output rises in H1

China's production of natural gas has maintained steady expansion in the first half, said the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday. The country produced 123.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas in the January-June period, up 6 percent from a year earlier. China's natural gas imports also posted fast growth during the period.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

# BUSINESS



Consumers browse products at a supermarket in Handan, Hebei province, on Wednesday. HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## More proactive monetary, fiscal policies seen as key

As domestic demand recovers, experts call for support to shore up momentum

By LIU ZIZHENG and OUYANG SHILIA

As domestic demand has been on a steady recovery track in the first half, experts said on Monday they expect more proactive fiscal and monetary policies to advance the balanced allocation of financial resources, and further help prices recover.

Their remarks came after the National Bureau of Statistics said on the same day that China's consumer price index, a main gauge of inflation, rose by 0.1 percent year-on-year in the first six months.

The NBS said the first-half core CPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices and is deemed a better gauge of the supply-demand relationship in the economy, expanded by 0.7 percent year-on-year.

Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said the gentle CPI recovery reflects the country's

“With more proactive fiscal policies to take effect, the issues will be better dealt with and thereby the PPI is expected to embrace further recovery in the second half.”

Zhou Maohua, researcher at China Everbright Bank

strengthening driving force of domestic consumption growth.

Zhou said both solid support from the supply side and stable pork prices have significantly boosted consumer confidence.

Li Peijia, a senior analyst at Bank of China, said China's growing CPI benefits from its large-scale equipment upgrades, consumer goods

trade-in policy and efforts to stabilize the real estate sector.

Li said insufficient domestic demand remains the major factor hindering price recovery and the country should further tap into the growth potential of consumption and investment, especially in rural areas.

Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said the supply-demand relationship in China is expected to be further improved in the current half, with enterprise inventories to be reduced and domestic demand to recover stably.

However, Zhou said the frequent extreme weather events and fluctuations in global energy and raw material prices could have an adverse impact on commodities, especially in the midstream and downstream sectors, thus lowering CPI growth.

Against such a backdrop, Zhou said further efforts are needed for the country to improve its infrastructure, increase production efficiency and strengthen the ability to promptly deal with unexpected events.

Meanwhile, the NBS said China's

first-half producer price index, which gauges factory-gate prices, dropped by 2.1 percent year-on-year, a decrease of 0.6 percentage point from the first quarter.

The PPI is closely associated with the profits of industrial enterprises, Zhou said, adding that the narrowing decline in China's PPI came as a result of its sound policy support, smooth domestic circulation and resilient foreign market demand.

The country's industrial sector has embarked on a path of recovery. The supply-demand relationship in the sector is getting increasingly balanced and the overall operating conditions of industrial enterprises have continued to improve, he said.

“There still exist some challenges in the sector, such as insufficient effective demand and the severe pressure faced by some companies in daily operations. With more proactive fiscal policies to take effect, the issues will be better dealt with and thereby the PPI is expected to embrace further recovery in the second half,” he added.

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## Changchun auto expo showcases 1,100 models

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

The 21st Changchun International Auto Expo kicked off on Saturday in Changchun, Jilin province, attracting around 1,100 vehicle models, including over 300 new energy varieties, from 124 domestic and foreign automakers.

During the 10-day event, major manufacturers such as China FAW, BMW and Mercedes-Benz boasted offerings with high specifications, with 85 percent of booths featuring international A-level vehicles.

The main exhibition area of the expo covered a total of 170,000 square meters and was divided into seven major zones, including independent and new energy brands, luxury brands and automotive service products.

Outdoor areas included special vehicle displays and interactive experience zones.

There were also two sub-venues, hosting events such as the automotive culture and car sports activities.

Hongqi, a sub-brand of China FAW Group, presented 17 products from its three major sub-brands at the expo, among which the Golden Sunflower brand made its debut in Changchun, showcasing top-tier Chinese luxury.

Combining Hongqi's top-notch craftsmanship and millennia of Chinese civilization, the Golden Sunflower brand has created several classic vehicles such as the ultra-luxury full-size SUV Guoyao, top-tier luxury flagship sedan Guoli and ultra-luxury executive sedan Guoya.

During the event, visitors can enjoy a direct discount subsidy of 3,000 yuan (\$413) when purchasing any Hongqi vehicle, further meeting consumers' pursuit of a better life, the company said.

“I have attended almost every auto expo in past years,” said local Zheng Daming. “My biggest takeaway is that the expo is constantly upgrading, which is not only reflected in the venue but also in the increasing cultural connotations. From classic car parades, RV exhibition areas, and Red Flag carnivals in previous expos to the night activities this year, each event has left a deep impression on me.”



A Hongqi Guoyao SUV is displayed during the Changchun International Auto Expo in Jilin province on Saturday.

TIAN JIAXIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

This year's auto expo also focuses on fields such as autonomous driving solutions, operating systems, chips, LiDAR and batteries, thus showcasing cutting-edge technological achievements and the latest developments in the industry, and injecting new vitality into Changchun's auto sector, said the local government.

As a major automotive event in China, the Changchun International Auto Expo has been a platform for brands to showcase their development achievements, supporting Changchun's ambition to build itself into an international automotive city.

It has contributed new insights into the innovation and development of Changchun's automotive culture, injected new momentum into the transformation and upgrading of China's automotive industry, and played a crucial role in driving automotive industry growth and boosting local economic development.

In addition, a series of innovative and enriching activities — such as roundtable meetings, high-level conferences and fan carnivals — will be held during this year's expo.

On Saturday, the 21st Changchun International Auto Expo High-level Conference was held at the Northeast Asia International Expo Center, attracting industry leaders and experts to delve into how the Chinese automotive industry can lead globally, actively embrace technological progress, look ahead to future development and adapt to market changes.

Cui Dongshu, secretary-general of the China Passenger Car Association, stated that at this year's expo, the diverse display of plug-in hybrids, pure electric and gasoline-powered vehicles, especially domestic new energy vehicles represented by China FAW, has overcome challenges with impressive results.

“The Northeastern car market is embracing a new era of energy transformation,” he said. “I believe the expo is not only a visual feast but also a catalyst to boost consumer confidence and stimulate consumption.”

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## Export growth to sustain amid headwinds in H2

By ZHONG NAN and WANG KEJU

China's foreign trade will continue its quality upgrade in the second half of the year, bolstered by its industrial chain advantages, robust innovation momentum and strong policy support, exporters and market watchers said on Monday.

Despite a complex and challenging external environment, the accelerated cultivation of new quality productive forces and further release of trade stabilization policy effects are expected to provide a solid foundation for sustaining export growth through the year, they added.

China set a record for foreign trade in the first half, achieving a year-on-year increase of 6.1 percent, reaching 21.17 trillion yuan (\$2.9 trillion), while its exports surged 6.9 percent on a yearly basis to 12.13 trillion yuan, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Developed countries are in the process of shifting from service spending to increased demand for goods, said Wei Hao, deputy dean of the Business School of Beijing Normal University. This will support China's exports in the second half, Wei added.

Moreover, the global upward cycle in technology will continue to



Employees of SANY Heavy Equipment Co Ltd work at a truck assembly line in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in June. HAN XIAOCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

benefit exports of China's semiconductor, mechanical and electrical products, creating structural growth potential for the country's exports this year, said Wei.

Chinese manufacturers' exports of mechanical and electrical products — including automobiles,

smartphones, automatic data processing equipment and integrated circuits — amounted to 7.14 trillion yuan between January and June, surging 8.2 percent year-on-year, accounting for 58.9 percent of the total value of the nation's exports, Customs statistics showed.

This underscores China's ongoing efforts in scientific and technological innovation, industrial upgrading and brand building in overseas markets, said Kang Ren, vice-president of Naipu Mining Machinery Co Ltd, a Shangrao, Jiangxi province-based mining equipment manufacturer.

Thanks to the tangible Belt and Road Initiative cooperation and the company's continuous market expansion in emerging markets, including Serbia, Kazakhstan, Peru and Indonesia, Naipu Mining Machinery's overseas revenue surpassed domestic revenue for the first time in the first half.

“At present, we have 600 million yuan worth of orders lined up for production, with schedules extending into 2025. Our workshops are operating daily to meet these deadlines,” said Kang, adding that the company had established factories in Africa and South America, further cutting production costs and reaching more clients.

Naipu Mining Machinery's exports reached 320 million yuan during the January-June period, marking a year-on-year increase of 200 percent, the highest growth in recent years, data from Nanchang Customs showed.

Eager to enhance its earning strength, SANY Heavy Equipment Co Ltd, a Shenyang, Liaoning province-based mining and construction machinery manufacturer, said its hybrid and electric widebody dump trucks are becoming increasingly popular in overseas markets.

Its products are exported to over 40 countries and regions, including New Zealand, the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations and Nigeria, according to information released by Shenyang Customs.

Sun Wen, head of the company's export unit, said its clients are also demanding longer battery lives and smarter control systems, pushing it to continuously launch new products.

The electrification trend of construction machinery with small operating radiuses and fixed activity is more obvious, such as electric-powered loaders and dump trucks used in factories, mines and ports, Sun added.

Confronted with the challenges of trade remedy measures and imported inflation, the price advantages of Chinese goods help alleviate price pressures in many countries, making Chinese exports crucial for the global economy, said Zhang Xiaolan, an assistant researcher at the department of economic forecasting of the State Information Center in Beijing.

As global industrial chains undergo accelerated restructuring, China's production and exports are increasingly linked with manufacturers in Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. The country will continue to be a powerful engine of the global manufacturing sector, said Zhang.

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# BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

## Big changes sweep across biz clusters

Manufacturing capability, digital acumen of online marketplaces converge to foster innovative growth

By WANG KEJU  
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Manufacturers of household cleaning products in Bazhou in North China's Hebei province are experiencing a surge of youthful energy, fueled by a wave of individuals armed with digital marketing skills on platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou.

In a notable shift from the past, these newcomers are not interested in establishing their own factories but are seeking partnerships with existing units, drawn to the city's thriving industrial cluster.

By collaborating with these factories, they gain access to a reliable and diverse supply of high-quality products that they can promote through online marketing channels.

This change has injected fresh enthusiasm and a newfound vibrancy into the household cleaning products industry in Bazhou.

The factories benefit from increased exposure and sales, while the talented youngsters gain a competitive edge by offering a wide range of high-quality products to their online customer base, said Li Shifan, general manager of Jamil Household Products Co.

Over the past two years, as e-commerce platforms have battled to offer the lowest prices, businesses within industrial clusters like Bazhou have gradually emerged as key players in reshaping the supply chains within online marketplaces by providing high value-for-money products.

Industrial clusters refer to a mass of manufacturers within specific geographic regions, where industries coexist and collaborate closely to streamline production processes, optimize supply chains, and enhance overall quality and cost-effectiveness.

Their high-quality and affordable products often benefit from the synergistic effects of concentrated expertise, economies of scale, and efficient resource utilization.

A list released by Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall Group in January unveiled 50 industrial clusters, each of which boasted a combined transaction value exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.38 billion) on Taobao, Tmall, and 1688 platforms.

Spanning 21 cities, including Hangzhou, Jinhua and Jiaxing in Zhejiang province, Guangzhou and Foshan in Guangdong province, and Hebei's Baoding, these industrial

clusters encompass 27 product categories, ranging from women's apparel, home furniture, smartphones, beauty and skin care products, to jewelry.

The convergence of local manufacturing capability and the digital acumen of online marketplaces has fostered a symbiotic relationship that drives innovation and growth in a mutually reinforcing way, said Li Mingtao, head of the research institute at the China International Electronic Commerce Center.

In response to the escalating price competition in the e-commerce sector, platforms such as JD and Douyin launched initiatives in 2022 to facilitate the integration of industrial clusters into the digital economy.

This year, Kuaishou has prioritized greater involvement in empowering industrial clusters so as to better meet the growing demand for reasonably priced, yet superior quality goods.

In return, businesses within clusters are recognizing the immense potential of e-commerce platforms in expanding their reach and accessing a broader consumer base.

"Today's consumers are increasingly turning to online channels for their shopping needs, seeking convenience, variety, and competitive prices. By joining e-commerce platforms, industrial cluster businesses can meet these evolving consumer demands and establish a direct connection with their target audience," Li said.

Caoxian county, located in Shandong province, has leveraged the vast user base and support programs of livestreaming platforms such as Douyin to foster a complete industrial chain of *hanfu*, the traditional attire of the Han ethnic group.

With a total of 2,473 upstream and downstream enterprises dedicated to *hanfu* production, the online sales of *hanfu* reached 7.2 billion yuan last year, marking a year-on-year growth of 44.3 percent. The combined online and offline sales exceeded 10 billion yuan, accounting for over 40 percent of the national market.

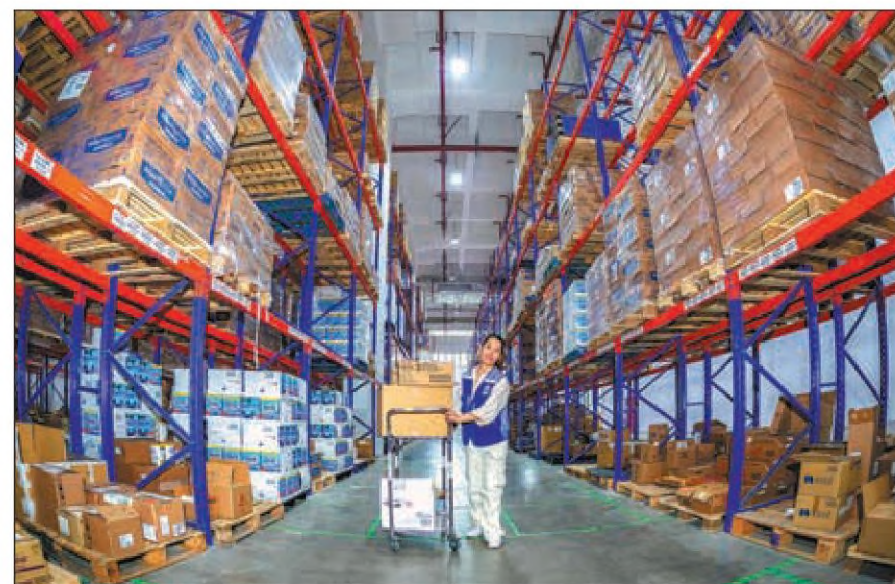
In the first five months of this year, online retail sales of *hanfu* in Caoxian amounted to 2.9 billion yuan, representing a year-on-year growth of 8.6 percent.

An Peng, general manager of a *hanfu* manufacturer in Caoxian, said the company purchased six jacquard looms to weave complicated



Above: Sellers promote products via livestreaming in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, in May. SHI BUFA / FOR CHINA DAILY

Below: A worker sorts packages at an e-commerce warehouse in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, in June. LIU JILI / FOR CHINA DAILY



patterns — a key procedure in the creation of *hanfu* garments. Along with four old ones, these machines have been operating continuously, with workers operating in two shifts to maximize production efficiency, he said.

Walk down any street, and it is hard not to miss the storefronts dedicated to different stages of *hanfu* production, An said.

These workshops, featuring embroidery, pattern-making, pleating, ironing, packaging and more, have divided each aspect of *hanfu* production into separate work disciplines, he added.

The *hanfu* industrial clusters in Caoxian are flourishing, thanks to e-commerce platforms that have

revolutionized the way businesses engage with consumers and showcase their products.

The platforms' abilities to attract a vast audience, create immersive shopping experiences, and facilitate direct interactions between producers and consumers have been instrumental in the success of the industry, resulting in the establishment of a comprehensive value chain that encompasses every aspect of *hanfu* production, said Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy.

The rapid development of the industrial cluster in Caoxian has boosted e-commerce startups and job creating ventures. The e-commerce sector alone has given rise to

350,000 jobs, among which more than 50,000 are returnees who have chosen to start businesses in their hometowns.

The shift toward e-commerce within the industrial belt is a response to the changing market dynamics and the evolving consumer preferences, said Zhang Zhouping, a senior analyst on business-to-business and cross-border activities at the Internet Economy Institute.

As e-commerce platforms continue to gain traction in various sectors, traditional brick-and-mortar factories have experienced a decline in their offline sales. The convenience and accessibility of e-commerce platforms provide a viable

solution for factories within the industrial belt to expand their market reach and increase sales, Zhang said.

By embracing e-commerce, factories can overcome geographical limitations, tap into new markets, and cater to the evolving demands of online consumers. This transition enables them to diversify their distribution channels and remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace, Zhang added.

During this year's June 18 shopping carnival, which kicked off on May 31, businesses within industrial clusters operating on JD experienced a 260 percent increase in order volume compared to the same period in the previous month.

Moreover, e-commerce platforms have been actively introducing a range of incentives and support measures to encourage industrial-cluster businesses to facilitate their entry into the e-commerce arena, Zhang said.

From logistics support to marketing guidance, the supportive policies and assistance provided by e-commerce platforms have empowered industrial belt businesses to overcome challenges associated with online operations and maximize their online potential, Zhang added.

Contrary to the perception of the industrial belt as a hub for cheap manufacturing and outsourcing, it has emerged as an opportunity-filled landscape for domestic entrepreneurship and brand creation. The industrial belt has become the largest source of new brands on Tmall, accounting for over 40 percent of the platform's new merchants, according to a report by Taobao and Tmall Group.

## Yiwu makes windfall gains from Olympic orders

By WANG KEJU

With the Paris 2024 Olympics around the corner, orders for sports merchandise have inundated Yiwu, the world's largest wholesale market for small commodities located in East China's Zhejiang province.

Over the years, businesses in Yiwu have expanded their presence in the international market by participating in major global sporting events and accumulating a wealth of experience.

This has enabled them to seize market opportunities and stay ahead of the competition, experts said.

According to statistics from Yiwu Customs, the export value of sporting goods came in at 4.1 billion yuan (\$563.97 million) in the first five months, marking a year-on-year growth of 44.4 percent.

A convergence of multiple sports events this year has created a unique opportunity for Yiwu, allowing merchants to tap into a wider customer base and land new orders,

said Xu Yan, president of the Yiwu Cross-border E-commerce Association.

Businesses specializing in sporting goods have experienced a substantial surge in order volumes, with many witnessing an increase of over 30 percent compared to earlier periods. Demand for jerseys, socks, flags, horns and other sports-related items has skyrocketed, Xu added.

At the Yiwu International Trade Market, covering an area of more than 4 million square meters and housing over 62,000 booths, a shop is displaying silicone bracelets bearing the official emblem of the Paris Olympic Games.

"This bracelet is manufactured by our factory under official authorization," said Lin Daolai, a merchant.

In October last year, his company won the bid for an order to produce 1 million Olympic bracelets, Lin said, adding that he and his team wasted no time when they received the order.

Production started in December, and by the time the Chinese New

Year ended in mid-February, the first batch of 500,000 bracelets had been flown to Paris. The remaining bracelets were all dispatched before May.

The increased visibility and credibility gained from being an official supplier of Olympic merchandise have translated into a 30 percent growth in overall sales for the flag-themed bracelets, Xu said.

Since last year, many business owners like Lin in Yiwu have received substantial Olympics-related orders.

Wang Qiang, president of the Yiwu Sports and Fitness Supplies Industry Association, said the association swiftly took action and began convening enterprises in the summer of last year to discuss marketing strategies, optimize the supply chain, and seize the business opportunities presented by the event.

The city's production and supply systems are renowned for their efficiency and the ability to adapt to the unique needs of buyers. This adapt-

ability has positioned Yiwu as a preferred destination for sourcing relevant products for major sporting events, Wang added.

The scope of sports events encompasses a diverse range of product categories, allowing businesses to tap into new avenues of growth. In addition to sporting-related merchandise, the demand extends to commemorative items, catering supplies, and hotel products.

As spectators enjoy their favorite sports events with a refreshing beverage in hand, demand for bottle openers has also surged, said Liu Liping, another merchant in Yiwu.

"We have experienced a significant increase in overseas orders for bottle openers since April, with sales growing by 20 percent to 30 percent," Liu said, adding that the recent influx of orders from Portugal and Spain has prompted the manufacturer to ramp up production, resulting in a workshop filled with goods bound for Europe.

However, escalating sea freight costs have prompted businesses to



A business owner shows sporting-related products in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, in May. DONG YIXIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

explore alternative transportation options, with the China-Europe railway emerging as an attractive solution.

As the Belt and Road Initiative continues to advance, the trade logistics costs between China and Europe through land channels are

expected to decrease further. This cost reduction will create a favorable environment for trade and establish a virtuous cycle, bolstering Yiwu's position as a global trading hub, said Bao Yuefei, general manager of Yiwu CF International Logistics Co Ltd.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Decision sets modernization course that will guide nation for years to come

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China started its third plenary session in Beijing on Monday morning. The four-day meeting is expected to chart the country's course to build a high-standard socialist market economy by 2035, with the country's per capita GDP reaching the level of moderately developed economies, laying a solid foundation for building a strong modern socialist country in all aspects by the middle of this century.

The strong headwinds the country is encountering in its pursuit of high-quality development and the increasingly complex internal and external environments, featuring rising uncertainties, risks and fast-changing landscapes, call for careful navigation and forward-looking piloting.

Effective leadership is crucial at this pivotal juncture in the country's development journey. The nation needs to harness the potential of its institutional strengths to keep a dynamic balance between the quality and quantity of its economic growth and efficiency and fairness in its governance.

That China's gross domestic product surged 5 percent year-on-year in the first half of this year, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Monday, should be taken as an encouraging sign that, despite the tremendous difficulties the country faces, under the resolute leadership of the Party, it has managed to keep its economic growth within a rational range. That hard-earned growth in the face of the current hardships is testimony as to why President Xi Jinping issued a rallying cry in his latest article published by Qiushi magazine on Tuesday, urging the whole Party and nation to be fully confident of the prospects of the country as long as it upholds the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and seeks high-quality development along the socialist path with Chinese characteristics.

The fact-based work report CPC Central Committee General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered to the plenum on behalf of the Political Bureau on Monday objectively shows the practical experience the central leadership has gained in coping with all kinds of challenges since 2012, and its success in leading the country to emerge ever stronger from the difficulties that have been overcome.

The CPC Central Committee's Decision on Further Comprehensively Deepening Reform and Advancing Chinese Modernization — which as Xi expounded on to the plenum on Monday is oriented toward solving problems — will serve as a guiding document for China to further comprehensively deepen reform in the new journey.

The extensive discussions the members of the CPC Central Committee are having as they review the document is a meaningful process to enrich the historic file that will serve as the guideline for the country's reform and opening-up over the coming decade by pooling the collective wisdom of the Party.

While the document will be a scientific plan for further comprehensively deepening reform to advance Chinese modernization, it will also be a blueprint for the implementation of reform to ensure that China's development direction has a high degree of certainty, coherence and continuity.

Given China's paramount role as a global growth engine, a pillar of economic globalization, a stabilizer of global industry and supply chains, and a defender of world peace and stability, the success of the key gathering of the central leadership of the country will inject more certainty into the development of not only the country but also the whole world.

## UN agency vital for Gaza refugees

That 118 countries have signed a joint statement supporting the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East reflects the international community's recognition of the agency as an "indispensable" and stabilizing force carrying out aid operations in Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East despite efforts by Israel to dismantle it.

Created by the UN General Assembly in 1949, the UNRWA provides education, primary healthcare and other development activities to about 6 million Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. But as a result of some countries halting their funding to the UNRWA following allegations by Israel that some of the agency's staff members were involved in the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel that triggered the Gaza conflict, the agency is now facing a profound funding gap.

The UNRWA immediately suspended the 12 staff members implicated, and an investigation is still ongoing. But Israel has long called for the UNRWA to be dismantled, accusing it of anti-Israeli incitement, and Israel's Parliament is currently considering designating the UNRWA as a terrorist organization.

The UNRWA reportedly has only enough funds to operate through August, and requires \$1.2 billion to cover critical humanitarian needs until the end of the year. In addition, the agency has been hit hard during the conflict in Gaza, with 195 staff members having been killed, "the highest staff death toll in UN history".

The dire situation that the UNRWA now finds itself in has prompted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to warn that Palestinian refugees "will lose a critical lifeline and the last ray of hope for a better future" without more support and financing for the agency. "Let me be clear: there is no alternative to the UNRWA," he told a UNRWA donation pledging conference in New York on Friday. He urged all UN member states to help ease the deepening financial crisis that the UNRWA faces so it can sustain its operations, given the pivotal role that the agency plays in providing assistance to the Palestinian refugees under the UN mandate.

The UNRWA now faces increasing challenges as the humanitarian crisis in Gaza persists. More than 38,300 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry, in the ground offensives and bombardments that Israel launched in response to the October Hamas attack that killed some 1,200 people, and led to the abduction of about 250 people. "Appallingly, civilians are being pushed into ever deeper circles of hell," the secretary-general said.

Thus ensuring enough funds for the UNRWA is not only about the survival of a UN agency, but also about the survival of people and the survival of Palestine refugees, especially women and children, across the Gaza Strip.

It came as a relief that pledges announced by UN member countries on Friday will be able to sustain the UNRWA's core budget until the end of September, reflecting the solidarity of countries in the face of the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave. Even the United States was among the signatories of the statement of support for the UNRWA, though it didn't attend the conference.

China has long provided humanitarian and development assistance to Palestine and supported the UNRWA in conducting its aid operations. Since the outbreak of the conflict, China has provided several batches of assistance to Gaza amounting to around \$82 million.

At the pledging conference at the UN Headquarters on Friday, Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, said China would contribute \$3 million to the agency to support its emergency humanitarian assistance efforts and called on the international community to support the agency in its work. China will also continue to work to realize a lasting cease-fire in Gaza as that is the only way to alleviate the humanitarian disaster that is taking place in Gaza.

## Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## After NATO summit, Germany sees security risk in Chinese technology

A news release from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community on Thursday shows it has signed contracts with mobile network operators obligating the latter to stop using all critical components made by Huawei and ZTE in their 5G core networks by the end of 2026.

The news release cites "greater security and technological sovereignty for the German 5G mobile network" as the justification. But that excuse is unreasonable and groundless. Chinese telecommunications companies, including Huawei and ZTE, have long operated legally and compliantly in Germany, making contributions to its digital progress and economic growth without any suggestion they were endangering the country's security.

That German politicians are targeting Huawei and ZTE's 5G involvement ultimately stems not from their claimed security concerns but from certain German and European politicians' desire to suppress China's technological development.

Actually, even a thorough reading of the news release won't find any concrete evidence that equipment from Chinese companies poses security risks to Germany, it just voices the allegation.

The move constitutes blatant political discrimination, severely damaging mutual trust and potentially affecting future China-EU cooperation in related fields.

The timing of Germany's move, coinciding with the NATO summit in Washington, further raises serious concerns about the independence of its decision-making.

Germany and the European Union cannot demand fair competition while discriminating against foreign companies with unfounded claims of potential security risks. Whether Germany can handle related issues fairly is a test of its sincerity. Such actions will affect not only bilateral trade and economic cooperation but also foreign investors' confidence in Germany. China will take necessary measures to protect the legitimate interests of its enterprises.

—ZHANG ZHOXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## Structure more important than growth rate of trade

The national foreign trade data for the first half of the year, released on Friday, show the total value of China's import and export of goods was 21.17 trillion yuan (\$2.91 trillion), an increase of 6.1 percent year-on-year, continuing and consolidating the previous upward trend.

For the first time ever, China's half-year import and export scale exceeded 21 trillion yuan, setting a new record. In terms of growth rate, the second-quarter imports and exports grew by 7.4 percent year-on-year, an increase of 2.5 and 5.7 percentage points from the first quarter of 2024 and the fourth quarter of 2023 respectively, indicating a further consolidation of the positive trend in foreign trade.

In the first half of the year, general trade imports and exports accounted for as much

as 65 percent of China's foreign trade, becoming the main force driving foreign trade growth, which reflects the significant results of China's foreign trade transformation and upgrading, with high-quality trade modes represented by general trade becoming mainstream.

Especially, new energy vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products have been popular overseas, injecting strong vitality into China's foreign trade. According to data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, in the first half of the year, NEV sales increased by 32 percent year-on-year, and exports increased by 13.2 percent year-on-year, further achieving breakthroughs. This stems from Chinese companies always taking innovation as their core competitive advantage.

With higher trade volumes and better quality, China offers more opportunities globally. Besides providing affordable products, China has a vast consumer market for foreign products. In the first half of this year, China's imports grew by 5.2 percent year-on-year. Government policies are making it easier for foreign goods to enter China, expanding the space for foreign businesses.

International financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have all raised their 2024 growth forecasts for China, highlighting its role as a global growth engine.

China's strong trade performance not only supports its economy but also aids the recovery of the global economy.

—CHINA MEDIA GROUP

## What They Say

## Guidance aims to change nobody's-business attitude

The Ministry of Commerce, the People's Bank of China, the National Financial Regulatory Administration and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange have jointly issued "Opinions on Strengthening Commercial and Financial Coordination and Supporting the High-Quality Development of Cross-Border Trade and Investment with Greater Efforts".

The central authorities require the financial industry to play a role in stabilizing foreign trade and foreign investment, and serve the global development of Chinese enterprises and the construction of the Belt and Road. The issuance of the document provides guidance for the financial industry to fulfill those requirements.

The document proposes 11 policy measures in five aspects with the aim of promoting foreign trade by optimizing the financial services and facilitating foreign investment by strengthening the guarantee of foreign financial services.

The trade promotion measures include improving credit, credit insurance, policy financing, and property insurance and other services for international cooperation in foreign trade supply

chains, cross-border e-commerce exports, and the green trade, as well as increasing support for service trade funds, intangible asset pledge financing and data element insurance.

The investment facilitation measures aim to improve the foreign investment environment, connect the country with foreign-funded enterprises, provide diversified professional financial services, enhance the efficiency of open platforms, deepen innovation and collaboration, and jointly promote institutional opening-up in trade, investment, finance and other fields.

According to the document, these central departments should encourage relevant entities to further improve cross-border renminbi services to better meet the needs of enterprises, carry out in-depth training and publicity, optimize exchange rate hedging products, and reduce the foreign exchange hedging costs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Meanwhile, the document attaches great importance to managing and controlling risks related to cross-border trade, investment and financial exchanges.

The document, which is problem-targeted and solution-oriented, plans commerce and finance work as a whole and calls for close coordination and exchanges between the commerce and finance departments to prevent the departments from hoarding their own rows only. For too long, the departments of

finance, foreign exchange, banking, commerce, business, investment, trade and market regulation have operated separately and all have claimed their jobs done, but many real problems companies and investors encounter in practice have remained unaddressed as they cannot be resolved by any of these departments separately.

The government departments should fundamentally recognize that they are not only responsible for implementing the instructions of higher-level authorities but also meeting the needs of their service objects. A top-down instruction system within the administration itself is not enough. The transverse cross-sector exchanges and collaboration between departments of the same level are weak, making everybody's business nobody's business.

The market has long called for a smooth feedback channels through which the market entities can express their views to the higher-level authorities on both their practical concerns as well as the performances of these intermediate departments that are supposed to be in charge of helping them address their problems so as to form a closed loop of policy execution to prevent the relevant departments from offering only lip service. To answer that call is a reason why the document was released.

—LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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## COMMENT

Yao Yang

## New productive forces facilitate reform

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) started its third plenary session in Beijing on Monday morning. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, delivered a work report on behalf of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and expounded on a draft decision of the CPC Central Committee on further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization.

Previously Xi has reiterated that high-quality development requires guidance from new theories of productive forces. Since new quality productive forces have emerged in practice and exhibited their role as drivers of high-quality development, they should be theorized to guide further development. In a nutshell, new quality productive forces are primarily driven by innovation, breaking free from traditional growth- and productivity-based development models.

New quality productive forces are characterized by high technology, high efficiency and high quality. They represent advanced productivity required by the new development philosophy, and are shaped by revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, industrial transformation and upgrading, and improvements in labor forces, means of labor, subjects of labor and their optimal combination as underlying elements.

Accelerating the development of new quality productive forces is key to facilitating economic work at all levels of government. New quality productive forces aim to increase total factor productivity. To engage in production, a business or country needs to invest in labor and capital. Accordingly, an increase in labor or capital input leads to increased output.

But there is another aspect that is not readily visible or tangible, which is the improvement in efficiency. Economists refer to the efficiency gained from increased labor and capital as total factor productivity.

China has reached a stage where its economic growth is being driven by innovation and technological advancements. So why introduce a concept such as new quality productive forces now?

Before 2010, China's economic growth primarily relied on increasing labor and capital inputs. In terms of labor, China saw a significant migration of workers from rural to urban areas, who produced goods for consumption in international markets.

When China launched reform and opening-up in 1978, its urbanization rate was less than 20 percent. Today, it is more than 65 percent. Also, before 2010, China's economic growth was mainly driven by exports, with a large labor force fueling international trade, leading to increased production.

Simultaneously, the rate of capital accumulation in China was increasing, indicating a rise in the savings rate. As such, before 2010, China's economic growth was primarily driven by an increase in labor and capital inputs.

But after 2010, China's economy entered a period of adjustment. One aspect of this shift was the restructuring of the economy, marked by the elimination of excess and polluting capacity, promotion of new productivity and the emergence of new industries such as electric vehicles. The other aspects of the shift were the transition from export-oriented to domestic consumption-driven growth, and production- to innovation-driven development.

These developments set the stage for the introduction of new quality productive forces, signifying that China has entered a development phase where growth is being driven by innovation and technological advancements.

According to the economic growth theory, a country's economic growth goes through various stages, from workforce expansion and capital accumulation to technological advancements.

Moreover, China's population growth rate has been declining, so is its working-age population. Additionally, the marginal benefits of capital accumulation are diminishing. This has made it all the more important to expedite technological progress. And this is a significant reason for the introduction of new quality productive forces.

How can new quality productive forces be developed? Does it mean identifying certain industries suitable for new quality productivity while excluding others? Since new quality productive forces aim to increase total factor productivity, all industries have the potential to develop new quality productive forces.

Take the clothing industry for example. It's a traditional sector. And yet companies like Shein have emerged from the sector. Shein, often perceived

as a cross-border e-commerce platform, actually encompasses a series of clothing production processes. While in the past, the concept of Industry 4.0 seemed daunting, Shein has successfully implemented Industry 4.0 by adopting flexible production methods. With its valuation of \$60 billion, Shein's success is closely tied to its flexible production.

Platform companies play similarly crucial roles. Some may argue that platform companies are outdated in the era of AI, but the platform economy remains a key industry, as it contributes, in a major way, to the enhancement of new quality productive forces.

To begin with, it provides a platform for the real economy, enabling many traditional businesses to reduce costs. A few years ago, logistics costs were a major concern for enterprises, as they accounted for up to 30 percent (or even 40 percent) of sales. Today, the discourse around logistics costs has changed, largely due to the development of the platform economy.

Also, the platform economy generates technologies. A core competitive element of the platform economy is algorithm, which requires more brainpower than funds' power and advancements in basic research, among other things.

Besides, the platform economy has significant network effects that should not be underestimated. Nearly everyone's daily life now depends on the platform economy, creating network effects where mutual usage leads to cost savings for all. Over the past decade, as China's platform economy has grown rapidly, innovation has accelerated, indicating the crucial role that the platform economy plays in fostering national innovation and setting a solid foundation for the future of the Chinese economy.

Looking ahead, China's potential growth rate may remain around 5.5 percent, with growth driven by capital accumulation gradually diminishing and eventually reaching a state where per capita income growth relies entirely on technological progress.

China has an advantage over other countries in terms of long-term planning. Therefore, while pushing for the development of new quality productive forces, we are essentially aiming for a larger goal of laying a solid foundation for the future of the Chinese economy. This is the significance of introducing new quality productive forces in the new era.

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SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

John Milligan-Whyte

## Empower young talents toward common prosperity

China has been progressing from a moderately well-off society to common prosperity. If it realizes common prosperity, China can narrow the development and income gaps between coastal and inland regions, and urban and rural residents, respectively, as well as give voice to underrepresented groups and make China's governance system more inclusive and responsive to local needs. And by building a unified national market, China can ensure the smooth flow of goods and services across provinces and regions.

The Communist Party of China's economic policy seeks to promote innovations in technology, accelerate dual circulation, boost consumer confidence and enhance self-reliance. By utilizing the highly developed computer skills of the unemployed and underemployed university graduates, China can bolster the development of new quality productive forces, upgrade industries, increase mobility of workers, and make the economy more balanced, coordinat-

ed and sustainable.

Also, China can pursue its domestic and international development goals by encouraging more highly educated and IT-competent youth to work in rural areas. And other countries related with BRICS or Belt and Road Initiative can strengthen cooperation on such digital economy and young talents exchanges to boost their economies.

The Chinese top leader has been encouraging young Party members, including highly educated individuals, to work in rural areas to promote rural development, learn life skills and gain life experiences.

US president John F. Kennedy established the "Peace Corps" in the 1960s to promote altruism and inculcate cultural values among people across the world. In the six decades since its establishment, the Peace Corps has had about

200,000 participants from more than 100 countries. In the spirit of the Peace Corps, the United States should re-energize Kennedy's vision and uphold peace instead of triggering wars.

In his famous Peace Speech on June 6, 1963, Kennedy asserted that the US abandon its Cold War mentality, because war between nuclear powers will destroy the world. In line with Kennedy's peace call, China and the US, two of the world's largest military superpowers which follow very different economic development models, need to urgently change their approach to each other and learn to compete and coexist peacefully.

The roles of the US and China in the fast-changing world will be determined by their success or failure in competing for economic, political and military support from other countries. And the two sides should realize that the economic and military superpower that creates more opportunities for, and raises the living standards of, people both at home and abroad, and garners the support of

more countries will achieve more success on all fronts.

China can strengthen its socialist and altruistic values by encouraging more young competent people to begin their careers as well as hone their skills by facilitating the socioeconomic development of people in the country's rural areas, and boosting exchanges with other countries.

Teaching young people to help themselves by helping others to promote peaceful economic development is how China can enable young people worldwide to pursue viable careers against the backdrop of AI's severe impact on the job market. In this regard, youths with leadership and teaching skills, greater cultural awareness, and the required knowledge to achieve success can build successful careers.

The author is chairman of the America-China Partnership Foundation. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

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## More foreign visitors present more positive China stories

The National Immigration Administration recently announced that the number of inbound trips to China in the first half of this year increased to 14.63 million, up 152.7 percent year-on-year. Many attribute the increase to China's visa exemption policy implemented last year. As of now, the National Immigration Administration has implemented a 144-hour visa-free transit policy at 37 ports.

Tourism officials in China must be happy now that the scenic spots and historical sites are crowded with foreign visitors, because the unilateral visa-free entry policy is designed to boost inbound tourism. Happier are the diplomats and journalists because foreign nationals are not only visiting China in larger numbers but also presenting positive stories about China to the world.

Using their mobile phones, the tourists are sending tens of thousands of photographs, videos and stories of their travels to China to almost all influential international social media platforms, drawing hundreds of millions of Western viewers. Their stories, photographs and videos about China are different from what the Western politicians and media outlets have been telling them.

Having gone over some of their stories and photographs, I, as a journalist who has been to almost all corners of China on reporting assignments, have to say that their "dispatches" are more or less fragmented, technically immature and sometimes too emotional. But I also have to say that they are mostly objective, original and largely unbiased, and thus believable.

## They are shocked by China's cashless paying system and robots and drones that send takeaways to their address within half an hour.

Digging deeper into their stories, I found the key words used in their dispatches are of being "shocked" or "amazed", or both. For long, the photographs and videos they have seen and the stories they've read about China in their home countries have been mostly negative: the air in China is polluted, the economy sliding, and the people dissatisfied with governance and oppressed.

They can't help but be shocked and amazed when they see with their own eyes something totally different, in fact, the opposite, from what they have been told.

They are shocked by the modern infrastructure when they land at China's airports. They are shocked by the convenient subway and high-speed train services. They are shocked by China's cashless paying system and robots and drones that send takeaways to their address within half an hour. They are shocked by the size and the modernization level of not only metropolises such as Shanghai and Shenzhen but also of many little-known small cities.

They are amazed by China's divergent yet unifying culture, and beautiful scenes. They are amazed to see the Chinese people enjoying their life, singing and dancing in parks and squares. They are amazed by the country's security system, which enables even women to walk alone in cities late at night. They are amazed by the fabulous restaurants and by the wide variety of cuisines from different provinces. They are amazed by the vast number of public toilets, which are clean and well maintained.

Some foreign nationals have visited China to "investigate" how the surveillance cameras on the streets are "violating" people's rights. They did find lots of such cameras and even interviewed some people to find out their reaction. But the local people told them that as law-abiding citizens, they are not only not worried about but also grateful for the cameras, for the cameras have played a key role in curbing theft and pick-pocketing in the country. "What freedom and rights can you enjoy if you are not sure of being provided basic security?" one of the interviewees asked the interviewer.

As a patriot, I am grateful to the objective and positive "reporting" on China by the foreign visitors. I sometimes get emotional when reading or watching videos or reading stories praising China. Indeed, China still has a lot of problems to address such as the slowing economy, rising unemployment, disparity in the development level of different regions, and corruption.

Since China is a big country, it would be demanding too much from a foreign visitor to present an overall picture of the country within two weeks. I hope more foreign visitors come and stay in China longer enough to enjoy, observe and tell their China stories objectively — good or bad.

## GLOBAL VIEWS

RAPHAEL ONI

## Advancing democracy in international relations

China is rolling out blueprints on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to counter global challenges

In today's interconnected world, from climate change to poverty, from disease outbreaks to political conflicts, collective efforts and collaboration from all nations are needed to create a better future for our planet and all its inhabitants.



Addressing global challenges requires a long-term perspective and sustained effort. It is not enough to simply respond to crises as they arise; we must also invest in preventative measures and build resilience to future challenges by supporting education, research and development in fields such as renewable energy, public health and conflict resolution. It also means promoting policies that prioritize the well-being of people and the planet over short-term economic gains. To create a more just and sustainable world for all, one needs to take a holistic approach to global challenges.

Ten years ago, President Xi Jinping propounded the idea of building a global community with a shared future, emphasizing cooperation and collaboration among nations, which seeks to foster mutual understanding, respect and peaceful coexistence to address global challenges. This proposal reveals that China aims to promote sustainable development, economic prosperity and cultural exchange on a global scale, and reflects China's commitment to multilateralism and the belief that shared prosperity benefits all nations. It is a call for unity, solidarity, and collective action to create a better future for humanity.

China's proposal for a shared future has gained significant attention and support from various nations worldwide to address global challenges. This proposal emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding, respect and peaceful coexistence, which are crucial elements in building a harmonious and prosperous world. Moreover, China's initiative aims to promote sustainable development, economic prosperity and cultural exchange on a global scale. By working together toward these goals, countries can create a better future for

generations to come.

Globalization has improved the allocation of production factors worldwide, including capital, information, technology, labor and management. It draws nations out of isolation and away from the obsolete model of self-reliance, merging their individual markets into a global one and combining their respective experiences into world history. Moreover, as information technology advances, human exchanges have become deeper, broader and more extensive than ever before, and countries are more interconnected and interdependent than at any point in the past. This is an integrated world. Those who turn their back on it will have no place in it. In this context, the success of China's proposal for a shared future will depend on the willingness of nations to work together toward common goals.

The proposal reflects China's commitment to multilateralism, which highlights the belief that shared prosperity benefits all nations. It also highlights the need for dialogue and communication among nations, as well as respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. These principles are essential for building trust and promoting peaceful coexistence among countries. Cooperation among nations is necessary to tackle these challenges and ensure a livable planet for future generations. In addition, China's emphasis on sustainable development is crucial for addressing pressing environmental issues such as climate change.

Overall, China's proposal for a shared future provides a hopeful vision for the world, one that prioritizes collaboration over conflict and mutual benefit over individual gain. This requires a change in mindset from competition to cooperation and from isolationism to openness. It is crucial for countries to recognize that their individual interests are interlinked with the interests of the global community. By working toward shared objectives, nations can create win-win situations that benefit all parties involved.

Furthermore, we must acknowledge that addressing global challenges is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Different regions and communities face unique challenges that require

tailored approaches. It is essential to involve local stakeholders and empower them to take ownership of solutions that work for their specific context. This means investing in capacity-building and providing resources for local innovation and entrepreneurship. By promoting diversity and inclusivity in our approach to global challenges, we can ensure that everyone has a voice and a stake in creating a better future for all.

Just as China says in A Global Community of Shared Future: China's Proposals and Actions, which was released in September 2023: There is no iron law that dictates that a rising power will inevitably seek hegemony. China has never accepted that once a country becomes strong enough, it will invariably seek hegemony. China understands the lesson of history — that hegemony precludes decline. We pursue development and revitalization through our own efforts, rather than invasion or expansion. And everything we do is for the purpose of providing a better life for our people, all the while creating more development opportunities for the entire world instead of superseding or subjugating others.

The strong preying on the weak is not a way for humans to coexist. If the law of the jungle is imposed on human society, and the idea that "might makes right" prevails, the principle of sovereign equality will be fundamentally undermined, and world peace and stability will be severely endangered. In the age of globalization, all countries are interdependent and interconnected. Therefore the law of the jungle and the winner-takes-all mindset will lead nowhere — inclusive development for the benefit of all is the right path forward. China has consistently championed equity and justice, and remains committed to friendly cooperation with other countries, on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, in order to advance democracy in international relations.

*The author is editor-in-chief of Diplomats Extra Magazine. 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.*



LIMIN / CHINA DAILY

WU ZHICHENG AND XU XIAOFANG

## On the cusp

Unlike the binary opposition Cold War thinking of the West, China is striving to build a community with a shared future

Amid the power shift between a rising East and a declining West, the United States has been trying to alleviate its mounting anxiety at the potential loss of its hegemony by attempting to provoke a new Cold War and shift the blame for its internal problems onto other countries. This persisting Cold War mentality is threatening world peace and development, and exacerbating division and confrontation worldwide.

The collective rise of emerging market countries and developing countries, represented by China, has upset the international balance of power, which is the most prominent change of our times. That change is stoking the hegemonic anxiety of the US.

While shifts in power are completely normal in international politics, the US, scarred by Cold War memories, demonizes and stigmatizes China's growth by underlining the ideological and social system differences between the US and China, which only lays bare its deep-seated anxiety about losing its hegemony.

In 2017, the Donald Trump administration labeled China as a "revisionist" and a "strategic competitor" of the US in its first National Security Strategy report and launched strategic competition with China. The Joe Biden administration keeps hyping up threats from China, which is said to be the only country capable of posing a "systemic challenge" to the US, and it has declared a full-spectrum strategic contest.

The transformation of the international order has intensified ideological disputes. Since the 2008 financial crisis, the liberal international order, dominated by the US after World War II, has been under threat. The collective rise of non-Western countries and the relative decline of the West have weakened the foundation of Western civilization and Western centrism.

To maintain the ideological foundation of the hegemonic order and curb the development of other civilizations, the US started to advocate for a "rules-based liberal international order", polarize the value differences between China and the West, and even criticize China's development model from an ideological perspective, aiming to seize dominance in the international order and obstruct China's growth by inciting ideological confrontation.

Technological revolution and industrial transformation is reshaping

international politics. While technological progress itself does not necessarily intensify major-power competition, the US' narrow understanding of it has led to the resurgence of a technological monopoly culture.

Using technology issues as ideological tools, the US is suppressing China's technological development under the pretenses of human rights and democracy, and working with its allies with "shared values" to blockade China's high-tech sector. For example, a critical and emerging technologies working group has been established under the Quad, composed of the US, Japan, Australia and India, to ensure that technological standards are controlled by countries with "common interests and values".

Essentially, the US is using a fabricated "external enemy" to cover up the failures of its democracy and shift the blame for its internal political turmoil.

The Cold War mentality is regressive thinking from the past. China is committed to peaceful development and win-win cooperation.

Unlike some countries that draw lines based on ideology, China advocates the common values of all mankind, which transcend Western-centric and binary opposition thinking.

China embraces the diversity of civilizations. It has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative, which calls for mutual respect and inclusiveness among civilizations, social systems and development paths; and promotes exchanges and dialogues for peaceful coexistence and harmonious living to let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority.

China adheres to peaceful development and works to build a new-type international relations. China resolutely opposes all forms of hegemony and power politics, as well as the outdated belief that a strong country will inevitably seek hegemony. Peace is the everlasting wish of humanity and a value much cherished by the Chinese civilization.

China is on its way to modernization through peaceful development.

With a Cold War mentality that stresses absolute security, countries tend to safeguard their security at the expense of others. This idea is no longer compatible with today's increasingly complex security situation and does not contribute to global security governance.

To achieve universal and common security, China has proposed the Global Security Initiative, which goes beyond the traditional security concepts represented by the Cold War mentality and plays a leading role in world peace and development. The Global Security Initiative calls for

staying committed to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; upholding the principle of indivisible security; respecting the legitimate security concerns of all countries; resolving differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; avoiding double standards; and not neglecting or infringing on the security interests of other countries.

Since the end of the Cold War, Western countries have been using their global influence to promote their own values and development models, giving rise to individualism and egoism. Coupled with the widespread negative impacts of globalization, development across the world has become largely imbalanced.

By proposing the Global Development Initiative, China calls for building an open world economy, jointly carrying out high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and promoting balanced development to create a favorable external environment for world peace and development.

Today's world is an indivisible community. Countries are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. The international community needs to work together to address various global issues. Rejecting the Cold War mentality, China advocates the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, which can serve as the theoretical weapon to defeat the "new Cold War" and guide the healthy development of international relations.

On the one hand, China insists on equality among countries, regardless of their size, strength or wealth, respecting the right of all peoples to independently choose their development paths and upholding international fairness and justice. China opposes imposing one's will on others, interfering in other countries' internal affairs, and bullying the weak.

On the other hand, the international community should break free from the Cold War mentality and keep abreast of the trend of the times. New international relations should be established with the guide of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, replacing power politics with mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. Only then can we forge a new path for interactions between countries.

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SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

## LIFE



A porcelain scroll of *Lantingji Xu* (Preface to the Collection of Poems of the Orchid Pavilion) is one of the highlights of the *Exposition Reviving Craft* exhibition in Paris.

## Intangible cultural heritage dazzles Paris

Display of Chinese art highlights intricate craftsmanship and long history of exchange, **Yang Feiyue** reports.

**T**raditional puppetry, embroidery, New Year woodblock prints and wood carvings are creating a strong Chinese vibe at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in the western wing of the Louvre Museum in the French capital.

On a large high-definition screen, visitors can glimpse the skills passed down through generations of Chinese artisans that are used to turn the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth into works of art, as well as the way modern inheritors have pulled off a seamless blend of tradition and modernity.

It is part of *Exposition Reviving Craft*, an ongoing show about aspects of intangible cultural heritage and modern design included in the framework of the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism in 2024 by China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

"Cultural and artistic exchange between China and France has a long history. This exhibition aims to present the works of intangible cultural heritage masters and contemporary designers to the world, injecting new vitality into cultural diversity and cross-cultural exchange," says Yang Lan, chair of the Sun Media Group and co-curator of the exhibition, which opened on July 5 and will run until Friday.

"The exhibition follows the concept of the five elements, highlighting the mutual influence, transformation and fusion," Yang says.

Handicrafts such as filigree inlay, woodwork, bamboo weaving, tea making, wine-making, ceramics, and textile embroidery are present to represent those elements, she adds.

"Combining Chinese aesthetics with multimedia and AI presentation technology, the exhibition creates an immersive and interactive experience. It allows the audience to understand the natural and cultural environments of intangible cultural heritage, the creation process, and the emotions it embodies, fostering a sense of empathy," Yang adds.

In the metal space, visitors can try on pieces of jewelry, and even customize them to their taste using artificial intelligence, and learn traditional carpentry via digital demonstrations in the wood space.

The exhibition is hosted by the media company in conjunction with China National Brand, a brand-related news platform, and brings together some 100 pieces by 40 outstanding artisans and designers, as well as 20 participating brands and institutions. It is an opportunity for visitors to see the magnificent millennia-long culture of China.

Walking into the main hall, the metal section is the first to greet one's eyes. A gold mesh crown is placed front and center, immediately giving visitors a good measure of the stunning craftsmanship of ancient Chinese filigree art. The piece is an exact replica of the crown of Emperor Wanli of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) that was unearthed in the 1950s.

Dragon patterns coil around the crown, as if possessing a life on their own. At close quarters, the mind boggles at how the piece is composed of hair-thin strands of gold wire, all braided by hand, using a variety of techniques such as wire cutting, arranging, and welding. In particular, thousands of the dragon scales have been modeled out of gold wire measuring 0.2 millimeters in thickness. There are no seams, visible joints or broken threads, making this the epitome of China's gold craftsmanship.



**Top:** A hat on display at the exhibition in France is decorated with low tassels and a silver sparrow on top, giving off a sense of vitality. **Above left:** Yang Lan (right), co-curator of *Exposition Reviving Craft*, exchanges ideas with two visitors. **Above right:** A visitor appreciates artwork in the water section of the exhibition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Yang says the metal space aims to vividly present the traditional processes of metal craftsmanship, from casting, forging, engraving, inlaying and filigree to enamel work, and to showcase the skills of Chinese craftsmen and the beauty of their metal artistry.

She says she was impressed by seeing in person how filigree inlay artists can pull a piece of metal into a wire as thin as a strand of hair, a process she witnessed when she was learning about the practice a few years ago.

"At the same time, they have the skill to bend the threads gently around their fingers. Every little dragon on (the crown) is lifelike and awe-inspiring."

Su Dan, vice-curator of the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum, says that he has taken a special shine to the unique folk silverware craft of the Miao people, which is used in fashioning silver hats of various styles.

The silver blossom hat on display is decorated with low tassels at the forehead and a lifelike silver sparrow. When the wearer moves, the silver sparrow will tremble slightly, and the tassels sway gently, giving the hat a sense of vitality. About 30 steps were involved in its creation, four of which — wire drawing, wire braiding, carving, and wire coiling — were the most important, according to the exhibition organizers. "The hat is an ordinary person's tribute to life," Su says.

Other highlights of the metal space include *Convergence*, an artwork made of brass and gold, featuring lifelike figures, posing hand in hand, which symbolizes not only the increasingly close and deep connections between people, but also a shared vision for a better life. The base model was created using 3D printing, shaped through precision casting, and decorated using electroplating.

"We not only witness the pursuit of craftsmanship and its heritage, but also the innovation and individuality of contemporary artisans," Yang says.

In the earth space, embroidery has been chosen to convey the element's traditional connotation of balance and stability.

Yao Jianping, a master of Suzhou embroidery brocade from the Song Dynasty (960-1279), has created a fabric version of the *Mona Lisa*, the famous oil painting by Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci. The work takes on a dreamy and mysterious temperament as the artist has used rich colors, to convey the complex light and shadow transitions of the oil painting.

As a form of fine art born in combustion, ceramics are displayed in the fire space, which represents fervor.

The porcelain form of the scroll of *Lantingji Xu* (Preface to the Collection of Poems of the Orchid Pavilion) by fourth-century calligrapher Wang Xizhi impresses the audience with its volume and novelty. Made by Professor He Qin of the Jingdezhen Ceramic University, it integrates the Xuan paper used for calligraphy with clay and glaze, which is molded, carved, sculpted and painted, conveying the harmony of simplicity and complexity, and the interplay of rusticity and technique.

The mortise-and-tenon technique is shown to good effect in the space dedicated to wood, while tea and wine making culture is on display in the water space.

Wang Yin, cultural counselor of the Chinese embassy in France, says that China places great importance on the protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, and the exhibition showcases the achievements of heritage protection, inheritance, and innovation in the country, which has breathed new life into ancient crafts through contemporary design.

On the eve of the Paris Olympics, the exhibition intends to show visitors from around the world the vitality of Chinese intangible cultural heritage, the creativity of Chinese designers, and the beauty of China's traditional culture, Wang adds.

Sylvie Correard, CEO of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, says the exhibition has introduced beautiful items to the Paris audiences, giving them an opportunity to discover and understand different aspects of Chinese cultural output. Correard adds that she hopes there will be more opportunities in the future to work with artists from China.

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## Zimbabwe seeks stronger ties with China in creative sector

HARARE — Zimbabwe is seeking to elevate cooperation with China in creative arts to boost the sector and promote cultural ties between the two sides, says Napoleon Nyanhi, the director of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

"Many of these exchanges take place in the areas of live performances, including music, dance and instrumentation. We would like to see more collaboration in other spheres of the arts, such as fashion design, filmmaking and television productions," said Nyanhi in an interview on the sidelines of the first Harare Forum for Africa and Academic Week, which concluded in

the Zimbabwe capital last week.

He notes that the Chinese-funded Dreamstar program, Zimbabwe's largest talent search competition for young people, has been pivotal in uplifting Zimbabwean artists in various genres.

"We are excited about the cooperation between Zimbabwe and China, especially in the arts and cultural development," Nyanhi says. "Specifically the Dreamstar program, which has been running for over 10 years. We have witnessed almost 300 artists go from Zimbabwe to China to learn and bring the Chinese work ethic and performance culture back to Zimbabwe."

The Dreamstar competition is organized by the China-Zimbabwe Exchange Center, an organization dedicated to promoting ties between China and Zimbabwe, with the support of the Chinese embassy, Chinese businesses and communities in Zimbabwe and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

Noting the importance of the arts sector to the economy, the Zimbabwean government is investing in the film industry to help filmmakers develop their skills, according to Nyanhi.

"We would also like to encourage and invite Chinese filmmakers to come to Zimbabwe and participate in this development," he says.

"We would like Chinese producers to come and film their shows here and to use some Zimbabweans in their crews along with Chinese crews for culture and skills exchange."

Nyanhi says that Chinese productions, such as the TV series, *Journey to the West*, have been influential in Zimbabwe, a sign of positive development for China-Zimbabwe cultural engagement.

"We would love for more of our Zimbabwean productions to be able to do the same thing, whether animations, children's programs, TV series or movies, so we can create more love between Zimbabweans and Chinese by intermingling our cultures and

arts," he says. "That way we can do more work and business and host more friendship activities between the countries to better understand each other's cultures."

More Chinese cultural products and arts have been marketed in Zimbabwe and we aim to export its arts and crafts to China as well, he says.

"We need to send more of our culture and arts outside of Zimbabwe to China to see what we do here. We have a rich national culture," Nyanhi says, adding that art is a significant contributor to bringing the two sides closer.

XINHUA

## LIFE

## CULTURAL JOURNEY

## Award-winning protector still passionate for Great Wall

Dedicated visionary shares the culture and resources of the historical structure with photos, researches and the founding of a society, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Xinzhou, Shanxi province.



**From top:** Yang Junfeng stands before Pingxingguan, a Great Wall section, in 2017. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A section of the Wall runs across the green mountains in Xinzhou, Shanxi province. Winter view of the Yezhukou section of the Wall in Xinzhou. More than 200 photos by Yang are on display at a travel promotion event in the city. **Below:** Yanmen Pass is a majestic view in winter. PHOTOS BY YANG JUNFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Yang Junfeng's eyes light up and a childlike smile spreads across his face the moment he sits down and shares his experiences of the Great Wall. Although gray hairs have sprung all over his head, the man in his 60s has a sturdy build and is full of vigor, a result of his years of outdoor excursions.

He speaks fast, sometimes even tripping over his words as if trying to cram as much information about the Great Wall as he can in a limited time to an audience during the opening ceremony in early July of a Great Wall-themed tourist program in Daixian county, Xinzhou city, Shanxi province.

"There's a watchtower that has a carved floral pattern dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and you can also find a stone tablet that bears traffic instructions," Yang says about the distinctive features of the Yanmen Pass in Xinzhou, an important point of the Great Wall that runs more than 20,000 kilometers on the northern fringes of the country, which defended Chinese empires.

Great Wall resources are scattered across 15 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, including Hebei, Beijing and Shanxi. The National Cultural Heritage Administration has identified 4,266 points and segments of the Great Wall from various dynasties in Shanxi, spanning about 1,400 kilometers.

Xinzhou has the largest distribution of the Great Wall in Shanxi, with historical records indicating that 13 of its 14 counties and districts host constructed sections.

According to recent surveys by related cultural relics departments, there are 248.8 kilometers of well-preserved sections of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall in Xinzhou, as well as 229.9 kilometers of well-preserved sections of Wall structures before the Ming, such as the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) and Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534).

Having spent more than three decades trekking to almost all of the existing parts of the Wall in Xinzhou and recording precious images with his camera, Yang has come to know the historic structure like the back of his hand.

"I haven't counted how many photos I have taken because I have been continuing to record it," Yang says.

At the tourism season launch ceremony, 202 of his photos were on display, exposing visitors to the magnificence of the Yanmen Pass and the great changes surrounding it.

#### Inspired to study

Born and raised in Xinzhou, Yang remembers that as a child, he would stare at the rammed earth-made lumps as he herded cattle.

As he got older, he began to understand the profound history and culture behind the "lumps". Yang took a train in 1991 to Jiayuguan, a well-known pass at the western end of the Great Wall dating back to the Ming Dynasty in northwestern China's Gansu province.

"It was a long trip that took days," recalls Yang, then working as a reporter at a local newspaper.

On the journey, he came across Gao Fengshan, the curator of the Jiayuguan Great Wall Museum. Yang remembers how Gao held out his business card and told him that Shanxi possesses many Great Wall resources.

"It inspired me to study them," Yang says. Since ancient times, Shanxi's geographical features of mountains and rivers have made it strategically important for military affairs. It served as a border between the nomadic peoples of the grasslands and the agricultural

"I hope to do my part in protecting the Great Wall, help more people understand its immense value and curb its destruction."

Yang Junfeng, a Xinzhou local

peoples of the Central China Plains, as well as a place of cultural exchanges between the Han and other ethnic groups, he explains.

To rigorously protect the area around the capital, the Ming Dynasty constructed inner and outer walls, both of which intersected in Xinzhou, Yang says.

As he surveyed the Great Wall sections, Yang says he was pained to see they had suffered damage.

"The northwestern part of Shanxi has often seen strong winds and abundant sandstorms, which cause natural damage," Yang says.

Additionally, many sections of the Wall and fortresses are located in sparsely populated mountainous areas, where villages are generally poor.

After the Great Wall lost its military defense function, the impoverished villagers living nearby used its materials to build houses, causing significant damage, he observed.

"Worse still, the hard access to those off-beaten tracks made it more difficult to detect and address the damages to the Wall," he says.

In 2000, Yang spotted a modern concrete road being built within the ancient section and became very anxious.

"It was a big compromise to the cultural relics and historical appearance," Yang says.

He took immediate action by reporting the problem to a local news outlet, which grabbed the attention of the local authorities.

It didn't take long before modern construction was called to a halt and gave way to a gravel path matching the surroundings.

In 2009, Yang founded the Xinzhou Great Wall Society, which is under management by the local cultural heritage administration.

The society has since played a positive role in Great Wall surveys, studies, promotion and protection, delivering many publications that provide crucial decision-making references for local preservation and development efforts of the Great Wall.

#### Positive changes

The Great Wall section in Xinzhou boasts rich cultural heritage and sizable sections that stretch the area, making its protection challenging, Yang notes.

"I hope to do my part in protecting the Great Wall, help more people understand its immense value and curb its destruction," Yang says.

Over the years, Yang has dug into the history and culture of Yanmen Pass, contributing to the area's tourism development.

He has also supported major publicity events, such as Yanmen Pass-themed photography competitions, which have helped put the area on the tourist map.

Du Juan, a local writer, joined Yang's team five years ago.

"I had just finished writing about the culture of counties along the Yellow River and Yang informed me of the grand theme of the Great Wall in Xinzhou," Du says.

Du has since explored the Great Wall sections across Xinzhou, as well as those in Shaanxi province and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

"Those journeys led me to discover that Xinzhou has amazing, diverse pieces of the Wall," she says.

She has written essays about the Great Wall and stories about guardians in Xinzhou that have put a human touch on the wall, endearing it to the public.

Du is now focusing on the development of a national Great Wall cultural park and the roles of culture and tourism in rural vitalization along the Wall.

In 2015, Xinzhou incorporated the Great Wall into its 2016-20 plan for national economy and social development. Two years later, the city proposed to continue tapping into the Wall's resources and value.

Xinzhou has also built a Great Wall museum and launched maintenance projects in multiple sites, such as historical military campsites.

Key sections of the Great Wall have been marked for protection and officers are appointed in these efforts.

Yang has noticed the positive changes.

He took three photos of Yanmen Pass from the same angle over 20 years, showing the ecological changes and sharing them with others.

Barren, snow-covered mountains jump into view in the first photo taken in the early 2000s, evoking a sense of harsh desolation. The presence of green trees emerges on the mountain slopes in the second photo taken 10 years ago.

In the third photo, taken last year, the trees have grown into a lush forest.

"The Great Wall used to be desolate and imposing. Now it has become gentler and full of vitality," Yang says.

To continuously improve the ecological environment of the Yanmen Pass scenic area and the surrounding Great Wall, Daixian county has implemented afforestation projects in a mountainous area of more than 2,600 hectares in recent years, where pine, spruce, wild apricot and elm trees have been planted.

Yang's contribution has earned him multiple accolades, including the Ten Great Wall Guardian award by the Xinzhou government. "The Great Wall has given me a mission and greatly enriched my life," Yang says, adding that the awards serve as an incentive for him to carry on.

He says he will keep enrolling people in the Xinzhou Great Wall Society so they can join in the efforts for Great Wall protection and studies.

Yang is now working on compiling years of Great Wall studies into books for the public to understand and appreciate its charm.

"Hopefully, I can offer some useful information on Great Wall protection and utilization," he says.

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## Singers battle to reinvigorate ancient 'slow rap'

HAIKOU — With dynamic beats and catchy lyrics, singers battle each other onstage with performances that echo modern-day rap. Except this is something much older with very different roots.

Danzhou *diaosheng*, or Danzhou Rhyming Sounds, is a traditional song-and-dance genre that originated in the city of Danzhou, located northwest of Hainan province.

Nicknamed "slow rap" by the locals due to its slower rhythm, this national intangible cultural heritage dates back over 2,000 years to the ancient Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24) and remains popular today.

"The music makes you happy because the melodies are cheerful. When you feel sulky, rapping the songs can lift your negative mood," says Tang Baoshan, a local inheritor of Danzhou *diaosheng*, explaining why it is still popular.

"Sometimes people sing the same songs for hours," he adds.

Locals hold competitions and stage performances, often with no participation limit, attracting anywhere from a dozen people to tens of thousands.

"The scenes are quite spectacular and everyone wants to win the rap battle," says Tang.

Tang, 75, started learning the folk songs as a child. He soon demonstrated a talent for it.

Later he found a job at a local quarry where he used to sing while working.

Encouraged by his colleagues, Tang began composing songs in 1976, of which at least 13 won local prizes. Three years later, he won the *diaosheng* competition and rose to fame.

However, as time passed, he saw fewer young people wanting to learn the art.

"I used to earn a living by singing," Tang recalls. "For the younger generation, however, the income was too low to attract them."

In 2006, Danzhou *diaosheng* was included in the first national intangible cultural heritage list.

To restore the art, Tang joined local experts to compile a book of songs they found by knocking on doors in local communities.

More than 1,000 songs were thus recorded.

The city of Danzhou has also incorporated the art form into the curriculum of primary schools, hosted art and cultural events, and promoted it at tourist attractions.

Social media has also helped popularize the ancient art. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tang composed a rap song calling on people to protect themselves, which went viral.

Thanks to these efforts, about 85 percent of Danzhou's residents are familiar with and love the art.

Each of the 16 townships is home to at least three troupes, with the city boasting more than 140 troupes of 20 or more members.

"Danzhou *diaosheng* has developed. And every village has a big team," Tang says, adding that on the occasion of festivals, weddings or marriages, people stage large-scale performances with men and women standing on both sides and singing against each other.

Tang directs around 100 *diaosheng* operas each year, with more than 250 performances staged, attracting an audience of tens of millions.

He has also trained more than 100 rappers, actors and actresses, bringing the art to every village.

It is now a favored pastime for the local people.

Tang notes that in the future, he will compose not only in the local dialect but also in Mandarin and English to allow more people to appreciate it.

"Danzhou *diaosheng* has thousands of years of history and is an inseparable part of our Danzhou culture.

"It will never be erased because people pass it down from generation to generation," Tang says.

"We will make it better and keep passing it on," he adds.

XINHUA

## LIFE

# Future stars handed keys to success

Master pianist shares his knowledge as he encourages talent of young learners, **Chen Nan** reports.



**Above:** Pianist Lang Lang gives a recital at the Beijing Performing Arts Centre on Wednesday, playing pieces by Chopin, Robert Schumann and Gabriel Faure. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Below:** Lang coaches Xu Ziyuan during his master class at the NCPA Taihu Stage Art Centre on Wednesday. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

Amid the scorching summer temperatures in Beijing, parents take their children to the NCPA Taihu Stage Art Centre, a complex in Tongzhou district, which is part of the National Centre for the Performing Arts.

During Wednesday afternoon, the air hummed with anticipation as attendees settled into their seats in the concert hall, their murmurs subdued in reverence for the imminent arrival of Lang Lang, a pianist renowned for his virtuosity and artistry in the world of classical music.

He is also the idol of many piano learners in China, especially children.

At this afternoon's unique event, the stage is not set for a mere performance but for a profound exchange of musical knowledge and inspiration — a master class led by the pianist himself. The participants, chosen from a pool of aspiring young musicians, include three children of varying ages and an extraordinary young blind man who navigates the world of music through touch and sound.

"I am very excited to be back here. The first student is going to perform the first movement of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 13*. I played the music piece many times when I was a child but I have never played it onstage," says Lang.

The first student was Xu Ziyuan, a teenage girl with hair cascading down her shoulders. Her fingers trembled slightly as she sat at the bench, her feet dangling above the pedals. Lang listened to her performance, nodding to the rhythm.

"The piano is not just an instru-

ment — it's a storyteller," Lang says to the girl and the audience. "Each note you play is a word in a tale you are weaving. Feel the emotion behind the music and let your heart guide your fingers."

"For the higher pitches, you play the piano like a soprano singing. For the lower pitches, you should play the keys with a bigger sound, like an earthquake," he tells Ziyuan.

Nine-year-old Shao Youran walked to the piano next. She played Chopin's *Nocturne in C-sharp Minor*, which is a short piece — about 3.5 minutes long. Lang watched with keen interest, occasionally nodding in approval as Shao tackled it with youthful exuberance.

"You have the spirit of a performer. Now, let's shape these phrases together," says Lang, pointing to the score. "Imagine you are sitting on a vast land, watching stars sparkling at night."

"The sounds you make with the keys should bring a feeling of dancing, clear and lively," he adds.

With animated gestures, Lang demonstrated how subtle changes in dynamics and tempo could transform the technical exercise into a heartfelt expression.

The third on stage was Zhou Hongyu, also 9 years old, who looked a bit serious. He sat with a quiet intensity, his fingers poised over the keys as he prepared to delve into the first movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major, K. 545*. Lang, leaning in closer, closed his eyes briefly to immerse himself in the beautiful melody.

"I am impressed. You made a slight mistake but you dealt with it



calmly," says Lang. "I am also impressed because you have a gift for capturing emotion. Now, let's explore the depths of this piece together."

"Let's talk about Mozart first. He was a child prodigy. He was also liberal to some degree. I guess that he was a party boy and in his art, he wanted to make people happy," says Lang. "So when we play Mozart's music, we should be imaginative, not limited. His music is a whole world, not just a small room. We should make a bold interpretation and be 'naughty' when we play his music."

Together, they embarked on a

journey through the piece again, dissecting each passage with meticulous attention to detail. Lang's playful banter and encouragement transformed Hongyu's nervousness into confident strides across the keyboard, eliciting laughter from both himself and the audience.

Throughout the session, Lang's wit and humor interjected moments of lightness and relaxation, particularly with the three students, who were initially nervous.

"At last, I want to introduce a special friend, Liu Hao, who has been learning with me for a very

"I want to share with the children that master classes are not just about techniques but bring a transformative journey of self-discovery, a glimpse into the boundless possibilities that music offers."

Lang Lang, pianist



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cal talent at the age of 3. His mother Kang Guiqin has been devoting herself to helping her son to learn the piano after sensing his talent.

"We not only studied but also performed onstage together. He works very hard and makes progress fast. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, sighted or blind. What matters is the passion within you, waiting to be unleashed," says Lang.

In 2021, Lang opened his studio at the NCPA Taihu Stage Art Centre, where his photos, albums and trophies are displayed, including an award certificate from 1989, which shows the pianist at 7 years old, winning a piano competition in his hometown in Liaoning province.

Since then, he has been giving master classes to children when he returns to Beijing, despite his hectic schedule.

"I want to share with the children that master classes are not just about techniques but bring a transformative journey of self-discovery, a glimpse into the boundless possibilities that music offers," he says.

On Wednesday, Lang made his debut at the Beijing Performing Arts Centre near the Grand Canal in Tongzhou, one of the most important waterways in ancient China.

During his recital, the pianist played works by renowned composers, including Robert Schumann's *Kreisleriana, Op. 16*, Gabriel Faure's *Pavane, Op. 50*, and 12 of Chopin's mazurkas.

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## Folk melodies showcasing traditional art in tune with tourism

YINCHUAN — Sa Lina, 38, has juggled a hectic schedule recently, performing Hua'er, a type of folk song popular in northwestern China, not only in her hometown in Ningxia Hui autonomous region but also in the neighboring Gansu and Qinghai provinces.

"Over the past two years, the link between culture and tourism has strengthened, creating more opportunities for local folk singers like me to showcase traditional art to tourists," says Sa, who has devoted herself to Hua'er for almost 20 years.

Hua'er, which means flower in Chinese, uses a distinct high pitch and has been exceedingly popular in China's Qinghai and Gansu provinces, and Ningxia Hui and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions, for hundreds of years. The Chinese folk song genre, also known as a type of "mountain song", was inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.



**Left:** Sa Lina, a regional inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage of Hua'er, a type of folk song, in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region. **Right:** Sa lectures students about the art form. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

Sa was born in Ningxia's Haiyuan county, dubbed "the hometown of Hua'er". After graduation, she returned to Haiyuan to join a local art troupe and soon became an apprentice under Ma Handong, a well-known Hua'er singer.

In 2013, she was named an inheritor of Hua'er, becoming the youngest inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage at the regional level at the time.

To actively promote Hua'er, platforms and audiences are essential,



Sa says, adding that Hua'er and tourism make the perfect combination and their synergy can boost the incomes of tourist sites and expand the influence of Hua'er.

Efforts have been made in this regard and many music festivals were

held at tourist sites across Ningxia during this year's May Day holiday.

"We chose a performance arena close to the display and sales areas of local commodities and snacks, which better connects folk culture and consumption," says Zhang Ying-

qing, director of the tourism department in the county of Tongxin in Ningxia.

According to Zhang, a three-day event held in Tongxin during the holiday gained popularity among tourists and locals, attracting more than 10,000 people in a single night.

Hua'er has also been integrated into music dramas, operas and dance dramas. For example, in *Shanhaiqing*, an opera adapted from a famous Chinese anti-poverty TV series, Hua'er plays an important role.

"Infused with modern elements, the traditional art of Hua'er can cater to the evolving tastes of listeners," says Sa. "Art should not only be inherited but also innovated."

According to Zhang, a Hua'er stage play based on local revolutionary stories will be performed in a local 4A-level scenic spot. "We really hope the traditional art can help boost the popularity of local tourism," he says.

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