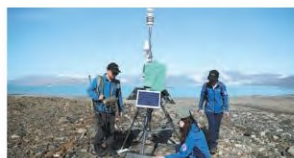


Arctic attraction

Researchers carry out fieldwork at Yellow River Station in Norway

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Recycling market benefits environment

CHINA, PAGE 4



Best way forward

Championing five principles a timely response for world peace

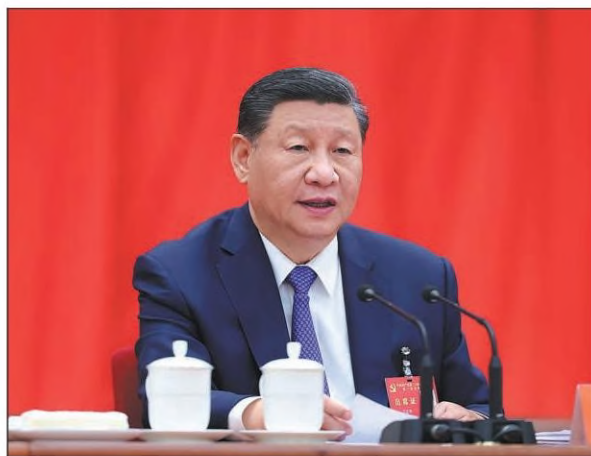
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CHINA DAILY

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PARTY CHARTS REFORM COURSE

CPC Central Committee vows to enhance higher-standard opening-up, expand foreign cooperation



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, delivers a speech at the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee in Beijing. The plenary session was held from Monday through Thursday. JU PENG / XINHUA



General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee Xi Jinping arrives to attend the third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee in Beijing. He is followed by Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi, who are the other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the 20th CPC Central Committee. YUE YUEWEI / XINHUA

By CAO DESHENG
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China aims to build a high-standard socialist market economy by 2035 by enhancing the role of market mechanisms in the economy in order to create a fairer and more dynamic market environment, according to a communique issued on Thursday after a key reform-themed meeting of the Communist Party of China.

The goal is part of the reform priorities that the CPC worked out at the third plenary session of its 20th Central Committee, which was held from Monday to Thursday in Beijing.

A resolution on further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization was adopted at the session. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, delivered explanatory remarks on the draft version of the resolution at the meeting.

The highly anticipated meeting came as multiple reform policies are needed to address the challenges on the path toward Chinese modernization, with an increasing emphasis on coordinating development and security.

The communique said that restrictions on the market will be lifted while effective regulation will be ensured to better maintain order in the market and remedy market failures.

It is essential to ensure that all economic entities have equal access to factors of production in accordance with the law, participate in market competition on a level playing field, and are protected by law as equals, the communique said.

In improving macroeconomic regulation, the communique said that China will deepen coordinated reforms in the fiscal, tax, financial and other major sectors and enhance the consistency of macroeconomic policies.

The third plenary sessions of the CPC Central Committee have often launched major reforms.

During the third plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978, when the decision was

made to embark on reform and opening-up, China initiated reforms to transition from a planned economy to a market economy, continuously advancing market-oriented reforms since then, with the role of market mechanisms in resource allocation steadily strengthening.

Particularly since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, China has comprehensively deepened reforms, attached great importance to the optimization of the business environment, advanced reforms to delegate powers, streamlined administration and optimized government services, and continuously relaxed market access.

Ouyang Yaofu, an associate research fellow at the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that reform and opening-up in China are always ongoing and will never end.

China's journey from a planned economy to a market economy through market-oriented reforms has been of immense significance not only for China itself, but also offers valuable lessons for other countries, Ouyang said.

Describing opening-up as a defining feature of Chinese modernization, the communique said that China will promote reform through opening-up. By leveraging the strength of its huge market, China will enhance its openness while expanding international cooperation, and develop a new system of higher-standard open economy, it said.

The communique also underlined the need to steadily expand institutional opening-up, deepen foreign trade structural reform, further reform the management systems for inward and outward investment, and refine the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

At the session, the CPC Central Committee also made systematic plans for further deepening reform with the emphasis on promoting high-quality economic development, supporting all-around technological innovation, promoting integrated urban-rural development, advancing whole-process

See *Session*, page 3

EDITORIAL

A strong guarantee is made to achieve national rejuvenation

By CHINA DAILY

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China concluded in Beijing on Thursday, having charted a new course for the nation's foreseeable future under the guidance of CPC Central Committee General Secretary Xi Jinping.

This pivotal gathering of the leading decision-makers of the country underscored the Party's unwavering commitment to deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization, and set the stage for the establishment of a prosperous, equitable and sustainable society.

The session reaffirmed the Party's confidence in the nation's development path. The approval of the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization is a testament to the Party's adaptability and forward-thinking approach to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

As the strategic foresight and determination displayed in the document indicate, the Party's commitment to comprehensive reform and high-standard opening-up, which has been instrumental in steering China through the intricate dynamics of both global and domestic environments in the past, remains unwavering.

At the heart of the session was the recognition that China is at a critical juncture in its journey toward modernization and national rejuvenation and it needs to maintain a delicate balance between development and security, while advancing socialist democracy and the rule of law, and enhancing the welfare of the people and environmental protection.

The approach set out transcends mere economic growth. It is a holistic vision that seeks to harmonize economic development with social progress and environmental stewardship, with deepened reform the cornerstone for Chinese modernization.

It calls for the new development philosophy to steer reform that deepens supply-side structural reform, improves incentive and constraint mechanisms for promoting high-quality development, and strives to create new growth drivers and strengths. All relevant departments are thus to make all-out efforts to improve the institutions and mechanisms to foster new quality productive forces in line with local conditions.

To that end, coordinated efforts are needed to promote integrated reform of institutions and mechanisms pertaining to education, science and technology, and human resources, and improve the new system for mobilizing resources nationwide to make key technological breakthroughs, so as to boost the overall performance of China's innovation system.

Notably, as the document indicates, the Party is clearheaded about the risks and uncertainties the country faces, and relevant departments are called on to implement various measures to prevent and defuse risks stemming from the real estate sector, local government debt and small and medium-sized financial institutions.

Looking ahead, the session outlined a visionary road map through 2035, with goals including the establishment of a high-level socialist market economy, significant advancements in governance, and the basic realization of socialist modernization. By 2029, the 80th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, the Party aims to have accomplished the reform tasks set out in the decision, laying a solid foundation for achieving these long-term objectives. This ambitious timeline underscores the Party's confidence that the country is heading in the right direction.

Essentially, as the session stressed, the CPC Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership with General Secretary Xi Jinping at the core are the fundamental guarantee for the deepening of reforms. As China continues on its transformative journey, the decisions made at this plenary session will not only play a crucial role in shaping the nation's trajectory in the years to come, but also the shaping of a more harmonious and inclusive world.

EU should withdraw tariffs on Chinese electric cars

The European Commission imposed additional tariffs of up to 37.6 percent on Chinese electric vehicle makers on July 4. Compared to the rates pre-disclosed on June 12, several provisional duties were slightly reduced based on comments submitted by interested parties on the accuracy of the calcu-



lations, according to a statement from the commission. It said the provisional duties effective from

July 5 will apply for a maximum of four months. Within that time, a final decision has to be taken on definitive duties through a vote by European Union member states. Once adopted, the definitive duties will be in place for five years.

The European Commission's measure seeks to safeguard its

industries in the face of the swift expansion of Chinese-manufactured electric vehicles in the world market. This move not only represents clear protectionism but also breaches the regulations of the World Trade Organization, and poses a threat to the German automotive industry.

Electric vehicles in China are

popular with consumers because their unique design and technology are in line with consumer preferences, not because of their low cost.

Imposing tariffs on Chinese-made electric cars is detrimental for Europe's auto industry and overall economic growth. Firstly, these tariffs will negatively impact European consumers by driving up prices.

See *Trade*, page 3

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DOCUMENT

Communique of the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on July 18, 2024

The 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China convened its third plenary session in Beijing from July 15 to 18, 2024.

A total of 199 members and 165 alternate members of the Central Committee attended the session. Members of the Standing Committee of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and leading officials from other relevant departments were present at the meeting in a non-voting capacity. Some of our colleagues working at the primary level and a number of experts and scholars who were delegates to the 20th National Party Congress also attended the meeting in a non-voting capacity.

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee presided over the meeting. General Secretary of the Central Committee Xi Jinping delivered important addresses.

At the session, the Central Committee heard and discussed a report on the work of the Political Bureau, presented by Xi Jinping on behalf of the Political Bureau, and considered and adopted the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization. Xi Jinping delivered explanatory remarks on the draft version of the Resolution.

At the session, the Central Committee fully affirmed the work of the Political Bureau since the second plenary session of the 20th Central Committee. It was unanimously agreed that in the face of a grave and complex international environment and the arduous tasks of advancing reform and development and ensuring stability at home, the Political Bureau has secured progress in the following respects:

- earnestly implementing the guiding principles from the 20th National Party Congress and the first and second plenary sessions of the 20th Central Committee;
- fully and faithfully applying the new development philosophy on all fronts;
- adhering to the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability;
- implementing the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy in a coordinated way; [The Five-Sphere Integrated Plan is to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement. The Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy is to make comprehensive moves to build a modern socialist country, deepen reform, advance law-based governance, and strengthen Party self-governance.]
- giving full consideration to both domestic and international imperatives;
- ensuring both development and security;
- promoting high-quality development;
- taking further steps to advance and plan for the deepening of reform across the board;
- advancing socialist democracy and rule of law;
- improving public communication and cultural work;
- ensuring the people's wellbeing and protecting the environment;
- safeguarding national security and social stability;
- promoting the development of national defense and the armed forces;
- advancing work related to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan;
- pursuing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics; and
- strengthening full and rigorous Party self-governance.

As a result of these efforts, we have achieved economic recovery and growth and have made firm strides in building a modern socialist country in all respects.

At the session, the Central Committee gave a highly positive assessment of the success and achievements we have made in comprehensively deepening reform since the beginning of the new era and studied the issue of further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. It was stated that the present and the near future constitute a critical period for our endeavor to build a great country and move toward national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernization. Chinese modernization has been advanced continuously through reform and opening up, and it will surely embrace broader horizons through further reform and opening up. We must purposefully give more prominence to reform and further deepen reform comprehensively with a view to advancing Chinese modernization in order to better deal with the complex developments both at home and abroad, adapt to the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, and live up to the new expectations of our people.

It was stressed that, to further deepen reform comprehensively, we must stay committed to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development and fully implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. We must thoroughly study and implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's new ideas, viewpoints, and conclusions on comprehensively deepening reform and fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts. We must adhere to the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability and continue to free our minds, seek truth from facts, move with the times, and take a realistic and pragmatic approach, as we work to further unleash and develop the productive forces and tap into and boost the vitality of our society. Keeping in mind both domestic and international imperatives, we will ensure coordinated implementation of the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy. Regarding economic structural reform as the spearhead and greater social fairness and justice and improvements in the people's wellbeing as our ultimate objectives, we will make our reforms more integrated, focused, and effective. We will work to better adapt the relations of production to the productive forces, the superstructure to the economic base, and national governance to social development, so as to provide strong impetus and institutional support for Chinese modernization.

It was stated that the overall objectives of further deepening reform comprehensively are to continue improving and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernize China's system and capacity for governance. By 2035, we will have finished building a high-standard socialist market economy in all respects, further improved the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, generally modernized our system and capacity for governance, and basically realized socialist modernization. All of this will lay a solid foundation for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects by the middle of this century. To steadily advance reform, we will focus on building a high-standard socialist market economy, advancing whole-process people's democracy, developing a strong socialist culture in China, raising the people's quality of life, building a Beautiful China, advancing the Peaceful China Initiative to a higher level, and improving the Party's capacity for leadership and long-term governance. The reform tasks laid out in this resolution shall be completed by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2029.

It was stressed that, to further deepen reform comprehensively, we must review and apply the valuable experience we have gained from our efforts to deepen reform comprehensively since the launch of reform and opening up, particularly in the new era. We must implement the principles of upholding the Party's overall leadership, taking a people-centered approach, upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, taking institution building as our main task, exercising law-based governance on all fronts, and applying systems thinking.

At the session, the Central Committee made systematic plans for further deepening reform comprehensively with the emphasis on building a high-standard socialist market economy, promoting high-quality economic development, supporting all-around innovation, improving macroeconomic governance, promoting integrated urban-rural development, pursuing high-standard opening up, advancing whole-process people's democracy, promoting socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics, deepening reform in the cultural sector, ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing,

ing, deepening reform in ecological conservation, modernizing China's national security system and capacity, deepening national defense and military reform, and improving the Party's leadership in further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization.

It was stated that a high-standard socialist market economy will provide an important guarantee for Chinese modernization. We must better leverage the role of the market, foster a fairer and more dynamic market environment, and make resource allocation as efficient and productive as possible. We will lift restrictions on the market while ensuring effective regulation, striving to better maintain order in the market and remedy market failures. By doing so, we will ensure smooth flows in the national economy and unleash the internal driving forces and creativity of our society as a whole. We will unwaveringly consolidate and develop the public sector and unwaveringly encourage, support, and guide the development of the non-public sector. We will ensure that economic entities under all forms of ownership have equal access to factors of production in accordance with the law, compete in the market on an equal footing, and are protected by the law as equals, thus enabling entities under different forms of ownership to complement each other and develop side by side. We will build a unified national market and refine the systems underpinning the market economy.

It was stated that high-quality development is our primary task in building China into a modern socialist country in all respects. It is essential that we use the new development philosophy to steer reform and ground our efforts in the new stage of development. We must deepen supply-side structural reform, improve incentive and constraint mechanisms for promoting high-quality development, and strive to create new growth drivers and strengths. We will improve the institutions and mechanisms for fostering new quality productive forces in line with local conditions, for promoting full integration between the real economy and the digital economy, for developing the service sector, for modernizing infrastructure, and for enhancing the resilience and security of industrial and supply chains.

It was stated that education, science and technology, and talent function as a basic and strategic underpinning for Chinese modernization. We must fully implement the strategy of invigorating China through science and education, the strategy of developing a quality workforce, and the innovation-driven development strategy, make coordinated efforts to promote integrated reform of institutions and mechanisms pertaining to education, science and technology, and human resources, and improve the new system for mobilizing resources nationwide to make key technological breakthroughs. These efforts will help boost the overall performance of China's innovation system. We will deepen comprehensive reform in education, deepen structural scientific and technological reform, and deepen institutional reforms for talent development.

It was stated that sound macro regulation, along with effective governance by the government, is essential for ensuring that we can fully harness the institutional strengths of our socialist market economy. It is, therefore, vital that we improve our macro regulation systems. We must pursue coordinated reforms in the fiscal, tax, financial, and other major sectors and work to enhance the consistency of macro policy orientation. We will improve the national strategic planning system and policy coordination mechanisms, deepen reform of the fiscal and taxation systems, further reform the financial system, and improve mechanisms for implementing the coordinated regional development strategy.

It was stated that integrated urban and rural development is essential to Chinese modernization. We must coordinate our efforts in new industrialization, new urbanization, and all-around rural revitalization, pursue greater urban-rural integration in planning, development, and governance, and promote equal exchanges and two-way flows of production factors between the cities and the countryside, so as to narrow the disparities between the two and promote their common prosperity and development. We will improve the institutions and mechanisms for advancing new urbanization, consolidate and improve the basic rural operation system, improve supporting systems to strengthen agriculture, benefit farmers, and enrich rural areas, and deepen reform of the land system.

It was stated that opening up is a defining feature of Chinese modernization. We must remain committed to the basic state policy of opening to the outside world and continue to promote reform through opening up. Leveraging the strengths of China's enormous market, we will enhance our capacity for opening up while expanding cooperation with other countries and develop new institutions for a higher-standard open economy. We will steadily expand institutional opening up, deepen the foreign trade structural reform, further reform the management systems for inward and outward investment, improve planning for regional opening up, and refine the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

It was stated that developing whole-process people's democracy is integral to Chinese modernization. We must firmly stay on the path of socialist political advancement with Chinese characteristics and uphold and improve our country's foundational, basic, and important political systems. We must diversify the forms of democracy at all levels and ensure that the principle of the people running the country is manifested in concrete and visible ways in all aspects of China's political and social activities. We will strengthen the institutions through which the people run the country, improve the mechanisms for consultative democracy, enhance the institutions of democracy at the primary level, and build a broad united front.

It was stated that the rule of law provides an important guarantee for Chinese modernization. We must ensure full implementation of the Constitution and uphold its authority, coordinate the reforms to promote sound legislation, law enforcement, administration of justice, and observance of the law, and improve the mechanisms for ensuring that all are equal before the law, so as to promote socialist rule of law, safeguard social fairness and justice, and see that all work of the state is carried out under the rule of law. We will deepen reforms in legislation, advance law-based government administration, improve the institutions and mechanisms for impartial law enforcement and administration of justice, refine the mechanisms for building a law-based society, and strengthen the rule of law in foreign-related affairs.

It was stated that Chinese modernization is the modernization of material and cultural-ethical advancement. We must boost our cultural confidence and work to develop advanced socialist culture, promote revolutionary culture, and carry forward fine traditional Chinese culture. We must stay abreast of the latest trends in information technology, cultivate a vast pool of talented personnel in the field of culture, and ignite the cultural creativity of the entire nation. We will improve the responsibility system for ideological work, refine the mechanisms for supplying cultural products and services, improve the system for comprehensive cyberspace governance, and establish a more effective international communication system.

It was stated that ensuring and enhancing the people's wellbeing in the course of development is one of the major tasks of Chinese modernization. Striving to do everything within our capacity in this regard, we must refine the system for guaranteeing basic public services, work to provide inclusive public services, meet essential needs, and provide a cushion for those most in need, and focus on resolving the most practical problems that are of the greatest and most direct concern to the people, so as to meet people's aspirations for a better life. We will improve the income distribution system, the employment-first policy, and the social security system, further reform the medical and healthcare systems, and improve the systems for facilitating population development and providing related services.

It was stated that Chinese modernization is the modernization of harmony between humanity and nature. We must improve ecological conservation systems, make concerted efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, pursue green development, and boost economic growth, actively respond to climate

change, and move faster to improve the systems and mechanisms for applying the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. We will improve the basic systems for ecological conservation, environmental governance systems, and mechanisms for green and low-carbon development.

It was stated that national security provides a pivotal foundation for ensuring steady and continued progress in Chinese modernization. We must fully apply a holistic approach to national security, improve the institutions and mechanisms for safeguarding national security, and ensure that high-quality development and greater security reinforce each other, so as to effectively safeguard the country's stability and security over the long term. We will improve the national security system, the public security governance mechanisms, the social governance system, and the mechanisms for ensuring national security in foreign-related affairs.

It was stated that modernizing national defense and the armed forces is an integral part of Chinese modernization. We must maintain the Party's absolute leadership over the people's armed forces and fully implement the strategy of strengthening the military through reform to provide a strong guarantee for realizing the centenary goal of the People's Liberation Army in 2027 and achieving basic modernization of national defense and the armed forces. We will improve the systems and mechanisms for leading and managing the people's armed forces, further reform joint operations systems, and deepen military-civilian reforms.

It was stressed that the Party's leadership is the fundamental guarantee for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization. We must acquire a deep understanding of the decisive significance of establishing Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and establishing the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era; be more conscious of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership; stay confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics; and uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and uphold the Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership. We must maintain keen awareness of the need to use the Party's own transformation to steer social transformation and continue to apply the spirit of reform and strict standards in conducting Party self-governance. We will improve the systems and regulations for the Party's self-reform and continue working to purify, improve, renew, and excel ourselves. All this will enable our Party to remain the strong leadership core in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must uphold the Party Central Committee's centralized, unified leadership over the endeavor to further deepen reform across the board; deepen institutional reforms related to Party building; intensify efforts to improve conduct, build integrity, and combat corruption; and work with relentless persistence to ensure the implementation of reforms.

It was stressed that Chinese modernization is the modernization of peaceful development. In foreign relations, China remains firmly committed to pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace and is dedicated to promoting a human community with a shared future. Holding dear humanity's shared values, we will pursue the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative and call for an equal and orderly multipolar world and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. We will deepen institutional reforms related to the work of foreign affairs and participate in efforts to lead the reform and development of the global governance system. We will resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests.

It was stated that studying and implementing the guiding principles from the session represent a major political task for the entire Party and nation both at the present and for some time to come. It is essential to thoroughly study the guiding principles from the session and fully grasp the main theme, major principles, major measures, and fundamental guarantees for further deepening reform comprehensively. The entire Party from the leadership down must work as one to ensure that the Resolution is implemented and the strategic plans for further deepening reform comprehensively are translated into strong impetus for advancing Chinese modernization.

At the session, an analysis of the present situation and the tasks we face was conducted. It was highlighted that we must remain firmly committed to accomplishing the goals for this year's economic and social development. In accordance with the Party Central Committee's decisions and plans concerning economic work, we will ensure effective implementation of macro policies, strive to expand domestic demand, develop new quality productive forces in light of local conditions, move faster to foster new drivers of foreign trade, take solid steps toward green and low-carbon development, ensure and improve the people's wellbeing, and consolidate and build upon our achievements in poverty alleviation. We will review and assess the implementation of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) and make sound preparations for the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030).

It was stated that we must ensure both development and security. To this end, we will implement various measures for preventing and defusing risks in real estate, local government debt, small and medium financial institutions, and other key areas. We will make sure that responsibilities for workplace safety are strictly fulfilled and refine the measures for monitoring, preventing, and controlling natural disasters, especially floods. We will strengthen the network for preventing and controlling public security risks so as to safeguard social stability. We will improve public opinion guidance and effectively deal with risks in the ideological domain. We will properly respond to external risks and challenges, strive to play a leading role in global governance, and actively work to foster a favorable external environment.

It was stressed that on the basis of studying, communicating, and implementing the guiding principles from the session, we must arm all Party members with the Party's new theories to enhance their understanding of Marxism and their capacity for advancing the modernization drive. We will refine the systems for exercising full and rigorous self-governance, improve work conduct, and rectify the deep-rooted practices of pointless formalities and bureaucratism in a continued effort to ease the burdens on those working on the ground. We will redouble efforts to improve Party conduct, build integrity, and fight corruption and make solid strides in carrying out discipline inspections. We will consolidate and expand on what we have achieved in theoretical study initiatives, advance the campaign to increase awareness of Party discipline, safeguard the Party's solidarity and unity, and continue to enhance the Party's creativity, cohesion, and ability.

It was decided at the session that, in accordance with the Party Constitution, empty seats on the Central Committee will be filled by alternate members Ding Xiangqun, Yu Lijun, and Yu Jihong.

It was also decided that Comrade Qin Gang's resignation should be accepted and he should be removed from his position on the Central Committee.

At the session, the CPC Central Military Commission's inspection report on grave violations of Party discipline and state laws involving Li Shangfu, Li Yuchao, and Sun Jiming was deliberated and adopted, and the Political Bureau's previous decision to expel Li Shangfu, Li Yuchao, and Sun Jiming from the Party was confirmed.

At the session, a call was issued to the whole Party, the entire military, and Chinese people of all ethnic groups to stay closely rallied around the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core; hold high the banner of reform and opening up, pool our collective wisdom and strength, and forge ahead with enterprise; and strive toward the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and work to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through Chinese modernization.

XINHUA

TOP NEWS

Foreign trade to drive growth, experts say

Supportive policies, quality upgrades will bolster economy despite external challenges

By ZHONG NAN
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China's supportive policies and ongoing quality upgrades in foreign trade are set to bolster economic growth throughout the year despite lingering external challenges, market watchers and business leaders said on Thursday.

They added that the accelerated cultivation of new quality productive forces, the expansion of tech-intensive green product industries and cross-border e-commerce businesses, and the fast-growing intermediate goods trade will help Chinese companies better compete with their global rivals.

They made the comments at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China vowed to further deepen reform, including in the trade sector, and continue to expand opening-up.

According to a communique released on Thursday after the conclusion of the session, which started on Monday, China will "steadily expand opening-up, deepen foreign trade structural reform, further reform the management systems for inward and outward investment, improve planning for regional opening-up, and refine the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative".

Zhao Fujun, a foreign trade researcher at the Beijing-based Development Research Center of the State Council, said that in recent years, protectionist moves, geopolitical rivalries and intense competition have pushed domestic manufacturers to upgrade the technical content of their products.

Many of them have also invested in new plants and warehouses in countries like Hungary and Vietnam to enhance competitiveness and mitigate risks, said Matthias Loebeich, partner and leader for international business at BearingPoint, a European consultancy with more than 10,000 employees in 70 countries and regions.

China set a record for foreign trade in the first half of the year, achieving a year-on-year increase of 6.1 percent, reaching 21.17 trillion yuan (\$2.92 trillion), data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

As developed countries are shift-

Value of China's foreign trade

Unit: Trillion yuan



Source: General Administration of Customs CHINA DAILY

ing from services spending to increased demand for goods, China's exports will continue to grow in the second half, said Mao Zhenhua, co-director of the Institute of Economic Research at Renmin University of China in Beijing.

Mao said that the upward global trend in technology will also benefit exports of China's high-value-added products.

For instance, China saw the exports of mechanical and electrical products, such as automobiles, smartphones and integrated circuits, grow 8.2 percent year-on-year to 7.14 trillion yuan between January and June, accounting for 58.9 percent of the total value of the country's exports, customs statistics showed.

Upbeat about the Chinese market, United States-based logistics services provider FedEx launched two new cargo flights to the US from Qingdao, Shandong province, and Xiamen, Fujian province, in late June.

"This is a proactive move to meet the growing demand of China's foreign trade and to deepen cooperation with the local market," said Koh Poh-Yian, senior vice-president of FedEx.

Yu Xiangrong, Citigroup's chief economist for China, warned that in the long term, the recovery of developed economies remains uncertain, and trade policies in the US may become even more unpredictable after the 2024 US general election.

The emulation of US policies in Europe could further increase fluctuations in external demand, Yu said.



Proving a point

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo swims in the Seine River on Wednesday in the French capital, less than 10 days before the opening of the 2024 Olympic Games. The mayor took to the water to prove that the once polluted waterway was clean enough to host open water swimming events during the Games. Paris has invested \$1.5 billion in building infrastructure to help keep the river clean.

JULIEN DE ROSA / AFP

New think tank set to promote peace

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Beijing launched a think tank on Thursday to focus on the 2-year-old Global Security Initiative, and it outlined plans to pool strengths for making peace, boosting the unity of nations and rejecting bloc confrontation.

At the launching ceremony for the Center for GSI Studies, the organizer, the China Institute of International Studies, issued the first "Report on the Implementation Progress of the GSI", which takes stock of the outcomes that have been achieved so far.

President Xi Jinping proposed the GSI, a key vision that advocates the spirit of solidarity, win-win thinking and political settlement of hot spot security issues, in April 2022.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing established the Center for GSI Studies to better strengthen research, facilitate the implementation of the GSI, and provide more contributions from the think tank to promote world peace and security.

In a written message to the launching ceremony, he asked the center to adequately gather the wisdom and pool the strength of Chinese and foreign experts and scholars to "build a platform for

exchanges and dialogues on international security issues, and provide strong support for all parties to carry out exchanges and cooperation under the framework of the GSI".

More than 100 countries and international and regional organizations have expressed their support and appreciation for the GSI.

At the launch ceremony, Pakistani Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi hailed China's role in effectively promoting peace for hot spot issues, noting that the GSI has gone beyond "theoretical concepts" and led to practical moves.

Observers said the GSI, as a Chinese solution, has seen its value constantly increasing in solving security problems and maintaining global stability.

Behind that is the increasingly complex international security situation, such as the prolonged Ukraine crisis and the conflict in Gaza, as well as challenges on issues including cybersecurity and climate change, they added.

"As shown by the prospering GSI, China's constructive input into global security is systematic, and its policy structure and resources are being perfected in a multidimensional way," said Wang Yiwei, a professor at Renmin University of China's School of International Studies and

director of the university's Institute of International Affairs.

China has effectively honored its role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, such as by working with Brazil to issue a joint proposal earlier this year for resolving the Ukraine crisis, he said.

Furthermore, "behind China's successful push for the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is the ancient Chinese wisdom that could help seek balance and resolve conflicts that have frustrated Western countries", he said.

So far, the GSI and its core ideas have been written into more than 90 bilateral or multilateral documents between China and other countries and international organizations.

Analysts said the results achieved by the GSI are due to a commitment to rejecting confrontation between camps, refraining from choosing sides, transcending ideological boundaries, and pursuing pragmatism and efficacy.

Chen Xulong, a professor of multilateral diplomacy and UN reform studies at the University of International Business and Economics' School of International Relations, said, "The international community is in desperate need of consolidating consensus on

shaping common security."

Currently, the international security situation is worsening, and this highlights the need for the GSI, he said.

"China is playing its dutiful role as a major country, and the initiative has focused on pooling consensus and shoring up solidarity," he added.

Looking to the GSI's future, China said on Thursday that it will keep strengthening international security exchanges and cooperation to inject more stability into a volatile world.

Vice-Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong said China is willing to strengthen communication and exchange of security concepts and policies with various parties, promote international security cooperation and "promote sustainable development for sustainable security".

China is willing to fully tap the role of multilateral mechanisms such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and make good use of existing discussion and dialogue platforms such as the Beijing-based Xiangshan Forum, to strengthen communication and coordination in the area of security, he said.

He highlighted the need to "carry out more practical actions" on the GSI's 20 priority directions for cooperation, including the role of the UN, nonproliferation, information security, biosecurity, artificial intelligence and combating transnational crime.

Session: Systematic plans made for deepening reform

From page 1

people's democracy, and promoting socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics.

Priorities will also be given to deepening reform in the cultural sector, ensuring and improving the people's well-being, deepening reform in ecological conservation, modernizing China's national security system and capacity, deepening national defense and military reform, and improving the Party's leadership in further deepening reform in all respects to advance Chinese modernization, according to the communique.

Zheng Shanjie, director of the

National Development and Reform Commission, said that the third plenary session is of milestone significance, as it closely focused on the theme of Chinese modernization and scientifically worked out the overall deployment for further deepening reforms.

While targeting major reforms concerning the country's overall development, the session also emphasized the need to advance reforms that matter to people's livelihoods, Zheng said.

Wang Wentao, minister of commerce, underlined the need to turn the reforms in specific fields into a task list for implementation. It is important to expand opening-up and promote institutional

reforms in terms of trade in goods, trade in services and digital trade, he said, adding that efforts should be made to propel high-quality development through high-standard opening-up.

At the session, an analysis of the current economic situation and the tasks that the country faces was conducted. It was highlighted that the nation must remain firmly committed to accomplishing the goals for this year's economic and social development.

While ensuring both development and security, China will implement various measures for preventing and defusing risks in real estate, local government

debt, small and medium-sized financial institutions, and other key areas.

"We will properly respond to external risks and challenges, strive to play a leading role in global governance, and actively work to foster a favorable external environment," the communique said.

According to the communique, the session decided to accept Comrade Qin Gang's resignation from the CPC Central Committee, and confirmed the Political Bureau's earlier decision to expel Li Shangfu, Li Yuchao and Sun Jinming from the Party.

A total of 199 members and 165 alternate members of the Central Committee attended the session.



Chinese-made new energy vehicles meant for export wait to be loaded onto the giant vessel BYD Explorer No. 1 on April 25 at Lianyungang Port in Jiangsu province. WANG CHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Trade: Germany should seek quick, negotiated settlement with China

From page 1

As a result, the cost of purchasing electric vehicles imported from China will increase for EU buyers. Additionally, other automakers might seize the opportunity to hike their prices to boost profits. Ultimately, European consumers will bear the financial burden of such protectionist measures.

The tariffs will also have a major impact on the European car industry. While tariffs may temporarily create a comfort zone for European automakers by reducing competition in the market, healthy competition is essential for innovation and technological advancement. The imposition of tariffs, which would disrupt the electric vehicle supply chain, could exacerbate the challenges faced by

European automakers. These companies benefit greatly from collaboration in EV supply chains and joint research and development initiatives with their Chinese counterparts.

The real challenge for the European electric vehicle industry comes from developments within Europe, not imports from China. In 2023, although China's exports to the EU increased by 45.5 percent, Chinese electric vehicles accounted for less than 11 percent of the total number of electric vehicles registered in the EU. China's electric car market share in Europe is not large. Talk of Chinese electric cars flooding the European market is just propaganda.

In Germany, there is considerable opposition to these European Union measures. Many believe that the European Commission must

immediately withdraw the tariffs on Chinese electric cars.

According to a recent statement by the German Association of the Automotive Industry, the German automotive industry does not expect Chinese EVs to flood the European market. It expects them to account for around 5 to 10 percent of the total passenger car market by 2030. They also point out that in 2023, German manufacturers sold around 10 times as many electric cars in China as Chinese manufacturers have sold in Germany.

German carmakers are strongly opposed to anti-subsidy tariffs and are advising the European Commission to find a negotiated solution with China without delay. Protectionist measures such as the imposition of additional tariffs on

Chinese electric vehicles will not help remove the challenges facing the German and European auto industry, but will create the risk of trade friction. In the event of trade friction, tariffs imposed by the EU could quickly have a negative impact, slowing down the EU's promotion of electric vehicles and digital transformation.

The German Association of the Automotive Industry is consequently warning of a trade war that could be triggered by the EU leadership's unilateral action. If China were to impose counter-tariffs on the EU, Germany would suffer enormous losses. At the same time, German car companies and suppliers are operating actively all over China. Therefore, EU tariffs also indirectly affect German companies

based in the country. Once you are caught in the spiral of a trade war, there can be no winners.

China is not only the world's largest market, but has also become a driver of innovation in many areas and has a large pool of skilled labor, particularly in STEM subjects. Its infrastructure and productive assets are already more advanced in many areas than in the West. Economic and trade ties with China provide a large number of job opportunities for Germany. In addition, a large amount of capital for the transformation of German companies also comes from China.

The EU tariffs are not an expression of concern about the competitiveness of European or even German car companies vis-à-vis the Chinese. They are an expression of

geopolitical fanaticism. Just as the tariffs on Chinese solar panels failed and missed their target, the punitive tariffs on Chinese electric cars will also fail. Just as the sanctions on technology companies such as Huawei and ZTE were only effective in the short term and had the opposite effect in the medium to long term, the car tariffs, should they come into full effect in November, will also fail in the face of reality.

If the European Commission really wanted to live up to its claim of strategic autonomy, it would have to adopt an independent position on China that reflects the interests of its member states and their companies, rather than follow the suit of its ally in its policies.

The author is an independent political analyst, and a research fellow at the Germany-based think tank Schiller Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA

Growing trend of selling used goods contributes to greener lifestyle

By YU RAN in Shanghai
For China Daily

From pre-loved clothing and handbags to furniture and books, the trade in secondhand merchandise is growing rapidly in China — delivering not only bargains, but also green benefits.

The trend represents a change in Chinese people's mindset, as more consumers are recognizing the value of extending the life span of products through reuse and recycling. By embracing the secondhand market, they are not only finding cost-effective alternatives but also contributing to a more sustainable and eco-friendly way of life through the recycling of goods.

Kang Lin, in her 40s, is originally from Shenzhen, Guangdong province, and now calls Hong Kong home. A seasoned traveler, she lived in Oxford, the United Kingdom, for a year and a half, Shanghai for a year, and Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, for 12 months.

For Kang, buying secondhand goods is more than just a cost-saving measure — it's a lifestyle choice that celebrates sustainability and uncovers hidden treasures from the past.

"When I lived overseas, buying secondhand was the most cost-effective option since these items were inexpensive, and I didn't mind discarding them when I left," she said. "It's also environmentally friendly, as it prevents usable items from going to waste — my unwanted items may be desired by others, and vice versa."

In Oxford, Kang immersed herself in exploring the city's many charity shops. She even volunteered at Oxfam, the nonprofit organization combating global hunger, which operates over 500 stores in the UK, generating nearly 50 million pounds (\$63 million) annually from the sale of donated secondhand goods like clothing, housewares, furniture, and more.

But affordability isn't the sole reason Kang is drawn to secondhand shopping. She values "the opportunity to uncover treasures — especially antique items that offer a glimpse into past production techniques."

Kang has discovered "gems" from the 1920s to 1950s with no signs of wear, such as a 1925 thermos flask and 1950s woolen military long Johns.

"There were also high-quality brass tools from decades ago and pop-art pioneers ... It felt like I'd stepped into a museum," she said, adding the objects served as a means to travel back in time.

"The years haven't dimmed their brilliance; instead, they made them shine ever brighter," she said.

Refresh, repeat

The Deja Vu Recycle Store launched its app in 2017. In 2020, it started its secondhand clothing business and simultaneously opened a store on Anfu Road in Shanghai. In 2024, a new store opened in Hongqiao Tiandi in Shanghai. It has also developed its apparel and electronics resale business.

As of July 2024, Deja Vu recycles nearly 600,000 books and approximately 300,000 clothing items on a yearly basis. Currently, it has over 8,000 brands. Their products are sold with guarantees about their authenticity, and Deja Vu promises customers compensation equivalent to three times the purchase price if the goods are found to be counterfeit. Pirated apparel is rejected or destroyed when detected, the company said.

Ye Lu, a staff member of Deja Vu's marketing department, said the company is building a community of



Graduating students at a university in Zhengzhou, Henan province, set up stalls on campus to sell their various secondhand items last month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Booming recycling market benefits environment

secondhand goods enthusiasts through numerous social media platforms.

"Previously, we used WeChat and Weibo, but recently we've tried new lifestyle platforms like Xiaohongshu, product reviews, and articles, to better connect with users and make them more comfortable with secondhand goods," Ye said.

In 2020, when Deja Vu was researching the feasibility of expanding into the secondhand clothing business, over 90 percent of survey respondents said they would not wear pre-worn clothes. Now, nearly half of their new customers get to know secondhand clothing through Deja Vu, and become repeat buyers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Deja Vu established an authentication process for secondhand clothing, built a fully automated secondhand clothing sorting facility, opened a popular secondhand store on Anfu Road in Shanghai, and launched clothing sales on their app.

In mid-May, Deja Vu opened a store at Hongqiao Tian Di, with an area of 1,500 square meters, selling nearly 6,000 secondhand clothing items.

"We have been witnesses to the gradual development of the secondhand market in China over the years, and it fills us with confidence about the future," Ye said.

Trading for profit

The transaction volume of China's used goods market surpassed 1 trillion yuan (\$139.9 billion) in 2020, and is expected to reach 3 trillion yuan in 2025, according to a report issued by the Institute of Energy, Environment and Economy of Tsinghua University.

Data from Xianyu, one of China's largest platforms for trading secondhand products, shows that the daily transaction volume on the platform has exceeded 1 billion yuan. Over the past year, about 4 million secondhand items were listed on Xianyu on a daily basis.

Forty-three percent of users are from the post-1995 generation, and 22 percent are from the post-2000 generation, the data showed. In 2023, the average post-1995 user on Xianyu earned 2,700 yuan, with young people discovering the



Top: Photography enthusiasts select camera equipment and accessories at a used camera exchange event in Beijing on April 21. SONG JIARU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Above: People shop at a secondhand bag market in a shopping mall in Shanghai in October. WANG GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

"wealth secret" in trading secondhand goods.

The generational change is also reflected in a stronger awareness of how consumption impacts the environment.

The understanding of green consumption among those born in the 1990s and 2000s is significantly higher than other age groups in China, reaching 70 percent and 79 percent respectively, according to the Green Development Report on E-commerce in China released in 2023.

Wen Tianyi, a 21-year-old advertising major at a university in Beijing, spends around 1,000 to 2,000 yuan on secondhand goods every

year and gets rid of around 10 items annually.

"During the first two years of university, I had little concept of spending money, so I ended up buying many useless items here and there," she said.

"I started paying attention to and getting rid of idle items during my freshman year, driven by the thought of wanting to get some cash back."

The first unused item Wen sold on Xianyu was a bottle of perfume she bought online.

Her initial reason for purchasing secondhand items was simply to save money. Many of the items were relatively new, having been used only a

few times. However, because they were secondhand the prices were greatly discounted.

"Key differences between buying new items and secondhand ones are lower costs but higher after-sales risks (no returns, counterfeit goods, questionable conditions), and relying on mutual trust between strangers rather than a service provider-client relationship," Wen said.

She said buying and selling secondhand merchandise had reshaped her ideas on consumption. "Previously, items might have just been left unused, but now they can be revitalized with the incentive of earning some money, thereby supporting sustainable consumption," Wen said.

She has even adopted a "secondhand mentality" for making new purchases and considers how much an item will depreciate before being resold. This hit home when she sold 10 kilograms of clothing she had paid nearly 10,000 yuan for, to a clothing recycler for just 6 yuan.

A blogger on Xiaohongshu, she advocates a minimalist approach to life and is more focused on saving money and getting rid of her unused goods.

"After dealing with idle items and engaging in secondhand consumption, I have embraced the concept of minimalist living. Moving from constantly buying to decluttering and letting go, I may have found a lifestyle that truly suits me," she said.

Sweet charity

The recycling of household items, goods, clothing, and donations of food, have for a long time played a crucial role in keeping charities afloat.

Jiang Shujie is the chief executive officer of Buy42, a charitable organization founded in 2010, which operates 14 charity stores in Shanghai and sells donated goods at 30 to 70 percent below market prices.

She believes the secondhand goods market is an indication of a healthy developed economy.

"The popularity of secondhand purchases is also linked to economic development — as basic needs are met and material accumulation increases in developed countries, a prosperous secondhand market

emerges from the surplus goods," she said.

After running the charity for the past seven years, Jiang said she had seen customers go from doubting the safety and hygiene of previously owned items to viewing purchasing secondhand goods as a "cool trend."

This is driven by Generation Z's pursuit of high-end goods originally priced out of their reach, which they can now afford as secondhand purchases. It also aligns with their pursuit of unique, sustainable goods at affordable prices.

The prevalence of green consumption among Chinese people has helped propel the secondhand goods sector into a period of rapid development. However, due to the nature of secondhand transactions, trust issues — such as the authenticity of goods — remain core factors in determining how far the industry can go.

"Secondhand trading platforms play a crucial role in establishing trust — acting as a bond between buyers and strangers," Jiang said. "A high level of trust is required for consumers to accept purchasing and using secondhand goods with potential flaws from unknown previous owners. The value of these platforms lies in facilitating trust for the secondhand market to operate."

However, from a positive perspective, Jiang said such platforms satisfy diverse needs — from trading secondhand luxury items to connecting communities with shared interests.

She believes that platforms like Buy42 provide "low-barrier" public welfare opportunities by recycling secondhand and unused items.

Green vision

As the world's second-largest consumer market and the largest online retail market, China has introduced various policies in recent years to encourage and support green consumption and promote the recycling of unused items.

"In recent years, our country has been advocating the concept of sustainable living and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles. Whether from the corporate level, the government level, or the public welfare sector, there has been increasing promotion of more environmentally friendly consumption attitudes, which are becoming deeply rooted in people's mindset," Jiang said.

In July 2021, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) issued the 14th Five-Year Plan for Circular Economy Development, explicitly encouraging the development of the "internet plus secondhand" model, strengthening the management responsibilities of internet trading platforms, and enhancing the oversight of such trading to provide standardized and regulated services for secondhand goods transactions.

"Establishing a sound recycling system for waste materials is of great significance for achieving carbon peak and carbon neutrality, and the trading of idle goods is also an important measure to help achieve these 'dual carbon' goals," said Du Huanzheng, director of the Institute of Ecological Civilization and Circular Economy at Tongji University in Shanghai.

In 2022, the NDRC and the Ministry of Commerce, along with other departments, issued the Implementation Plan for Promoting Green Consumption. The plan proposed the expansion of channels for the sharing and utilization of idle resources and secondhand transactions.

"People's mindset toward using secondhand products is gradually shifting, and the volume of secondhand transactions is increasing, corresponding to supply and demand," Du said.

"With more standardized trading platforms emerging in China, this signals that the secondhand market will definitely be a future lifestyle trend."

Contact the writer at sunnyu923@163.com



Left and Middle: Consumers select products at an outlet of Deja Vu Recycle Store in Beijing, in June 2023. Right: Shoppers in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, browse at Deja Vu's pop-up bookstore in May. The event between April and May attracted over 80,000 visitors. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

WORLD

Libya hosts forum on migration problems

TRIPOLI — European and African leaders gathered in Libya on Wednesday to attend the Trans-Mediterranean Migration Forum in an effort to collaborate on finding solutions to the migration issue.

The forum aims to formulate a unified vision that enhances cooperation and coordination between the countries concerned, in order to develop the foundations of sustainable economic and trade European-African relations, said Libya's Prime Minister Abdul-Hamed Dbeibah.

Dbeibah called for reallocating the funds currently used to manage irregular migration flows toward financing development projects in African source countries, the official Libyan News Agency LANA reported.

"Let us implement real projects that lead to the stability of the people of these countries in their regions," he said.

Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno urged the development of solutions to irregular migration and the identification of its root causes, emphasizing the importance of addressing this issue while upholding human rights.

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said her country considers resolving the migration issue a priority, noting that large numbers of irregular migrants require intensifying efforts with the countries in the region.

Collective action

Malta's Prime Minister Robert Abela highlighted the efforts made by the Libyan government to rescue migrants and cooperate on the issue of irregular migration, calling for collective action to reduce migration and organized criminal networks.

Margaritis Schinas, vice-president of the European Commission, stressed the European Union's support for Libya in addressing migration, noting that the number of migrants crossing to Europe from Libya has dropped compared with five years ago.

The meeting was scheduled to address several issues, including enhancing border management, strengthening rescue and relief mechanisms for migrants and providing necessary support to countries receiving migrants, LANA reported.

Ever since the downfall of the late leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has become a preferred point of departure for some African migrants who attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach European shores.

XINHUA



People stand in front of a collapsed minaret of a mosque following an Israeli bombardment in Nuseirat, central Gaza, on Wednesday. EYAD BABA / AFP

Israel pounds Gaza as tanks advance on Rafah

UN calls for refocus on finding political solution, while US ends aid pier mission

CAIRO/GAZA — Israeli forces bombarded the Gaza Strip's historic refugee camps in the center of the enclave and struck Gaza City in the north on Thursday, killing at least 21 people, while tanks pushed deeper into Rafah in the south, health officials and residents said.

A barrage of Israeli airstrikes killed 16 in Zawayda town, Bureij and Nuseirat camps, and the overcrowded city of Deir-Al-Balah, the last major urban center in Gaza not to be invaded by Israeli forces, health officials said.

In Gaza City in the north, medics said five Palestinians were killed in two separate strikes.

The Israeli military said in a statement its forces killed two senior Islamic Jihad commanders in two airstrikes in Gaza City, including one who it said had taken part in the Oct 7 attack in southern Israel that triggered the conflict.

At Al-Amal Hospital, run by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, Palestinian health officials exhumed at least 12 bodies buried inside the medical facility to rebury them at another location.

In Rafah, residents said Israeli tanks advanced deeper in the western side of the city and took position on a hilltop there. The Israeli military said forces located several tunnels and killed several gunmen.

More than a million people had sought shelter in Rafah from fighting further north, but most have scattered again since Israel launched an offensive in and around the city in May.

The fighting has pushed the

60-bed Red Cross field hospital in Rafah to the brink of capacity, the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Thursday.

"The repeated mass casualty events resulting from the unrelenting hostilities have stretched to breaking point the response capacity of our hospital and all health facilities in southern Gaza to care for those with life-threatening injuries," William Schomburg, head of the ICRC's subdelegation in Gaza, said.

Israel vowed to eradicate Hamas after its militants killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostage in the Oct 7 attack, according to Israeli tallies. At least 38,848 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory offensive since then, Gaza health authorities said on Thursday.

Stalled cease-fire efforts

Diplomatic efforts by Arab mediators to halt the hostilities appear to be on hold, though all sides say they are open to more talks, including Israel and Hamas.

A deal would aim to end the conflict and release Israeli hostages in Gaza in return for many Palestinians jailed by Israel.

Hamas was awaiting an Israeli response to a cease-fire offer drafted by the United States, a Palestinian official close to the mediation effort said.

"The feeling in Hamas is that Netanyahu is stalling and that he might not say anything before he goes to the United States next week," said the official, who asked not to be named.

On Wednesday, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged a renewed emphasis on a political resolution to the persistent crisis in Gaza.

"We must refocus on finding a political solution that will end the occupation and resolve the conflict in line with international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions," Courtenay Rattray, chef de cabinet of the UN secretary-general, told a Security Council debate on Gaza on behalf of the UN chief.

Separately, the US military's problem-plagued mission to bring desperately needed aid into Gaza via a temporary pier has ended, with deliveries shifting to an Israeli port, a senior US officer said on Wednesday.

US President Joe Biden has expressed disappointment in the performance of the pier, which has repeatedly broken free of the shore because of bad weather since its initial installation in mid-May, limiting the time it has been operational.

"The maritime surge mission involving the pier is complete, so there's no more need to use the pier," Vice-Admiral Brad Cooper, deputy head of the US Central Command, said.

The project, which Cooper said cost less than a previous estimate of \$230 million, though a final figure is not yet available, has faced repeated issues starting in May, when the pier was damaged by bad weather and had to be removed for repairs.

It was then reattached on June 7, but was moved to Ashdod in Israel on June 14 to protect it from anticipated high seas, a situation that was repeated later in the month.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

V-P Kamala Harris reaches out to Asian American voters

By BELINDA ROBINSON

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US Vice-President Kamala Harris has been courting Asian American voters, speaking at events in Las Vegas and Philadelphia this month in an effort to woo the increasingly important voting bloc.

Harris, who is of South Asian and Jamaican descent, is the first woman US vice-president and is encouraging Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters to back President Joe Biden's reelection bid.

Harris' speech before a crowd of AAPI community leaders and organizers at the Philadelphia Convention Center on July 13 was overshadowed later that day by the attempted assassination of former president Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

"We must all condemn this abhorrent act and do our part to ensure that it does not lead to more violence," she wrote on X.

Harris used her speech in Philadelphia to tout the Biden administration's actions to improve healthcare and infrastructure.

Harris addressed several other topics, including how the Biden administration has helped the Asian American community — passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act in 2021 in the wake of a spike in violence toward people of Asian descent.

The vice-president also was interrupted twice by protesters chanting "Free, free Palestine."

She later said that if Trump gets back in the White House, he would "round up peaceful protesters and throw them out of our country."

She also told the audience that Trump is someone who "stokes hate."

"While I will not repeat the vile, vile language that Trump has used, I will say someone who vilifies immigrants, who promotes xenophobia, who stokes hate and who incites fear should never again have the chance to stand behind a microphone and never again have the chance to stand behind the seal of the president of the United States of America," she said.

Harris also criticized the controversial "Project 2025" plan by The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, supposedly drawn up as a blueprint for Trump if he gets a second term. The former president has said he knows nothing about the project.

The vice-president has increasingly been in the national spotlight since the first 2024 presidential debate on June 27, when Biden gave an often-confused performance that led to calls for him to step aside as the Democratic candidate.

More than 20 Democrats, recently including US representatives Adam Schiff of California and Jamie Raskin of Maryland, have publicly urged Biden, 81, to drop out or reconsider his candidacy as more party leaders express fears of steep down-ballot losses.

Political pundits also are speculating whether Harris would make a better candidate against Trump.

Nearly two-thirds of Democrats say Biden should let the party nominate a different candidate, an

AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs research poll found.

But Biden has been resolute that he is the party's presumptive nominee. He is currently off the campaign trail as he recovers from COVID-19 in Delaware.

The New York Times reported on Thursday, however, that "several people" close to Biden have said he has begun to "accept the idea" that he may have to drop out of the contest.

The White House denied he would drop out, the Times reported.

The Democratic National Convention begins on Aug 19 in Chicago.

The Philadelphia event was organized by APIAVote, an advocacy group focused on mobilizing Asian American voters.

The 2024 Asian American Voter Survey, which APIAVote helped conduct along with three other groups, found that 46 percent polled (down from 54 percent in 2020) said they would likely vote for Biden, 31 percent for Trump (up 1 percentage point from 2020), and the rest undecided.

The survey of 2,479 voters from the six largest Asian American groups (Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese) was released on July 10.

Christine Chen, co-founder and executive director of APIAVote, said in the survey press release that "while there's little evidence of a broad political realignment of Asian American voters, recent elections have shown that their political identities are more tenuous than their voting habits imply, and that when candidates make concerted efforts to engage them, Asian American voters are persuadable."

The survey also found that 31 percent identify as independent, compared with 25 percent in 2020.

Chen later told China Daily: "When you look at who Asian Americans think is doing a better job when it comes to the economy, crime, education and other top issues, a significant portion say they see no difference between the Democrats and Republicans. That also is an indicator that parties need to do better outreach."

Chen added that both parties needed to implement "more structured, sustained outreach."

The top three issues for Asian American voters are the economy, healthcare and inflation, according to the survey.

"Asian Americans are rapidly diversifying the American electorate, and it is critical for us to update our understanding of what motivates them and informs their voting choices," Karthick Ramakrishnan, executive director of AAPI Data, another group involved with the survey, said in the press release.

The Biden-Harris campaign said it is well aware that the past two general elections were decided by a margin of just 100,000 votes. Georgia, a key battleground state, saw Asian American turnout increase by 84 percent in the previous general election.

AAPI had the largest increase in voters from any racial or ethnic group between 2016 and 2020, as turnout went from 49 percent to 59 percent, according to the US Census Bureau, helping Biden's win in the Electoral College.

Heat warnings issued as southern Europe hits 40 C

By JONATHAN POWELL in London
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Italy, Greece and Spain are among countries experiencing scorching conditions as a surge of hot air from Africa sweeps across southern Europe, pushing temperatures above 40 C, with predictions of even worse conditions to come.

Local governments in urban areas in various southern European and Balkan countries took measures to protect vulnerable populations, especially the elderly, while emergency response teams received requests for water-bombing aircraft to combat wildfires raging in southern Italy and North Macedonia, the Associated Press reported.

In Greece, local authorities provided air-conditioning facilities for public use, while specific outdoor activities, including manual labor, deliveries and construction, were prohibited during peak heat hours when temperatures reached 40 C.

Several countries were anticipated to experience temperatures of 42 C on Thursday. Spain's official meteorological service predicted

that thermometers could register 44 C in the southern Guadalquivir River Valley in the coming days.

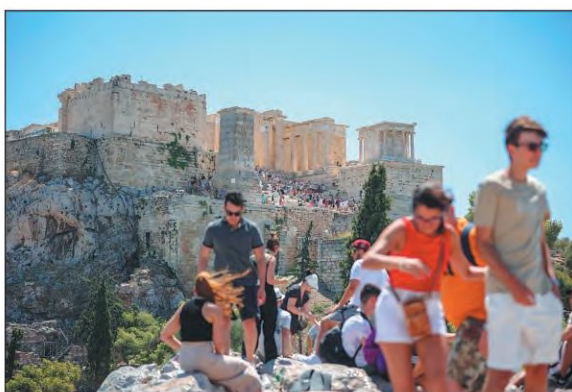
In Italy, the civil protection agency reported receiving 18 requests for assistance on Monday to combat wildfires raging in various southern regions.

Italy's Health Ministry issued a red alert heat warning, the highest level of heat emergency, for 12 cities spanning from Trieste in the north to Rome in the center, and announced that Palermo, Sicily, would be added to the list of red-bulletin cities on Wednesday.

In areas under such alerts, all residents — not just vulnerable groups such as the elderly or young children — are advised to remain indoors during peak heat hours and avoid intense outdoor activities and heavy meals.

To help combat the heat, Rome's zoo planned to offer frozen treats to animals later in the week, when temperatures were expected to exceed 38 C.

The heat challenged those attending Coldplay concerts in Rome this week, including Patrizia



Tourists leave the Acropolis hill in Athens, Greece, on Wednesday. The Greek Ministry of Culture has implemented a precautionary measure amid a heat wave, limiting access to the Acropolis site from 12 pm to 5 pm to ensure visitor safety. ARIS OIKONOMOU / AFP

Valerio from Varese, who told AP, "It really feels like we are in an oven with a hair dryer pointed at us."

Another concertgoer, Mattia Rossi, linked the unusual storms that hit Italy earlier in the summer to the effects of climate change on weather patterns in the southern Mediterranean region.

"These are all symptoms of a planet that is suffering in my opinion," Rossi said.

In Albania, where the mercury was forecast to reach 42 C, authori-

ties discovered the body of a 72-year-old man at his farm in Memaliaj, 200 kilometers south of the capital Tirana. Local news outlet Panorama reported that heat was suspected to be the cause of death.

In Tirana, the streets and cafes were near deserted, with the few individuals venturing outdoors using umbrellas for shade. The combination of elevated temperatures and winds had been fueling wildfires across the country, from south to north, in recent weeks.

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Nyingchi, the host city of this year's Trans-Himalaya Forum, features impressive scenery. DORJE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Calls for cooperation at Trans-Himalaya Forum

Delegates from across the world marvel at Xizang's ecological gains

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Delegates at a recent forum in Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region have highlighted the region's ecological conservation efforts, calling for increased cooperation and exchange.

Themed "Promoting the Harmony of Humans and Nature, Sharing the Fruits of Cooperation and Development", the fourth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation was held from July 4-5 in the town of Lunang in Nyingchi city, attracting attendees from more than 20 countries and regions.

Since the first forum in 2018, China has cooperated with related parties on working toward the goals of protecting Xizang, known as the "roof of the world", and safeguarding the Earth as the home of all people, said Qin Boyong, vice-chairperson of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body.

Extensive international cooperation has been undertaken to improve ecological environment governance, promote green development and deepen mutual learning among civilizations, with the aim of promoting high-quality development together with high-



Delegates listen to a speech during the Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation. DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY

level ecological and environmental protection, Qin said at the forum's opening ceremony.

Forum attendees exchanged views on such issues as environmental and cultural protection, tourism development, highland agriculture and animal husbandry.

Lee Flores Enrique Segundo, a member of the House of Representatives of Chile who was visiting Xizang for the first time, said he has been impressed by the region's cleanliness and the warmth of the local people.

He said that his home country faces similar challenges to China, such as developing high-altitude regions without harming the environment.

"This forum serves as a valuable learning platform where we could exchange ideas and we also learned from China's policies on enhancing citizen awareness of environmental protection," he said.

In Xizang, environmental conservation has been prioritized, with a third of the region's land now consisting of nature reserves.

Xizang maintains excellent air quality levels almost all of the time, its major rivers and lakes meet or exceed Class III water quality and it has achieved carbon neutrality ahead of schedule, making it a region with one of the best ecological environments in the world, according to Wang Junzheng, secretary of the Xizang Autonomous Regional Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Thaung Naing Oo, director-general of the forest department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar, was making his second visit to Xizang.

He said that by observing the well-preserved natural environment during his two visits, he has gained a deeper understanding of

the autonomous region's ecological civilization protection concepts.

"I think this forum plays a very important role in understanding the important linkage between humans and nature," he said.

Vivian Tatiana Camacho Hinojosa, an official of Bolivia's Ministry of Health and Sports, praised Xizang's efforts to balance development with the preservation of tradition.

"In Xizang, one cannot only see beautiful landscapes but ancient buildings and culture. It preserves vibrant ancient traditions," she said.

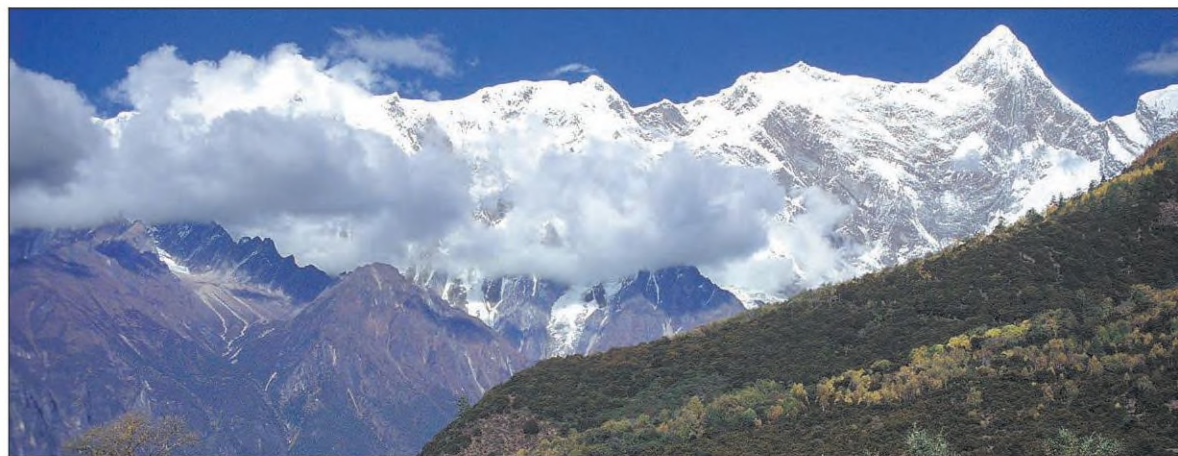
Previous Trans-Himalaya Forum sessions were held in Nyingchi in 2018 and 2019, with the third forum seeing the release of the Nyingchi Initiative in October 2023 to deepen international cooperation in the trans-Himalaya region.

In the initiative, China has proposed to deepen international ecological cooperation and promote harmony between humans and nature; strengthen international development cooperation and share the outcomes of development; promote people-to-people cultural dialogues and exchanges and safeguard the diversity of world civilizations; maintain international peace and security and improve the global governance system.

The trans-Himalaya region is characterized by a large population, diverse civilizations and substantial ecological diversity. Its development is crucial to the common well-being of people all over the world, the initiative noted.

The document also seeks to promote clean and low-carbon energy and its safe and efficient use in the trans-Himalaya region; accelerate collaboration in new energy, environmental protection and other fields; and assist the comprehensive green transformation of economic and social development in the region.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



The snow-capped Namjagbarwa Mountain in Nyingchi is one of the symbols of Xizang's pristine environment. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Region's potential as outdoor sports hub discussed

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Domestic and international representatives gathered in the city of Nyingchi earlier this month to discuss promoting outdoor sports in the Xizang autonomous region.

The discussions were conducted at a roundtable meeting during the fourth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, which was held from July 4-5 in Nyingchi city of Xizang.

As one of the key agendas of the forum, the roundtable meeting focused on plateau ecology and tourism. Some representatives shared their thoughts on the healthy development of outdoor sports and its related tourism segments.

Pan Shihua, an executive of China Sports Industry Group, gave a presentation about Xizang's outdoor sports at the meeting. He said that the region's snow-capped mountains, pristine forests, streams, lakes, grasslands, deserts

and various other ecological resources offer excellent conditions for the development of outdoor sports.

"The vigorous development of outdoor sports in Xizang is currently in the spotlight," said Pan.

He pointed out that the outdoor sports sector has become a new engine for consumption upgrading in China.

Regarding the development of the outdoor sports industry in Xizang, Pan stated that the region has the ability and potential to become a popular global destination. It can consider developing the mountain sports sector with climbing as the core and create a world-renowned mountain sports destination, he said.

He also suggested enhancing a multilevel mountain sports event system in Xizang, introducing international and national competitions and unleashing the economic vitality of mountain sports events.

His suggestions included inte-

grated planning for mountain climbing, orienteering and rock climbing routes, and service facilities such as campsites, climbing paths, hiking trails and cycling paths according to local conditions.

Serge Louis Koenig, an expert from the sports ministry of France, said that Xizang presents exceptional assets for outdoor sports, like high mountains, varied and preserved natural resources, vibrant local traditions and ongoing socioeconomic development.

"So you will tell me that the altitude in Xizang is not the same as in the Alps, certainly! The land here is much higher, but it is perhaps also an advantage to naturally limit mass tourism with its negative impacts, particularly on the environment," Koenig said.

He suggested that to meet all the recreational aspirations of tourists, the region should diversify outdoor sports at all levels over four seasons, with all these activities practiced in Xizang; on the

land, on the water and in the air.

In his speech, Koenig also praised the contribution of Nyima Tsering, the head of the Xizang Sports Bureau and an experienced mountaineer, for founding a mountaineering school in Lhasa. He said that it has become a benchmark in the country and in Asia for mountaineering sports.

"This project boasts all the characteristics of the best projects that I have encountered in my life, allowing young people to be able to live better and fulfill their dreams," he said.

"This project was created and is managed by locals, with training aimed at a stratum of the population vital for the future, the young people," he added.

As part of the consensus reached at the forum, Xizang has signed the Framework Agreement to Enhance Exchange and Cooperation in High-Altitude Mountaineering with Nepal, according to a news conference on the sidelines of the event.

Overseas guests praise results of collaboration

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Foreign guests attending the fourth Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, which was held in the Xizang city of Nyingchi early this month, highlighted the importance of cooperation in multiple fields, especially challenging issues facing humankind.

Karma Tsering, secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Bhutan, attended the forum held on July 4-5.

"I am honored to attend this forum once again," Tsering said. "When we met on this 'roof of the world', our primary missions are to think about the challenges ahead of us and discuss the future of cooperation and innovation in various fields relating to development."

He added that a major agenda of this forum was to implement the measures outlined by the Nyingchi Initiative, a consensus reached during the third Trans-Himalaya Forum in October, which highlights regional collaboration on environmental protection, increasing people-to-people exchanges and promoting green development.

Indira Rana, deputy speaker of the Nepalese House of Representatives, praised the cooperation between China and Nepal in the fields of sustainability and interconnectivity.

"China has always been the good neighbor, good friend and reliable partner of Nepal," Rana said. "China's support has been crucial to our development."

She added that China's development has been inspirational for countries in the trans-Himalaya region.

"Neighboring China's Xizang autonomous region, Nepal is willing to contribute to the regional development by actively joining the Belt and Road Initiative," Rana said. "We hope to enhance intercon-

nectivity in the region for a shared future with harmony and mutual benefits."

Khin Maung Yi, minister of natural resources and environmental protection of Myanmar, spoke highly of the Nyingchi Initiative for its focuses on international cooperation in environmental protection and development, dialogue among diversified cultures and international and regional peace.

He said that China and Myanmar have carried out fruitful collaboration in forestry, traditional medicines and biodiversity. He said he believes the implementation of the Nyingchi Initiative will push cooperation to new heights.

Prior to the opening of the forum, foreign guests attended a special exhibition of Xizang's products and culture on July 3.

Hussam Al Hussein, Jordanian ambassador to China, and his wife visited a show of Tibetan calligraphy. They were warmly received by Norbu Tsering, a famed calligrapher and *thangka* painter in Nyingchi.

Norbu Tsering's gift to the couple was a piece of calligraphy featuring Al Hussein's name converted into Tibetan characters. In return, the Jordanian diplomat created a piece of work by converting Norbu Tsering's name into Arabic.

Norbu Tsering received another honorable guest, Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi, Pakistani ambassador to China. While asking for Tibetan calligraphy work featuring his name, Hashmi requested the writer put the Tibetan words "everlasting friendship between China and Pakistan" on top of his name.

Taking the sheet and posing for a photo with Norbu Tsering, Hashmi said this exhibition and the forum are a platform for great exchange and friendship.



A woman (left) attending the forum is interviewed by local reporters on the sidelines of the event. DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY

Premium foodstuffs to be traded — Nepalese official

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Organic agricultural products are to be traded between Nepal and Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, a Nepalese official said at the fourth China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, which was held in the region's Nyingchi earlier this month.

As one of the invited guests at the forum, Genesh Prasad Timilsina, former chairman of the national assembly of Nepal, shared his thoughts on exporting agricultural products from Nepal's hilly and snow-capped mountain regions to Xizang in the future.

He made the remarks during a highland characteristic agriculture and animal husbandry roundtable meeting on July 4, which is a key part of the forum.

Timilsina said that 77 percent of Nepal's land area is covered by low-altitude hills and snow-capped mountains, giving the region significant potential for year-round agricultural production.

"These regions not only supply food and income for local communi-

ties but preserve a vast knowledge of cultural heritage and conserve indigenous livestock and crops.

"Crop farming and livestock breeding in these regions provide a stable livelihood for the local population," Timilsina said.

"Livestock like yaks, sheep and goats, as well as herbs, serve as the primary sources of income for people living in snow-capped mountain regions," he said, adding that cattle, buffaloes, goats, chickens and fish constitute the main sources of income in hilly regions.

He believes that the production of pesticide-free organic herbs, fruits, fish, meat and dairy products will increase substantially in the Gandaki province and other hilly and snow-capped mountain regions of Nepal.

"This will ensure the efficient export of premium animal products and pesticide-free organic fruits from Nepal to Xizang, while meeting local demands," he added. "By utilizing water resources in its mountainous regions, Nepal can take pride in supplying quality agricultural products to the inhabitants of Xizang and other regions."



Delegates share insights into farming at a roundtable meeting during the forum. PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

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A Chinese Arctic expedition team member conducts research in Norway's Ny-Alesund area on June 22.



A view of Norway's Ny-Alesund area, a scientific sanctuary for polar researchers, on June 21.

Chinese researchers immerse in Arctic fieldwork at Yellow River Station in Norway

NORTHERN EXPOSURE



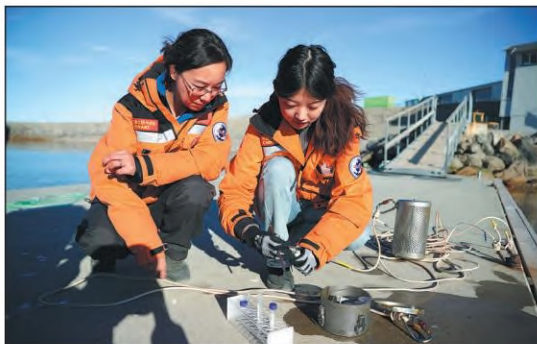
Members of the Chinese Arctic expedition team set out for sampling work in Ny-Alesund, Norway, on June 22. A member carries a firearm for protection in the wild. PHOTOS BY ZHAO DINGZHE / XINHUA



A Chinese Arctic expedition team member (right) speaks with an expert from the Norwegian Polar Institute at the Yellow River Station in Ny-Alesund, Norway, on June 21.



Chinese Arctic expedition team members discuss work at the Yellow River Station in Ny-Alesund, Norway, during an inspection of sampling equipment on June 21.



Situated at the northwestern region of Spitsbergen, the largest island in Norway's Arctic Svalbard archipelago, Ny-Alesund is the world's northernmost permanent settlement of its kind.

Once a thriving coal mining town, Ny-Alesund now buzzes with the activities of polar researchers. Since the Yellow River Station's inception in 2004, China has established a significant presence in this scientific sanctuary, carrying out a range of observations and investigations in glaciology, terrestrial ecology, marine ecology, space physics and other fields.

"As a member of the Chinese Arctic expedition team, I am proud of our country's achievements in polar research," said Hu Zhengyi, head of the Yellow River Station.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Norway. After 70 years of development, China-Norway relations have become more mature and resilient, and have maintained a strong endogenous momentum, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said when he held talks with



Left: Expedition team members take samples of seawater on June 21. Above: Team members check their research equipment on June 22. Right: Team members take a boat out for sampling work on June 22.



Norwegian counterpart Espen Barth Eide in Beijing in February.

Chinese researchers have also conducted many studies on polar scientific exploration and environmental protection in line with international and sustainable development efforts to tackle climate change, including China-Nordic cooperation.

By the end of last year, the Yellow River Station had supported more than 250 scientific research projects and hosted over 660 researchers. As China's first Arctic research station, it has witnessed the development of China's polar research efforts and the endeavors of polar researchers facing many challenges in the field.

"China's policy goals in the Arctic are to understand, protect, develop, and participate in Arctic governance, so as to safeguard the common interests of all countries and the international community in the Arctic, as well as promote sustainable development of the region," the Chinese embassy in Norway said in a statement to High North News, a Norway-based newspaper.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

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Trade fair set to boost ties with Hungary

By LI WENFANG in Guangzhou
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Hopes are high that the upcoming 24th China International Fair for Investment & Trade (CIFT) will open the gates for a new phase of mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation between China and Hungary, said Peter Varfi, consul-general of Hungary in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and China, and Hungary will act as CIFT's guest country of honor, Varfi said at an event in Guangzhou, on Wednesday for promoting the fair, which will be held in Xiamen, Fujian province between Sept 8 and 11.

CIFT "provides a valuable platform that contributes to two-way investment, pragmatic discussion and cooperation on an international level," he said.

China is Hungary's largest trade partner outside the European Union and the robust bilateral economic ties have been further accentuated by substantial foreign direct investment inflows from China.

Last month, direct flights were launched between Guangzhou and Budapest, while those between the Hungarian capital and Shenzhen in Guangdong province will start next month.

"Budapest will be linked to seven major Chinese cities by direct flights, with the number of weekly flights rising to 19. I hope that this list of cities will further expand soon, with the inclusion of Xiamen," Varfi added.

Hungary's national pavilion at CIFT will take up 450 square meters and will house the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency, the Hungarian Tourism Agency, the National Investment Promotion Agency, the National Industrial Park Operator and Developer, the Agricultural Marketing Center and the Hungarian Wine Marketing Agency, he said.

Andrew Edlefsen, principal commercial officer of the Consulate General of the United States in Guangzhou, said CIFT is one of the most influential investment events globally.

CIFT — whose permanent theme is "expanding two-way investment, jointly facilitating global development" — is committed to developing platforms for promoting two-way investment, releasing authoritative information and discussing investment trends, said Zhang Zhihong, vice-mayor of Xiamen.

A series of events will be hosted during the fair, including the Transnational Companies Round-table Meeting, the Annual Conference of the Global Alliance of Special Economic Zones, the Night of Gulangyu Networking Event, economic and trade exchanges between Chinese provinces and states in the US, and the Global Supply Chain Innovation Forum, she said.



Employees check a power transmission network in Zhangye, Gansu province.

YANG XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Report: New energy sector on a roll

By ZHENG XIN
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The construction of new energy projects in China for grid connections and transmission continues to strengthen, further enhancing the industry's capabilities to optimize large-scale resources, a report released on Thursday said.

China has set up a batch of intra-provincial and inter-provincial transmission projects last year. By the end of 2023, there were 39 ultra-high-voltage transmission projects. National transmission capacity exceeded 300 million kilowatts, further enhancing new energy consumption capacity, according to a report on China's new energy power generation published by the State Grid Energy Research Institute in Beijing.

Companies are also accelerating investment in grid construction to guarantee sufficient energy supply, and increasing the share of green power in the country's energy mix, said Ye Xiaojing, senior engineer from the new energy department of the institute.

For instance, State Grid Corp of China, the largest power provider in the country, plans to invest more than 500 billion yuan (\$69.6 billion) in grid network construction this year, focusing on construction of ultra-high-voltage power transmission projects, to ensure power supply stability and boost green power consumption.

The company also said it will continue to step up construction of clean energy power transmission projects and intelligent power distribution systems, and sharpen focus on aspects like new energy storage regulation and vehicle network interaction.

Kou Nannan, head of China Research at BloombergNEF, an industry research provider, said most new energy sources are intermittent and are characterized by rapid and unpredictable variations, which complicates the task of maintaining stable power generation and poses a risk to the consistent operation of the grid.

Kou emphasized that invest-

ment in infrastructure, including grid upgrades and expansion, as well as the development of energy storage systems, will be crucial in accelerating China's transition to green and low-carbon energy in the coming years.

Zhu Yicong, senior analyst of renewables and power research at global consultancy Rystad Energy, said China's renewable installations have surged since 2023, while 82 GW of new installations have been connected to the grid during the first five months of this year.

This necessitates speedy construction of related transmission networks, improvement to grid systems' capability to take in more renewable power and accelerated development of energy storage, she said.

Accelerating the construction of grid network projects, including cross-province transmission lines and ultra-high voltage transmission lines will help improve consumption of power generated from large-scale renewable base projects and ease the power imbalance between resource-rich areas and high power demand areas, she said.

Global consultancy Accenture said in a report that for the largely unchanged power distribution industry, this transition means fundamental transformation. Increased investment in the grid network will enhance transmission channel use and boost investor confidence in wind and solar projects.

According to the China Electric Power Development 2024 report released by the China Electric Power Planning and Engineering Institute recently, China's electricity demand has been steadily climbing in recent years, with the flexibility of the power system continuously improving, which has further facilitated the world's largest renewable power generation system.

With China's new energy sector entering a new phase of rapid growth, resulting in increasing pressure on energy consumption, the institute underscored more

efforts to ensure the reasonable consumption and utilization of new energy by better predicting the demand for regulatory capacity and optimizing the coordination of power generation, grid, load and storage.

By 2025, the coordinated development of regulatory capacity across power generation, grid, load and storage is expected to increase the maximum adjustable capacity by about 300 million kilowatts, said Rao Jianye, president of the China Electric Power Planning and Engineering Institute.

China's capacity for innovation in energy technology has consistently advanced over the past few years, with accelerated upgrades in technologies related to high-capacity offshore wind turbines, tidal energy generation and crystalline silicon photovoltaic technology, he said.

The institute recommended better coordination of the layout of various types of power sources in the next three years, including conventional hydropower, pumped storage, wind power, solar power generation, nuclear power and coal-fired power, to contribute to China's green and low-carbon development as well as global emissions reduction.

According to the State Grid Energy Research Institute, China's installed capacity of distributed photovoltaic systems has surpassed 200 million kilowatts. In 2023, China added 85.89 million kilowatts of new distributed PV generation capacity, accounting for nearly 40 percent (39.6 percent) of the total new PV installations.

By the end of 2023, the installed capacity of distributed PV systems reached 240 million kilowatts, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 54 percent and representing 40 percent of the total PV capacity.

Residential PV systems continued to play a significant role in the development of distributed PV, with 43.48 million kilowatts of new residential distributed PV capacity installed, making up 50.6 percent of all new distributed PV installations, it said.

Hopes of stable stock market rise on H1 data

Over 850 of 1,600-plus firms forecast higher profits, with electronics leading

By SHI JING in Shanghai
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The improving half-year profitability of A-share companies can be interpreted as an indication that stock market performance will further stabilize in the following months and, more importantly, China's economic transformation will advance, said experts on Thursday.

Of the 1,600-plus A-share companies that have disclosed their first-half earnings forecasts so far, more than 850 said their income will rise year-on-year, according to market tracker Wind Info.

More than 350 companies anticipate their first-half net profit to rise over 100 percent year-on-year, while another 240 reported that they expect their net profit to rise by 50 percent to 100 percent.

The electronics sector showed the strongest gains. At least 88 A-share companies from the sector reported net income increases in the first half. Chemical companies, engineering equipment providers and carmakers followed in terms of net income increase growth rates.

Of the 45 semiconductor companies that released earnings forecasts, 39 reported growth in the first half. Seven companies reported net profit increases of over 500 percent year-on-year, including industry big names such as Will Semiconductor and Montage Technology.

Analysts from Ping An Securities said semiconductor companies have abundant orders now, thanks to improving production globally and the rapid increase in domestic substitution. As industry leaders continue to invest in artificial intelligence-powered devices, chips have to be upgraded accordingly, which may lead to a new round of device replacement demand.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the output of China's integrated circuit products increased by 28.9 percent year-on-year in the first six months.

Apart from semiconductor com-

panies, improving profitability can be widely seen in the technology sector, including the computing power industry chain, the intelligent driving industry chain and consumer electronics, according to Chen Guo, chief strategist of China Securities.

The external reasons for the improving profitability vary, including the recovery of the overall industry and market demand, said Chen Li, chief economist of Chuancui Securities. But it can also be seen that technologies are making a bigger difference, with high-value-added sectors such as IC, robots and new energy vehicles showing stronger growth momentum, he said.

Qiu Xiang, joint chief strategist at CITIC Securities, said there were mainly two sets of A-share companies reporting better profitability in the first half. First, the upstream resource providers supported by rising prices, such as nonferrous metal and power suppliers. Second, manufacturing industries, which are export-oriented or show a better supply-demand relationship. Electronics companies and carmakers fall into the latter category.

"The profitability of A-share companies can reflect the transition of old to new economic drivers going on in China right now. Industries are gradually replacing the property sector to become the new source of growth," he said.

It is for this reason that companies along the real estate industry chain or manufacturing companies confronting intensified competition have reported poorer first-half earnings forecasts. Profitability improvement of more A-share companies may still take some time, said Qiu.

Looking ahead, A-share technology companies, especially with self-reliant technology expertise, as well as export-oriented companies, may post better performance in the following months, said experts from China International Capital Corp Ltd.

Briefly

Volkswagen launches NEV for local market

Volkswagen Anhui officially launched its first new energy vehicle for the Chinese market on Wednesday in Hefei, capital of East China's Anhui province. The new model, ID.UNYX, is Volkswagen's first smart electric coupe SUV. It has a maximum range of 621 kilometers and is equipped with an 82.4 kilowatt-hour battery from CATL.

Central bank conducts reverse repos

China's central bank conducted 49 billion yuan (\$6.87 billion) of seven-day reverse repos at an interest rate of 1.8 percent on Thursday. A reverse repo is a process in which the central bank purchases securities from commercial banks through bidding, with an agreement to sell them back in the future.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Guangxi posts standout first-half trade performance

By ZHANG LI in Nanning
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Despite facing mounting complexities and uncertainties in the global landscape, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region's foreign trade sector continues to flourish.

Figures released on Monday by Nanning Customs unveiled a significant surge in Guangxi's total imports and exports, reaching 345.28 billion yuan (\$47.57 billion) in the first half, marking a notable 12 percent year-on-year increase. The growth rate outpaced the national foreign trade expansion.

Of particular note, exports surged to 191.8 billion yuan, surpassing 150 billion yuan for the first time within the same period in history, demonstrating a substantial 28.5 percent year-on-year increase.

Private enterprises emerged as

pivotal players in Guangxi's foreign trade domain, displaying resilience and stability.

During the first six months, import and export volume of private enterprises in Guangxi skyrocketed to 238.17 billion yuan. The share of import and export volume from private enterprises in Guangxi's foreign trade surged to 69 percent.

Among its major trading partners, Guangxi's imports and exports with its largest trading partner, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, soared to 185.62 billion yuan, reflecting a 26.7 percent surge and expanding its market share. Trade with emerging markets such as Latin America and Africa also grew at a pace exceeding the overall trend.

Benefiting from global demand recovery, the Vietnamese manufacturing sector experienced

growth. Guangxi's exports of intermediate goods to Vietnam reached 63.67 billion yuan in the first half, up 50.3 percent year-on-year.

Notably, exports of intermediate electronic information products — including integrated circuits, computer components, lithium-ion batteries and audio-visual equipment components — doubled during the period.

Moreover, trade through Guangxi ports involving the nine major mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area totaled 70.46 billion yuan, with over 80 percent of such trade conducted with ASEAN member economies.

Via Guangxi ports, the "13+2" provinces and regions along the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor traded 323.39 billion yuan in goods and services in the

first half, a 17 percent increase.

Lei Zhonghua, director of the foreign trade division at the Guangxi's Department of Commerce, emphasized the region's enhanced service mechanisms for key foreign trade projects, strengthened industry-trade linkages, and identified 30 major industrial projects with a total import and export volume of approximately 80 billion yuan, generating an incremental volume of about 20 billion yuan since the start of 2024.

Guangxi hosted the "Guangxi Products Go Global" event in Japan, facilitating the entry of 72 companies and numerous high-quality specialty products into the Japanese market.

Furthermore, Guangxi is accelerating its "same source of medicine and food" and expanding the scope of goods eligible for cus-



A freight train leaves Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, for Vietnam. CAO YIMING / XINHUA

tombs facilitation reform to 39 categories. In the first half, Guangxi imported 11,000 metric tons of goods through the reform, marking a notable 91.3 percent year-on-year increase.

Lei said, "We are committed to

enhancing collaboration with Vietnam and other ASEAN nations in the production and trade sectors, fostering deep integration of industrial, supply and value chains, and bolstering the export of intermediate goods."

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Traditional sectors bloom in new thrust

China stresses their upgrade via sound measures in smarter, greener directions

By MA SI
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China, the world's manufacturing powerhouse, is facing a big challenge as it scrambles to cultivate cutting-edge technologies and emerging fields, and deal with its sprawling traditional industries such as steel, nonferrous metals and building materials.

Though some have called these "low-end" and urged for the phasing out of such industries, arguing that they are not productive enough and could trigger negative environmental fallout, China's top industry regulator has expressed a more rational view.

Jin Zhuanglong, minister of industry and information technology, has said that China's traditional industries are vast and account for over 80 percent of the manufacturing sector, including steel, nonferrous metals, petrochemicals, building materials, light industry, machinery, textiles and apparel, foods, and traditional Chinese medicine.

These traditional sectors form the foundation of the modern industrial system, are crucial to economic development and people's livelihoods, and are essential for maintaining China's status as the world's leading manufacturer, Jin said.

"Regardless of the present or the future, traditional industries should not be simply labeled as 'low-end industries' and phased out. We must prioritize the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries, employing a set of 'comprehensive measures' to accelerate their development toward higher-end, smarter and greener directions, allowing traditional industries to 'blossom anew,'" Jin added.

Looking ahead, Jin's ministry will focus on implementing high-end, intelligent, green and integrated technological renovations of traditional industries, supporting new technology pilot projects, and executing major manufacturing technological upgrades and large-scale equipment renewal projects. The aim is to rejuvenate traditional industries, making them carriers of new quality productive forces.

A typical example is the collaboration between Inspur Yunzhou, a unit of Inspur Group that focuses on the industrial internet, and Hansy Mining Co Ltd, a manufacturer of mining

crushing and screening equipment. The two companies have launched an industry case application aimed at transforming traditional machinery into smart equipment.

This initiative focuses on equipping conventional "dumb machines" that are not connected to the internet, with advanced industrial security devices such as Yunzhou security chips and intelligent gateways before they leave the factory. This transformation allows the equipment to evolve into smart devices that boast data services.

The equipment undergoes full-spectrum management and analysis, through comprehensive monitoring and control capabilities, including quality tracing, energy consumption, productivity analysis, remote maintenance and after-sales service. This process continually accumulates application and fault data, forming an equipment analysis model, the two companies said.

The transformation has significantly benefited Hansy Mining by reducing operational costs, enhancing product value and improving service quality. It has helped the company cut equipment failure rates by 15 percent, reduce unplanned downtime by 20 percent, increase maintenance efficiency by 25 percent, lower maintenance costs by 20 percent, and boost after-sales repair efficiency by 90 percent. These improvements have markedly increased the competitiveness of the company's products and brand, Hansy Mining said.

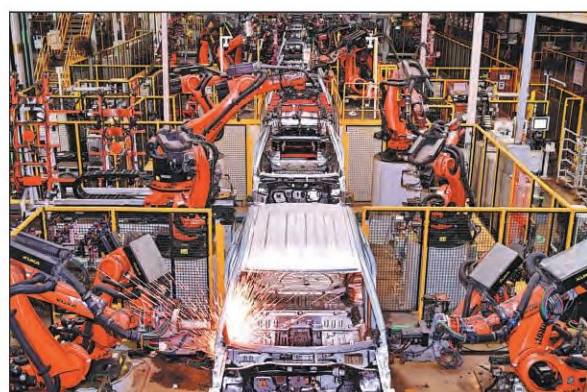
Shang Guangyong, chief technology officer and deputy general manager of Inspur Yunzhou, said the intelligent transformation of equipment helps companies transition from traditional "industrial equipment manufacturers" to "operators of industrial equipment manufacturing, industrial digital service and infrastructure".

"This shift enhances equipment market competitiveness and maintenance efficiency, reduces after-sales costs, and expands secondary sales opportunities, including spare parts sales and equipment leasing services. It also promotes the digital transformation and upgrade of small and medium-sized enterprises, fostering collaborative development in the industrial economy," Shang said.

Apart from prioritizing digital transformation in manufacturing



Above: A worker inspects an intelligent yarn production line in Qingdao, Shandong province, on July 15. LIANG XIAOPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY
Below: A view of a smart manufacturing line for vehicles in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, in April. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



enterprises, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology will also intensify energy-saving and carbon reduction initiatives, particularly in key industries such as steel, nonferrous metals, petrochemicals, and building materials, as well as in critical areas like data centers and communication base stations, said Zhao Zhiguo, chief engineer of the MIIT.

These efforts will include constructing digital energy and carbon management centers and accelerating the development of resource recycling systems to enhance resource security, Zhao said.

That is of particular importance in an era of rapid development of artificial intelligence.

Computing power is a crucial element supporting technological progress and industrial transformation. However, data centers are often high-temperature environ-

ments, and the computer servers need a sophisticated cooling system. As a result, efficient, green data centers are essential for ensuring computing power supply and driving AI innovation, experts said.

To help solve the problems, Sugon Data Energy (Beijing) Co Ltd, an affiliate of Chinese supercomputer manufacturer Dawning Information Industry Co, is dedicated to applying liquid cooling technology to broader intelligent computing scenarios.

Zhang Peng, vice-president and chief technology officer of Sugon Data Energy, said that the company's proprietary liquid cooling technology involves immersing computing equipment like servers in a low-boiling, nonconductive, and highly efficient cooling liquid.

This method significantly improves energy efficiency and reduces energy consumption com-

pared to traditional air cooling, effectively addressing data center heat dissipation challenges and providing innovative pathways for building low-carbon, efficient intelligent computing data centers, Zhang said.

Sugon Data Energy's proprietary cooling liquid, an electronic fluorinated liquid, offers high insulation, low boiling point, high stability, low viscosity and absolute safety with environmental friendliness (no ozone depletion and low greenhouse effect).

The product, independently developed by Sugon Data Energy, has outperformed similar foreign products in performance and costs, breaking foreign monopolies and achieving domestic substitution, Zhang added.

Going forward, Sugon Data Energy said it will continue to invest in research and development of immersion liquid cooling technology and other green data center solutions. This will drive technological innovation and industrial upgrading in collaboration with global partners to create a grand blueprint for green intelligent computing.

Such cases are just a part of the vast digital and green transformation of China's manufacturing industry. Significant progress has been made in the digital transformation of the manufacturing sector, creating favorable conditions for high-end, intelligent and green development.

Xin Guobin, vice-minister of industry and information technolo-

gy, said currently, China's industrial robot installations account for over 50 percent of the global total, and the industrial internet has achieved comprehensive coverage of major industrial categories, nurturing 421 national-level smart manufacturing demonstration factories.

Meanwhile, China dominates the Global Lighthouse Network list, a project launched by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with consultancy McKinsey & Company to track advanced manufacturing plants, known as lighthouse factories, that apply state-of-the-art digital technologies.

To date, China is home to 62 lighthouse factories, the highest number of any country and accounting for more than 40 percent of the world's total of 153.

The advanced Chinese factories in areas such as large planes, new energy vehicles and high-speed trains have shortened product development cycles by about 30 percent and increased production efficiency by nearly 30 percent, illustrating that many manufacturing enterprises, empowered by digital advancements, outperform their peers, Xin said.

MIIT, in collaboration with local governments and departments, will work on implementing a manufacturing digital transformation initiative, which aims to build about 200 high-standard industrial parks that feature efficient digital transformation by 2027, and complete a round of digital transformation for major industrial enterprises by 2030, Xin added.

Kingdee speeds up AI push for rapid tech advancement

By MA SI

Kingdee International Software Group Co Ltd, a Chinese software industry pioneer, has stepped up efforts to embrace artificial intelligence, with the aim of revolutionizing its products and solutions as well as cultivating new quality productive forces for the country's software sector.

As industries evolve in an era marked by rapid technological advancements, leveraging new ideas, methods, tools, technologies and elements is imperative, said Xu Shaochun, chairman and CEO of Kingdee.

"In the past, growth was driven by labor, capital and energy. However, in the future, data will emerge as a critical element in digital transformation, gaining increasing importance among enterprises. Consequently, Kingdee is committed to nurturing new quality productive forces to support high-quality corporate development," Xu said.

Kingdee, which has been offering management software and services for companies for over three decades, is focusing on its "subscription priority, AI priority" strategy this year to help enterprises accelerate

their digital transformation, he said.

Xu said that the key to developing a digital economy lies in driving enterprises' digital transformation. This involves utilizing new technologies and concepts to develop next-generation enterprise management digital platforms, thereby enhancing enterprise business capability. This encompasses data-driven business operations, customer service and engagement, partner empowerment, asset management and employee enablement.

Xu's remarks were echoed by Kitty Fok, managing director of International Data Corp China.

Fok said China's digital transformation was mainly focused on the consumer level in the past, such as mobile payments, e-commerce and video-streaming platforms.

This means there is huge potential for companies in the country to accomplish their digital upgrade as a whole.

IDC has forecast that 51 percent of global IT budgets will go toward digital innovation and digital transformation by 2024, while that number in China is estimated to be above 70 percent.

Specifically, China's investment in AI is forecast to reach 273.9 billion

yuan (\$38.1 billion) in 2027, accounting for 9 percent of the world's total, IDC said.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China's top industry regulator, has also said that it would launch an "AI plus" initiative to promote the application of the technology in more sectors.

That would spell significant opportunities for companies like Kingdee.

"In the realm of financial management, AI has revolutionized the traditional framework, and the shift from experience-based forecasting to AI-precise forecasting represents a significant change," Xu said.

According to him, while traditional methods rely on subjective experience and limited data, AI integrates big data correlation analysis and deep learning, enabling more accurate revenue, cost, profit and risk predictions. This adaptability to changing environments and needs exemplifies the profound impact of AI.

Moreover, the scope of expert service management has expanded from relying on individual experts to utilizing AI "teams". In specialized areas such as taxation, treasury and capital operations, AI can

now provide cross-industry, multi-skilled solutions, akin to having numerous experts at one's disposal, Xu added.

For instance, Kingdee said its collaboration with a bank employs multi-feature recall and financial model technology to automatically screen transaction data daily, aiding enterprises in preventing fraudulent trade risks.

"The introduction of AI also transforms workforce dynamics. A finance department originally staffed with 500 employees can now achieve the output of 1,000 people, with AI significantly enhancing productivity. Conversely, AI can maintain the department's capabilities even if the workforce is reduced to 200, showcasing its value," Xu said.

In May 2024, Kingdee launched its intelligent AI management assistant, Cosmic, and upgraded its Kingdee Cloud Cosmic platform into a new-generation enterprise-level AI platform. Notable collaborations include Chinese property developer C&D Real Estate Corp Ltd, which has partnered with Kingdee to develop a contract management system powered by AI, marking a big



Visitors try out Kingdee's products at the Kingdee Cloud Cosmic Summit in Beijing in May. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

boost in work efficiency.

Similarly, Hisense Group and Kingdee co-created AI applications in human resources management.

As of March 31, Kingdee International reported an annual recurring revenue of about 2.98 billion yuan from cloud subscription services, a 28 percent year-on-year increase.

In the first half, Kingdee secured contracts with large enterprises, including China National Petroleum Corp, China National Aviation Holding Corp, Dongfeng Motor

Corp, and Longfor Group.

The progress is the result of Kingdee's long-term emphasis on research and development. In 2023, Kingdee's R&D expenditure was approximately 1.44 billion yuan, accounting for about 25.4 percent of the group's total revenue.

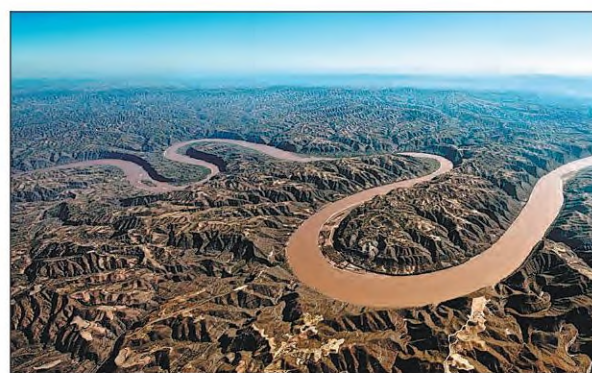
"The goal is to enhance the digital management value of Chinese enterprises. By empowering our entire product line with AI, Kingdee aims for disruptive innovation, ensuring that every user benefits from an AI assistant," Xu said.



HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

Enhanced road network opens up access to almost 1,000 tourist sites across Shanxi province

From Left: A section of a rural road in Lingchuan county, which is a branch of the Taihang No 1 Highway. A road sign on a sightseeing highway in the Taihang Mountains. A spectacular bend of the Yellow River near Pianguan county's Laoniawan village, where the river and the Great Wall meet. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The Yellow River winds its way between Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces.

By YUAN SHENGAO

Shanxi's landmark attractions — the Yellow River, the Taihang Mountains and the Great Wall — are now connected by the trunk roads of three major sightseeing highways, allowing tourists to better experience the province's spectacular natural wonders, long history and brilliant cultures.

Since 2018, North China's Shanxi has invested nearly 100 billion yuan (\$13.75 billion) in the construction of sightseeing roads. With a planned total length of 13,000 kilometers, the three highway systems — which are called Yellow River No 1, Taihang No 1 and Great Wall No 1 — are designed to link nearly 1,000 tourism sites among the three attractions, according to a local official.

These three highways also connect to other transport systems — national and provincial truck highways, high-speed railroads and airports — in Shanxi, giving people "fast access to and an in-depth touring experience of various destinations," the officials said.

Local statistics show that the bulk of the three No 1 highways, with a total length of 10,900 km, has been opened to traffic. Officials said the entire project will be completed by the end of this year.

The project will also feature infrastructure to offer services for self-driving tourists. Facilities like filling stations, charging stations, recreation vehicle parks and scenic viewpoints have been built along the roads and these will continue to increase and improve in the future, said the officials.

Shanxi's three landmark attractions offer a unique appeal to tourists but the road journeys along the three routes had been challenging because of the distance they cover. The new highways aim to alleviate that.

Shanxi is one of the best places to see Chinese architectural wonders of the Great Wall. As the country's most

iconic ancient defensive structure, the Great Wall was built in a period from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

With a total length of more than 3,500 km across Shanxi, the Great Wall runs through nine cities and about 40 counties in the province. More than 1,500 km of walls and other relics remain relatively intact.

The Yellow River — which has a course of 965 km serving as the border between Shanxi, Shaanxi and Henan provinces — has the same importance as the Great Wall in Shanxi's tourism industry.

The Yellow River enters Shanxi at the village of Laoniawan, which means "Old Ox Bay", in Pianguan county. From the village, the river has left one of its most beautiful features — the Shanxi-Shaanxi Grand Gorges. The gorges were formed by the Yellow River cutting through the Loess Plateau over millions of years.

Also holding an important position in Shanxi's tourism map are the Taihang Mountains. Extending more than 400 km from north to south, they are among the largest ranges in North China.

With breathtaking peaks, steep cliffs, unique rocks, lush forests and clean waters, Taihang is regarded by many sightseers as a place to be visited many times.

As the Yellow River, Great Wall and Taihang Mountains are located in the west, north and east of Shanxi respectively, it might be difficult for tourists to visit all three attractions in a short period of time. However, with the construction of three major sightseeing roads, travel in Shanxi has been made easier.

Yellow River No 1

The Yellow River No 1 Highway is designed to string together more than 200 scenic spots, including wetlands, waterfalls, ancient villages and ancient ferry ports, with the aim of boosting local tourism.

With a total length of 1,238 km, the trunk road of Yellow River No 1 begins in Pianguan's Laoniawan and ends in Xihonghong village in Yuanqu county. It covers four major Shanxi cities of Xinzhou, Lyuliang, Linfen and Yuncheng.

As the starting point of this route, Laoniawan village has been transformed into a popular tourist destination. Laoniawan is a landmark in Shanxi, not only because it is the beginning of the grand gorges but because it is the intersection of the Yellow River and the Great Wall.

The village borders the Inner Mongolia autonomous region in the north and neighbors Shaanxi province in the west. Locals call it a place where "the cock's crow can be heard in three provinces".

At the convergence of the Yellow River and the Great Wall, the most spectacular part of the area is a big, 180-degree bend that forms a small peninsula opposite to the village.

Standing on the peninsula is a Great Wall watchtower called Baozita, which was built in the early Ming Dynasty. It is a vantage point of the Yellow River, which used to be a torrential waterway but became a lake after a reservoir was built in the 1990s.

It has also silently witnessed the incessant flow of the river and witnessed changes in the area for hundreds of years.

One of the changes it has seen in recent years is what the sightseeing roads brought to local life.

Several years ago, tourism in this historical village was not so prosperous compared to other famed destinations in Shanxi due to underdeveloped transport.

The situation has changed with the construction of the Yellow River and Great Wall sightseeing roads.

The village provides visitors with the opportunity to explore the mysterious fortresses of the Great Wall and experience the beauty of the Yellow River. Visitors can also savor delicious farm-to-table cuisine and enjoy overnight accommodation in unique cave dwellings, with a

chance to sleep on a kang — a cozy clay-and-brick stacked bed heated from within.

Almost every family in Laoniawan runs a homestay now and tourism has become a cash cow for the villagers, according to an official of the village.

Taihang No 1

When mentioning a road that can provide self-driving tourists with a sightseeing experience of a long range of spectacular mountains, one may think of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the Appalachian Mountains in the United States, which inspired John Denver to write his famous song *Take Me Home, Country Road*.

Now Shanxi province has a similar road in its Taihang Mountains region. The Taihang No 1 Highway starts from Yaodu village in Qinshui county and ends in Pingxingguan village in Fanshi county in the north. With its trunk line and branches covering the five cities of Jincheng, Changzhi, Jinzhong, Yangquan and Xinzhou, the road system now has more than 4,100 km opened to traffic.

The Taihang Mountains are a famed tourist destination in China, featuring a perfect combination of natural and cultural wonders.

Like the sentiment of Denver when driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway, a yearning for singing is often inevitable for tourists on the Taihang roads. This is especially true on the Lingchuan section of Taihang No 1.

The road features the three colors of red, yellow and blue on its surface. But the most amazing part of it is that it can sing. When driving at a speed of 30 km per hour on the road, electronic devices along the road will sing a song that is familiar to many — *In the Taihang Mountains*.

The song is a tribute to the national heroes who fought invaders there during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). And when the music resonates between the "iron walls of Taihang",



An overhead view of the Yellow River No 1 Highway in Linfen city.

it can easily strike a chord among tourists.

One of the most imposing sights in the Taihang region are the cliffs rising up from the valleys. The cliffs are often called the "iron walls of Taihang".

But for many Chinese people, the term is not only a description of the landscape, but homage to the heroes who protected the nation.

About 80 years ago, the Taihang Mountains were an important base for the Eighth Route Army led by the Communist Party of China, a vital force in the war of resistance.

When the Chinese nation and its people were at their most critical moment, the warriors of the army pledged to "build a new Great Wall with their very flesh and blood". Many of them sacrificed their lives to honor this pledge and rendered new significance to the "iron walls of Taihang".

Taihang is now home to a great number of Red tourism sites related to China's revolutionary history, like the Eighth Route Army Memorial Museum in Wuxiang county, and the site of the Hundred-Regiment Campaign in Yangquan city.

The county of Lingchuan, where the "music highway" is located, was one of the important bases for the army during the war and is also the birthplace of the song *In the Taihang Mountains*.

Great Wall No 1

The Great Wall No 1, starting from Laoniawan in Pianguan county in northwestern Shanxi and ending in Pingxingguan in the eastern Shanxi county of Fanshi, is a road network of 3,573 km, including 1,171 km of trunk lines and 1,566 km of branch lines.

Shanxi is one of the nation's leading provinces in Great Wall-related tourism. The northern Shanxi city of Datong was one of the nine border garrison towns in the Ming Dynasty, when construction of the Great Wall

reached its height for the purpose of defending against the northern Mongol Yuan forces. To this date, the city holds the largest number of Great Wall relics in Shanxi.

Datong is strategically located at the natural boundary between the farming areas of Shanxi and the nomadic areas in the north. Many Great Wall sites from multiple dynasties are located within the city. The Datong Great Wall consists of both an inner and an outer layer, with a total length of 503 km, of which the Shoukou Fortress, Zhenbian Fortress, Desheng Fortress and Xiping Fortress are all well preserved and worth visiting.

Among the many Great Wall fortresses in Datong, the Desheng Fortress is the most well known among tourists.

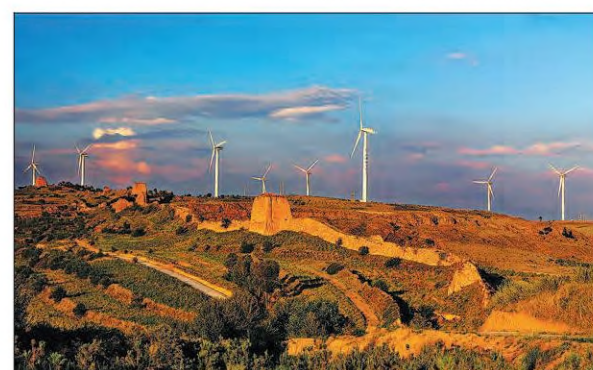
Desheng was originally built in 1538 and was renovated and enhanced in 1574 and 1607 respectively. It features 18 watchtowers and four turrets on the four corners of the wall. While functioning as a stronghold during wars, the fortress was a hub for trade and cultural exchanges in times of peace.

Even in the modern era, the strategic importance of Shanxi's Great Wall has remained. Since 1937, as part of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and World War II, numerous battles took place along the walls.

In September 1937, for instance, the Eighth Route Army launched a battle against the Japanese invaders at the Great Wall pass of Pingxingguan and won a victory that helped to raise the morale of the entire Chinese military.

Both Desheng and Pingxingguan fortresses are accessible with the Great Wall No 1 Highway. The road system offers great convenience for tourists, allowing them to easily travel to any site of the Shanxi Great Wall sections.

Li Yao contributed to this story.



From left: A section of the Great Wall in Shanyin county. A group of statues stand in front of the Pingxingguan Victory Memorial Museum in tribute to the Chinese warriors who fought invaders during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). A section of the ancient Great Wall in Datong offers a sharp contrast with a modern wind farm close by.

ADVERTORIAL

COMMENT

Editorials

Easing of visa restrictions good for improvement of China-India ties

In a move that could help ease strained China-India economic and trade relations, New Delhi is reportedly planning to speed up the process of issuing visas for Chinese engineers and technicians in a bid to make up for the delays at manufacturing units that have already cost the country billions of dollars. The technicians are mainly needed to operate Chinese-made machinery installed in India's high-tech manufacturing units in industries ranging from telecommunications to steel production and solar panels.

The Indian Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade is trying to formulate a framework along with the ministries of home and external affairs that will fast-track visas for Chinese engineers and technicians, with the aim of reducing the visa processing time to 30 days or less from the previous period of four to five months, according to reports.

India virtually stopped issuing visas to Chinese visitors following a deadly clash between Chinese and Indian troops in a disputed border area in June 2020. Reports from the Indian media suggest there was subsequently a significant decline in the issuing of visas to Chinese nationals, dropping to 2,000 so far in 2024 compared with around 200,000 in 2019. Other restrictive measures India has taken against China include the prohibition of hundreds of Chinese mobile apps, delays in approvals for Chinese investments, and a reduction in the number of direct flights between the two countries.

Yet these measures have been a double-edged sword as they have also taken a toll on India's economy. For example, the Indian government's visa restrictions have already caused production losses of \$15 billion for the electronics manufacturing sector alone in the last four years, The Economic Times newspaper has said, citing an industry estimate.

The situation, if it remains unchanged, will certainly hinder Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious "Make-in-India" initiative aimed at boosting manufacturing and turning the country into a global manufacturing hub. The program includes plans to cut red tape, develop infrastructure and make it easier for companies to do business in India.

Such measures to enhance confidence and convenience are exactly what the country needs given the capriciousness of the government departments when it comes to dealing with foreign companies doing business in India. Despite the country's seemingly vast and promising consumer market, a string of prominent multinational companies including electronics giant Foxconn have been forced to exit, scale down or consider pulling out of the Indian market over the years because of the harsh business environment in India in terms of taxation and arbitrary law enforcement. In the World Bank's Global Doing Business report, India used to be ranked as one of the worst countries in the world to start a business, which earned it the reputation of being a "graveyard for foreign companies".

Chinese companies have been among the biggest victims, especially because of an orchestrated campaign against Chinese economic interests in India. In 2022, Indian authorities seized \$725 million from Chinese smartphone company Xiaomi, accusing it of breaking the country's foreign exchange laws by making illegal remittances abroad, a charge that the company denies. The seizure prompted Beijing to urge New Delhi to "provide a fair, just and nondiscriminatory business environment for Chinese companies".

China and India are each other's major trading partners, and together they are expected to account for nearly half of global growth this year, according to the International Monetary Fund's estimate this week. Hopefully, the latest move by India to ease visa restrictions on Chinese technicians is not made out of expediency, but rather part of a long-term strategy that will see the country become more amenable to Chinese and other foreign businesses.

Allies dodging US' tech war draft

The Joe Biden administration is mulling harsh restrictive measures on Tokyo Electron, ASML and other chipmaking and chip equipment manufacturing companies of US allies if they continue to trade with China.

In trying to coerce them to be a collective pressure point on China, the Joe Biden administration is creating a self-made dilemma for the United States.

On the one hand, most US semiconductor companies are opposed to the Biden administration's de facto chip embargo against their largest chip market, believing that the policy is counterproductive and undermines the interests of US business. On the other hand, with Biden facing tremendous difficulties in his bid for reelection as US president in November, more and more US allies feel they needn't serve in the ranks for the Biden administration's "chip war" against China anymore.

Even if Biden tries to resort to extreme pressure to reinforce his anti-China Maginot Line, in which he took great pride as he said during the NATO Summit in Washington last week, that fortification is becoming increasingly shaky and porous.

The ASML's sales revenue from China accounted for about half of its global total in the first half of this year. And for three quarters in a row, as of the second quarter of this year, at least 50 percent of the chip manufacturing equipment made in Japan has been exported to China.

Most of those conscripted by his administration know that Biden's "chip war" against China, which violates market law and leaves no party unscathed, was nothing but a personal vanity project from day one.

The tumbling share prices of relevant Japanese and Dutch companies on Wednesday following the Biden administration's latest threats — Tokyo Electron's share price dropped by 8.3 percent at one point — means that even before the US' restrictive measures against them materialize, they have started paying for being dragged into the US' tech offensive against China.

The Biden administration's "chip war" is not sustainable. It is like trying to hold back the tide.

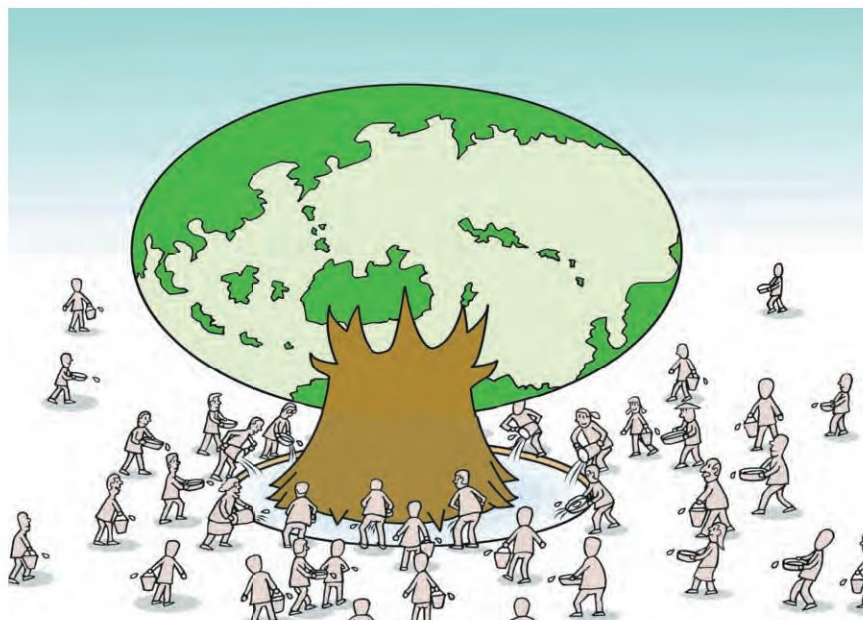
The latest forecast by the Semiconductor Industry Association of the United States predicts that global chip manufacturing equipment sales will grow by 3.4 percent this year to \$109 billion. Among them, equipment shipments to the Chinese mainland market are expected to exceed \$35 billion, accounting for more than 30 percent of the total, making it the largest market driving demand growth.

All signs indicate that, as the halo of its "value diplomacy" is fading as a result of its "of value only to the US" trade strategies, the Biden administration is increasingly treating the high-tech companies of the US' allies the same way it deals with their Chinese counterparts. Its efforts to unite its allies to form a united front in a "chip war" against China are therefore doomed to failure.

Reportedly, a group of heavyweight US executives led by US-China Business Council President Craig Allen and CEO and board chair of FedEx Corporation Raj Subramaniam will head to Beijing soon, hoping to meet with Chinese officials to obtain first-hand insights following the conclusion of the four-day meeting of China's leading decision-makers on Thursday.

With no more than four months to go before the election, entrepreneurs in the US and its allies have already started voting with their feet.

Zhang Jiliang



Opinion Line

Expanded transit visa-free policy facilitates exchanges and cooperation

The National Immigration Administration recently announced that three new ports in Zhengzhou, Henan province, and Lijiang and Mohan, Yunnan province will be implementing a 144-hour transit visa-free policy for citizens from foreign countries and their scope of stay will also be expanded.

This has brought the number of Chinese cities implementing the 144-hour visa-free transit policy for foreign tourists to 37. The administration said that it will continue to optimize the visa-free transit policy and further promote the institution-based opening-up of immigration management in a more open manner.

The further expansion of the 144-hour visa-free transit policy will directly facilitate foreign nationals' tourism and business in China, promoting Sino-foreign exchanges and cooperation, and giving more foreigners opportunities to see a more authentic China.

Since the beginning of this year, China's inbound tourism market has been busy, with 14.635 million foreigners arriving in the first half of 2024, up 152.7 percent year-on-year; 8.542 million of the tourists made a visa-free entry, accounting for 58 percent, an increase of 190.1 percent year-on-year. Since 2023, China has experimented with the unilateral visa-free policy for 15 countries such as France and Germany, and added seven countries such as Singapore and Thailand to mutual visa exemption. The payment service for foreign nationals has also been optimized.

The expansion of the 144-hour visa-free transit policy marks a further upgrade of services and increased policy intensity to better facilitate inbound tourism. It will give more foreigners opportunities to come to China and understand China in a more three-dimensional and comprehensive way, ridding them of their prejudice toward China. This will further expand

China's high-level opening-up, strengthen cultural exchanges and economic and trade cooperation with other countries.

Because of this opening-up trend, in the first half of this year the e-commerce transaction volume of domestic tourism and entertainment services increased by 23.4 percent year-on-year, and final consumption expenditure contributed 60.5 percent to economic growth, driving GDP growth by 3.0 percentage points. It is believed that potential economic growth areas will be further explored as the opening-up policy intensifies.

An open China is welcomed by foreign tourists too. This way, what China harvests is not only economic returns, but also increased inclusiveness and confidence, which will in turn help open up new horizons for its reform, economic and social development, and economic and trade cooperation with the world.

— BEIJING NEWS

One degree higher, a giant leap for air-conditioning

This summer, many have received a text message from the power company suggesting that they set their air conditioners to 26 degrees Celsius or higher in order to save energy, a message that many have ignored.

Data show that when the air conditioner is set to cooling mode, every degree above the recommended 26 degrees Celsius can save at least 4 to 15 percent of energy. Nationally, this could alleviate some of the increased electricity demand, predicted to exceed 100 million kilowatts this summer.

But currently air conditioning control in China relies largely on the self-discipline of residents and businesses, which could

improve by upgrading to systematic AC load management that can save energy costs, enhance grid regulation and ensure stable electricity supply during peak summer periods without compromising on comfort or safety. Especially, as public institutions and commercial/industrial entities consume large amounts of energy through their ACs, the power sector can remotely adjust AC temperatures to reduce peak load pressures, ensuring reliable electricity for essential services and key enterprises.

Relevant energy departments can also guide large power consumers to upgrade old equipment and promote devices such as energy-saving ACs and ice storage ACs.

Major AC users, such as commercial complexes and office buildings, are encouraged to collaborate with professional energy service providers and apply innovative digital technologies like artificial intelligence, utilize smart building energy management platforms, and explore AC control strategies based on human comfort algorithms.

Strengthening AC energy-saving is crucial for ensuring electricity supply during peak summer periods and requires public participation, which in turn requires promoting public awareness through various forms of communication.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

What They Say

EU exposes its loss of strategic autonomy over Ukraine crisis

President of the European Council Charles Michel wrote to Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Tuesday saying that Hungary's EU presidency does not qualify him to represent the EU internationally, nor was he authorized by the European Council to represent the EU in international affairs. Michel was responding to an earlier letter from Orban to all EU leaders as part of his mediation efforts to resolve the Ukraine crisis. In the letter, Orban mentioned that US President Joe Biden cannot change the US' pro-war policy, but if the US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump wins the election in November, the latter will immediately act as a mediator in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the situation will be unfavorable to Europe, which has followed the pro-war policy of the Biden administration.

It is fully justified that Orban suggested that the EU develop a strategic approach to sovereign independence and reopen

direct diplomatic channels of communication with Russia, while maintaining high-level contacts with Ukrainian authorities and holding talks with China on the format of the next peace conference.

Although Michel denied that the EU was pursuing a "pro-war" policy against Russia, the EU, as all can see, has been taken advantage of to that effect by the US.

Earlier this month, Orban visited Ukraine, Russia, China, and the United States to meet with Trump at the latter's Mar-a-Lago resort.

On July 12, Orban wrote the above letter to the leaders of other EU member states, making some suggestions based on the results of the trip. The EU claims it seeks to build a lasting, balanced and just peace mechanism. But the bloc is drifting even farther away from realizing that objective compared with two years ago, as it has rendered its strategic autonomy to Washington over the issue.

Fundamentally, the EU leadership is gripped in a deep fear of Russia — which actually only tries to keep a buffer zone in the face of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's eastward expansion — and it

counts on the US to protect the bloc's security through NATO. So Brussels has given up communication with Russia, completely throwing its weight behind the US' geopolitical game in Europe and beyond.

It has not only unconditionally joined the US-led sanctions on Russia and provided all it can to support Ukraine in the conflict that benefits only the US, but also continuously tried to smear China, a long-term peace broker that maintains stable exchanges with both Kyiv and Moscow, over the Ukraine crisis and other issues.

That is why the EU leadership has sought to undermine the tremendous pro-peace efforts Orban has made.

The EU's criticism that Orban cannot represent the bloc is totally unfounded for the Hungarian leader has never claimed his shuttle diplomacy was on behalf of the EU and none of his hosts took that to be the case.

Brussels should praise Orban's pro-peace efforts. The only reason the EU has been so critical of Orban's efforts is that they are not in accordance with what Washington wants the EU to do.

— LIYANG, CHINA DAILY

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

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COMMENT

Chen Zhi

Original thinking can lead to more innovation

In the communique released after the closure of the Third Plenum of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Thursday, the central leadership once again underscored the crucial role of innovation.

Over the past decade, China has made remarkable achievements in the field of technology, contributing to global progress. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index 2023, China ranks 12th in terms of innovation capacity compared with 34th in 2012. Among the top 100 global science and technology clusters, China boasts 24, more than the United States' 21.

These achievements underscore China's increasing prowess in innovation and its expanding role on the global technology stage. China's research and development expenditure in 2023 exceeded 3.3 trillion yuan (\$454.02 billion), the second highest in the world. And its R&D expenditure intensity (as a ratio of GDP) measured at 2.64 percent, more than the EU's average, which shows China is on the way to becoming a global leader in innovation.

Also, Chinese applications for international patents under the Patent Cooperation Treaty increased from 18,627 in 2012 to 69,610 in 2023, with the rate of increase being the highest among all countries for several years. This surge in patent applications is indicative of China's thriving innovation ecosystem.

China's achievements in the technology field have directly fueled its industrial development, particularly in the high-tech sectors. It leads the world in large-scale application of 5G technology, a testament to its development potential in cutting-

Hence, Chinese scholars should focus more on raising original scientific questions, finding the answers to those questions and establishing theoretical frameworks.

edge telecommunications technology. China is also a global leader in renewable energy with the highest installed capacity for solar and wind power, energy storage and hydrogen production. These achievements have helped China take significant strides in green industries, making it a global leader in sustainable energy solutions.

Besides, since 2001, China has been involved in major electric vehicle (EV) projects, focusing on developing key technologies for batteries, motors and control systems. As a result, it has built a comprehensive industry chain which includes materials research, manufacturing and assembly lines — and its EV ownership exceeded 20 million in 2023. This achievement reflects China's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

China has also made marked progress in extensive and diverse industrial system including high-end equipment, smart robotics and laser manufacturing. These technological advancements have elevated "Made in China" to new heights, boosting the country's manufacturing capability and global competitiveness.

China has also mastered high-speed rail technology, becoming the only country

capable of building and operating railways in diverse and challenging environments. China's expertise in high-speed trains is a shining example of its engineering prowess and ability to tackle complex infrastructure projects.

Behind China's industrial growth is a burgeoning group of innovative enterprises. According to the 2023 European Union Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard, 679 Chinese companies were listed among the global top 2,500, with Huawei, Tencent, Alibaba and China State Construction making it to the top 50, highlighting Chinese enterprises' innovation capacity and competitiveness on the global stage.

In April 2024, the Hurun Research Institute said China had 340 unicorns, second only to the US, which were primarily focused on emerging fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductors, new energy and biotechnology. The rapid growth of such companies reflects China's dynamic and evolving entrepreneurial landscape.

Besides, China's achievements in space, deep-sea and deep-earth explorations include building a space station, successfully completing lunar missions, and operationalizing the Beidou global navigation system. These milestones highlight China's expertise in executing complex, large-scale scientific projects.

Recognizing the foundational role of basic research, China has implemented a 10-year plan to promote basic research, while raising funding for research in 2023 to 221.2 billion yuan, up 9.3 percent year-on-year. The increased funding for basic research has led to significant breakthroughs in quantum information, stem cells and neuroscience. These achieve-

ments underscore China's commitment to advancing the frontiers of science and technology.

However, China still faces challenges on the path to becoming a science and technology superpower. Despite the impressive increase in research publications, China still lags behind advanced economies in terms of scientific ideas and theories. Hence, Chinese scholars should focus more on raising original scientific questions, finding the answers to those questions and establishing theoretical frameworks.

As for innovation in the corporate sector, it requires advancements in AI, quantum technology and biotechnology, areas in which China doesn't have many leading global enterprises. To address these gaps, China must continue to foster an environment that encourages original thought and breakthrough innovations. To become a technology powerhouse, China must promote innovation while collaborating with global scientists to address critical issues such as climate change and food security.

China's journey on the way to becoming a global sci-tech powerhouse is marked by substantial progress and significant challenges. And the country's dedication to innovation, coupled with strategic global partnerships, will be pivotal in shaping a future where advancements in high-tech will contribute to global prosperity.

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Chen Weihua

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US leaders should reflect on their hate speeches

The assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday has shocked the United States and the world, triggering calls from US political leaders, including President Joe Biden, to shun political violence and calm down.

However, the unfortunate assassination attempt on Trump came as no surprise given the heightened tensions between the two US political parties and their incessant attacks and hate speeches against each other.

According to a survey by Morning Consult on Monday, three in five voters said political rhetoric was responsible for the toxic political environment that led to the attack on Trump. Specifically, 38 percent of the respondents said Trump is to blame for the current toxic atmosphere in the US, while 31 percent blamed the Republican Party, 35 percent the Democratic Party and 29 percent Biden for the unfortunate incident on Saturday.

Under pressure, Biden admitted on TV that it was a mistake on his part to say it's "time to put Trump in the bullseye". Biden's tweets on X (formerly Twitter) a few days before the attack were also quite vicious. Let us forget, Trump, too, is notorious for using inflammatory rhetoric to attack opponents.

The hate speeches by US political leaders are pushing the world closer to a new Cold War, even a hot war.

Political violence has become common in the US. In 2011, Democrat congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona survived an assassination attempt after being shot in the head outside a grocery store. And in 2017, House Republican whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana was critically injured after being shot at a charity baseball game in Virginia.

These are just two of the many political violent incidents which occurred during my stay in the US from 2009 to 2018.

While political hatred worries many Americans, the hate speeches US political leaders give on the global stage, including against countries such as China, Russia, Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, deserve closer scrutiny.

The use of McCarthyist hate rhetoric against some countries and their leaders has sadly become a favorite sport for US politicians as they seek to attract more voters to their side. This is especially true during the US presidential campaign when candidates try to act tough.

"Pure thug" and "murderous dictator" are just two of the terms Biden used to refer to the Russian president despite the sharp criticism he has drawn at home and abroad for the role the US has been playing in Israel's brutal offensive against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip for the past nine months.

Americans are disappointed with their political leaders. As many as 72 percent of the respondents to a Pew Research Center survey released on July 10 said the US used to be a good example of democracy, but it isn't anymore.

US politicians may not know that fueling misunderstanding and hatred among countries and peoples is a much more dangerous game than the slanging match between the Republicans and Democrats, because the entire world has to face the negative consequences of these hate speeches.

The hate speeches by US political leaders are pushing the world closer to a new Cold War, even a hot war.

US Senator Joe Manchin, an independent from West Virginia, issued a statement immediately after the attack on Trump, warning against the toxic political environment in the US and ruling that "politics has become a race to the extremes".

"But nothing good has ever come from hate," Manchin said, adding that the main reason he became an independent is that both the parties have failed to drive sense in the majority of Americans.

This should be a wake-up call for not only US leaders, officials and politicians but also the international community, especially because the US leaders are using hate rhetoric to demonize other countries in a bid to divide the world and consolidate the US' hegemony.

Adrien Fabre and Hu Bin

World needs an 'ecological union' to fight climate change

China is leading the world in green transformation of industry, driven by its dominant position in solar photovoltaic panels, high-quality yet low-cost electric vehicles (EVs) and EV batteries. Thanks to long-term policies of the government, and sophisticated, distinctive and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises, China's low-carbon transformation will help it to achieve high-quality development.

Yet two hurdles stand in the path of China's decarbonization. First, China is not alone in pursuing decarbonization, and many countries are not on track to realize decarbonization. Until all countries' decarbonization plans align with the Paris Agreement, limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius (let alone 1.5 C) will be impossible. Although commentators will continue to complain about China's overcapacity in green products, the real concern is the low global demand for such products. Second, while China has made remarkable strides in renewable energy and electric vehicles (EVs), it can further enhance its efforts to achieve climate targets by reducing its reliance on coal.

Indeed, China has the resources and political will to achieve its climate target of peaking its emissions before 2030 and realizing carbon neutrality before 2060. The same cannot be said of the lower-income countries.

Besides, global climate negotiations are stuck because countries such as India legitimately condition their decarbonization efforts on transfers from high-income countries (the historical polluters), but high-income countries like the United States have always refused substantial transfer.

There are two ways of breaking the deadlock in climate negotiations: moving on with high-ambition countries by accepting that some countries will not join ambitious climate agreements; and negotiating an agreement that involves substantial North-South transfers. High-income economies such as the European Union, however, would need to contribute financially.

Such economies may accept a deal for two reasons. One, because they are genuinely concerned about climate change and understand that the only way forward is by contributing to climate justice. And two, since the EU will most likely miss its 2030 climate target (the European Environment Agency estimates that at best the bloc can reduce emissions by 48 percent instead of the targeted 55 percent from the 1990 level), it could circumvent this failure by purchasing emissions allowan-



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Such adjustments would preserve the overall ambition of the "ecological union", helping it to meet the objective of the Paris Agreement.

ces from other countries by providing them with due technology and financial transfers.

With diplomats and researchers from African countries, the EU, Brazil, China and India, we are working on a proposal of international climate policy that could suit the interests of most countries. Here is a summary of a work-in-progress proposal for an "ecological union".

In the short term, economies participating in the proposed "ecological union" would establish a uniform carbon price floor at 100 yuan (\$13.75) per ton of carbon dioxide, which roughly corresponds to the CO2 price in China's carbon market. The exact price floor would be proportional to the temperature increase in the previous five years' moving average: when

global warming ends, the price will be zero.

A share of the carbon price revenue raised in a given country would be pooled at the global level and rebated to participating countries in proportion to their population. The pooled amount would be proportional to the country's GDP, ensuring transfers from rich countries to poor countries: the farther above the global average per capita GDP, the more a country contributes and the farther below the global average, the more a country receives.

Besides, countries in the "ecological union" would commit not to tax the carbon content of imports from one another, and return the tax collected to the exporting country if they do so. This would neutralize the ecological union's CBAM for participating countries.

In the medium term, the "ecological union" would establish a global carbon market. Each country would be granted emissions rights proportional to its population as a benchmark. There would be some adjustments to the benchmark in line with specific needs and ambitions of certain regions. Especially, China and the EU would get emissions rights corre-

sponding to their respective decarbonization plans.

This would give more rights than the benchmark to China, and less to the EU. Such adjustments would preserve the overall ambition of the "ecological union", helping it to meet the objective of the Paris Agreement.

Importantly, integrating all economies' emissions in a common market would guarantee that each economy respects its target. For example, if the EU ends up emitting more than it aimed for, this will be compensated by other economies emitting less than the world average and selling their emissions rights to the EU. Emissions reductions will take place where they are least costly. And transfers will flow from rich to poor economies, spurring growth and poverty reduction in lower-income countries.

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GLOBAL VIEWS



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

ONG TEE KEAT

All safe and sound

China's championing of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is timely response to the increasing fragility of the global peace

The conference marking the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in Beijing was not a mere commemorative event. It also marked the beginning of a new milestone for the principles that have been progressing and morphing from being the cornerstone of Chinese diplomacy in managing interstate relations to the foundation for dispute resolution, peace building and international cooperation.



The presidential address delivered at the event said it all. As the global peace is coming to a crunch, the offer of the evergreen principles as the Chinese solution to the prevailing conflicts and security challenges is undoubtedly tantamount to injecting a new lease of life into them.

Alongside this, China's renewed commitment to making the Five Principles a contemporary developmental vehicle for the Global South looks set to further enhance South-South cooperation, besides bridging the Global North-South gap in the increasingly polarized world.

China's roll out of the Belt and Road Initiative and its three global initiatives have been a response to the call of the times. Bearing the aspiration to build a global community with a shared future, which is characterized by inclusiveness, symbiosis and egalitarian cooperation, the Chinese global initiatives are virtually rooted in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. In essence, the global initiatives help reinvigorate the Five Principles in the contemporary perspective.

Amid the fragile global peace and widening trust deficit, Chinese wisdom holds that both economic prosperity and security are not mutually exclusive, but are codependencies that reinforce one another.

Conversely, the sway held by the US-led West across the world is conveniently framed as a carte blanche by the reigning hegemon to

uphold its global primacy. The old "Monroe Doctrine" is no longer confined within the bounds of the Western Hemisphere or the near shores of the United States, but is further extended in essence to encompass the entire world as the US' backyard. Under the prism of the unipolar power in its bid to advance its hegemonic interests, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, alongside pledges of nonaggression, is meant to be compromised so long as the hegemon's interests are served.

This is best exemplified by the recurrence of "regime change" that has triggered widespread humanitarian disasters in the name of "promoting democracy". The recent repeated use of veto power by Washington against the overwhelming majority views in the United Nations Security Council to command an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, is an unparalleled epitome of political hypocrisy. The self-proclaimed global sheriff is callously turning a blind eye to the Israeli military operation deemed genocidal against the Palestinians, while its own sanctimonious sanctioning of others for purportedly committing genocide is still fresh in the global memory.

The practice of double standards in favor of the collective West has been getting more rampant than ever. The Global South representing about 88 percent of the world's population remains increasingly vulnerable when the unipolar power seeks to intervene in hotspot disputes. This is particularly so in the Asia-Pacific where the containment and encirclement of China is top of the agenda. The risk of sleepwalking into a full blown kinetic conflict is clearly on the cards if the prevail-



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

ing belligerence is allowed to fester indiscriminately.

Against such a gloomy backdrop for peace, the relevance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence is worth revisiting more than ever before. Over the past seven decades, the principles have been staying globally relevant through the ages of bipolarity and unipolarity as well as the contemporary age of multipolarity.

Their relevance has grown far beyond the role of managing interstate diplomacy that transcends diverse social systems and ideolo-

gies. The Global South is in dire need of such principles as mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, in the face of the current challenges of instability induced by the external interventionists. The relevance of the principles commands due recognition and respect from all the state actors on the world stage, notably at such a crunch reminiscent of the Cold War years.

and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) was unveiled as the foundational peace treaty of ASEAN in engaging with the world in 1976. It is an ASEAN-initiated foundational peace treaty that embodies the universal principles of peaceful Coexistence and friendly cooperation among its member states and beyond.

Again, this was largely consistent with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence which were hailed as the "Asian wisdom" that underpinned the guiding philosophy of the Non-Aligned Movements then.

Fast forward seven decades later, the "rules-based order" is now the favorite catchphrase of the collective West in their attempts to contain and restrain China's all-dimensional rise, which is deemed an existential threat by the US. The latter appears increasingly insecure in picking up the gauntlet with prowess and confidence. Instead, it is resorting to a doctrine of deterrence, with the mushrooming of several US-led unilateral security alliances, ranging from the Quad and AUKUS to the latest security alliance of the US, Australia, Japan and the Philippines to serve the US interests in the region at the expense of multipolar peace.

While the collective West continues to make the saber-rattling of their naval vessels in the distant Asia-Pacific a "new normal" under the pretext of "upholding freedom of navigation and rules-based order", the antagonism it manifests lies not in the ideological face-off, but more of an evolving scenario where the entrenched forces in defence of the reigning hegemon's sagging primacy are on the collision path with the arising aspirations to preserve the fragile multipolar peace.

The author is president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for the Asia-Pacific and former transport minister of Malaysia. 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.

WEI ZONGYOU

Impolitic gambit

By allowing itself to be pulled into the US' 'Indo-Pacific' strategy, the Philippines is heightening the tensions in the South China Sea

The United States and the Philippines have enhanced defense cooperation to serve their respective strategic interests in recent years, stirring up tensions in the South China Sea and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole.



In its "Indo-Pacific" strategy issued in 2022, the Joe Biden administration said the United States' target is not to change China, but to shape the strategic environment around China. The "Indo-Pacific" strategy underlines the key roles of the US' allies and partners, among which, Japan is viewed as a major aide, while the Philippines is an important "piece" on the US' strategic chess board.

The strategic importance of the Philippines is reflected in three aspects. First, it has a critical geographical location. The Philippines sits at the south of the First Island Chain in the West Pacific, and is an integral part of the US' strategy to encircle and contain China within the First Island Chain. Once there is a contingency in Taiwan or in the South China Sea, the US can use the military bases in the Philippines to intervene militarily.

Second, the US is trying to drag the Philippines onto its strategic chess board to serve its "Indo-Pacific" strategy by supporting the latter's territorial claims in the South China Sea. The US has called on China to comply with the illegal ruling of the 2016 South China Sea arbitration, and pledged to provide a security guarantee to the Philippines and defend its maritime rights.

It is foreseeable that if the Philippines continues to ignore the consensus reached by the two countries on Ren'ai Reef and makes provocations in the South China Sea by relying on external forces, a maritime conflict may break out between China and the Philippines, which is not in either country's interest.

Third, the Biden administration has been pushing for closer security cooperation among the US, Japan, Australia and the Philippines to challenge China's sovereignty and security simultaneously in the Taiwan Strait, the East China Sea and the South China Sea. The Philippines, as a military ally of the US in the Asia-Pacific, is viewed as a key node in the US' "Indo-Pacific" strategy to contain China thanks to its geographic proximity to Taiwan island, and its position as a gateway to the Pacific.

Since Biden took the office, the US-Philippines defense partnership has shown new developments. First, the US has expanded its military presence in the Philippines.

In 2023, the Philippines allowed the US to deploy forces in four more of its military bases, bringing to

nine the number of Philippine bases the US has military access to. The "Indo-Pacific" Command of the US plans to build 34 projects in the nine military bases in the 2024 fiscal year and accelerate the deployment of forces on the frontline of the "Indo-Pacific". The Philippine military bases, along with the US military bases in Guam and Okinawa of Japan, form the military barrier of the US along the First Island Chain.

Second, the US is conducting joint patrols with the Philippines in the South China Sea and intervening in the South China Sea disputes. The Biden administration has emboldened the Philippines to provoke tensions in the South China Sea and confront China. The US has even threatened the use of the US-Philippines mutual defense treaty against China.

Since 2023, the US started conducting joint controls with the Philippines in the disputed areas in the South China Sea to back the latter's moves to encroach on China's territorial rights. In April, the US, Japan and the Philippines announced their first trilateral summit that they will hold joint coast guard patrols in the South China Sea this year, and conduct joint maritime military drills in the "Indo-Pacific" region in 2025.

Third, the US is drawing the Philippines into its geopolitical cliques in the Asia-Pacific. The Biden administration upgraded the Quad, created AUKUS, and has built other mini-multilateral security mechanisms with Japan, the Philippines and Australia in a bid to thwart China's maritime aspirations.

In their April trilateral summit, the US, Japan and the Philippines expressed "serious concerns" over



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

the situations in the South China Sea and in the East China Sea, and reiterated the "importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait". The US and Japan pledged to support Philippine coast guard capacity building, and provide maritime law enforcement training to the Philippines.

The three nations also seek to enhance cooperation in economy, science and technology, clean energy and supply chains. Through these moves, the US aims to incorporate the Philippines into its "Indo-Pacific" strategy.

By upgrading its defense partnership with the Philippines and dragging the country into its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, the US is heightening the tensions in the South China Sea and presenting new risks to the security situation in Asia-Pacific.

First, the US-led small anti-China cliques such as the Quad, AUKUS, the US-Japan-Republic of Korea alliance, and the US-Japan-Philip-

pines alliance create bloc confrontation in the Asia-Pacific.

Second, as the US defines China as its primary strategic competitor and is forcing regional countries to pick sides between the US and China, the risk of a US-China conflict and a new Cold War in the region have increased.

Third, there is a growing risk of a China-Philippines conflict over their maritime disputes. Under former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte, the ties between Beijing and Manila took a turn for the better thanks to the courage and vision displayed by Duterte, who withstood the pressure from the US and domestic nationalists to shelve the maritime disputes between China and the Philippines and promote joint development.

However, after Ferdinand Marcos Jr took office, despite his rhetoric on wanting to advance the traditional China-Philippines friendship, he has been emboldened by the US' support and incited by

domestic nationalism to make one provocative move after another against China in the South China Sea. As a result, the China-Philippines maritime disputes have escalated sharply, and confrontation between the two countries' coast guards has become a normal occurrence in the waters surrounding Ren'ai Reef and Huangyan Island.

It is foreseeable that if the Philippines continues to ignore the consensus reached by the two countries on Ren'ai Reef and makes provocations in the South China Sea by relying on external forces, a maritime conflict may break out between China and the Philippines, which is not in either country's interest.

The author is a professor at the Center for American Studies at Fudan University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



From left: A visitor from South Korea uses a UnionPay card to pay for his bill at a store in Dalian, Liaoning province. A woman boards a 100-year-old tram in Dalian, which accepts UnionPay payment for tickets. A teahouse with UnionPay payment acceptance. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

UnionPay enhances payment access and streamlines services

Company making it easier for shoppers, seniors and global tourists to engage in transactions

By YUAN SHENGGAO

China UnionPay launched Project Excellence 2024 in March to implement the *Opinions on Further Optimizing Payment Services to Facilitate Payments* by China's State Council and the arrangements of the People's Bank of China. To date, the project has achieved results in 41 key cities and 17 payment use cases nationwide.

To accommodate the payment preferences of inbound visitors to China and the elderly, China UnionPay offers a wide range of payment methods, including cards, QR (quick response) and OEM (original equipment manufacturer) pay products, and cash withdrawal. With the launch of the SplendorPlus card by Bank of China Singapore Branch and Halyk Bank of Kazakhstan, as well as the Guangxi Card and the Greater Bay Area Theme Card, China UnionPay has issued more than 240 million cards in 81 countries and regions outside the Chinese mainland and has rolled out nearly 200 UnionPay powered e-wallets in 36 countries and regions. As of the end of May, the number and value of in-store purchases made by UnionPay cards issued outside the Chinese mainland in China rose 85.2 percent and 48.6 percent year-on-year, respectively.

Greater convenience

China National Silk Museum, adjacent to the West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, attracted large crowds during the Chinese Costume Festival. A tourist from the United Kingdom wearing a traditional Chinese dress had an immersive experience at the cultural event while shopping for embroidery-themed gifts. "I was worried about payment challenges, but the staff said I could use an international UnionPay card, which I happen to have. It couldn't be any easier," she said.

A businessman from Spain returned to the International Trade Mart in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, which he had not been able to visit for four years. A shopkeeper there recommended he pay with his international UnionPay card, which made his wholesale purchases much easier.



China UnionPay provides various payment tools for inbound visitors.

During the Summer Davos Forum, Cheon Chang-Nyung from South Korea visited Dalian in Liaoning province for the first time — a trip that changed his opinion about payment services in China. "I will tell my friends back home to bring the Hana UnionPay card when they visit China," he said, adding that he also used Hana Pay to pay for his meal at a restaurant that accepts UnionPay QR codes.

At senior canteens in Shanghai, Fujian, Hainan and many other places, elderly patrons are enjoying the convenience of digital payment brought by offerings such as the senior-friendly version of the UnionPay App and facial recognition. "The artificial intelligence-enhanced canteen is very good," said Tan Fengzhen, a visitor from

Shanghai. "I can pay with cash, mobile phone or with facial recognition. Sometimes there are even discounts." At a canteen in Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province, Granny Wang uses her UnionPay card designed specifically for seniors to pay for her subsidized meals. This particular card was introduced by China UnionPay and the Haixia Bank of Fujian for local customers over the age of 60.

Frictionless exchanges

The easy payment solutions allow global visitors and senior residents to benefit from the digital convenience of a diverse array of payment options. Since the launch of Project Excellence 2024, acceptance coverage of UnionPay cards has reached 93.4

percent among key merchants in 41 key cities and 17 use cases nationwide.

For transportation services, the development of payment pilot zones has been completed at several transit hubs, including Beijing Capital International Airport, Beijing Daxing International Airport, Shanghai Hongqiao Airport, Shanghai Pudong International Airport, Shenzhen Baoan International Airport, Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, Nanjing Lukou International Airport, Haikou Meilan International Airport and Sanya Phoenix International Airport. UnionPay cards are also accepted for ticketing at the major high-speed railway stations in the 41 key cities and are supported by

the English version of the 12306 ticket booking system's website and app. In addition, cross-boundary and cross-border transit infrastructure, including the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the China-Laos Railway, allows international passengers to pay with various UnionPay products.

China UnionPay and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism jointly released an action plan to boost culture and tourism spending in designated cities and commercial zones, which has made UnionPay payments broadly available at 10 exemplary tourist attractions such as Zhangjiajie Scenic Area in Hunan province and Gulangyu (Kulangsu) Island in Fujian province, along with 25 major shop-

240m

Number of cards issued by China UnionPay in 81 countries and regions outside the Chinese mainland

ping destinations including Hubei Pedestrian Street in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province; Kuanzhai Alleys in Chengdu, Sichuan province; Laomendong district in Nanjing, Jiangsu province; and Qilou Old Street in Haikou, Hainan province.

Additionally, Project Excellence 2024 has tabbed major hospitals, ports, harbors and hotels with three-star or above ratings, and with promotions continuing through the summer in China, UnionPay will provide high-quality, efficient and easy payment services across different use cases to customer groups including inbound tourists and senior residents.

Building consensus

Optimizing services to facilitate payments requires systematic efforts. Since its launch, Project Excellence 2024 has encouraged all industry players to reach consensus, creating an environment for joint investment and concerted efforts. China UnionPay has facilitated 61 key acquirers to accept UnionPay cards issued outside the Chinese mainland and 151 mainstream payment aggregators to support UnionPay-standard wallets launched overseas. By leveraging accumulated resources, major acquiring banks have enabled acceptance with their core merchants to improve payment access, while payment institutions, using their strength in technology and human resources, have worked to make POS terminals more cost-effective and intelligent.

China UnionPay is dedicated to implementing the requirements of the Chinese government. Guided by the PBOC and within the framework of Project Excellence 2024, the company will collaborate closely with industry stakeholders to improve payment services while contributing to the high-quality development of the payment industry, business environment optimization and high-level opening-up of China.



From left: A board at Beijing Daxing International Airport displays the wide range of payment methods that UnionPay offers to travelers. Various payment services are available under UnionPay's effort. A customer pays a bill by scanning UnionPay QR code at a fan store in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

ADVERTORIAL

CULTURE

LIVING HERITAGE



Staging a memorable performance

Kunqu Opera stars reprise the roles that made them famous 18 years ago, **Chen Nan** reports.

A group of young performers from the Jiangsu Province Kunqu Opera Theater captivated audiences in 2006 with their mesmerizing portrayal of characters from the production *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan*. This had been adapted from the classical script *The Peach Blossom Fan* written by Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) playwright Kong Shangren.

Their talent and dedication propelled them to fame, marking a significant moment in the revival of the traditional Chinese opera.

Now, 18 years later, these same performers return to the stage to reprise their roles, offering a poignant reflection on their artistic journey and the enduring appeal of Kunqu Opera.

Touring nationwide from July to August, they are performing in several cities, including Beijing on Friday and Saturday, Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Aug 3 and 4, and Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Aug 9 and 10.

Two leading Kunqu Opera performers, actor Shi Xiaming and actress Shan Wen, appeared on July 12 in a bookstore in Sanlitun subdistrict, a popular Beijing commercial area in Chaoyang district, to share their memories about the Kunqu Opera production.

They started by elaborating on the name of the play: *1699* was the year that Kong completed the masterpiece *The Peach Blossom Fan*. In 1991, the Jiangsu Province Kunqu Opera Theater staged a version of the piece. To distinguish the new from the old version, director Tian Qinxin named the 2006 production, *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan*.

The story, set against a Nanjing backdrop during the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), concerns a young scholar named Hou Fangyu and a courtesan named Li Xiangjun who loved and lived during the last days of the dynasty when their world fell apart. The separation and reunion of the lovers allowed the author to dwell on emotions associated with the dynasty's rise and fall, offering a kaleidoscope of society, such as honor and corruption,

patriotism and disloyalty, friendship and betrayal, as well as cruelty and kindness.

"I was 16 when I played the role of Li Xiangjun, who, in the classic piece, was also 16," says Shan, now 35. The fact that both young women shared the same age of blossoming youth and harboring dreams for the future resonated deeply with Shan, who had just graduated from Jiangsu Provincial Drama School as she embodied the role.

"The epic tale demands not only vocal prowess, but also a deep understanding of classical Chinese culture and aesthetics. It was quite challenging for us when we first performed the production because we were so young," she says. "Now, we are in our 30s with more life experience, which helps to explore the roles' inner world with newfound maturity and insight."

A Kunqu Opera actress hailing from a family deeply rooted in traditional Chinese opera, Shan says that she studied the original script of *The Peach Blossom Fan* and examined various adaptations in film and theater, delving into the heroine's inner world.

After three months of tireless rehearsals, *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan* premiered in Beijing in March 2006, etching Shan's portrayal into the audiences' memories. Her performance not only showcased her talent, but also solidified her position as a notable figure in the contemporary revival of Kunqu Opera. Now, Shan is a professor at Nanjing University of the Arts.

About 20 shows were staged in that year, bringing the play to audiences at home and abroad, with three shows in South Korea.

"What we did back then was imitate our teachers' performances, from singing to moving onstage. Even a single eye contact and a subtle movement of fingertips took us days to practice," recalls Shi, who was 20 when he played the role of Hou in *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan*.

He also notes that an expert guidance team was formed, comprising the most esteemed artistic talent from the company.



Top: A scene from *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan*, staged by Jiangsu Province Kunqu Opera Theater in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Clockwise from above left:** Kunqu Opera artists Shi Xiaming (left) and Shan Wen discuss the play staged 18 years ago, in a bookstore in Beijing in July. Performers display the elegant art form at the venue. PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

"They wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to supporting and assisting us — the young actors and actresses of the fourth generation of the company, mostly under 18," says Shi, also a graduate from Jiangsu Provincial Drama School, who was trained by veteran Kunqu Opera artist Shi Xiaomei.

On the stage, his performance captivated audiences with his graceful allure, resonant vocals and scholarly poise, earning accolades from Kunqu Opera aficionados.

Both Shan and Shi Xiaming attributed the success of the play to director Tian, a veteran theater director, now president of the

National Theatre of China.

Tian used innovative approaches in the Kunqu Opera production. For example, she featured *Nandu Fanhui Tu* (Prosperous Scenes of the Southern Capital), a famous painting 350 meters long and 44 meters wide, which vividly depicts the economic prosperity and social

life of Nanjing in the late Ming Dynasty, as part of the stage setting.

"The painting was displayed onstage through screens. The director also let the band perform and be seen behind the screens, which was quite different from traditional Kunqu Opera shows," says Shan, adding that traditionally, bands perform on the sides of the stage, unseen by the audience.

"In one of the shows in Beijing in 2006, the director invited the audience to sit onstage, delivering the performers with stage props. It was a very fresh experience for us to have the audience share the stage with us," Shan adds.

Inscribed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2008 (originally proclaimed in 2001), Kunqu Opera, one of the oldest traditional Chinese operas, has a history of over 600 years that originated in Kunshan, Jiangsu province. With a combination of singing, dancing and acting, as well as a live band, it is performed in the melodic Suzhou dialect.

Thanks to contemporary Kunqu Opera productions, such as *1699 The Peach Blossom Fan* and the "youth version" of *The Peony Pavilion* produced by Chinese American writer Kenneth Hsien-yung Pai, the fresh interpretations and innovative staging resonate with audiences young and old, sparking renewed interest both domestically and internationally.

"Those young people, who are devoted to the ancient art, deserve to have more opportunities to be seen," Tian said in an interview back in 2006. "If they didn't have performances, they might give up their career and take on other well-paid jobs. The art form would be dead."

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Online
See more by scanning the code.



What's on



Literati painting

Hua Yan is a leading figure of Yangzhou School, a loose artists' group in Yangzhou, Jiangsu province, during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

The group's inventive approach helped carry on literati painting, a semiabstract, expressive style of classical Chinese painting, and the artists emphasized high morality, literary accumulation and mastery of calligraphy as integral parts of their endeavors to be accomplished in art.

Elegance, Refinement and Style: Paintings of Hua Yan, an exhibition at Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, running until Oct 7, hails the achievements of Hua in blazing new trails in ink art.

Born in Fujian province, Hua lived in destitution throughout his life. He taught himself to paint and studied calligraphy, literature and other areas of arts and culture. He traveled a great deal to become immersed in the brilliance of nature.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 2 Zhujiang Donglu, Tianhe district, Guangzhou, Guangdong province. 020-3804-6886.

Seeds of art

Meta Point, an art exhibition now on at the Museum of Contemporary Art Yinchuan, is a collaboration between adult and child artists whose works investigate the impulse of people to create, examining current world issues from the



perspectives of younger generations.

The exhibition looks at children not only as a group or community but also as a stage in a person's whole course of development. It brings the audience to the initial stage of humankind to see how and what motivated men and women to create art.

The exhibition also surveys how experiences and memories

of childhood influence people throughout their lifetime and the importance of independence and creativity for both adults and children in a time when digital technology plays a big role.

10 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 12 Hele Road, Xingqing district, Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region. 0951-8426-111.

Porcelain glare

Shangyu, a district of Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, was one of the earliest ceramics production hubs.

In 2014, the district partnered with Tsinghua University to establish an international center for modern ceramics, which has since received more than 100 artists from home and abroad to carry out residence-creation in Shangyu, with over 1,800 of their works collected by Shangyu Museum.

East Encounters West, an exhibition at the Shangyu Museum running until Oct 15, gathers the works of dozens of artists from around the world, who have been introduced to the history of ceramic making in China during their stay in

Shangyu and whose works show new developments in the international ceramic art scene.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 26 Yuyuan Lu, Cao'e sub-district, Shangyu district, Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. 0575-8222-1222.

CHINA DAILY



LIFE



Left: The main creators of *White Snake: Afloat* attend an event in Beijing hosted by the China Film Administration to promote the most anticipated films vying for the summer box-office season on July 9. Center: Director Wuershan (center) of *The Traveler*. Right: Director Chen Sicheng (second left) of *Decoded* alongside actor Liu Haoran (second right) at the event. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Summer box office picks up steam

After slow start, upcoming release of big-name movies, domestic and international, injects fresh momentum into film market, **Xu Fan** reports.

Despite the summer heat, China's film industry is gearing up to captivate a sea of cinemagoers during this traditionally lucrative box office season.

As of Thursday, the film market had grossed more than 26.6 billion yuan (\$3.67 billion) in ticket revenue since the beginning of this year. It is currently riding on momentum fueled by the summer season, which began on June 1 and will last until Aug 30, according to film information tracking platform Maoyan.

Malaysian director Sam Quah's *A Place Called Silence*, a suspenseful crime film about a series of murders resulting from campus bullying, is currently in the top spot on the summer box-office charts, raking in 984 million yuan.

The latest information from the China Film Distribution and Exhibition Association reveals that 85 films have been or will be released between June and August. Among them, 49 premiered in June and as of Monday, 18 more films had made their debuts.

During a recent event hosted by the administration to gather creators behind the latest big-name films, Lu Liang, deputy head of the China Film Administration, said that the summer season would be a feast of high-quality domestic films.

"This summer, filmmakers will present their latest work in theaters with the aim of resonating with audiences. While some may not yet meet the highest standards, the work reflects their sincere commitment to storytelling," Lu says.

The most anticipated films include Wuershan's fantasy film *The Traveler*, Chen Sicheng's espionage tale *Decoded*, female director Hu Mei's *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and Light Chaser Animation's feature *White Snake: Afloat*.

As the Chinese equivalent of the mutants in Marvel's X-Men franchise, *The Traveler* — adapted from comic artist Mi Er's best-selling graphic novel *The Outcast* — depicts a group of individuals with super abilities and exceptional martial arts skills who disguise themselves as ordinary people to live in the modern world.

"The movie intertwines elements from Chinese philosophy, traditional *wushu* (martial arts) stunts and modern youth fashion. The comic has a large fan base in China, exemplifying the increasing appeal of domestic comics in recent years," says Wuershan.



Fu Ruoqing, chairman of the China Film Group Corporation, reveals the lineup of imported films during the summer.



Posters for the movies: (From left) *White Snake: Afloat*, *The Traveler*, *Decoded*, and *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

Based on the 2002 novel of the same title by Mao Dun Literature Award-winning writer Mai Jia, *Decoded* tells the story of a math genius dedicated to deciphering intelligence information between the 1950s and '60s.

Chen says that he hopes the film will serve as a tribute to the unsung heroes who fought for their country, much like the protagonist in the film, and hopes it will evoke

appreciation for those who risk their lives fighting on secret front lines.

With its string of culture-oriented blockbusters, like last year's animated blockbuster *Chang'an*, Light Chaser Animation has been dubbed "China's Pixar" by some domestic industry insiders. Continuing the studio's trademark of drawing inspiration from traditional culture, its upcoming film *White Snake: Afloat* — the final episode in the *White Snake* trilogy — retells the story of a snake demon who shape-shifts into a beautiful woman who bravely pursues her love for a young man in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Yu Zhou, cofounder and president of Light Chaser Animation, says that the story marks the studio's first attempt to retell this tragic household tale, which has been

circulating in China for centuries, in comedic form.

Additionally, new digital technology will be employed to bring to life the famous scene in which the snake demon and the man meet on the Broken Bridge, one of the most renowned spots on West Lake in Hangzhou.

Adapted from Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) novelist Cao Xueqin's classic, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* retells the famous Chinese Romeo and Juliet love story on the silver screen, re-creating some of its most iconic scenes, such as the first meeting between Jia Baoyu and Lin Daiyu, the two protagonists.

Hu says that each era produces its own interpretation of Cao's masterpiece, deemed one of China's four great classical novels.

"Our goal is to create a film that honors both the original text and aligns with contemporary aesthetic standards. We hope to present young viewers with a fresh, accessible and vibrant version of the classic novel in this two-hour movie," she says.

Lai Li, a market analyst at Maoyan, says that the movies released or scheduled to come out over the summer cover a wide range of genres, including suspense, romance, comedy, action and animation.

Despite the fact that compared to the same period last year, the market has yet to see a blockbuster make more than a billion yuan — the threshold for defining a film as a runaway hit — it has become more heated in recent days, largely fueled by news of upcoming high-profile releases.

He adds that in addition to domestic movies, the industry is also expecting the market to be propelled by big-budget Hollywood releases, such as Marvel's superhero movie *Deadpool & Wolverine* and Warner Bros. Pictures' disaster film *Twisters*.

Rao Shuguang, president of the China Film Critics Association, says that despite lackluster performance following the Spring Festival holiday, the film market is now gaining momentum during the summer season. He adds that he believes the current buzz surrounding new releases will not only elevate the summer box office, but also contribute to the ongoing recovery of the domestic market.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

TIANJIN — In less than two weeks, the 2024 Paris Olympic Games will officially open, marking the return of the Games to Paris after a century.

The 1924 Paris Olympics was witness to a number of pioneering practices, including the introduction of the Olympic motto "Faster, Higher, Stronger" and the Olympic Village. Meanwhile, several legendary athletes emerged, among them Finland's Paavo Nurmi, who won an unprecedented five gold medals.

For China, the biggest star of the 1924 Paris Olympics might be a British Olympic champion. Not for his world-record winning performance in the 400 meters, nor for the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*, which was adapted from his life story, but because he was born in, died in and dedicated his life to China.

Eric Liddell is known in Chinese as Li Airui. His life story and achievements were on display at a memorial exhibition at the Tianjin Sports Museum in Tianjin municipality.

Liddell, whose parents were from Scotland, was born in Tianjin in 1902. At the age of 5, he was sent back to the United Kingdom for an education. He showed sporting talent at a young age, always ranking near the top in school running competitions, and captain-

Tianjin remembers the 'Flying Scotsman'

ing its rugby and cricket teams.

After he enrolled at the University of Edinburgh in 1920, his athletic talent became more prominent, winning many awards in national athletics competitions.

Liddell was one of the strongest contenders for the gold medal in the 100 meters at the 1924 Paris Olympics. However, the advance copy of the Olympic schedule listed the 100m and 4x100m races as being held on a Sunday. As a committed Christian, he chose not to compete in these two races and signed up instead for the 200m and 400m races, which were not his favored events and for which he had only a few months to prepare.

Despite this, he not only won the bronze medal for the 200m but broke the world record for the 400m with a time of 47.06 seconds, clinching the gold. Despite being at the peak of his sporting career, Liddell then made a surprising decision. After obtaining a degree in science, he returned to settle in Tianjin at the age of 23.

Even today, many are puzzled by his choice. Zhao Yan, a staff member



Left: Catriona Radcliffe (left), head of the Scottish Government Office in China, and Tianjin Sports Bureau Deputy Director Li Shan at an exhibition commemorating British Olympic champion Eric Liddell at the Tianjin Sports Museum on June 1. Right: Liddell competing in a race. PHOTOS BY XINHUA



at the Tianjin Sports Museum, suggests that he returned for two reasons: first, to be nearer to his family who were in Tianjin, and second, his belief that his future would be more

meaningful in China. As he once said, "From birth to death, everyone seems to be on the same track, but what each person does is different, hence the meaning of life is also different"

In Tianjin, Liddell worked as a science and physical education teacher at the Anglo-Chinese Christian College. He also taught chemistry and math, trained athletes and spread the Olympic spirit. Under his tutelage, the school set up teams in soccer, basketball, baseball, table tennis, tennis and volleyball, becoming the most popular and highest-level middle school for sports in Tianjin.

Liddell is also known as the "Father of the Minyuan", then the city's most famous stadium. When it was renovated in 1925, he referenced the Stamford Bridge stadium in London to make a series of suggestions on track structure, lighting equipment and grandstand levels.

In 1929, the stadium was host to a much-anticipated international track and field competition, in which Liddell defeated German athlete Otto Peltzer in the men's 500m, winning the last gold medal of his life.

In 1934, the 32-year-old married Canadian Florence Mackenzie. With the outbreak of World War II, Liddell sent his pregnant wife and children back to Canada in 1941 while he

remained in Tianjin to help to treat wounded soldiers and aiding refugees. In 1943, he was captured by the Japanese army and imprisoned in a concentration camp in today's Weifang in Shandong province.

In the camp, he taught science and organized sports activities, inspiring fellow prisoners with his optimistic attitude. However, long-term imprisonment and malnutrition severely damaged his health. In early 1945, Liddell passed away due to a brain tumor at the age of 43.

"We refer to Eric Liddell as a Scottish hero and a Scottish icon. We call him the 'Flying Scotsman'. Not only was he a great sportsman, he had a really positive outlook on life. His compassion, integrity and passion are the values that we can hold dear today, whether in China or Scotland," says Catriona Radcliffe, head of the Scottish government office in China.

Liu Jianbin, director of the Tianjin Sports Museum, says that regardless of the changes to Liddell's identity and environment, he remained consistent, practicing his simple beliefs and pursuing the meaning of life. His spirit and strength transcend time to inspire people.

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