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Nation makes strides on path set by Deng

Late leader's legacy in politics, economy and diplomacy continues to inspire China today

By CAO DESHENG and WANG XU

On a hilltop at Lianhuashan Park in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, stands the bronze statue of late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (1904-97), the chief architect of China's reform and opening-up policy.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the country come to visit the site with a view to having a better understanding of how Deng and the policy he initiated have led Shenzhen, a metropolis that arose from a fishing village, to achieve an economic miracle.

Ahead of the 120th anniversary of Deng's birth, which falls on Thursday, Zhang Xinqiang, 40, a tourist in Shenzhen, visited Deng's statue to pay respects to the late Chinese leader.

"China's modernization is making progress based on the blueprint set out by Deng Xiaoping. The reform and opening-up he initiated has turned out to be a right path leading the country toward prosperity and progress," Zhang said.

Embarking on the path set by Deng, China has achieved new milestones in its economic and social development. Per capita GDP increased phenomenally from about \$155 in 1978 to over \$10,000 today, and more than 700 million people have been lifted out of poverty.

"If there were no Deng who guided our Party to make the historic decision to reform and open up, we couldn't have achieved this much," President Xi Jinping said during an inspection tour of Guangdong in December 2012 — the first one he made outside Beijing after being elected general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

Deng's reform and opening-up policy was officially embraced at the third plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in December 1978. The policy outlined the need to follow new economic management methods, introduce advanced technologies, boost economic exchanges with the outside world and scale down centralism in the planned economy to spur vitality and development.

It was Deng's southern tour in 1992, especially his visit to Shenzhen starting on Jan 19, that pushed China's reform and opening-up policy further. The 87-year-old retired statesman, also founder of the theory of a socialist market economy, called on local officials to be "bolder in carrying out reform

Ultimately, the goal is to enable hundreds of millions of people to live happy and fulfilling lives and embark on the path toward common prosperity."

Li Junru, former vice-president of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee

and opening-up" and to "dare to make experiments".

His legacies in terms of politics, the economy and diplomacy have continued to inspire China over the years.

Li Junru, former vice-president of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, said that Deng led the Party and the people in advancing reform and opening-up, aiming to achieve socialist modernization.

"Ultimately, the goal is to enable hundreds of millions of people to live happy and fulfilling lives and embark on the path to common prosperity," Li wrote in an article published in the eighth issue of Dang Jian (Party Building), a monthly magazine of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee.

As China enters a crucial phase in further deepening reform and opening-up, it has a leader like Xi who has not only the vision but also the determination to transform outlines into detailed plans, and put plans into practice.

Over the past decade, more than 2,000 reform measures have been rolled out, enabling the country to eliminate extreme poverty, promote integrated urban-rural development, fight corruption, support businesses, boost innovation and push forward a green transformation.

With the reform measures, the Chinese economy has not only sustained robust growth but also more than doubled since 2012, cementing the country's status as a major contributor to global growth.

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Burning issue



A large tract of the Amazon rainforest is deforested by an illegal fire on Tuesday in Labrea, Amazonas State, Brazil. The concentration of PM 2.5, a particle pollutant, reached 56.5 micrograms per cubic meter of air in the state's capital Porto Velho. EVARISTO SA / AFP



Chinese Premier Li Qiang shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting on Wednesday in Moscow, Russia. SPUTNIK / ALEXEI FILIPPOV / POOL VIA REUTERS

Beijing, Moscow sign deals to strengthen cooperation

By MO JINGXI in Moscow mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Russia signed multiple cooperation documents on Wednesday covering areas such as investment, education, science and technology, and cross-border cargo transportation, as the two neighbors vowed to further tap potential in practical cooperation and bring bilateral ties to new levels.

The signing of the documents in Moscow was witnessed by Premier Li Qiang and Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin after they co-chaired the 29th regular meeting between Chinese and Russian heads of government. The meeting has been held every year since 1996.

The leaders agreed that the two countries' strengths are complementary in practical cooperation and urged efforts to steadily advance collaboration in traditional areas, while expanding cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, the biopharmaceutical sector and green development.

The two sides should also take

the China-Russia Years of Culture as an opportunity to deepen cultural exchanges and strengthen the foundation of friendship between the Chinese and Russian people, they said.

Li said during the meeting that China-Russia relations have achieved high-quality development, with cooperation in all fields continuously showing strong resilience and advancing steadily in recent years.

Bilateral trade has maintained a momentum of growth, energy cooperation has seen improvements in terms of both quantity and quality, and collaboration in areas such as logistics, aerospace and aviation has gained impetus, while people-to-people exchanges have become more vibrant, he said.

In 2023, bilateral trade between China and Russia exceeded \$240 billion, up 26.3 percent year-on-year, according to the Foreign Ministry.

"We are confident and also hopeful about further deepening the all-around and mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries," Li said.

Mishustin spoke highly of the efficient operation of the two countries' intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms, noting that Russia stands ready to work with China in continuously deepening mutual trust, expanding cooperation and closely coordinating in global affairs to better safeguard their legitimate rights and interests.

The Russian prime minister also underscored the importance of people-to-people exchanges between the two countries in facilitating communication and fostering friendship.

According to Mishustin, in Russia, more than 90,000 students and schoolchildren are studying the Chinese language. Last year, the number of tourist trips between the two countries exceeded 1 million and Russia aims to "double this figure" by the end of December, he said.

Li arrived in Russia on Tuesday for a visit widely expected to carry forward the enduring friendship and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Russia.

On Wednesday morning, he visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in

Moscow's Alexander Garden and laid a wreath.

Li also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday.

China and Russia have seen a series of high-level interactions over the past week. Vice-Premier He Lifeng and State Councilor Shen Yiqin had held meetings with senior Russian officials in Moscow respectively on Tuesday and Monday.

Last week, Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu held consultations with visiting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Alexeevich Ryabkov in Beijing.

Qian Feng, an expert with Tsinghua University's National Strategy Institute and a senior research fellow at the Taihe Institute, a Beijing-based think tank, said China and Russia are developing bilateral relations on the basis of mutual strategic trust.

"The holding of the regular meeting itself demonstrated that the China-Russia relationship is a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, mutual trust and cooperation that benefits both sides," Qian said.

Key meeting puts focus on citizens, innovation, opening-up

WORLD WATCH By Maged Refaat Aboulmagd

based economy, thus creating millions of jobs in other developing nations. This will offer an unprecedented opportunity to the Belt and Road Initiative countries, which will benefit from this transformation by attracting new Chinese investments in industrial activities. China will finally be moving from population dividend to talent dividend powered by its well-educated and highly motivated young generation.

The third admirable feat is the decision to open up to the world by boosting people-to-people interaction, easing visa requirements and promoting tourism in inland cities.

During my first visit to China to attend the 7th China-Africa People's Forum in late July 2024, meetings were held in three less-known cities of Changsha and Chenzhou in Hunan province and Luoyang in Henan province, before heading to Beijing. I was impressed by how China has successfully managed to merge deep-rooted traditions and history with modernization.

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HAINAN YACHT INDUSTRY BUOYED BY POLICY VISION

Free trade port propels sector forward, visitors enjoy affordable 'luxury'

By CHEN BOWEN in Haikou chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn



Almost every morning, the coastline of Sanya in Hainan province transforms into a shimmering spectacle, with a flotilla of yachts moored at bustling ports poised to set sail on their maritime adventures.

Sanya, with its abundant aquatic resources and favorable tropical climate, has emerged as a magnet for international and domestic visitors eager to embark on yachting trips and enjoy blue skies and sparkling waters.

"Except for occasional

typhoons, Sanya can almost achieve more than 350 seagoing days throughout the year," said Gao Yongning, deputy director of the cruise and yacht department of the Sanya Central Business District Administration.

Hainan is home to over 13,000 yacht-related enterprises, and boasts 14 operational marinas and 2,511 yacht berths.

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Left: A technician from Lingao Haiquan Yacht Co works on a luxury yacht in Lingao, Hainan province, on Tuesday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Right: Yachts moor in a port in Sanya, Hainan province, in February. ZHAO YINGQUAN / XINHUA
Main photo: A flotilla of boats enters the mouth of the Sanya River on July 6. FENG SHUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Yachts: Industry sails to new horizons

From page 1

Sanya, a southern coastal city of the province, has emerged as a standout destination for the leisure activity. More than 7,300 yacht enterprises, making up 22.7 percent of China's total yacht-related businesses, were located there as of June, according to a report by Hainan Daily.

The city also accommodates a registered yacht fleet exceeding 1,400 vessels, according to the Sanya Maritime Safety Administration, with the number exceeding its reputation as the "city of 1,000 yachts".

In the first half of the year, yachts made around 58,000 port entries and exits in Sanya, which received about 367,000 visitors.

During the 40-day Spring Festival travel season, 30,944 port entries and exits were recorded and 212,154 visitors welcomed. The numbers were a record for the holiday period, the administration said.

Free trade benefits

The establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port has emerged as a catalyst to propel Sanya's yacht tourism. In 2021, Hainan introduced a zero-tariff policy on vehicle and yacht imports, exempting registered enterprises in the province's transportation and tourism sectors from import duties on vehicles, aircraft, ships, and yachts.

In July 2022, the government in Hainan issued regulations aimed at accelerating the growth of the yacht industry in the free trade port. These regulations enable overseas residents working in Hainan and holding a residence permit to apply for yacht registration in Hainan, bolstering efforts to boost yacht sales.

On Feb 5, 2024, the Sanya Central Business District Special Fund Incentive Measures for Cruise And Yacht Industry Development was announced.

The fund provides incentives and support for the development of the yacht industry in five aspects: operational rewards; operational space subsidies; scientific and technological innovation support; fixed asset investment incentives; and incentives for the sale of new energy yachts.

"Following the introduction of regulations and policies, the yacht-leasing sector has entered a period of rapid growth," said Liu Yangliu, general manager of Hainan Visun Yacht Industry

Development (Investment) Group.

Wakesurfing, a favorite water activity among younger people, is also gaining greater attention.

Chen Xiaoyu, executive director of Sanya Serenity Marina, said there has been an influx of wakesurfing clubs in the area in recent years, with over 50 wave-making boats moored at the marina.

The development of the yacht industry has also dovetailed with sectors such as wedding photography, catering, event hosting and provision of accommodation, which have also enjoyed notable success.

Captain's choice

Despite the surging success of the yacht industry, the scene was vastly different three decades ago.

Back then, there were just over 1,000 households on Xidao Island off Sanya, with the majority earning a living from fishing. "I always envisioned a life as a fisherman," said Mai Shineng, while reminiscing about his previous life spent fishing beside his father.

With the transformation of the picturesque small island into a tourist hot spot, Mai left the unpredictable life of a fisherman for a more secure livelihood as a ferry captain.

In 2010, he became captain of a yacht and a pioneering helmsman in Sanya.

Mai was not alone in abandoning his old fishing job. Scores of long-term inhabitants of Xidao Island chose the regular work and stable income provided by the yacht industry over the uncertain returns from fishing, Mai said.

Fishermen are limited to the waters around Sanya due to the capacity and range of their boats. They are also restricted by annual fishing moratoriums, which are imposed to ensure healthy fish stocks.

Since he became a yacht captain, Mai has sailed to nearly all the coastal provinces of China, which has broadened his perspective, he said. His new occupation has also given him the opportunity to compete in, and win, sailing regattas.

During these events, he keeps a watchful eye out for yachts and sailboats that appear to be in trouble.

In 2022, Mai spotted a sailboat over 1 kilometer away drifting aimlessly on the waves. He quickly reported the situation to

the race organizers and joined the rescue mission.

"At sea, unity, friendship, and mutual assistance are essential for achieving better outcomes," said Cui Xiaojin, head of marketing at Hainan Hongzhou Marine Tourism Co.

Cui praised Mai's leadership in nurturing the skills and cooperative spirit of yacht captains, and helping provide talent for Sanya's yacht industry.

A little luxury

Hongzhou Yacht Marina, the largest commercial yacht base in Hainan province, has undergone a major transformation in recent years.

"A decade ago, Hongzhou Yacht Marina was a bustling fishing harbor — with a multitude of boats moored — that an unpleasant odor emanated from that greatly inconvenienced residents and visitors," said Cui, whose company later repurposed it into the yacht marina.

Yachting, once a luxury pastime for the affluent due to the high purchase price of the boats and maintenance costs, is now accessible for more people, he said.

"Initially, yachts were predominantly used for commercial services," Cui said. "However, owners soon realized they could lease their vessels during downtimes to help defray maintenance expenses."

This shift gave rise to yacht chartering and pooling in 2014, a flourishing business that has advantages for both owners and tourists who want to experience opulence on the seas.

The implementation of hourly yacht rentals has increased the affordability of yacht tourism, said Gao Yongning, deputy director of the cruise and yacht department of the Sanya Central Business District Administration.

With the increasing availability of yachts and the maturation of the market, rental prices have plummeted from over 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) to less than 1,000 yuan, making yachting increasingly accessible and boosting its popularity.

"For a three-hour yachting escapade for my family of four, the cost is now under 1,000 yuan," said Zhang, a visitor from Sichuan province.

Sanya is now home to five yacht marinas, with the Hongzhou Yacht Marina

having a capacity of 450 berths and hosting around 420 yachts year-round.

Changing tack

However, a series of challenges and obstacles, which experts say need urgent attention, are testing the yacht industry in Hainan.

The upstream aspect of the industry involves design and manufacturing, the midstream sales and consumption, while the downstream covers maintenance, repairs, and financial services, said Hu Xiaoming, a special adviser to the Sanya Central Business District Administration and general manager at Hainan Marine Trade Exchange Services.

Zuo Zhiyong, secretary-general of the Sanya Cruise and Yacht Association, said "even within the midstream segment, where Hainan's yacht industry shines, there are shortcomings".

Despite flourishing yacht tourism in Sanya, operational costs have been hampered by high berthing fees, Zuo said. For instance, one well-known yacht club in Sanya pays an annual fee of around 1 million yuan to berth nine yachts.

Sanya has nearly 1,000 yacht berths, and more than 90 percent are privately owned. This has led to a shortage of affordable public berths, Zuo said.

Another critical part of the industry that needs attention is the upstream design segment, experts said.

Hu believes there is an urgent need to accelerate recruitment and training of yacht designers as well as specialists in construction, woodworking, plumbing, fiberglass work, sheet metal painting, electromechanical installation, and technical evaluation.

After setting up operations in the Lingao Jinpai Port Development Zone, Lingao Haiquan Yacht Co has boosted its manufacturing capacity, resulting in an uptick in orders.

"The growth potential of the yacht industry within the Hainan Free Trade Port is substantial," said Wu Yanfeng, assistant to the company's general manager.

In order to attract more yacht manufacturers to the province, facilities to support the industry need to be expanded and better access to land and marine resources guaranteed, Wu said.

"We hope that raw materials such as

steel plates and paint can be supplied locally. Additionally, the construction of suitable sheltered harbors and yacht berthing areas are essential to alleviate the concerns of businesses," Wu added.

The company has secured orders worth about 25 million yuan this year, coming from countries including Singapore and the United Arab Emirates. It is aiming to produce 20 vessels this year, with a total output value of 80 million yuan.

"Under the Hainan Free Trade Port, we want to explore international markets and promote China's 'smart manufacturing' new energy yachts on a global scale," he said.

Showcase event

The Haikou Boat Show, a support event of the China International Consumer Products Expo since 2021, has also played a major role in driving the yacht economy in Hainan.

The exhibition aims to not only showcase vessels and businesses, but also offer a space to foster cross-industry growth and advance Hainan's yacht sector.

"Featuring sleek and innovative designs, the showcased yachts offer a fusion of novel features and experiences," Du Hongyu said while visiting the consumer expo.

This year's Haikou Boat Show was held from April 13 to 18. Visitor turnout on April 15 was double that of the previous year, underscoring the event's growing appeal and popularity.

Wang Min, chairman of the Haikou Tourism and Culture Group, said this year's focus on high-quality and new products, had enhanced the exhibition's appeal. A total of 250 yachts were featured at the event, a 14-percent increase from the previous year. The vessels included 120 from 80 international companies.

At a seminar on development of the yacht industry held during the expo, experts and observers highlighted China's huge consumption potential in the sector.

Liao Minsheng, a maritime economy expert and vice president of Hainan Tropical Ocean University, said as people's living standards rise, the consumer base for yacht tourism is gradually expanding. The yacht tourism market has been experiencing rapid growth in recent years, emerging as a new hot spot for consumer spending, as exemplified by Sanya's success, Liao added.



Visitors inspect boats and yachts during the Haikou Boat Show in April in Haikou, Hainan province. PHOTOS BY YI HAIFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE AND YANG HE / FOR CHINA DAILY

TOP NEWS

Global efforts to boost robotics stressed

Speakers at industry event highlight importance of supply chains, diverse use, innovation to help grow business

By FAN FEIFEI
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Heightened efforts are needed to strengthen international cooperation in the robotics industry, speed up the application of robots in a wider range of industries, and jointly build efficient and stable robotics industry and supply chains, said officials, experts and company executives at a global industry event on Wednesday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the five-day 2024 World Robot Conference, which kicked off in Beijing on Wednesday, Xin Guobin, vice-minister of industry and information technology, said China is willing to work with the international community to bolster robotic technology innovation and industrial development.

China will also welcome global stakeholders to grow their businesses in the country, encourage Chinese robotic companies to go global, and augment the use of robots in various fields like intelligent manufacturing and healthcare, he said.

Highlighting the pivotal role of robots in promoting the in-depth integration of artificial intelligence and real economy, Xin urged efforts to carry out basic research on robots and achieve breakthroughs in core technologies of key fields, so as to promote the high-quality development of the country's robotics industry.

As of July, China owned more than 190,000 effective robot-related patents, accounting for about two-thirds of the global total. The country has maintained its position as the world's largest industrial robot market for 11 consecutive years, he noted.

He added that robot density in the manufacturing industry reached 470 robots per 10,000 employees, and service robots have been used in multiple sectors on a large scale, including family services, health and elderly care, adding that the average annual growth rate of China's robotics industry is 15 percent.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the out-



An employee introduces the single-hole laparotomy robot to visitors at the 2024 World Robot Conference, which kicked off in Beijing on Wednesday. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

“Since 2013, China has consistently maintained the top position in global robot installations, playing a vital and irreplaceable role on the international stage.”

Marina Bill, president of the International Federation of Robotics

put of industrial robots in the country has increased from 33,000 units in 2015 to 430,000 units in 2023, with a compound annual growth rate of 37.8 percent. The output of robots used in the services sector jumped 21.3 percent

year-on-year to 7.83 million units last year.

Marina Bill, president of the International Federation of Robotics, said China has made remarkable achievements in the robotics industry in recent years, emerging as the world's largest consumer market and a leading producer of robots. “Since 2013, China has consistently maintained the top position in global robot installations, playing a vital and irreplaceable role on the international stage.”

Chinese products such as collaborative robots, logistics robots and underwater robots have gained prominence in the international market, capturing a significant share of the total, she said.

Bill, who is also the global head of marketing and sales and head of product line software and digital in industrial conglomerate ABB's robotics division, said, “China is

actively promoting the research and development and application of humanoid robots, injecting new vigor and vitality into the diverse development of global robotics technology.”

She also called on governments, businesses and research institutions worldwide to strengthen dialogue and collaboration, and promote the profound integration of innovative technologies like generative AI and digital twins with robotics.

“International collaboration is obviously a fundamental pillar for the sustained growth and prosperity of the robotics industry,” said Alois C. Knoll, a professor at the Technical University of Munich in Germany.

The deep integration of technologies like AI has made robots smarter, more flexible and more autonomous, Knoll said, underlining that these advancements not only boost production efficiency

but also play a vital role in supporting the sustainable development of society.

He said the conference has served as a prominent platform for actively promoting the deep integration of robotics technology across various sectors, while setting a very good example for promoting innovation and global cooperation in the robotics field.

Zhang Jin, president of Chinese robotics maker Siasun Robot & Automation Co, said the company will continue to step up investment in R&D, enhance indigenous innovation capabilities and expand its footprint in the industrial robots segment.

At the conference, Siasun is showcasing a series of AI-powered robots, which could be used in semiconductor manufacturing, automated production lines, factory and warehouse cleaning work, and as a family companion.

Vision: Nation is central to world peace, stability

From page 1

Meeting warm locals who were excited to greet me and ask for a group photo to commemorate our encounter was both heartwarming and a reflection of how eager they were to welcome foreigners to their cities. Their smiles and traditional dresses made me want to come back as a tourist to see more of China beyond its cosmopolitan cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

During my stay in Beijing, Italian Prime Minister Geogia Meloni was in town meeting with President Xi. On the agenda was closer economic cooperation and a reset of bilateral relations following Italy's withdrawal from the BRI.

Several deals were signed paving the way for Chinese manufacturers to build plants in Italy with a view to increasing access and market share in European markets including in photovoltaics, wind turbines and electric vehicles. These deals were a testament to China's indispensability to the growth of global trade and to the future of a healthy European economy despite trade arguments and tariff talks. It is also a testament to China's farsighted policies and the historic opportunities created by the BRI.

Having seen how China has successfully modernized itself, I am confident that we will witness a remarkable reinvention that will usher in the emergence of the new China.

Another remarkable trend taking place in China is electrification. During my 10-day tour of Hunan, all small transport means were electric, and cars with green plates were everywhere. Recent statistics in China indicate a 31 percent increase in EV sales since last January, which is 10 percent higher than the global average. On my visit to the SANY wind turbines plant, automation was central to their global success. The plant was producing a wind turbine every three hours with almost no technicians involved in the production process.

The world community will be watching how China articulates the balance between its aspirations and challenges.

Having seen firsthand how China has successfully modernized itself while remaining anchored to its core and rich traditions, I am confident that we will witness a remarkable reinvention that will usher in the emergence of the new China, a developed and modern power that is central to world peace and economic stability.

The author is an ambassador member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs and a member of Egyptian-Chinese Friendship Association. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Media, think-tanks in China and Africa urged to make their voices better heard

By ZHANG YUNBI
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Working together to realize modernization and strengthening unity among members of the vast Global South should be prioritized amid the looming challenges worldwide, said senior officials and experts from China and Africa.

They made the remarks on Wednesday at the 6th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation & China-Africa Think Tank High-Level Dialogue, a key Sino-African exchange event held in Beijing. It convened ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which is scheduled in Beijing from Sept 4 to 6.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the event, Li Shulei, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, said that Chinese and African media organizations and think tanks are expected to tell great stories about China-Africa

friendship and cooperation, and their shoulder-to-shoulder endeavors in the new era.

Li called on media organizations and think tanks from both sides to “make their voices better heard through various means”, such as joint interviews, information exchanges, audiovisual cooperation and think tank dialogues.

They should “join hands to safeguard international justice and continuously bolster the representation and voice of the Global South”, he said.

In a written message sent to the event, Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairman of the African Union Commission, said that media organizations “play a role in bridging China and Africa to better understand each other's past and present”, while think tanks “pool their experiences and offer advice on tackling behaviors that affect climate change, jeopardize global peace and security, and seriously undermine sustainable development”.

He said: “Let the world hear our call for hope, resilience and

progress. Let us together shape a future where the media promotes solidarity and shared prosperity.”

Mahamat called for encouraging exchange programs and scholarship programs for media professionals, collaborative reporting, use of data journalism, establishment of media innovation labs, and emphasis on multilingual support and improved translation capacity.

Gao Xiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that both the Chinese path to modernization and the African path to modernization “are writing unprecedented chapters in history, and they are different from the West's modernization built on colonialism and looting”.

“China is willing to work with African countries to support each other, collaborate vigorously and join hands to promote the modernization process for the benefit of the people of China and Africa,” Gao said.

The spirit of self-reliance and shared cultural memories have



A participant of the 6th Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation & China-Africa Think Tank High-Level Dialogue learns about the production process of traditional lacquered fluttering fans, which are made using a technique based on a national intangible heritage, in Beijing on Wednesday. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

been giving a constant boost to mutual respect and amity between China and African nations, according to African dignitaries who attended Wednesday's event.

Noting that the Global South has a shared history, Thierry Lezin Mougalla, minister of communication and media of the Republic of Congo and a spokesman for the

Congolese government, said that history should be “written by ourselves” through “our own languages, sensitivity and cultures”.

He added: “Because we have to live together in such a world and show solidarity, we have to build bridges instead of putting up barriers. New models of cooperation emerge from this.”

Path: Blueprint for modernization ‘gradually turning into a reality’, expert says

From page 1

The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, which was held in July, adopted a resolution on further comprehensively deepening reform to advance Chinese modernization, which proposed over 300 reform measures to be completed by 2029. It sent out a clear message that in

China, reform will not stop and opening-up will not cease.

Recently, Qiushi Journal, the flagship magazine of the CPC Central Committee, published an article commemorating the 120th anniversary of Deng's birth, linking the third plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978 with the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee in July.

Observers said that by connecting the two third plenary sessions held nearly half a century apart, the article, written by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee, sends a signal that China's reform and opening-up should be seen as a continuation, encouraging the public to look forward to the next stage of reform and opening-up

and further bolstering external confidence in the country's reform efforts.

Like Deng, Xi has provided a philosophy for the next stage of fast-track development. Led by Xi, China's reforms aim to not only achieve a stable growth rate by making structural adjustments, but also to rid the country of internal and external challenges and coordi-

nate development and security.

“Starting with reform and opening-up (in 1978), the Chinese Communists have embarked on a new path of wholeheartedly focusing on development, achieving remarkable historic accomplishments. The blueprint for socialist modernization outlined by Comrade Deng Xiaoping is gradually turning into a reality,” Li, former vice-president of

the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, wrote in his article in Dang Jian.

On the new journey in the new era, the nation should unwaveringly carry forward reform and opening-up to give stronger momentum to the drive of Chinese modernization, Li added.

Xi Ruoshui in Shenzhen contributed to this story.

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CHINA

By ZHAO YIMENG

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Ying Jie ranks among a group of vloggers who have taken to social media to detail their daily lives working in China's civil service.

What makes the 29-year-old a little different from his colleagues is that he completed his studies overseas.

In a three-minute vlog he posted recently on Xiaohongshu, the smartly dressed Ying detailed his 30-minute drive to the office, breakfast in the canteen and the beginning of his working day.

In 2020, with a bachelor's degree in finance from Jinan University, a highly regarded college in Guangdong province, and a master's degree in business analysis from the University of Sydney, Ying decided to return to his hometown of Foshan to take the civil service exam.

Getting a job in the civil service has a long history in China, and passing the entrance exam and gaining a position effectively means a job for life, offering more stability than working in the private sector.

The number of applicants who passed vetting for the annual recruitment exams for central and State organs hit a record 3.03 million last year, up from 2.6 million the previous year, indicating how people are turning to the civil service in the

often volatile and unpredictable job market.

Figures show 39,600 central government jobs are being offered this year, with there being one job per 77 applicants on average, slightly higher than the 1-70 ratio last year. The most sought-after position is at the National Bureau of Statistics where 3,572 vied for a single post.

Previously, highly educated overseas graduates were thought to be

"above" taking the civil service exam, instead having eyes on the private sector. But recent high-profile cases have proved those thoughts wrong.

"Overseas graduates with similar higher education backgrounds usually chose to seek job opportunities in the internet industry, at consultancies or securities firms," Ying said.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenging job market with shrinking employment opportunities, "I thought international students were already at a disadvantage when seeking employment after returning to their home country," he said.

The internet industry was booming in China as Ying pursued further education overseas. "Actually, I missed out on a lot of related information and recruitment opportunities," Ying said, adding that he struggled to compete for jobs both at home and abroad.

With the outlook grim, and his parents' encouragement, Ying decided to give the service exam a go instead of carrying on down the private sector path.

"If I have interviews at 10 companies, for instance, I need to prepare different materials for each. With the civil service exams I could focus on just two main subjects," Ying said.

After taking four exams at different levels, including the national, provincial and city levels, Ying settled on an economics position at the local government of Foshan.

"I didn't expect there to be so much administrative work, and I'm still exploring the rules as a relative novice," he said.

"More importantly, interpersonal relationships are challenging and more sophisticated than in private enterprises, I've found," he said, adding that he is gradually building out his social networks.

Ying said he is satisfied with his job because of its relevance to his majors and reasonable, though not extortionate, remuneration.

"The duties match what I want to do and are in the field I want to engage in," he said.

His current income as a civil servant inevitably falls short of the amount that

Overseas graduates come to terms with civil service posts

Tough job market teaching young people to manage expectations



LIANG LUWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

“Finding ways to maximize your talents within a set framework is also a romantic endeavor.”

Wang Zihuan, University of Hong Kong graduate who chose a civil service job in his hometown in Zhejiang province

he thought he would earn in the past, but Ying has learned to live with his decisions and manage expectations.

"Learning to accept and appreciate this is essential for achieving a sense of stable happiness," he said.

Students who study overseas often have high expectations for themselves when returning to their home country, according to Ying.

"After taking up civil service positions, they might feel that the system does not require an overly assertive personality or exceptionally strong professional skills, which could lead to disappointment," he said.

It's more important to cultivate a sense

of public duty and take on the responsibility of serving the country, he added.

However, some commented on Ying's posts that overseas graduates are only working in government organs or public institutions because of the current situation in the job market.

Wang Zihuan, a 25-year-old social science postgraduate from the University of Hong Kong, dreamed big when he returned to his hometown in Zhejiang province in June 2022.

"At that time, I had an obsession with technology and internet companies, where people work hard every day from early morning until 10 pm. They recruit graduates from top universities, and it's a

highly competitive sector. I felt like that's where I need to be, so I must give it a try," Wang said.

Wang submitted resumes to at least 60 companies, most of them in top-tier cities, during the autumn recruitment season, including tech giants Tencent and Alibaba, as well as automobile and gaming enterprises.

Most of the recruitment processes ended at the examination stage while some proceeded to rounds of interviews, but he received no follow-up calls, he said.

According to Wang, he was in the top 2 percent of the approximately 300,000 candidates in Zhejiang for the *gaokao*, or college entrance examination, and a new media graduate from Communication University of China in Beijing.

Despite pursuing further education outside of the Chinese mainland, Wang didn't receive any offers after returning home.

"Throughout the process, my confidence and pride were repeatedly hit. I even got a small notebook to keep track of the companies and positions I have applied for. Eventually, I stopped recording because it felt like there was no progress," he said.

He started to seriously consider a backup plan amid the anxiety, which was taking the civil service exam at both the national and provincial levels at the end of 2022.

Wang said he found the exam questions for the civil service, in an administrative aptitude test and essay writing test, "quite interesting", and are favorable for liberal arts students like him.

"For the first time in my life, I found I was well-suited for an exam," he said.

Aiming for a post in the national tax system, Wang initially applied for the national exam.

Coincidentally, the exam in Zhejiang that year was held early while the national exam was postponed to January 2023 due to the pandemic.

To his great relief, Wang learned of his gaining a civil service position in his hometown just before the Chinese New Year.

He later found during orientation and training that he was the only non-mainland graduate among the 40 new employees the district government enrolled that year.

"Reflecting on my choices, it seems like my life has always been on a path of unintended yet relatively correct decisions," Wang said after being in his new post for a year.

"I no longer believe that a job must drain 100 percent of your abilities and energy to be considered valuable," he said.

Meanwhile, the pace and pay of his civil service work are more satisfying than he imagined before starting the job.

"Overtime is actually quite common, but the pace is not that relentless," Wang said, adding that the work is relatively more flexible and allows him to better manage his schedule.

Part of his duties, such as drafting speech materials, also match with his education background, he said.

"Finding ways to maximize your talents within a set framework is also a romantic endeavor," he said.

For Wang and many others who chose to study for a master's degree outside of the Chinese mainland, the shorter programs can bring them an age advantage, particularly in government positions that emphasize experience and seniority.

Wang said he is at least one or two years younger than his peers who entered the civil service at the same time.

Despite having a secure job and stable life, Wang said he has expectations for advancement and hopes to progress further based on his abilities.

"I made the choice that, while uncertain at the time, has turned out well so far," he said.

Both Ying and Wang have shared their experiences and provided tips through their Xiaohongshu posts for students wanting to sit in the civil service recruitment exams.

Some followers with similar education backgrounds left comments asking for advice on taking the exam, while some advised netizens to think twice before taking government positions.

"There is no one definite right path, only the one that suits you. Never glorify a road you have not yet traveled," Wang said.

Stanford student's grassroots role in Anhui stuns netizens

By ZHAO YIMENG

A Stanford University graduate sparked heated discussions online recently, after taking an administrative position at a county-level government in Anhui province.

In late June, the public service bureau of Suzhou in Anhui announced the second group of candidates shortlisted for this year's civil service positions.

Su Zhen, a PhD graduate from Stanford University in the United States, was among those listed to be appointed to a

grassroots position in Lingbi county, administrated by Suzhou.

The recruitment information showed that the position Su applied for had only two openings.

Candidates are ranked by their overall scores and will be assigned to roles involving public service, rural cultural development and comprehensive management at grassroots.

The position specifically targets residents and requires a five-year commitment to remain in the designated township.

Su achieved the highest score in the written test, interview and overall performance among six candidates for the position, according to exam results released earlier.

Moreover, he was the only PhD candidate among the 434 people listed in the two groups of civil service recruitment announcements from the bureau this year.

Su obtained an undergraduate degree from the School of Physics at the University of Science and Technology of China, and pursued further education at Stanford University, ThePaper.cn reported.

The bureau later stated that the recruitment process for the position did not offer preferential treatment for overseas graduates or exemptions from written tests. All candidates were evaluated equally, it said.

The stark contrast between a top university graduate and grassroots civil service garnered public attention, with many saying that a growing number of Chinese overseas graduates are choosing to pursue positions in their hometowns or smaller counties rather than competing in major cities.

Chen Zhiwen, a member of the Chinese Society of Educational Development

Strategy, said the trend of top university graduates returning to smaller towns is becoming more common.

"The phenomenon of prestigious university graduates shifting their career focus to less prominent areas is evident," Chen said.

"There might be a misconception that graduates from renowned universities should only have high-profile roles or achieve grand accomplishments," he said.

"The values and choices of this generation are more diversified. While some continue to strive for high ambitions, others opt for stable lives without being passive," he said.

Meanwhile, the current number of high-profile roles is indeed limited, he added.

CHINA

Students prove their enthusiasm through lion dance

By PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa and LIU KUN in Wuhan

The No 3 Sports Hall of Hubei University in Central China's Hubei province recently witnessed the majestic performance of a "Golden Dragon".

Over 10 meters long, the dragon danced to rhythmic music, leaping into the air and spiraling on the ground with grace and power, Changjiang Daily reported.

Among the talented team members were seventh-grade students from Donghui Middle School in Lhokha city, Xizang autonomous region. This was a reunion marking a special moment as these students, who were taught by a support team from Hubei University in 2021, came together to practice dragon and lion dances at the university in Wuhan, capital of Hubei.

Led by Mei Yijian and Tenzin Rigzang, the team showcased their skills with precision and enthusiasm. Mei Yijian, who will soon be in his third year at Hubei University and is a member of the university's dragon dance team, adjusted his movements to match the height of Tenzin Rigzang, showcasing their seamless coordination and dedication to the art.

Accompanying them were six teammates, including Pema Tashi and Lhakpa Chungdak, from Tibetan herding and farming communities.

This visit to Hubei marked their first venture outside of Xizang, as part of the Hubei-Xizang Youth Hand in Hand Summer Camp. Nearly 100 Tibetan children participated in this weeklong activity.

The traditional dragon and lion dance is a forte of Hubei University, with the university team having achieved international success in competitions.

Since March 2021, five graduate students from Hubei University have taken turns serving as coach for the Donghui Middle School dragon and lion dance team. From forming the first male dragon dance team, to now having a female dragon dance team, lion dance team and ribbon dragon team, over 130 middle school students have received training and some were even awarded the Chinese Dragon and Lion Dance Association's second prize.

Professor Mei Linqi, head coach of the university's dragon dance team, surprised the students with his presence during training. His guidance and encouragement have been instrumental in nurturing the young talent, such as Lhakpa Chungdak, who impressed everyone with a two-meter leap.

Tenzin Norbu, a student at Donghui Middle School, said he first watched dragon dancing on television, and by becoming a member of the team he is more interested in traditional Chinese culture and has learned the importance of teamwork.

The exchange between the Tibetan youth and students in Hubei University exemplifies the power of cultural connection and mutual learning. Through years of dedicated training and mentorship, these students have honed their skills in dragon and lion dancing, earning recognition from the Chinese Dragon and Lion Dance Association.

Lu Fanglei, vice principal of Donghui Middle School and a member of the Aid-Xizang Work Team of Hubei, expressed pride in the students' accomplishments.

"The Tibetan children in these dance teams have a special connection to Hubei and Hubei University because of the traditional art, and they have expressed multiple times their desire to visit their teachers' school, and this time their dream has come true," Lu said.

Contact the writers at palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn



From left: Martin Haase stands in front of medicine display cabinet in the First Hospital of Hunan University of Chinese Medicine in Changsha, Hunan province. Haase performs acupuncture on a patient in the hospital. PHOTOS BY ZOU SHUO / CHINA DAILY



Canadian provides TCM treatment for Chinese patients in Changsha

Traditional medicine improves health and increases cross-cultural understanding

By ZOU SHUO in Changsha
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Martin Haase, an enthusiast of traditional Chinese medicine from Canada, has been in China for 17 years. He has a Chinese wife and two daughters who are attending public school in Changsha, Hunan province.

His daughters' first language is Chinese and English is their second, he said. He has been fascinated by China and Chinese culture since high school, during which he started practicing Chinese martial arts and learning about Chinese philosophy such as Taoism.

Influenced by his grandmother's knowledge of herbalism, he became interested in natural healing.

Similarly, he said, traditional Chinese medicine is a healthy way of living that can strengthen your body and has a rich philosophy about being in harmony with nature and the seasons.

In 2004, he enrolled in a traditional Chinese medicine college in his hometown of Victoria, British Columbia. It took three years to complete his acupuncture course, after which the dean of the college recommended him to go to China

"I think foreigners who want to learn TCM have a genuine interest in it and put a lot of effort into their research, so I trust him."

Zhang Li, one of Martin Haase's patients in Changsha, Hunan province

under an exchange program to Hunan University of Chinese Medicine in Changsha, capital of Hunan, to gain more experience.

"I thought it was an amazing opportunity because before that it had always seemed like an impossible thing to do. It seemed too far away and too difficult. I realized that in life, all one has to do is to make a conscious decision and go for it! And it was the best decision I have ever made," he said.

He arrived at Hunan University of Chinese Medicine in 2007 and has been living in Changsha ever since. "Despite the challenging weather,

Changsha is my second home. I just feel comfortable here. I feel at home," he said.

He is currently pursuing a master's degree in acupuncture, moxibustion and *tuina* massage at the university. "Changsha is a terrific place to learn Chinese medicine. The resources in the hospital and at the university are fantastic and I'm very grateful to all my teachers here."

Haase said some of his patients don't fully understand Chinese medicine, even though they're Chinese, and the idea of a foreigner doing it seems funny to them.

However, once they start to experience how he works with them, diagnoses them, lets them know what the problem is and why, and then lets them know what he is going to do for treatment, they will better understand it and trust him. A lot of his patients have been recommended by other people, he said.

"I think it's really amazing as a foreigner to be able to give acupuncture to Chinese people in China. It is a little ironic, especially if it's their first time to ever receive acupuncture. I feel extremely appreciative and touched that I'm able to receive their trust and respect," he said.

Haase said TCM is his "go-to treatment" for everything, as he can treat himself, or go to his classmates or teachers for help if necessary.

He is also working actively to bridge the connections between Canada and China through TCM and martial arts. He has finished translating several TCM-related books from Chinese to English.

A lot of people abroad are interested in and curious about TCM and often ask what it is, and how and why it works, he said.

"When we talk about traditional Chinese medicine, actually what we're often talking about is how to treat, benefit and strengthen the body. One of the things that I love about TCM is that we concentrate on the patient's health and healing, not just on the disease," he said.

"What's wonderful about TCM is that there are different tools to treat the problem, whether they are external such as acupuncture, cupping and massage, or internal treatment methods such as using herbal medicine, diet therapy or guiding patients on a healthy lifestyle," he added.

Canada was one of the first countries to standardize TCM, and there are three public universities where

it is taught, in addition to private colleges.

Chinese medicine in Canada is more standardized than in many other countries, and acupuncture can be covered by medical insurance, which means it's recognized by the Canadian medical system, he said. He intends to finish his master's degree by the end of this year and potentially do a PhD in TCM.

Zhang Li, 44, from Changsha, is one of Haase's patients and has been getting acupuncture treatment to treat lower back pain.

"It is novel to be getting TCM treatment from a foreigner, and I think foreigners who want to learn TCM have a genuine interest in it and put a lot of effort into their research, so I trust him."

Craig Johnson from the United States is a friend of Haase in Changsha and is also one of his patients.

Johnson has known him for a long time and sees Haase's passion when he talks about TCM and treating patients in the hospital, so he trusts him as his doctor.

He has received acupuncture and massage for exercise-induced muscular pain, which has worked well and has helped relieve muscle tension, he added.

Teenagers showcase their drone skills

CHONGQING — When teenagers wear specialized goggles to control small sports drones — just a few inches long — through obstacle courses at high speeds, they experience a thrilling sense of immersion. This exhilarating combination of speed and skill has made drone sports a new favorite among teenagers worldwide.

On Aug 16, the 2024 National Aviation Science Popularization Grand Assembly of China and the eighth China Educational Drone Event took place in Chongqing. Approximately 17,000 young participants competed in 23 events across five categories: control, programming, combination, virtual and creative.

The young athletes showcased their abilities by maneuvering drones during aerial combat and simulating freight transport relays. Those watching from the sidelines leaned in, eagerly raising their arms to capture these exciting moments on their phones.

Wu Hongxuan, a 12-year-old participant from the Foreign Language Primary School in the Jinjiang district of Chengdu, Sichuan province, passionately followed the "Quid-ditch"-style drone soccer elimination match. He cheered enthusiastically and engaged in animated discussions with his teammates.

"I'm going to participate in this match too, and I'm feeling a bit nervous," Wu said. He began his journey with drones two years ago and was

selected by his school this summer to undergo professional training for drone competitions.

"I think drone sports are incredibly cool! Not only do we learn how to operate drones, but we also gain a wealth of related knowledge," he added.

Zhang Qi, the chief executive judge of Leitongfeitu drone racing competition, emphasized that the event tests the children's understanding of drone technology, requiring them to think critically as they operate the drones.

He believes that the increasing standardization and specialization of drone sports will further promote the development of related industries.

In September last year, the General Administration of Sport of China issued the General Regulations for Mass Events of the 15th National Sports Meeting of the People's Republic of China, clearly stating that model events — including aviation model F9A drone soccer and aviation model F9U drone racing — will be part of the mass events lineup.

According to data from the Civil Aviation Administration of China, the total number of drone enterprises with valid operational certificates for civil unmanned aerial vehicles currently exceeds 14,000, and the number of individuals holding drone operator licenses has surpassed 225,000.



People take photos of a drone performance staged to celebrate the 2024 National Aviation Science Popularization Grand Assembly of China in Chongqing on Aug 13. HE PENGLEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

In the first half of this year, nearly 608,000 new drones were registered, indicating a 48 percent increase since the end of the previous year. The cumulative flight hours of drones reached 9.82 million hours, an increase of 134,000 hours compared to the same period last year.

Hou Tianyou, a 12-year-old boy from a rural primary school deep in the mountains of Southwest China, has seen his life transformed by drones. "This is my third time participating in the Educational Drone Event," said Hou, who attends

Liangtian Primary School in Zhenning Bouyei and Miao autonomous county, Guizhou province.

His journey began three years ago when a young teacher, Chen Zhongchao, arrived to introduce the children to this exciting new field.

"My first encounter with drones was at an aerospace event organized by Mr Chen. I found it fascinating, and after the event, I told him that I wanted to learn more about drones," Tianyou said.

Not only did Tianyou practice during weekdays, but also spent many weekends honing his drone

flying skills with his teachers and classmates. His hard work paid off when he secured second place in the National Educational Drone Event for the first time in 2022.

"This time, I'm participating in the individual flight competition, and I hope to win first place!" Hou said.

He revealed that he had already been accepted early into a prestigious local middle school because of his outstanding performance in several drone competitions.

XINHUA

WORLD

Hope fading in search for Sicily yacht passengers

By JONATHAN POWELL in London
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Searches resumed for a third day on Wednesday on the wreck of a luxury yacht that sank off Sicily, with hope fading that the six missing passengers would be found alive.

The search operation, which involves specialist divers aided by an underwater drone, continued until late on Tuesday and resumed at first light on Wednesday morning, firefighters said.

Six people, including Jonathan Bloomer, chairman of Morgan Stanley International bank, British technology mogul Mike Lynch and his 18-year-old daughter Hannah, and Chris Morvillo, a lawyer from Clifford Chance, remain missing following the sinking of the yacht about 700 meters from the Sicilian coast on Monday, according to Sicily's Civil Protection Agency.

The *Bayesian*, a 56-meter yacht, was carrying a total of 22 people — 12 passengers and 10 crew members — comprising British, United States and Canadian nationals.

The luxury yacht went down at about 5 am local time, after a heavy storm caused waterspouts, or rotating columns of air and mist, reported the BBC.

Fifteen individuals were rescued, among them a 1-year-old British girl.

Italian news agency ANSA cited



In this frame grab taken from footage released by the Italian Firefighters on Tuesday, scuba divers search for the missing passengers on the yacht in Porticello, southern Italy. VIA AP

witnesses saying the *Bayesian* had dropped anchor when the storm hit, resulting in the mast snapping and the vessel capsizing before sinking.

Specialized fire and rescue divers, experts in confined-space operations, were flown in from Rome and Sardinia on Monday, said the BBC.

Firefighters said on Tuesday evening that divers had entered the inside of the wreck, but that it was a "long and complex" operation.

The yacht is largely intact, resting on the seabed some 50 meters down.

Bodies found

On Wednesday, divers found two bodies in the shipwreck, said a source close to the search. It was not immediately clear who had been found.

The discovery brings the confirmed death toll to three.

Previously, Sicily's Civil Protection Agency confirmed the body of the ship's cook, a Canadian who had been residing in Antigua, had been recovered, according to Italian newspaper *la Repubblica*.

Lynch, dubbed "the British Bill Gates" in media reports, is a technology entrepreneur, who recently celebrated his acquittal in a high-profile fraud case related to the \$11 billion sale of his company, Autonomy, to US computing giant Hewlett-Packard. He had reportedly been facing two decades in jail and invited his legal team aboard the yacht to celebrate the result of the case.

The incident in Sicily coincides with the death of Lynch's co-defendant in the fraud case, Stephen

Chamberlain, after an accident in Cambridgeshire in the United Kingdom on Saturday. Chamberlain was hit by a car while jogging.

Morvillo, a prominent lawyer, worked on Lynch's trial and the investigation into the 9/11 New York terror attacks in 2001. Bloomer is the 70-year-old British chairman of Morgan Stanley International and of insurance company Hiscox. Both their wives are among the six missing individuals.

A spokesperson for Morgan Stanley said the company was "deeply shocked and saddened" and added, "Our thoughts are with all those affected, in particular the Bloomer family, as we all wait for further news from this terrible situation."

Agencies contributed to this story.

Farmer reaps benefits of Chinese tech

Nyambo Obed's mushroom business in Rwanda was helped by Juncao technology

By MINLU ZHANG
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After completing his university studies in 2017, Nyambo Obed, a young man from Rwanda, benefited from a Chinese farming technology.

While unemployed, he took a training course on agricultural technology (known as Juncao technology) organized by the China-UN Peace and Development Trust Fund.

In five years, Obed became a farmer who employs dozens of people and produces a wide range of products, including food, animal feed and fertilizer.

"Juncao technology has not only changed my life but has also made me a champion in my village, helping others out of poverty. Thanks to it, I am now able to support the livelihoods of dozens of families on my own," Obed told Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, when Fu visited his farm in Rwanda.

"Today, I can proudly say that my mushroom business has enabled me to create jobs for over 20 people in my community, helping them lift themselves out of poverty," he told *The New Times*, a Rwandan news agency.

Juncao technology is an agricultural invention that uses chopped grass as a substrate for growing edible and medicinal mushrooms. Invented by Lin Zhanxi from China's Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in the 1980s, the technology has benefited more than 100 countries, including Rwanda, reported *Xinhua News*.

Two weeks ago, Fu traveled with senior UN secretariat officials and Lin to visit farms using Juncao technology in Rwanda and Tanzania.

The technology "symbolizes the successful practices explored by the Chinese people in the course of poverty reduction and eradication and epitomizes China's practical actions to support the realization of sustainable development in the Global South," Fu said at a UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday.

"China is ready to work with the international community to

help more developing countries realize independent development," he added.

Juncao technology is used in the priority projects carried out under the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund. Created in 2015, the fund has so far supported about 150 projects in the Global South.

Fu called the fund an "important support for the UN in promoting the sustainable development agenda and maintaining international peace and security".

"As a permanent member of the Security Council and an important member of the Global South, China, along with realizing its own development, has always taken as its responsibility to support the Global South in achieving lasting peace and sustainable development," said Fu.

"Poverty and underdevelopment are major sources of conflict," said Fu, saying that conflict-prevention is a foundational task for poverty-reduction and development.

"It is important for post-conflict countries and countries in special situations alike to leverage their resource endowment and comparative advantages to tap the momentum and potential for sustainable economic development, so as to embark on the fast track to development," he said.

"To maintain stable economic growth and keep creating jobs and wealth constitute the very foundation for realizing long-term national peace and security," he added.

The path to sustainable development and lasting peace also lies in effective governance, social inclusion and proactive government investment, said Fu.

He reiterated that China urges countries to immediately lift all unilateral sanctions. "The indiscriminate imposition of illegal unilateral sanctions by some countries in violation of the UN Charter and international law not only exacerbate the economic and social difficulties of the countries targeted, but also sow the seeds for new conflicts and instability," he said.

Bridging East and West through culture, beauty

By MINGMEI LI in New York
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In the world of beauty, Yue-Sai Kan has dedicated decades of her life to bridging understanding between China and the world through the blending of Eastern and Western cultures.

Called "the most famous woman in China" by *People* magazine, Kan launched her new book, *The Most Famous Woman in China and How She Did It*, after this notable moniker. More than 200 people attended the book signing and panel discussion co-hosted by the China Institute in New York City on Aug 13.

"Everything I have done in my life has never been done by others, but I have always been focused on cultural exchanges between the East and the West, and I am committed to bridging understanding between China and the world," Kan said.

She said the book, her first autobiography in English, is more than just a chronicle of her life. It also offers a lens into the evolving relationship between the East and West, as seen through her eyes.

An Emmy-winning television host, producer, successful entrepreneur, fashion icon, bestselling author and philanthropist, Kan describes herself as a "pioneer" having been the first to break new ground on TV and in the cosmetics industry, influenced by her childhood experiences and pursuit of beauty.

Born in Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and raised in Hong Kong, Kan received little pampering from her parents.

Caught speeding up the clock to shorten her piano practice as a little girl, Kan faced punishment from



Yue-Sai Kan celebrates the launch of her new book at China Institute in New York City on Aug 13. JOHN LAMPARSKI / VIA AFP

her mother with a feather duster. But she cleverly avoided it by affectionately rubbing her cheek against her mother's wrist.

Despite the strict upbringing, her mother supported her early interest in beauty, especially when she found Kan playing with jewelry or experimenting with lipstick in front of a mirror.

Her father, a painter who would start over if he found even a small detail unsatisfactory in his work, exposed her early to art. This cultivated her appreciation for beauty and instilled a strict attitude toward it.

Kan said her parents' support had contributed a lot to her growth.

At 16, Kan went to the United States to attend the Brigham Young University-Hawaii. Her experience studying in the US, coupled with

her adventurous spirit, deepened her understanding of Westerners and people from diverse ethnicities and backgrounds. This experience then helped shape her commitment to represent Chinese culture through her own identity.

After a brief return to Hong Kong, Kan moved back to the US. In January 1972, she arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York with just \$150 in cash.

She began her television career in New York, using her persistence and resilience to establish roots in the city.

In 1978, Kan produced and hosted the TV show *Looking East*, which introduced Chinese topics to mainstream US media and brought China to the US audience for the first time.

In her autobiography, Kan described how she launched the show amid skepticism from friends, quickly transitioning to a successful start.

Lack of information

At the book-signing event, Kan said the lack of information about China was why she felt compelled to create *Looking East*. She wanted the show to help people in the US better understand China, bridging a significant cultural gap.

In 1984, Kan was invited by PBS to host a live broadcast in China for the 35th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

This event marked the first television collaboration between China and the US. In her book, she wrote that seeing Tian'anmen Square during the hour-long live broadcast filled her with pride.

Not only did Kan captivate the US audience, but she was also invit-

ed by the Chinese government to produce the show *One World*, which reached an audience of 400 million people.

This program helped Chinese viewers gain a global perspective through her eyes. The 1988 TV program introduced China's reform and opening-up process to the US audience, playing a key role in familiarizing the US with the New China.

Kan also consistently held herself to high standards. As a host, she made a lasting impression on viewers in both China and the US with her iconic "Yue-Sai Cut", vibrant clothing and signature red lips. Those elements resonated deeply with viewers in both countries.

Later, Kan founded Yue Sai Cosmetics, where she was personally involved in every step from sourcing to research and development, testing and mass production.

She integrated traditional Chinese herbal formulas into her cosmetics, creating a color palette specifically suited for sensitive skin and the complexions of Chinese women.

In her book, Kan detailed the journey of creating her cosmetics brand. Additionally, she introduced "Yue-Sai wawa" — dolls that feature black hair and yellow skin dressed in traditional Chinese attire, making a significant cultural impact.

To this day, Kan remains dedicated to fostering exchanges and cultural understanding between China and the US. Kan has built a diverse network of friends ranging from high-profile politicians and business leaders to ordinary citizens across both China and the US.

"Art, culture, education, business and culinary, always connect people," she said.



Fu Cong (second from right), China's permanent representative to the UN, visits a farm in Rwanda earlier this month. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Dubai eyes partnerships with China in key sectors

By PAN JIE
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Dubai is stepping up efforts to foster robust partnerships with China in key sectors such as logistics, trade, high technology and green energy, as industry insiders see huge potential in China's economic growth.

The Dubai Business Forum — China, hosted by Dubai Chambers on Wednesday in Beijing, aims to attract high-growth companies to Dubai and support Chinese businesses in leveraging opportunities for regional and global expansion.

In the opening remarks, Mohammad Ali bin Rashed Lootah, presi-

dent and CEO of Dubai Chambers, said: "Dubai has become increasingly attractive to Chinese investors with global ambitions."

According to him, by the end of the first quarter of this year, there have been about 5,400 Chinese companies registered as active members of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

According to Dubai Chambers, China is Dubai's largest trading partner, with a non-oil trade volume of \$67.8 billion in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 4 percent and an increase of 83 percent compared with 10 years ago.

Abdulla Al Hashmi, chief operating officer of Parks & Zones, DP

World GCC, a logistics company based in Dubai, underscored some key factors behind Dubai's achievements in international trade.

"We have made bold investments when we created the infrastructure that is needed to stimulate trade, whether it is the Jebel Ali Port or Al Maktoum Airport," he told *China Daily*.

Besides, he highlighted the importance of simplifying business processes.

"We've established a single trade window, called Dubai Trade, where traders, manufacturers, and all supply chain participants can conveniently conduct their transactions,"

he said. "So the ease of doing business is extremely important and this is what Dubai excels at."

Beijing Xiaocheng Technology, a company that works on integrated circuits and electric energy meters, is among those looking for business expansion and are interested in Dubai's favorable policies.

"We already established our own office in Dubai, and we are planning to further expand our business in Dubai in the future," Liu Hang, deputy general manager of the company, told *China Daily*.

Stephen Hurst, managing director and head of the China Management Office at HSBC China, also

sees "a massive opportunity" between Dubai and China.

"The Middle East is a very important region for us in terms of our strategy in supporting clients," Hurst told *China Daily*. He is now based in China and helps clients with banking solutions.

"China and the Middle East are long-standing trading partners, and Dubai in particular, so I see there is a huge opportunity for Chinese corporations that are going overseas, and Dubai can be the platform for them," he added.

As China and the United Arab Emirates celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations, their economic ties have significantly strengthened. China has maintained its position as the largest trading partner of the UAE for many years. Last year, the

non-oil trade between the two countries reached nearly \$81 billion. The two countries also look forward to a bilateral trade volume of \$200 billion by 2030, according to a joint statement issued by China and the UAE on May 30.

When asked about the UAE's BRICS membership, which took effect on Jan 1, Al Hashmi said: "We are an advocate of open market, trade without border, so we believe that this membership will enhance the multilateral trade relationship between the UAE and BRICS countries, we believe there is an opportunity to strengthen that through dialogue among the BRICS nations."

Wang Haoran contributed to this story.

ACROSS ASIA

Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



From left: China-Laos Railway staff prepare food for tourists on April 09, in Vientiane, Laos. Tourists board the China-Laos Railway at Vientiane Station on April 09. PHOTOS BY LAUREN DECICCA / GETTY IMAGES
Tourists line up at the Vientiane Station on April 8. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On a high-speed train departing Lao capital Vientiane and heading north one morning, Vongthong Somphavath, a resident of the world heritage town of Luang Prabang, said she could now enjoy making round trips to the city and beyond, all within a day.

Vongthong, 27, said the China-Laos Railway was a game changer. She reminisced about her childhood when visits to other parts of the country were rare due to the treacherous and time-consuming mountain roads. Her story is not unique, but shared by many people living in the north.

"It was not just a month, or months; it could be a year or more before we got the chance to visit Vientiane," Vongthong said.

Those difficult days of travel have become a thing of the past since December 3, 2021, when the China-Laos Railway came into service after full-scale construction began in 2016.

It now takes about two hours to travel from Vientiane to Luang Prabang and another two hours to reach Boten in Luang Namtha Province that borders China, compared to at least eight and 15 hours, respectively, by road previously.

Landlocked to land link

The railway — part of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China in 2013 — has alleviated landlocked Laos' transport challenges, unlocking its potential as a transit hub for the region and beyond.

Spanning 1,035 kilometers connecting Vientiane to Kunming, capital of Southwest China's Yunnan province, the China-Laos Railway is integrating into the major trans-Asian railway, enabling trains to carry freight from Southeast Asia to China and onward to Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Poland, before reaching Duisburg in Germany. It takes just 14 to 21 days from Southeast Asia to Europe by rail, compared to 45 days by sea.

"The railway has become an important trade gateway between China and ASEAN," Saleumsak Sayamoungkhoun from the Lao Ministry of Public Works and Transport told Chinese and Southeast Asian journalists during their recent eight-day 2024 ASEAN Media China-Laos Railway Tour, which involved a journey from Vientiane to Kunming.

While waiting for the standard-gauge China-Laos Railway to link up with the tracks of Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore to form a broader Pan-Asian network linking Kunming to Singapore, the region has already been benefiting from the current network, which converges the standard and one-meter gauges.

ASEAN Express — a freight train

system linking Malaysia to Thailand, Laos and Southwest China's Chongqing — recently completed its first round trip. Carrying 20 wagons loaded with containers, the freight train departed Selangor in Malaysia on June 27, passing through Thai capital Bangkok before crossing the Mekong River and entering Laos.

At the Thanaleng Dry Port, Laos' integrated logistics center in Vientiane, containers were off-loaded from the train on the one-meter gauge Laos-Thailand railway onto a train on the 1,435 meter-gauge China-Laos Railway running northward to Chongqing, taking nine days for a one-way journey compared to 14 to 21 days by sea, resulting in cost savings of about 20 percent.

With the closer links, many entrepreneurs in Thailand, Laos and China said they are looking to ride the wave of regional integration.

Opportunity, not debt trap

Both passenger and freight traffic on the China-Laos Railway has exceeded targets with a high growth rate, according to Liu Hong, general manager of the Laos-China Railway Company, in which the Lao side holds a 30 percent stake and the Chinese side a 70 percent stake — operating the Lao section of the railway.

In 2023, the Lao section of the railway carried up to 2.594 million passengers, a year-on-year increase of 85.8 percent. China-Laos cross-border trains carried 111,000 passengers during the same period and freight transport rose to 4.089 million metric tons, a year-on-year increase of 83.1 percent.

The link's annual volume of passenger and freight traffic is close to reaching the annual target set for its first decade, or a targeted 3.6 million passengers and over 5 million tons of freight, significantly earlier following its rollout.

With such strong figures, "we, as the company, are able to repay debts," said Amongdeth Phetkaysone, deputy managing director of the Lao Ministry of Public Works and Transport and deputy general manager of the Laos-China Railway Company, referring to the financing for the Lao section of the \$5.9 billion project.

Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith told media in May 2023 in Tokyo that the railway has bolstered Laos'

ON THE RAILS

Rail network 'a game changer for Laos, region looks set to reap benefits'



From top: Ethnic groups celebrate the departure of the second international passenger train in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, on April 13. Tourists at Luang Prabang Station on April 8. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Lao students show her painting on the train on May 25, 2023. LI JIAXIAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

efforts to transform the country from landlocked to land-linked, sparking hope for driving socioeconomic development, and that it is definitely not a "debt trap".

"We have been hearing rumors about this 'debt trap' and I just want to clarify that this is not the reality that is facing our country," the Lao leader was quoted as saying, adding that Lao people are proud of the nation's first high-speed railway.

The railway "has contributed

immensely to our economy and will certainly provide a very better future for us," he said.

Piti Srisangnam from Thailand's Chulalongkorn University told media that the China-Laos Railway is far more profitable than to be categorized as a "debt trap", given that freight volume — the railway's main revenue source — in 2023 doubled the break-even point, or

the point at which total cost and total revenue are equal, of 2 million tons a year.

"This project is the opposite of the debt trap status. It is an important source of foreign currency flowing into Laos," said Piti, who has been teaching international economics and ASEAN studies at the Chulalongkorn university since 2002.

"To understand this (debt trap) narrative, we must first understand what a debt trap means."

The lecturer explained that "debt trap" criteria are met when a country, the creditor, is well aware that a project is not profitable, but gives away a loan anyway in order to lure another country, the borrower, into a debt trap with the purpose of damaging the borrower's economy.

But the rail project cannot be considered as such because China is not just the creditor but also a borrower and owner of the project via the joint company for up to 70 percent, which means Laos is responsible for 30 percent, amounting to just \$1.4 billion of the project, Piti said.

China is not unwise enough "to invest in a project that will certainly go bankrupt", said Piti, who is also executive director of the ASEAN Foundation, adding that ensuring profitability is a win-win approach.

Many observers shared this view, justifying that if this major BRI project is a "debt trap" and does not prove successful in Laos, then the global infrastructure drive is unlikely to gain support elsewhere.

Driving industry

As Laos becomes an effective land link to regional and global supply chains, investors are tapping opportunities, pouring capital into developing and conducting businesses in 12 special and specific economic zones across the country, advancing the Lao government's efforts to drive and sustain growth and diversify the economy away from heavy dependence on natural resources.

Established in 2010 in the heart of Vientiane, the Saysettha Development Zone has attracted 150 major companies from countries such as China, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Switzerland, with combined investments of about \$2.3 billion, creating at least 7,000 jobs

for local workers, according to latest industry figures. Companies carrying out manufacturing operations in the area enjoy investment incentives such as tax breaks, low labor costs and cheaper electricity.

Manufacturers also enjoy improved access to major markets in countries that provide exemptions or reductions of import tariffs on goods made in Laos.

Chanthone Sithixay, the developer and operator of the Thanaleng Dry Port — is turning 327 hectares of land near the first friendship bridge across the Mekong River, also known as the First Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge, which connects Laos and Thailand, into a modern logistics park, leveraging Laos' position as a regional and global connector.

The \$547 million project includes a plant and animal quarantine facility, logistics park and export processing and free trade zones. The Lao investor is also considering building a landmark shopping center to leverage the growing tourism industry as high-speed trains bring in more tourists and shoppers.

The recent inauguration of express trains connecting Bangkok with Vientiane is adding significant momentum to the flow of tourists across the region.

Lao Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Darany Phommavongsa said the high-speed railway has made a significant contribution to facilitating both domestic and international travel, driving robust growth.

In the first four months of this year, Laos welcomed more than 1.5 million foreign tourists, an increase of about 35 percent compared to the same period last year, according to industry figures.

Chinese tourists numbered at least 351,000, making China the third largest source of foreign visitors to Laos after Thailand and Vietnam.

Darany said Laos is striving to develop more tourist attractions, upgrade infrastructure and improve hospitality services to meet the growing market and maximize benefits from the sector.

As the railway makes Laos more attractive to investors and creates new jobs, the World Bank projected that the transport network could potentially increase aggregate income in the country by up to 21 percent over the long term.

To achieve this, the bank emphasized that Laos should undertake bold policy reforms to facilitate trade and improve connectivity and the business environment.

"These reforms will be necessary to make the country more attractive as a new investment destination," it recommended.

"We have been hearing rumors about this 'debt trap' and I just want to clarify that this is not the reality that is facing our country."

Thongloun Sisoulith, Lao president

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VIENTIANE TIMES



A China-Laos Railway train stops at Mohan railway station in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan province, on April 13. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

WORLDUS

China seen as better Mideast mediator

US focus on military support for Israel dims prospects for two-state solution

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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China, rather than the United States, is better positioned to be a negotiator and mediator among countries in the Middle East, a US expert says.

"The Chinese government talks to everybody in the region," said Jack Midgley, principal of the global consultancy Midgley & Co and an adjunct associate professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. "China's role as a convener, an advocate, a sponsor of all sides will be much stronger as time goes by."

The US military said on Aug 11 that Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin ordered the USS Georgia, a nuclear submarine, to the Middle East. The Pentagon said in a statement that Austin issued the order after speaking with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

"It's unbelievably powerful," Midgley said of the ship, whose complement includes 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles, each of which can carry a 200-kiloton nuclear warhead.

"The move of the USS Georgia into central command is the clearest possible signal that the US will defend Israel with nuclear weapons

if necessary," he said, pointing out that the Pentagon's announcement was a public signal that the firepower could be used to defend Israel and also "a very powerful deterrent signal to the Iranians."

Since October, the US position "has moved toward unconditional support for Israel and away from a more balanced position" that it took in the past, Midgley said.

The US government and officials have repeatedly made statements supporting a two-state solution.

However, since the recent escalation of the conflict in Gaza, "there is no discussion about any topic really by the US other than how much military support Israel needs," Midgley said.

"The Americans used to be the convener. They used to be the authority that everyone could talk to in the Middle East."

Meanwhile, China's position is "a balanced one," he said, adding the country is "better able to address all the parties" than the US is.

"China is calling attention to the need of the Palestinians. At the same time, China has maintained its position that the key to success is restraint, negotiations and a two-state solution.

"So the Chinese government talks



People search for survivors after an Israeli airstrike hit a school sheltering displaced Palestinians, in the Al-Rimal neighborhood, Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. Gaza's civil defense agency said the attack killed 12 Palestinians. MAHMOUD ISSA VIA GETTY IMAGES

to everybody in the region. However, the US remains an essential military partner for everyone in the Middle East. That won't be changed anytime soon."

'Hardly achieved anything'

On Tuesday night, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken left Qatar, concluding his ninth tour to the Middle East. As with his previous eight trips, this one has hardly achieved anything, Xinhua News Agency commented.

"Despite the declared optimism from the American side, American

mediation could not solve the problem between Hamas and Israel, because reaching an agreement will not be easy due to the fundamental differences between them," said Kheir Diabat, a professor of the International Affairs Department at Qatar University.

Mostafa Amin, an Egyptian researcher on Arab and international affairs, said the failure of US mediation in the Middle East and its inability to solve the problem from the outset until now arise from the lack of real pressure from Washington on Israel to stop the war, while

it continues to supply Israel with weapons to kill Palestinians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and far-right officials in the Israeli government had realized that the Joe Biden administration is unable to apply meaningful pressure on Israel because of its preoccupation with the upcoming presidential election and its unwillingness to jeopardize relations with Israel, Amin said.

Midgley said the two-state solution currently is "much farther away than it ever has been", as none of the three requirements for the solution — cease-fire, agreement at some level on borders, and governance for Palestine — are met.

"And I think China's voice for a two-state solution and China's economic influence in the region can help keep this idea alive," he said.

"The US has already taken a position in favor of Israel and is providing unlimited military assistance to the Israelis.

"The second fact is that China maintains good relationships with all of the countries in the region, including Israel.

"This represents an opportunity for China to consolidate and improve its relationships in the Pacific while the United States is busy elsewhere. And I'm sure that Chinese policy will reflect that opportunity."

Study links anti-Asian hatred to economic disparities

By MAYZHOU in Houston
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A new study found that anti-Asian hate incidents (AAHIs) during the COVID-19 pandemic correlated to the degree of local economic and health disparities, and the FBI data on such incidents were different from that reported by the news media.

The study, called "Roots of Racism: Examining the Conditions for Anti-Asian Hate During COVID-19", was initiated by The Asian American Foundation (TAAF). It analyzed AAHIs using data from January 2020 to December 2021 from media data compiled by TAAF and law enforcement data documented by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program.

The study examined the relationship between social factors and anti-Asian hate, and found that there is no correlation between AAHIs and political party affiliation. Such incidents happened in counties of both Republican and Democratic strongholds.

The data suggested that AAHIs were correlated to economic conditions. Counties with more income inequality, lower median household income and more free lunch recipients tended to have more AAHIs incidents. Conversely, counties with higher homeownership saw fewer AAHIs.

Poor health also was connected to AAHIs. Counties with more drug overdose deaths and less sleep time saw a higher number of AAHIs.

TAAF said that such results were consistent with previous research that has found that income inequality is a strong predictor of neighborhood turmoil and violent crime in general.

The study noticed a discrepancy between the two data sets: for the same period, the media reported 1,288 AAHIs while the FBI recorded 1,087.

At the local level, the discrepancy is large for some counties, the data showed. For example, for San Francisco, the media reported 113 AAHIs while the FBI recorded 70. In Kings County (Brooklyn), New York, the media reported 56 hate incidents while the FBI recorded none.

There were reverse discrepancies, too. In Los Angeles, the FBI reported 90 incidents while the media reported 79. In Indiana County, Pennsylvania, the FBI reported 27 incidents while the media reported none.

In its news release, TAAF said the discrepancies can be attributed to a variety of factors, including news coverage of incidents that may not legally be categorized as crimes, and victims choosing not to report incidents.

TAAF said there is a need for improved measures to encourage reporting, whether to law enforcement or to community-based support organizations, in order to accurately capture the full scope of anti-Asian hate incidents.

TAAF's New York City Safety Study released earlier this year also found that Asian Americans who experienced a hate crime are less likely to report incidents to police (56 percent) than those who witnessed (69 percent) it.

The most common barriers to reporting were a reluctance to bring additional attention to themselves, not feeling comfortable dealing with law enforcement, or not knowing how to report.

"These findings clearly show that there's work to be done when it comes to both tracking and reporting anti-Asian hate incidents and addressing the factors that contribute to incidents in the first place," said Norman Chen, president and CEO of TAAF, in the release.

Anti-Asian hate incidents continue to be an issue in the United States. TAAF recently released its 2024 STAATUS Index (Social Tracking of Asian Americans in the United States), an annual survey of Americans' attitudes toward Asian Americans.

The survey showed that about one-third of Asian Americans were called a slur in the past year, and 61 percent of Asian Americans think that hatred toward them has increased in the past year.

Chinese espionage thriller makes debut in LA

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
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The Chinese espionage thriller *Decoded*, which is being called a groundbreaking film that blurs the lines between dreams and reality, made its global debut in the Los Angeles area.

The premiere was held Tuesday at an AMC theater in Monterey Park, California.

Adapted from the award-winning novel by Mai Jia, *Decoded* is set against "the turbulent backdrop of the 1940s, when accurately deciphering enemy codes was crucial amid global unrest", said CMC Pictures, which is marketing the film, in a release.

The story follows Rong Jinzhen, a young prodigy with extraordinary mathematical abilities. Raised by university dean Li Liren and his wife, Rong's life takes a dramatic turn when he solves a complex problem posed by his professor, Hayes.

The remarkable achievement catches the attention of the enigmatic 701 Bureau, led by director Zheng, thrusting Rong into the clandestine world of code breaking.

Directed by Chinese filmmaker Chen Sicheng, *Decoded* features a stellar ensemble cast, including Liu Haoran, John Cusack, Chen Daoming, Daniel Wu and Yu Feihong. This film marks Chen Sicheng's latest bold venture following the remarkable success



Decoded, a Chinese spy thriller, made its global debut in Los Angeles on Tuesday. RENA LI / CHINA DAILY

of his *Detective Chinatown* series and *Sheep Without a Shepherd*.

The story unfolds in the high-stakes world of espionage, loaded with suspense and tension.

Through the art of decoding, the film portrays the relationship between mentor and protégé as a poetic and fateful duel, where each becomes both the cause and the effect of the other,

according to Bohan Gong, senior manager of International Distribution Department at CMC Pictures.

"In addition to its compelling story, *Decoded* showcases breathtaking visuals, immersive soundscapes, and meticulous production design, pushing sensory boundaries," Gong said. "This film sets a new benchmark for Chinese filmmaking, offering a fresh,

innovative approach to the industry."

Audiences have praised the film's visual effects, sound design and emotional depth, expressing admiration for its cinematography, acting and international collaboration. They highlighted the impressive work of the crew and actors from both China and America.

Andrzej Bartkowiak, a Hollywood

cinematographer and film director, commended the film for its universal appeal.

"The film is truly international. It tackles important subjects, but at its core, it's about geniuses — and geniuses are universal. It's a story about two geniuses from different countries," Bartkowiak told China Daily. "The film was beautifully executed in every aspect — scope, lighting, directing, acting — it was flawless. I loved it."

"This film is absolutely spectacular — beautifully crafted with not only great cinematography but also amazing effects and stunning fantasy elements. It's truly a work of art," said Charles Herzfeld, a production manager and writer.

Digital artist Hari Tahov praised the film, calling the visual effects incredible. "What I loved most were the sound effects — they truly deepened the entire experience for me. The actor delivered an incredible performance; I could really feel his emotions, and the story's development was very touching," he said. "It was also a collaborative effort, involving actors and crew from two different countries — China and America."

The movie will be released globally starting Thursday. The initial wave of screenings will take place in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, with additional regions to be announced soon.

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Ford to shift EV strategy to hybrid vehicles

By MINGMEILI in New York
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When it comes to selling electric vehicles, US automakers face not only consumer reluctance but rising competition from China in the international market.

For example, the Ford Motor Co is adjusting its electric vehicle strategy due to softer-than-expected demand, and canceling and postponing the production of certain models. It also expects to take \$1.9 billion in related charges and write-downs.

Ford Chief Executive Officer Jim Farley said that China's EV companies have the advantage of a lower-cost supply chain and that Ford needs to find ways to lower its own costs to compete.

"We believe that the fitness of the Chinese in EVs will eventually wash over our entire industry in all regions," Farley told analysts last month.

In China, retail sales of new energy vehicles nationwide reached 878,000 units in July, accounting for 51.1 percent of the total market, according to data released by the China Automobile Dealers Association.

The electric vehicle market is rapidly evolving as Chinese competitors leverage advantaged cost structures

"We believe that the fitness of the Chinese in EVs will eventually wash over our entire industry in all regions."

Ford CEO Jim Farley

such as vertical integration, low-cost engineering, multi-energy advanced battery technology and digital vehicle consumers are more cost-conscious than early adopters, viewing EVs as a practical way to save money on fuel and maintenance, as well as time, by charging the vehicles at home.

The Dearborn, Michigan-based company noted that today's electric vehicle consumers are more cost-conscious than early adopters, viewing EVs as a practical way to save money on fuel and maintenance, as well as time, by charging the vehicles at home.

That shift, combined with a flood of new EV options entering the market over the next 12 months, along with increasing compliance requirements, has amplified price pressures.

Ford's EV business is on pace to lose about \$5 billion this year. In the three-month period ended in June, the company lost approximately \$44,000 on each electric vehicle sold.

Ford said it will cut capital spending on EVs; it will now spend 30 percent of its annual capital budget to develop them rather than the current 40 percent.

Not only is Ford facing competition from China, but its American competitor in the EV market, Tesla, also has lowered its prices.

Executives have stated that the company is working to reduce losses on its current EV lineup while ensuring that future models are profitable.

The company announced Wednesday that it would cancel plans for a three-row electric SUV due to high battery costs. Instead, the company will focus on producing those vehicles as gas-electric hybrids, with more details to be revealed at a future event.

The changes will force Ford to write down \$400 million of its current assets due to big electric SUVs, and it is also expected to have additional expenses of up to \$1.5 billion.

"With pricing and margin compression, we've made the decision to adjust our product and technology roadmap and industrial footprint to

meet our goal of reaching positive EBIT (earnings before interest and taxes) within the first 12 months of launch for all new models," Ford Chief Financial Officer John Lawler said in the statement.

The company stated that it will focus on hybrids in areas where it holds a competitive advantage — such as commercial vans, midsize and large pickup trucks, and long-range SUVs.

It plans to offer a variety of electrification options aimed at accelerating customer adoption, including lower prices and extended ranges.

Sales of gas-electric hybrids in the US jumped 35.3 percent from January through June to 715,768, eclipsing electric vehicle sales, according to The Associated Press.

"These dynamics underscore the necessity of a globally competitive cost structure while being selective about customer and product segments to ensure profitable growth and capital efficiency," the company said.

In May, the Biden administration imposed 100 percent tariffs on EVs made in China, which went into effect on Aug 1.

Agencies contributed to this story.

BUSINESS



Visitors gather at a beer festival in Yanji, Jilin province, in July. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Premium beer sales seen bubbling

Companies bank on high-end brews to solidify profitability

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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Breweries across China experienced varied outcomes in the first half, as wet weather and a sluggish market impacted sales.

However, a promising trend was seen with the continued emphasis on high-end strategies, with several companies reporting growth in premium beer segments despite broader challenges.

Chongqing Brewery Co Ltd reported strong financial results for the first half, highlighting the company's strategic focus on premium products and market expansion.

From January to June, the company saw revenue rise to 8.86 billion yuan (\$1.24 billion), up 4.18 percent year-on-year, while net profit increased by 4.19 percent to 901 million yuan.

Chongqing Brewery attributes its growth to a robust high-end product portfolio, including local and inter-

national brands such as Carlsberg, Tuborg, 1664, Wusu and Chongqing.

Lee Chee Kong, president of Carlsberg China and Chongqing Brewery, said the company's premium brands — particularly Carlsberg and Tuborg — achieved double-digit revenue growth. Despite the favorable impact of numerous sporting events during the summer, Lee said frequent rainfall slightly dampened beer sales.

He said he is confident about untapped potential in China's high-end beer segment.

"While the share of premium beer remains lower in China compared to European and US markets, the country's growing middle-income families suggest significant room for expansion. As incomes rise, consumers are increasingly willing to explore premium options, with quality beers at affordable prices," Lee added.

As consumer lifestyles and attitudes change, the focus is shifting toward creating more dynamic experiences for younger consumers.

Zhu Danpeng, an independent food and beverage analyst, said that crafting products tailored to specific social contexts and scenes could drive incremental growth in the high-end beer market.

In response to these market

dynamics, Chongqing Brewery has positioned its brands to align with various consumer experiences.

For example, the Wusu brand is widely featured at food festivals, food stall streets and barbecue venues, while the Chongqing brand — headquartered in the city considered the capital of hotpot in China — is closely associated with the hot pot experience. The French brand 1664 is marketed for fashion-forward and party scenes, enhancing its appeal among younger consumers.

Further expanding its footprint, the Jing-A craft beer brand launched new premium flavors and accelerated its business model, bringing the brand's total store count to 11 across Beijing and Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

Chongqing Brewery's performance has outpaced the broader industry.

The National Bureau of Statistics said Chinese enterprises above a designated size saw a modest 0.1 percent increase in beer production, totaling 19.1 million kiloliters in the first half.

For Budweiser Brewing APAC, in the Chinese market, second quarter beer sales volume fell 10.3 percent. The brewer cited a soft industry environment and adverse weather as the main reasons for the decline.

Its revenue in the market fell 15.2 percent.

Despite the setback, the company saw its margins return to pre-COVID levels in the first half, driven by ongoing premiumization efforts as well as cost management initiatives.

The company said innovations with the Budweiser family of brands, including Supreme and Magnum, are key contributors to expanding its revenue.

Another leading brewery, China Resources Beer, reported revenue of 23.7 billion yuan from January to June, a slight decrease of 0.53 percent year-on-year. Profit attributable to shareholders was 4.71 billion yuan, up 1.2 percent.

The company said the proportion of mid-range beer sales exceeded 50 percent for the first time during the period.

Sales of second-tier beers achieved a single-digit increase compared to the same period last year, while sales of high-end beer grew by more than 10 percent.

Hou Xiaohai, chairman of the board of directors of China Resources Beer, said that the trend of high-end beer consumption in China will endure over the long term, and the growth rate of high-end beer products could more than double in the future.

Taming rocky, arid farmland pays off in Chongqing

By ZHUANG QIANG and PANG BO

In Pengshui Miao and Tujia autonomous county under Chongqing in Southwest China, villager Zhao Yong says that in Pengshui, patches of lush greenery have become increasingly common in the once rocky arid areas.

As one of the 100 key counties for comprehensive rocky desertification control in China's karst areas, Pengshui has served as a model for restoring and developing forest and grass vegetation since 2011 on its karst areas covering 3,437 square kilometers.

Currently, Pengshui has completed 7,740 hectares of artificial afforestation and 829 hectares of protected afforestation, helping enrich the local people and beautify the surrounding ecology, Zhao said.

Since 2018, the county's Wangjia village has integrated a program for rural vitalization, adopting a "rocky desertification control + industry + infrastructure" development model, to help enrich farmers.

Today, over 25 hectares of pepper trees stretch across the mountain valleys in Wangjia in Lujiao town, lush and green, with clusters of plump peppers hanging from the branches.

Villager Wang Manquan said: "You have to believe in technology when farming. Look, even this rocky land can grow a prosperous industry."

Previously, the local land was severely affected by rocky desertification, making "busy spring planting on the mountain but meager autumn harvesting" a norm for agricultural development, Wang said, adding that most people abandoned farming, turning the area into barren land.

The local government encouraged villagers to tame rocky desertification through forest and grass vegetation by relying on science, guiding them to plant peppers to revitalize rural land resources.

Wang said pepper trees have now taken root in the once unutilized land, achieving a goal of "greening" the rocky mountains and "turning stones into gold".

Villager Zhang Dequn, who works at the pepper planting base in the village, said, "Picking peppers is a manual job, earning me over 100 yuan (\$13.9) each day."

Fertilizing, disinfecting, pruning and harvesting — and there is work every month, offering nearly 10,000 yuan in annual income for

him, said Zhang, adding that "Working near home allows me to take care of my family while earning some extra money."

The local government has also thought of means to address the villagers' special problems.

Ren Chuan, head of the pepper planting base in the village, said: "With elevations ranging between 500 and 600 meters, the terrain in our base is quite varied, and many areas are inaccessible by vehicles. Previously, all materials for maintenance and harvested peppers were carried manually."

To help develop the pepper industry, Lujiao applied for and built a 4-kilometer road in 2022, along with over 2,000 meters of "small train" transport lines.

The equipment is easy to operate, with the transporter and track closely integrated by gears, capable of climbing slopes reliably and stably, fully meeting the automated transport needs of the 25-hectare pepper fields, Ren said.

At the base, villagers cut pepper branches, bundle them and load them onto small trains. The trains chug through rocky crevices, transporting the peppers out of the base to be processed at a drying factory.

Ren said that with the transport trains, one trip can replace 20 strong laborers, greatly enhancing their efficiency, adding that the base's net income is expected to exceed 50,000 yuan this year.

Besides pepper, Pengshui has also adhered to site-specific management, and planted protective groves such as cypress, cedar and pine on formerly barren land above 1,000 meters in elevation, other types of pine on sloped farmland between 500 and 1,000 meters or slopes of 25-35 degrees.

The county also developed specialty fruits such as loquats, peach-ges and plums on areas below 500 meters with good soil conditions, achieving ecological, economic and social benefits.

Countywide, Pengshui is witnessing achievements in other townships too. In the Aji River basin, Mowei Mountain Scenic Area, Aji Mountain and Anzi town, tourism resources have been developed.

And in Changsheng town's Sanhe Community and Yandong town's Heba village, mountain plums and yellow peaches are helping local farmers earn handsome profits.

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New type power system need of the hour

By LIU YUKUN
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As China ramps up generation of clean power, its need for a new type of power system is on the rise, as the nation aims to address challenges brought on by unstable renewable energy, driving advancements in manufacturing and emerging sectors such as smart grids, experts said.

By the end of June, China's installed renewable energy capacity had reached 1.65 billion kilowatts, a 25 percent increase from the previous year. It makes up about 53.8 percent of the nation's total power generation capacity.

The combined capacity of wind and solar power (1.18 billion kW)

has exceeded that of coal power (1.17 billion kW), said the National Energy Administration. According to the China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute, installed capacity of new energy power generation will continue to increase and reach around 1.6 billion kW by 2025.

Looking ahead, there are obstacles to the sector's development, as the intermittency of renewable energy sources poses challenges for the traditional power system. There is an urgent need to enhance the grid's capacity to better integrate green power, said experts.

To this end, China released an action plan recently to step up the construction of a new type of power

1.65 billion kW

China's installed renewable energy capacity

er system in the 2024-27 period, focusing on fields such as high-quality development of grid's distribution networks and expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Experts said that driven by policy, upgrades and transformations across multiple system components — power generation plants, grid, consumption and storage facilities — will present various opportunities for relevant businesses. Emerging sectors such as

new energy storage, virtual power plants and smart grids are expected to benefit more.

"By 2060, it is estimated that clean energy power generation will make up 90 percent of total power generated in China. Clean power will become a major part of energy consumption," said Shu Yinbiao, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, during an event in Beijing on Wednesday.

"In this context, the power system will change significantly. On the generation side, sources will shift from strongly controllable coals to weakly controllable and highly unstable new energies. On the grid side, the focus will move from large grids to a mix of large grids, distribution systems and microgrids."

Hydropower, Shu said, can provide essential support for the safe operation of the new type of power

system, playing a crucial role in maintaining voltage stability.

Pumped storage hydropower is also important for the new type of power system as it secures constant renewable energy supply to power systems by storing excess energy and discharging it when needed. Its energy conversion efficiency can reach about 70 to 80 percent and costs only around 40 percent of those for electrochemical storage, the academician said.

In addition to pumped storage, new types of energy storage technologies such as compressed-air energy storage with flexible layouts and short construction periods are also advancing rapidly.

NEA data showed that by mid-2024, the installed capacity of operational new types of energy storage projects nationwide reached 44.44 million kW, an increase of over 40

percent from the end of 2023.

The new type of power system's development is also speeding up advancements in large grid and grid's distribution networks, with power scheduling and grid operations increasingly integrating technologies like artificial intelligence. This not only benefits related manufacturing industries but also fosters new business models such as AI-driven grid inspections, smart grids, and virtual power plants, said Lin Boqi, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Lin said coal power may still remain a cornerstone to secure basic energy supply in the short term, driving the development of new technologies such as carbon capture, utilization and storage through the fossil fuels' low-carbon and clean utilization.

Japanese sushi train restaurant opens Beijing outlet

By ZHU WENQIAN
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Sushiro, a popular Japanese sushi train restaurant, opened its first outlet in Beijing at downtown Xidan Joy City on Wednesday, adding to its more than 40 restaurants on the Chinese mainland.

Sushiro, which aims to continuously expand its presence in China, is a brand affiliated to Japanese group Food & Life Companies.

Founded in 1984, it launched its first restaurant on the mainland in Guangzhou, Guangdong province in 2021, and operates several more in cities such as Shenzhen, Guangdong province; Chengdu, Sichuan province; Wuhan, Hubei province and Tianjin.

The company said it is bullish on

the growth potential in the country and is considering opening more stores in the near future.

"Unlike other restaurants, we launched self-ordering digital screens and the conveyor belt system for food delivery for each table at the Beijing restaurant, making the ordering process more fun and convenient," said Kazunari Matsuda, general manager of Beijing Sushiro Restaurants Co Ltd.

"Sushi train restaurant is more suitable for dine-in experiences, given its unique features. A large proportion of our customers are aged between 18 and 35, including college students and office workers. At our restaurants in Shenzhen and Tianjin, we have also seen many foreign guests from Europe and the United States," Matsuda said.

Sushiro offers food delivery services in southern Chinese cities, but not yet in northern ones, he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly affect its operations, and the brand has stuck to in-store cooking, instead of relying on central kitchens.

According to the company, the prices of sushi range from 10 yuan (\$1.4) per plate to a maximum 28 yuan, enabling more people to easily experience the authentic sushi train cuisine.

Sushiro operates some 30 restaurants in Hong Kong and more than 40 outlets in Taiwan province. In Asia, its total number of restaurants has topped 800, including outlets in Thailand and Singapore.

In addition to sushi trains, various kinds of restaurants with differ-

ent Japanese cuisines have expanded their presence in China in the past few years. These include izakaya, Japanese grill and sukiyaki restaurants, and their dishes focus on various types of food, with some also offering sushi.

Last year, the proportion of overseas outlets of large-scale Japanese catering enterprises exceeded 40 percent for the first time. Among these, some 78,000 overseas outlets of Japanese restaurants operated in China, far exceeding its next biggest market, the US, Nikkei Inc reported.

Japanese cuisine has found many fans in China.

Data from domestic review app Dazhong Dianping showed that as of June last year, Japanese cuisine ranked as the sixth most popular



Diners order food at Sushiro's Beijing restaurant. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

one on the Chinese mainland, and the only overseas cuisine category among the top six kinds of cuisines.

In addition to Japanese restaurants that have been constantly expanding in the Chinese market,

many local Chinese brands that focus on providing Japanese cuisine have also emerged, but they still need some time to expand nationwide, a report by the Chinabao.com database showed.

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Hydrogen electrolyzers latest star export item

Sales propelled by booming demand for sustainable growth in EU, Mideast

By WANG KEJU
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China, celebrated for its strides in sectors such as electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic technologies, is now on the brink of embracing yet another major potential export product in the realm of new energy products — hydrogen electrolyzers.

Hydrogen electrolyzers use electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. For decades, the hydrogen electrolyzer, a technology entrenched in China's industrial landscape, primarily served domestic sectors like glassmaking and steel, with only limited export orders.

However, as the global appetite for green hydrogen escalates, a transformative shift is underway. Chinese hydrogen electrolyzer exports are experiencing an unprecedented surge, propelled by booming demand for sustainable solutions in Europe and the Middle East, catapulting this once niche equipment onto the international stage, executives and analysts said.

Beijing Peric Hydrogen Technologies Co, a manufacturer of hydrogen electrolyzers, has seen its export revenue double for three consecutive years due to surging global demand, said Li Haipeng, the company's marketing director.

The company's export value of hydrogen electrolyzers reached approximately 70 million yuan (\$9.8 million) in 2021, followed by a surge to around 170 million yuan in 2022 and a further jump to nearly 300 million yuan in 2023, Li said, adding that over the next 10 years, order volumes are expected to be over 10 times current levels.

Shandong Saikesaisi Hydrogen Energy Co expects its overseas revenue to overtake domestic performance by the end of this year. Looking beyond the immediate horizon, a bold prediction emerges as a potential reality — a growth surge of several magnitudes in the entire foreign market following a five-year development period.

Rewind the clock two decades and it would have been hard to imagine the vibrant export situation that China's hydrogen electrolyzer industry now commands, Li said, as the international market size was only around

500-600 million yuan back then.

The explosive growth in China's hydrogen electrolyzer exports can be traced back to the recent surge in global demand for green hydrogen, according to industry experts.

The International Energy Agency recently said that amid pathways to realizing net-zero emissions by 2050, global hydrogen demand is projected to climb to 528 million metric tons by the middle of the century.

In particular, the report said that around 60 percent of this hydrogen will be produced through water electrolysis, accounting for nearly 20 percent of the world's total electricity supply.

As countries and industries increasingly seek to decarbonize their operations, the need for high-performance, cost-effective hydrogen production solutions has skyrocketed — and China's electrolyzer manufacturers have been quick to capitalize on this global trend, said Yu Zhuoping, director of the expert committee for China Hydrogen Alliance.

To accommodate more overseas orders, Chinese electrolyzer manufacturers are proactively scaling up their production capabilities.

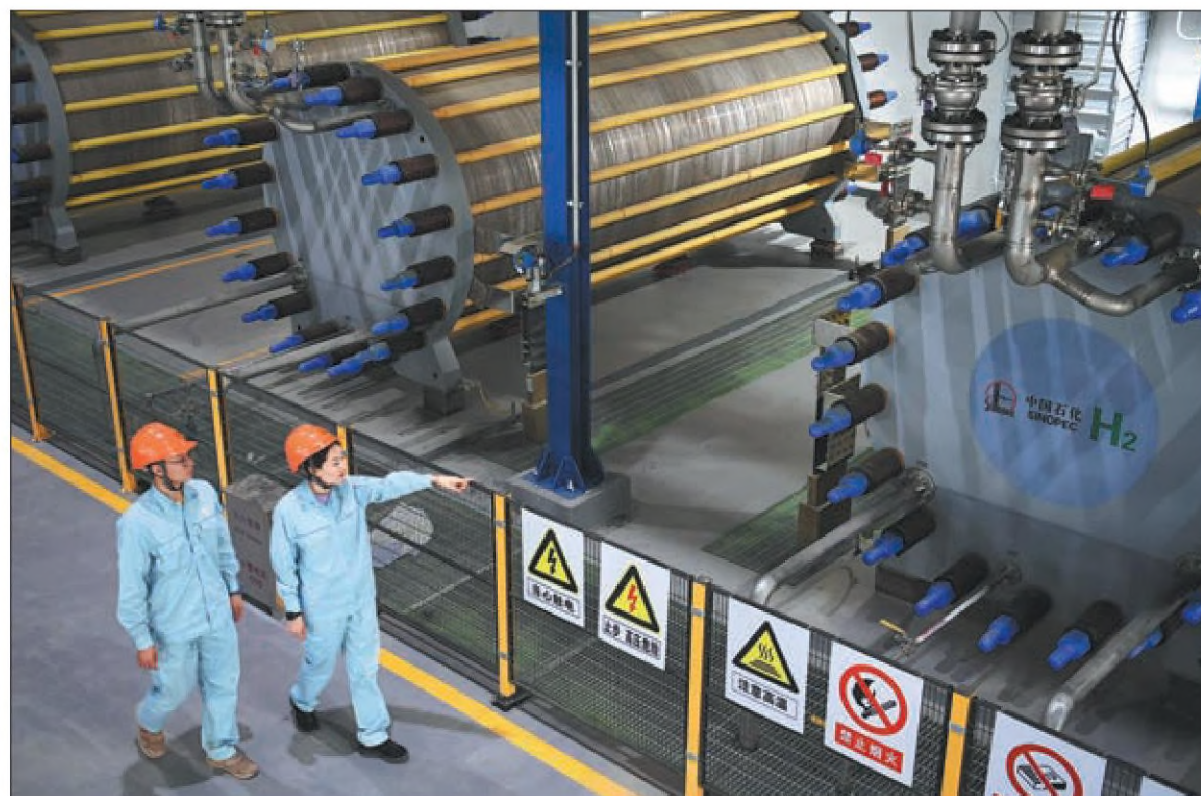
Li said the company has seen a remarkable increase in its production capacity, growing from just a few dozen units several years ago to approximately 350 units last year. Notably, its production in the first half had already doubled compared to the same period last year.

The company's production capacity will surpass 1,000 units next year, with at least 50 percent of that output earmarked for export, Li added.

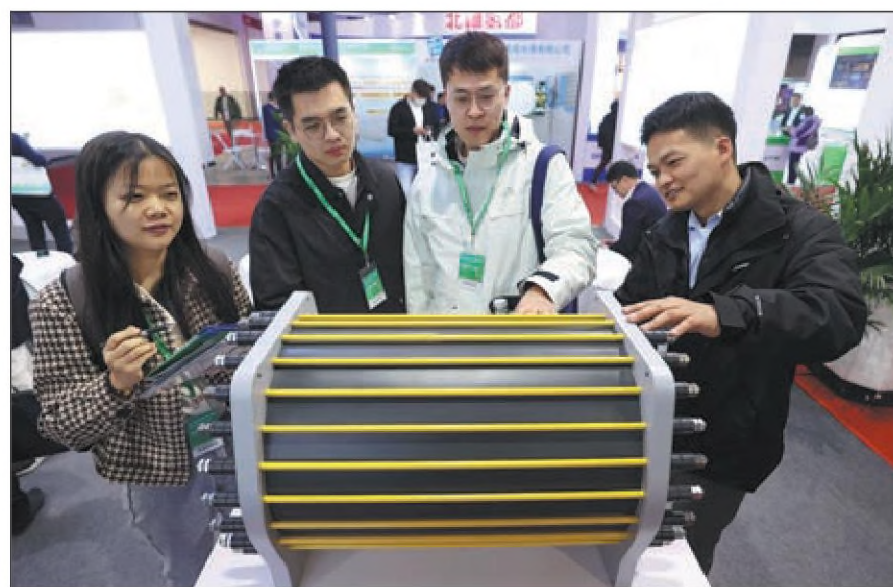
Sinohydro, a company providing hydrogen production and storage solutions in Jiangsu province, is set to accelerate its production capacity in North China, focusing on the Inner Mongolia autonomous region's Ordos. Meanwhile, the company plans to develop and upgrade its facilities in the Yangtze River Delta.

In addition to domestic efforts, Sinohydro is actively pursuing strategic partnerships in Europe, the Middle East and Japan.

Despite different resource profiles, the objective is to tap into growing demand in Europe and the Middle East, according to company executives.



Above: Technicians inspect hydrogen electrolyzer operations at a plant in Aksu prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in August 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Left: Visitors check out a hydrogen electrolyzer during a clean energy expo in Beijing in March. CHEN XIAOGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Hydrogen applications worldwide are moving beyond the demonstration phase into large-scale implementation, particularly in Europe and the Middle East. The development of renewable energy hydrogen projects is driving a significant shift in demand for hydrogen production equipment, said Chen Xuedong, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, rolled out its EU Hydrogen Strategy in 2020, setting ambitious targets that rely on the installation of at least 6 gigawatts of renewable hydrogen electrolyzers in the bloc by 2024, and aims to produce up to 1 million tons of renewable hydrogen.

In addition, hydrogen needs to become an intrinsic part of an integrated energy system with the objective of installing at least 40 GW

of renewable hydrogen electrolyzers by 2030 and producing of up to 10 million tons of renewable hydrogen in the EU.

Drawing parallels with China's largest-scale photovoltaic-based green hydrogen plant in Kuqa, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region — where 20,000 tons are produced annually, requiring hydrogen electrolyzer usage — the EU's vision dwarfs existing benchmarks, said Du Jiaen, deputy general manager for overseas markets of Sinohydro.

The EU's target of producing 1 million tons of green hydrogen annually equates to the output of 50 Xinjiang Kuqa projects. In essence, achieving this target would necessitate the deployment of 2,600 hydrogen electrolyzers, Du said.

The need for over 2,000 electrolyzers in Europe presents a significant challenge for Chinese companies,

which, even with continuous 24-hour production, cannot meet the demand on time. This gap means a substantial opportunity for Chinese suppliers to expand their market presence in the region, Du added.

Moreover, as the Middle East accelerates its shift toward greener energy solutions, the region is also emerging as a lucrative market for Chinese businesses.

The Middle East, despite being a major oil-producing region, has long recognized the urgency of energy transition, said Chen of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

While the region has an abundance of photovoltaic power plants since its average annual sunshine is nearly twice that of China, it faces significant challenges in power consumption and grid integration, Chen said.

As a result, Middle Eastern countries are looking to produce green

hydrogen and agricultural-use ammonia using low-cost electricity, leveraging their strategic location to export these resources to high-demand markets like Europe, Chen added.

As Chinese companies seek to expand their products beyond the domestic market, obtaining the necessary certifications and complying with international standards have become crucial prerequisites for success, industry insiders said, emphasizing that product certification is a major bottleneck facing Chinese enterprises in their globalization efforts.

The sheer diversity of standards and regulations in different countries and regions is truly staggering. The product certification process, which is essential for market access, is frequently accompanied by exorbitant costs, complex procedures and lengthy timelines, Du said.

Moreover, the electrolyzer is not a standalone device. It operates in conjunction with back-end separation and purification units to create a comprehensive hydrogen production system. This symbiotic relationship needs the back-end equipment to potentially undergo redesigns to align with specific customer needs, Du added.

Even in the face of considerable difficulties, it is remarkable to witness the unwavering enthusiasm and readiness exhibited by a multitude of manufacturers, Du said.

Green firms aim to break through trade barriers

By WANG KEJU

Chinese enterprises in the new energy sector, facing escalating trade restrictions initiated by some economies, are proactively adopting diversified strategies to ensure continued growth, with a focus on establishing overseas manufacturing facilities and exploring emerging markets, experts said.

China's electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and photovoltaic products, dubbed the country's "new three" export categories, have seen remarkable growth in overseas shipments in recent years.

Driven by the accelerated global transition toward green energy, the combined annual export volume of these products surpassed 1.06 trillion yuan (\$148.3 billion) last year, said the General Administration of Customs.

Leveraging economies of scale and continuous technological innovation, China has established a leading global position across the value chains of these burgeoning industries, said Liang Ming, director of

the Institute of International Trade, which is part of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

However, the rise of trade protectionism in certain countries has posed challenges to the global expansion of China's "new three" exports.

The United States, in May, decided to significantly increase tariffs on a range of Chinese products in the green tech sector. As well as a tariff increase from 25 percent to 100 percent on Chinese EVs, levies will rise from 7.5 percent to 25 percent on lithium batteries, and from 25 percent to 50 percent on solar cells.

Following Washington's stiff new tariffs, the European Union announced in July that provisional additional tariffs of up to 37.6 percent will be slapped on Chinese-made battery EVs.

Both Washington and Brussels, despite recognizing the importance of these sectors, lack the competitive edge enjoyed by China. This has led them to implement protectionist policies, aiming to create space for

their own nascent industries, Liang said.

As trade protectionism continues to cast a shadow over Chinese business, proactive steps such as establishment of overseas manufacturing plants and diversification of export destinations have been adopted to navigate these challenges, analysts said.

In early June, a free trade agreement between China and Serbia came into effect, with both sides agreeing to eliminate tariffs on 90 percent of tariff lines reciprocally.

This includes key Chinese exports such as automobiles, photovoltaic modules and lithium-ion batteries, which will see their tariffs gradually reduced from the current 5-20 percent range down to zero when entering the Serbian market.

While Serbia's market size may not directly translate into significant export volume for China's green products, the China-Serbia FTA holds long-term strategic importance for expanding these clean energy technologies across the European market, said Dong

Zhongyun, chief economist at AVIC Securities.

Exports of China's "new three" products can help Serbia accelerate the transformation of its energy system in a more cost-effective and efficient manner, Dong said, adding that this can serve as an example for other European countries, paving the way for deeper market penetration across the continent.

As China's manufacturing enterprises increasingly invest in countries like Serbia, Hungary, and Poland, surging demand for renewable energy solutions in these regions has become a key focus for the export of China's clean energy products, Dong said.

Beyond the traditional markets of Europe and the US, the need for power system upgrades and energy transitions in Central Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia has emerged as a strategic priority for the global expansion of China's "new three" exports.

In a series of recent strategic moves, several leading Chinese new



Workers pack export-bound lithium-ion batteries at a factory in Ji'an, Jiangxi province, in April. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

energy enterprises have recently announced major investments and partnerships in Saudi Arabia.

Notably, Chinese photovoltaics manufacturer Sungrow Power Supply has signed three landmark energy storage contracts with Saudi Arabia's Alghaz Holding, amounting to the world's largest grid-side storage order. Each project will have a capacity of 2.6 gigawatt-hours,

totaling 7.8 GWh.

China's rise as a clean energy powerhouse is the result of its commitment to an open and innovative approach. Protectionist trade policies, on the other hand, only serve to undermine the long-term competitiveness of industries, said Chen Wenling, chief economist at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges.

COMMENT

Editorials

Commission's wrong, unreasonable and noncompliant move not good for EU

The Chinese Commerce Ministry has denounced the European Commission for engaging in "unfair competition" under the guise of "fair competition", saying that it will take all necessary measures to defend the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises after the commission announced additional tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles.

Despite months of intensive negotiations with the Chinese side, the European Commission announced additional tariffs ranging from 17 percent to 36.3 percent on Chinese-made electric vehicles on Monday. The rate depends on the commission's judgment of how cooperative the various Chinese manufacturers were with the so-called anti-subsidy probe it initiated last year.

Although that is slightly lower than its previously proposed tariff range, that does not make any difference to the effects of the tariffs, which eliminate the price advantage Chinese EVs have enjoyed in the European Union market over EU-made EVs.

Notably, the commission "significantly" reduced the additional import duty on Tesla vehicles manufactured in China from the previously announced 20.8 percent to 9 percent following Tesla's request for an individual assessment regarding the European Commission's tariffs on China-made EVs that were outlined in July. Given China is Tesla's largest overseas manufacturing base, the US company will be the largest beneficiary of the EU's de facto protectionist moves.

The plan is still subject to approval by a majority of the 27 EU member states before Oct 31, but if that is forthcoming, the new tariffs will remain in effect for the next five years.

China has repeatedly pointed out that the EU's conclusions in the anti-subsidy investigation on Chinese EV companies violate the principles of "objectivity, fairness, nondiscrimination and transparency" that it promised, and did not conform to the rules of the World Trade Organization.

During the EU's probe, the Chinese government and the Chinese industry provided tens of thousands of pages of legal documents and evidence materials through various means such as submitting questionnaires, written comments and hearing statements. They have done all they could to expose the fallacy and irrationality of the EU's practice, which will disrupt the stability of the global automotive industry and supply chains, damage the interests of EU consumers, and undermine the EU's own green transformation and global cooperation in addressing climate change.

The final ruling disclosed by the commission used sampling to treat different types of Chinese companies differently, and intentionally distorted the results of the investigation. The final ruling was based on the "facts" unilaterally identified by the EU only, rather than being recognized by both parties.

China has always been committed to properly handling trade disputes with the EU through dialogue and consultation with the utmost sincerity. And since the end of June, China and the EU have conducted more than 10 rounds of technical consultations.

China firmly opposes the ruling, and has every right and reason to take countermeasures to protect its companies' legitimate rights and interests, as they have comprehensively and thoroughly defended themselves against "the unreasonable and noncompliant practices of the European side". It can be anticipated that China will respond with retaliatory tariffs on EU products. It is to be hoped that this tit-for-tat approach will prompt the EU to work with China to speed up the exploration of appropriate solutions with a rational and pragmatic attitude, and take practical actions to avoid the escalation of trade frictions.

US nuclear strategy change alarming

China has traditionally maintained a policy of minimum deterrence regarding its nuclear weapons arsenal. This means its nuclear strategy focuses on having a sufficiently small nuclear force to deter potential adversaries from attacking China with nuclear weapons.

China has also been steadfast in advocating for a world free of nuclear weapons. It has consistently called for nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and the prevention of an arms race, urging the nuclear-weapons states to reduce their nuclear arsenals.

It is concerning therefore, that on Tuesday, the White House confirmed media reports that United States President Joe Biden has approved a classified plan to reorient the US' nuclear strategy in a more aggressive way. Spokesperson Sean Savett said that while "the specific text of the guidance is classified, its existence is in no way secret" and that it was "not a response to any single entity, country, nor threat".

In June, however, a senior director of the National Security Council, said the US was preparing to change its strategy from the modernization of existing weapons to expanding its nuclear arsenal. The Nuclear Posture Review released by the administration in 2022 highlighted that the US is fully committed to implementing programs that will begin to field modernized systems later this decade. With the emphasis on a robust experimental approach to the use of emerging technologies and innovative design practices that includes the development of miniaturized nuclear weapons, the US' continued focus on nuclear weapons is alarming.

The change in strategy is being presented by the Biden administration as based on concerns about "possible coordinated nuclear confrontations with Russia, China and North Korea" and the expansion of Chinese nuclear weapons stockpile. Which is a false proposition intended to serve and disguise the latent threat in the US' strategy change. Even by US estimates China's nuclear weapons arsenal remains considerably smaller than that of the US.

Reorienting the US' nuclear posture to target China, which has so far refused to even define bilateral ties as competitive and which adheres to a "no first use" policy on nuclear weapons, does little except bolster and consolidate the aggressive stance the US has adopted toward China. But the move by the current US administration should come as no surprise to anyone who has been following the recent trajectory of global geopolitical developments. There has been a conspicuous change in Washington's perception of China and the bilateral relationship.

Since the US is the only country to have employed nuclear weapons, and since that was against an Asian country, China has grounds for feeling uneasy. And that may be the US' intention, as pushing China into an arms race, as it did with the Soviet Union to the point of collapse, may be part and parcel of the US' strategy. Whatever the rationale, the change to the US strategy is disconcerting to say the least and will certainly have significant implications, since it cannot but have a detrimental effect on global stability and security and affect the strategic calculations of other nuclear-armed states.

It will not only disrupt the relative nuclear equilibrium since the end of the Cold War, but also trigger a new round of readjustments in related countries' nuclear postures as it will inevitably trigger a spiral of increased strategic unease. The US should be playing a key role in global efforts for arms control and nuclear nonproliferation. But the heralded change in its nuclear strategy will adversely influence the international community's perceptions of nuclear weapons and impact efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries.

After the Donald Trump administration launched its trade war to contain China economically, the US has repositioned China as a strategic rival. Since taking office, the Biden administration has pushed the idea of strategic competition into every conceivable realm of ties. The only way for the world's two largest economies to get rid of such a mutually debilitating vicious circle is to communicate better. But it is also crucial that the international community, not just policymakers, but also experts and the public, voice its objections to the US "normalizing" the possibility of nuclear weapons use to avoid another Oppenheimer moment.

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Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Chinese legends journey to the west, this time in a video game format

On the video games circuit, an arena dominated by Western legends, one can say the Chinese legends have arrived. On Tuesday, the day of its official release, 1.6 million global players were together playing *Black Myth: Wukong* on the Steam platform. It had more takers than *Counter-Strike 2*, *Dota 2*, and *Elden Ring*, all of which are popular worldwide.

Black Myth: Wukong has showcased to the world not only the creativity of Chinese developers, but also the lure of Chinese culture.

Earlier, there was *Dota 2* and its predecessor *Dota*, which are, like *Black Myth: Wukong*, based on a fictional magical world and list the Monkey King among the heroes, but most of the other heroes, such as Alchemist, Paladin Omninknight and Naga Siren can be traced to ancient European tales. *Elden Ring*'s characters are most-

ly Western in style.

Even old favorites such as *Red Alert 2* or *Warcraft III* or *Super Mario* have a Western cultural background. It is not for nothing that someone joked that all legendary heroes have one thing in common — they speak fluent English.

The monopoly ended some years ago with the advent of *Honor of Kings*, in which most heroes are drawn from Chinese history or legend.

Now *Black Myth: Wukong*, developed by Shenzhen-based Game Science, has gone a step further by telling the story of a traditional Chinese legend in the form of a video game, the popularity of which will open the eyes of global audiences to the rich storehouse of Chinese legends.

The success of the game owes a lot to the selection of Wukong — the Monkey King hero from classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*, one of the four great classics of Chinese literature — as

the game's hero. The appeal of traditional culture and the application of modern video techniques is working wonders.

It will not be so easy to create such a sensational cultural work again, partly due to the amount of time, funds and human resources required. But the investment in the game has received good returns as by Tuesday evening over 3 million copies had already been sold on video game digital distribution service Steam. Another 1.5 million copies were sold on WeGame, Epic! and PlayStation services, with the total sales having exceeded 1.5 billion yuan (\$210.30 million).

At a time when developers are in a haste to make quick bucks, it's noteworthy that some are tapping the Chinese classics for inspiration, as there is no dearth of Chinese legends.

—ZHANG ZHOUIXIANG, CHINA DAILY

Extreme weather calls for agricultural risk control

Vegetable prices have been rising fast in China since July, up 36.2 percent from the year before. High temperatures are to blame for the vegetable price hikes.

Data show that during the period from July 21 to Aug 10, the average rainfall in northern China was more than during the same period in other years. High humidity, coinciding with high temperatures, seriously curtailed vegetable growth, leading to a sharp rise in prices.

The country must thus pay attention to frequent extreme climate events.

There are also some other problems in management mechanism to tackle climate risks to agriculture, weak ability to fend off meteorological disasters and farmers' lack of means to deal with climate risk to agriculture. Therefore, the country needs to build a relevant disaster prevention and control system as soon as possible, strengthen the construction of agricultural infrastructure,

and develop climate-resilient agriculture, to improve the ability of its agricultural sector to resist climate change risks.

It also needs to establish a backbone network for the circulation of agricultural products, and speed up the construction of cold chain logistics facilities, to ensure the smooth flow of agricultural products and their stable supply across the country.

—21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

What They Say

Washington clearly up to no good in South China Sea

The US State Department issued a statement on Monday criticizing the "reckless maneuvers" of Chinese ships, which it said "deliberately collided with two Philippine Coast Guard vessels" in waters near China's Ren'ai and Xianbin reefs in the South China Sea earlier that day.

It comes as no surprise. Every time the Philippines instigates such incidents, the US will swiftly voice its support for Manila and splash dirty water on Beijing.

Even the reporters of the US media outlets that in a remarkable coincidence are so often on board the Philippine ships when such incidents occur, cast aside their principles of independence and objectivity and never bother to try and cover the incidents from any other angle.

The reason why the US would rather stay in the background behind the Philippines as it stages one farce

after another is Washington is well aware of the fact that it cannot afford the costs and collateral damage of an open conflict with China on China's doorstep.

Instead, it promises more economic aid that never arrives. And if that doesn't work, it will flex its own muscles in the region by carrying out "patrols".

In fact, the US has never truly thought of the issue from the angle of the Philippines. Otherwise, it would not have enabled and emboldened the Philippines to carry out its provocations. Washington is pushing the Philippines to the brink of conflict with China rather than seeking to maintain peace and stability in the region.

The patience and restraint Beijing has shown so far toward Manila's stunts are because it can see the dilemma Manila has cornered itself into by surrendering its strategic autonomy to Washington. No matter how the US' China policy changes in the future, the fact that China and the Philippines are permanent neighbors will never change. It is the same for Japan, another agent of the US

in the region at present.

The more the US pushes its two regional allies to the front to confront China, the more clearly the international community can see the nature of the root cause behind the rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific.

As Beijing has said, none of the US' bilateral security treaties with regional countries can justify its overt and covert interference in the latter's bilateral maritime disputes with China. That means while its regional proxies count on the treaties for US protection, as Washington impresses them to believe, the treaties will not dissuade China from defending its own sovereignty, territorial integrity and core interests if the need arises.

While the US is pushing its regional allies to the front line in the potential theater of war it is preparing for its own narrow ends, China's door for cooperation and communication will always be kept open to them for the benefit of regional peace and common development.

—LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | The 120th Anniversary of the Birth of Deng Xiaoping

Editor's note: Deng Xiaoping is the pioneer of exploring socialism with Chinese characteristics. Now, China has started a journey to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Two experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Robert Lawrence Kuhn

Deng Xiaoping and the legacy of third plenums

The 120th anniversary of the birth of Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's reform and opening-up policy that brought about China's "miraculous" economic development, comes barely more than one month after the historic third plenum of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which established the road map for China to achieve full socialist modernization by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. That the two milestones are contiguous in time, and that it was the third plenum of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978 that launched reform and opening-up, invites a deeper look at the relationship.

Deng changed the course and history of China

And so it came to pass that Deng Xiaoping, a diminutive man in his 70s re-emerging from his second purge, came to change the course and history of China. Deng's powerful aphorisms challenged the rigid ideology of the time, and everyone understood that new thinking was afoot. The Chinese people were ready for renewal.

Deng's speech in December, 1978, is hailed as the singular event that marked the beginning of reform and opening-up in China. Titled "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, and Unite as One in Looking to the Future", the speech made powerful points, including to stay away from old doctrines and to let some people get rich first — breaking the sacred dogma of total equality for all classes. "This is very courageous" one of the drafters of Deng's speech remembered thinking at the time.

Deng's speech became the Party's new manifesto, changing its mission almost literally overnight from class struggle to economic growth, setting the agenda for decades to come. The government also adopted an "opening-up" or open-door policy, welcoming the participation of foreign interests (trade and investment) in the modernization process. It also began the process of gradually loosening controls on Chinese society, allowing the slow flowering of personal freedoms.

The Four Modernizations — agriculture, industry, national defense, science and technology — became the cornerstone of Deng's program. From here on, the achievement of economic goals would be the measure of success or the mark of failure. Policies and careers would rise or fall on quantifiable tests of growth and development. "If we do not start reform," Deng said, "then our goal to modernize socialism will be buried."

Under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, the new era of reform and opening-up was ushered in, and the "three-step" strategy was put forward: One: solve the problems of

food and clothing shortages (by doubling the 1980 GDP by 1990); two: realize a comfortable life for the people (by quadrupling the 1980 GDP by 2000, a goal achieved by 1995); three, complete the nation's modernization (raising per capita GDP to the level of an intermediate developed country, and achieving a fairly well-off life for the people).

After 1979, Deng Xiaoping was leading largely from "behind the curtain" — he held no formal titles but had enormous influence on those who did. He would give his grand thinking and others would do the implementation. By the early 1990s, Deng was no longer much involved — he was more than a figurehead but less of a factor. Though he continued to be revered as an icon in China, Deng's actual power and influence had waned. Also, he was enjoying retirement: dining with his large family and playing bridge, a game at which he excelled.

Yet China's "paramount leader" remained deeply dissatisfied with the pace of development. Before he died, he yearned to see his country irreversibly on the road to greatness. And so, as 1992 began, at age 87, Deng Xiaoping decided to go it alone. With failing senses, but with a will of steel, this short-in-stature elderly man emerged from his life of leisure to do political battle one last time.

To breathe new life into the economy, Deng told confidants, he needed to leave Beijing. And so he did, barnstorming around southern China, stumping for reform — a passionate, personal journey to force reform open and revitalize the nation. Deng's journey would later become known as Nanxun, or the Southern Inspection, tours of far-flung provinces — and which also suggests the significance of a journey now recognized as a defining event in making China what it is today.

At his first stop in Wuhan, Deng got straight to the point. "Here's what our problem is right now: it's called 'formalism', which is a kind of excessive bureaucracy," he told Hubei provincial leaders who met him in his private rail carriage at the train station. "Our leaders look like they're doing something, but they're not doing anything really worthwhile," he went on. "When I watch television, all I see are meetings and ceremonies — our leaders must think they're television stars. The meetings are excessive and the speeches have repetitious content and no new ideas. We should give priority to deeds not to words."

The characteristics of true reform

The resonance with President Xi Jinping, from formalisms to reform, is clear. To appreciate President Xi's leadership on reform, one must begin by understanding what China means by "reform". It does not mean less



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government and more private sector, as it usually does in the West. It does mean optimizing both government and markets and both State-owned enterprises and private companies, which includes creating an even playing field for private companies and State-owned enterprises. In a word, when China says "reform", it means "improvement".

So, when President Xi streamlined the government bureaucracy (in 2018) by combining ministries and reducing their numbers, that was reform. When he transferred

the management of the local courts to the provincial governments, that was reform. When he directed the restructuring of China's healthcare system, that was reform. When he instituted the relentless anti-corruption campaign in the Party, that was reform.

To understand China's next stage of comprehensive and economic reform, one must begin with President Xi's thinking regarding "new quality productive forces", China's new guiding phrase, and understand how it fits within the nested concepts that frame China's economic vision and future.

This is how it goes. China's grand goal is the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", which is achieved by advancing "Chinese modernization": Chinese modernization is energized by "high-quality development". High-quality development is powered by "new quality productive forces". And "new quality produc-

tive forces" are driven by "indigenous innovation", especially in science and technology.

"New quality productive forces" now headline economic directives at the central and local governments levels as China pivots to a growth model that prizes high quality over high quantity. It stresses scientific innovation to drive economic transformation, the re-invigoration of current industries, the accelerated development of future industries, and the insulation of the country from the volatilities and vagaries of global economics and international tensions.

Implementing "new quality productive forces" requires breakthroughs in science and technology, which introduce disruptive technologies, fuel emerging industries, enhance industrial chains, and expedite green transition — all empowered by intelligent informa-

tion. Equally important is system reform, especially modernizing science management and removing bottlenecks.

In announcing the third plenum decision, the CPC Central Committee stressed that advancing Chinese modernization requires law-based governance. Major reforms must be supported by law.

To analyze major Party policies, I seek to distinguish what strikes me as novel and fresh, even if nuanced and subtle, from the oft-repeated, unchanging principles, such as upholding the Party's overall leadership, promoting high-quality development, ensuring the people's well-being and protecting the environment, among others.

From the third plenum communiqué and reports, what I found sufficiently different to qualify as significant were the following:

Using the term "grave" as well as "complex" to describe the international environment and the arduous tasks of advancing reform and development and ensuring stability at home;

Upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, which encourages new thinking by seeking to ensure that it does not undermine core ideology;

Taking institution building as a main task, which stresses organizational continuity as opposed to individual fiefdoms;

Exercising law-based governance on all fronts, which makes it clear that there are no exceptions;

Applying systems thinking, which recruits a modern management system and best practices.

It was in April 2023 that President Xi set the overarching guiding principle, emphasizing that "comprehensively deepening reform should be regarded as the fundamental driving force for promoting Chinese modernization".

Regarding China's road map, I find great significance in the three dates proffered; 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, which has long been the aspirational target for the full realization of Chinese modernization; 2035, set at the 19th CPC National Congress in 2017, which is the aspirational target for when China will "basically" realize socialist modernization; and 2029, set at the recent third plenum in July, which gives a tight, five-year timetable for implementing all the reforms required to achieve the 2035 and 2049 goals.

It is this 2029 date that is particularly interesting, because it now establishes the temporal criteria by which officials will be held accountable. It represents how profoundly China is committed to basically realize socialist modernization by 2035. This should not be taken lightly.

Deng Xiaoping would be smiling.

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JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Victor Gao

Deng's philosophy inspires Chinese modernization

The best way to observe the 120th anniversary of the birth of Deng Xiaoping is to celebrate his invaluable, monumental contributions to China's economic development and thus global economic progress. No doubt, his leadership enabled China to perform an economic miracle.

In helping change China's economic landscape, Deng demonstrated wisdom, vision, courage, conviction and confidence, defying all odds and overcoming challenges. He initiated reform by first making the country's then leadership to resume the college entrance examination and restore college education for millions of Chinese youths in 1977.

While no one doubts the importance of college education today, back in the late summer and early autumn of 1977, the questions for China were whether to reopen the

colleges that recruit competent students and, if yes, when and how. Following the agreement among the leaders at that time on the initial point, Deng eventually managed to steer China toward resuming *gaokao*, in the winter of 1977.

I was one of the students who took the college entrance examination in 1977, which was later described as "a year without winter", because millions of Chinese youths, instead of enjoying the winter vacation break, were scrambling to get the needed books and studying day and night to clear *gaokao*, turning the winter of 1977 into a period of intellectual revival after a decade of political upheaval. The college classes for the 1977 educational session started only in February or March of 1978, though.

In one stroke, Deng changed the course of China's history, and thus, world history.



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Deng's sense of urgency in modernizing China through the implementation of reform and opening-up was palpable. Restoring *gaokao* in 1977 was an important first step in unleashing the intellectual power of the Chinese nation, paving the way for China's transformation into a major economic powerhouse of the world. Science and technology always figured prominently in Deng's plans as the most important driver of China's economic development and modernization, which still is at the core of China's

development program.

The difference between 1977 and now is that in the late 1970s China didn't have much capital, manufacturing capability, well-trained professionals or skilled workers, or a workable road map for economic development. Deng launched initiatives to ensure China acquired or developed these material capabilities and qualities as quickly as possible. On the other hand, China today is a global economic powerhouse, the second-largest economy, the largest manufacturing and trading nation, and the largest producer of about 200 major products, accounting for more than 50 percent of the global production for many of them.

Also, China is the leading producer of electric vehicles (EV) and biggest EV research and development center in the world, making significant contributions to the global fight against climate change. Yet

the country's current leadership, like Deng, still attaches great importance to science and technology, as it considers sci-tech to be a main driver of future development. Accordingly, it has been investing handsomely in R&D in order to become a global leader in science and technology.

China is now focused on developing new quality productive forces, in order to achieve high-quality development and make breakthroughs in science and technology to benefit all of humankind.

Deng changed China's economic and social landscape in the late 1970s, impacting the course of world history and contributing to global development. Similarly, China today, under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, is committed to making greater contributions to the world by building a community with a shared future for mankind.

In this ambitious endeavor, the main driving force will be new quality productive forces, which will promote innovation and help achieve scientific and technological breakthroughs, including in new technologies such as artificial intelligence.

The road map for China's modernization chartered by Deng more than four decades ago has been upgraded and enriched by the subsequent generations of the Chinese leadership. And the current leadership with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core will continue to inspire hundreds of millions of Chinese people, especially the younger generation, to strive for excellence and greater achievements, and overcome new challenges to ultimately realize greater prosperity and maintain lasting peace.

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GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

DAVID GOSSET

Inspirational spirit

The Olympics show us that a more cohesive and harmonious global community is possible

From organizational, aesthetic and sports performance perspectives, there is a broad consensus that the Paris 2024 Olympics were a resounding success, benefiting both French society and the international community. As



with the 2008 Beijing Olympics and other events of similar scale and evocative power, the images from these occasions will remain in our collective memory and, in doing so, create shared points of reference for humanity. The momentum will continue with the start of the Paralympic Games on Aug 28.

Aristotle (384-322 BC), whom Dante (1265-1321) referred to as "the master of those who know", wrote in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "At the Olympic Games, it is not the most beautiful or strongest who are crowned, but those who compete." In this sense, the Paralympics embody the Olympic spirit in its purest form.

The Paris gathering served as a moment of unity and joy, celebrating athletic prowess while fostering a spirit of cohesion across diverse cultures and nations. The Olympics, inherently competitive, showcase a range of outcomes with winners and losers, yet they are underpinned by principles of fair play and adherence to accepted rules. This competitive nature is accompanied by an overarching ethos of respect and camaraderie among participants, reflecting the ultimate goal of the Games: to bring people together through sport.

Since their inception in 776 BC in Ancient Greece, the birthplace of European civilization, the Olympic Games were accompanied by an Olympic truce, allowing athletes and pilgrims to travel safely to the Games. The last recorded celebration of the ancient Games occurred in AD 393.

When Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937) revived the Games at the end of the 19th century, with the first modern Olympics held in Athens in 1896, it was also a time when the first international organizations were emerging, such as the International Telecommunication Union founded in 1865. These early structures of international governance were both products and drivers of globalization, contributing significantly to human progress.

Coubertin's influence on our understanding of the Olympic spirit is profound. Beyond his remarkable work as a social

In essence, the Paris 2024 Olympics demonstrated that, even amid global challenges, moments of unity and shared purpose are possible. The spirit of the Games provides a valuable lesson in how cooperation and respect can bridge divides.

activist, it's important to recognize that Coubertin was also an educator deeply interested in the personal growth of individuals and the advancement of society. He is often quoted as saying: "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part; the important thing in life is not triumph, but the struggle; the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." However, Coubertin, inspired by humanistic values, also believed that "To spread these principles is to build up a stronger, more valiant, and above all, a more scrupulous and generous humanity."

Despite this, the Olympics are not a panacea for the world's persistent issues. Major global challenges such as poverty eradication and climate change remain unresolved, and conflicts did not cease during the Games. However, the spirit of the Olympics offers a glimpse into a more hopeful future and suggests a pathway forward. It reminds us that, while sports may not solve all problems, they can inspire and guide us toward a more unified and cooperative world.

Due to its widespread influence, distinctive popularity, and positive values, sport is well-positioned to support the United Nations' goals for development and peace. To highlight this potential, the UN General Assembly designated April 6 as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. It is clear that the international community is prepared to leverage sport for a purpose that extends well beyond mere physical activity.

The Olympic spirit should not be an ephemeral experience revisited only once every four years. Instead, it is crucial to cultivate this spirit continuously,

especially among young people. By fostering values of unity, respect, and fair competition, we can encourage a generation that values cooperation and mutual understanding. This is not just about sports but about applying these values to other aspects of life.

Expanding the Olympic ethos beyond the realm of sport could have profound implications. If humanity can come together for the Olympics, it stands to reason that we might also strive to apply similar principles to other areas of global interaction, such as multilateralism. While trade and politics are undoubtedly more complex than athletic contests, they are still fundamentally human endeavors. The same principles of fair play and cooperation can be applied to these spheres, suggesting that the dynamics observed in the Olympics might serve as a model for broader international relations.

Let us consider trade among nations as an example. Competition under agreed-upon rules is actively taking place, pushing companies to deliver better products and services. The Marrakesh Agreement, which established the World Trade Organization nearly 30 years ago, has been successful despite various challenges. The primary difficulty lies in the negotiation process needed for all parties to agree on the rules, whether they pertain to security, trade, finance or environmental protection. Then comes the implementation of the rules, followed inevitably by their revision when they no longer align with the distribution of power.

In essence, the Paris 2024 Olympics demonstrated that, even amid global challenges, moments of unity and shared purpose are possible. The spirit of the Games provides a valuable lesson in how cooperation and respect can bridge divides. As we look forward to the Los Angeles Olympics and beyond, it is important to remember and nurture this spirit, not just in the context of sports but in our collective efforts to address the world's pressing issues. By doing so, we can build on the hope and inspiration generated by the Olympics to create a more connected and harmonious global society.

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WANG XINWEI AND ZHAI KUN

People-to-people tech ties

China-ASEAN integrated cooperation in technology-education-talents can be jointly promoted by driving upgrading, resources integration and local cultivation

While deepening their solid foundation for cooperation, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also need to upgrade the momentum. At present, technology, education and talents are gathering new momentum for China-ASEAN cooperation. This year is the China-ASEAN Year of People-to-People Exchanges. Promoting a new direction of technology-education-talents integrated cooperation can provide strong support for building a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future.



Wang Xinwei



Zhai Kun

The new direction in terms of technology-education-talents cooperation is based on the continuous deepening of China-ASEAN people-to-people exchanges. With the establishment of the 10+1 mechanism, human resources development has become one of the five key areas of cooperation between China and ASEAN.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, the potential of China-ASEAN education-talents cooperation has been continuously stimulated by the cooperation among vocational colleges.

In fact, cooperation in technology-education-talents has already helped China and ASEAN work together in digital transformation, green development and other fields. The share of new energy vehicles in Thailand has exceeded 10 percent. China-Thailand cooperation includes both new production workshops and new vocational and technical schools. Singapore has created a sound business environment, and Chinese companies have actively participated in the development of the e-commerce industry.

China is comprehensively promoting Chinese modernization and accelerating the cultivation of new quality productive forces. ASEAN has also issued a new science and technology innovation policy including the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 and ASEAN Digital Master Plan 2025, which focus on industrial transformation and fostering digital talent. New spaces for China-ASEAN cooperation need to be unlocked, and the platform for personnel development can be further expanded. The foundation for China-ASEAN technology-education-talents cooperation has been established.

ASEAN countries have become popular choices for Chinese technology companies to invest overseas. The State of Southeast Asia: 2024 Survey Report, released by a Singapore think tank named the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, shows that China is still seen as the most influential economic (59.5 percent) and political strategic (43.9 percent) power in Southeast Asia, significantly outperforming the United States in both dimensions.

China has established respective bilateral inter-governmental technology transfer working mechanisms with nine ASEAN countries and the cooperation network of technology transfer covers 10 ASEAN countries with more than 2,800 members.

In addition to forming a series of annual activities such as the Forum on China-ASEAN Technology Transfer and Collaborative Innovation and China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week, China

and ASEAN are also actively exploring academic alliances to jointly promote innovation. The Alliance of National and International Science Organizations for the Belt and Road Regions, led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and jointly established by 36 national scientific research institutions, universities and international organizations including the National Science and Technology Development Agency from Thailand, promotes international scientific and technological cooperation through joint research, visiting scholar programs and training programs.

Scientific and technological innovation builds up cooperation momentum and further consolidates the basis for education cooperation. The advantage of technology-education-talents cooperation is synergy, but the difficulty is how to cooperate more efficiently and sustainably to benefit the region. Nowadays, the deepening of China-ASEAN technology-education-talents integrated cooperation also faces some challenges.

Market potential and cost advantages make ASEAN attractive for high-tech enterprises. Technology giants from the US have increased their presence in Southeast Asia. However, investment is not just about new factories. Geopolitical factors are also involved. The US and some other powers are trying to launch artificial intelligence and infrastructure projects to hedge the BRI and dilute China and ASEAN cooperation in science and technology, which is creating a negative impact on the China-ASEAN technology-education-talents cooperative agenda. In addition, ASEAN countries have their own development advantages. Industrial cooperation supported by technology-education-talents cooperative agenda needs to be classified and reinforced.

The industry chain safety guarantee needs to be strengthened. What's more, the local training system can be further improved. There is a relative shortage of applied talents in the digital field. The integrated programs of professional training in frontier science and technology need to be further explored. The support measures for continuing education also need to be strengthened.

In the future, China-ASEAN integrated cooperation in technology-education-talents can be jointly promoted by driving upgrading, resources integration and local cultivation.

First, the top-level framework of

technology-education-talents cooperation should be promoted. The plan for digital transformation can be strengthened, as well as developing high-quality cooperation in both hard infrastructure and cloud computing infrastructure. It can give full play to the converging role of high-quality projects of the BRI, promoting integrated development of technology-education-talents cooperative agenda. The stronger industry-university chain can be constructed, which deepens and solidifies regional cooperation.

Second, regional science and technology governance and integrated technology-education-talents resources should be optimized. While focusing on the professional and matching issues, the platform mechanisms such as ASEAN Plus Three Young Scientists Forum and China-ASEAN Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition can be continuously developed, apart from developing the high-level China-ASEAN Institute of Modern Craftsmanship. The supporting system can be strengthened, promoting the compatibility between Chinese enterprises overseas and the local innovation ecosystem.

Third, a science and technology local exchange channel based on local cultivation system should be constructed. Cooperating with technology transfer and innovation activities developed on major platforms, training courses for highly skilled personnel such as AI and 5G can be held. The potential of AI to enable vocational skills training can be tapped, effectively constructing the cultivation mechanism for local composite talents.

Both the direct effectiveness and carrier role of integrated cooperation in technology-education-talents should be taken into account to drive people-to-people exchanges, which inject vitality into China-ASEAN cooperation.

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MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

LIFE

Continent of attractions

Tourists surge back to Africa to experience a sense of adventure, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Chinese and foreign tourists relax and celebrate after their hot air balloon flight over the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The spectacles are there: wildlife migration, exotic culture, vast prairies and cascading waterfalls. Now, there are more spectators as favorable policies put the sites in sight for Chinese travelers.

"From the tourist bookings at the moment, the demand for African destinations is showing remarkable growth, with overall bookings for Africa increasing by approximately 30 to 35 percent year-on-year," says Xu Ning, product manager for African operations at a Beijing-based travel agency, Utour.

"The summer and the upcoming September-October period coincide with the best time to view the great animal migration in Africa, making it the prime season for African travel," Xu adds.

In recent years, with the increase in direct flights between China and Africa and the relaxation of visa policies, the potential of Chinese tourism to Africa has been unleashed, leading to deeper cooperation between the two in the tourism sector.

According to the data from the major intelligent travel platform Flight Master, as of May, the overall recovery rate of flights between China and Africa had reached 130.6 percent, compared to the same period of the pre-pandemic level.

Among these, Egypt's recovery rate stood at 241.7 percent, Kenya's at 150 percent, and both South Africa and Algeria achieved 100 percent.

Since last year, Zambia has proceeded to ease visa restrictions, allowing visitors from China to enter the country visa-free.

Angola announced last year a unilateral visa-free entry policy for citizens of 98 countries and regions, including China. Since January this year, the Kenyan government has implemented a visa-free policy for global tourists, allowing them to enter without applying for a visa, requiring only a travel permit via an electronic platform.

Last year, the Nigerian government established a tourism organ to better promote the country's rich cultural heritage and tourist attractions.

"Chinese travelers' footprints have been expanding in Africa, covering more



Top: Chinese tourists at the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. XINHUA

Above: A Chinese traveler zooms in on a giraffe at the Serengeti National Park. SUN SONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

destinations and with more in-depth and diversified travel experiences," Xu says.

In addition to traditional destinations like South Africa, Kenya and Egypt, an increasing number of Chinese travelers

have made inroads into southern African countries, such as Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, as well as African islands like Madagascar, Seychelles and Mauritius, he adds.

Particularly, bookings to southern Africa and Morocco in the continent's northwest have seen substantial increases, with year-on-year growth rates of 400 percent and 550 percent, respectively, Utour reports.

As for travel experiences, the length of tours to African destinations is on the rise, from the original eight to 10 days, to 14 to 18 days, allowing for a deeper exploration of what the continent has to offer, including various national parks, wild camps, yacht and desert trips, according to booking data from Utour.

"With the growing demand, new travel experiences in Africa are emerging, such as long cruises and island vacations," Xu says. Bookings for African island and cruise experiences have doubled so far this year.

During the May Day holiday from May 1 to 5, Africa was one of the most popular destinations abroad for Chinese travelers.

Egypt, Morocco, Kenya and Mauritius are popular country destinations, according to Chinese travel platform Mafengwo.

Although the Great Migration (involving more than 1 million wildebeests and zebras) didn't start in May, many travelers still chose to visit African destinations, such as Kenya, to immerse themselves in the natural environment, observes Kai Wen, who runs an African tours operation in Southwest China's Sichuan province.

Their favorite activities included riding in cross-country vehicles across the savannah, where they can observe elephants, rhinos, lions and giraffes, Kai says.

The pyramids, the Sphinx, and Luxor Temple are among the most alluring ancient sites that have drawn many Chinese tourists to Egypt, says Wang Peizhong, who runs a travel agency in Egypt.

Customers value individual choices and flexibility in tour services, notes Wang, whose business offers tailored itineraries, airport pick-ups and drop-offs, Chinese-speaking guides, and Chinese cuisine.

According to Statistics South Africa, the number of international tourists arriving in South Africa saw a significant surge last year, with the total number of Chinese tourists reaching 37,000, representing a year-on-year increase of 205.5 percent.

The Tanzanian tourism department estimated that the number of Chinese tourists visiting Tanzania grew from roughly 34,000 in 2019 to approximately 44,000 in 2023.

According to the China-Africa Belt and Road cooperation development report released in October 2023 by the Office of the Leading Group for Promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, China has signed bilateral tourism cooperation agreements with 31 African countries and designated 34 African countries as outbound group tour destinations for Chinese citizens. Additionally, China and Africa have established 166 pairs of sister cities.

Both sides have been actively inviting each other to participate in tourism exhibitions and organize tourism promotion events, thereby creating platforms for the tourism sectors of China and Africa to exchange experiences, discuss business opportunities, and promote tourism products. China has also launched a bilateral cultural and tourism training cooperation plan to work with African countries in strengthening tourism capacity-building efforts.

Tourism industries of both sides have unique characteristics and are highly complementary, leading to mutual interaction, says Song Wei, professor with the School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Beijing Foreign Studies University.

With the deepening of the BRI, China and Africa have achieved fruitful results in areas, such as facilitating tourism visas, increasing direct flights, enhancing tourism safety and quality, and improving hotel and scenic spot infrastructure, as well as promoting tourism routes, Song notes.

Song suggests that China and Africa could further collaborate in infrastructure development, digital network capability building, and environmental and biodiversity protection to elevate bilateral tourism cooperation, so things can be more convenient for global tourists to explore Africa.

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Ancient Chinese wisdom gives young Kenyans inspiration

NAIROBI/JINAN — "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting," says Eddy Paul Kirimi, a student at the Confucius Institute at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya. "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."

Kirimi was quoting from *The Art of War*, the Chinese classic by strategist Sun Tzu, dating to the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

The ancient book, which has influenced people all around the world, continues to inspire reflection among young Kenyans.

The Sun Tzu Book House, which opened recently at the university's Confucius Institute, features various iterations of the author's work, including some printed on silk, others on wood or scrolls, and is the first Sun Tzu Book House opened abroad by authorities from East China's Shandong province.

Kirimi says that *The Art of War* opens the minds of young Kenyans to overcoming problems and planning for a better future, adding that it enables them to experience Chi-



Left: Phyllis Wahura Maina, a student at the Confucius Institute of Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, studies at the Sun Tzu Book House on the campus. Right: Some of the publications as well as creative cultural products at the book house. PHOTOS BY ZHANG JIAN / XINHUA

nese culture and learning. "It is not a book that advocates strength, yet it focuses on strategic wisdom and philosophy that I find useful in life and work," he says.

"The most important lesson I learned from it is that in every situation, you have to be courageous and

strong, and then think it through to complete everything and achieve success."

In 2023, Kirimi spent six months studying Chinese at Shandong Normal University, and fell in love with the country's culture, which prompted him to seek a better



understanding of Chinese civilization and promote exchange between Kenya and China.

Phyllis Wahura Maina, another student at the Confucius Institute, says that she is honing her understanding of *The Art of War* and looks forward to applying Sun Tzu's

wisdom in daily life.

She says that the book has influenced her way of thinking, helping her to think ahead before doing something and develop strategies appropriate for different situations.

Maina encourages her compatriots

to use *The Art of War* as a guide in the pursuit of their goals when facing challenges.

Fan Qingyun, a teacher at the Confucius Institute, often discusses *The Art of War* with her students.

She says that the book emphasizes the philosophy and ideals of Sun Tzu, who advocated a people-centered approach to using peaceful ways to manage the relationship between countries, instead of war, and adds that the Confucius Institute will continue to promote this indispensable part of Chinese culture, so that more Kenyans will be able to appreciate the cultural treasure.

"I am delighted and proud to know that Sun Tzu is popular among young Kenyans," says Liu Ming, head of the project, adding that the book house could become a platform for better mutual understanding, and the integration of Chinese and African cultures.

"We will open more book houses so that the wisdom of *The Art of War* is able to enlighten more people," Liu adds.

XINHUA

LIFE

CULTURAL JOURNEY



Silk manuscripts excavated from the Mawangdui Han (206 BC-AD 220) Tombs in Changsha, Hunan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Writings continue to fascinate

By WANG XIN

The charm of ancient Chinese writing not only captivates domestic researchers but also fascinates overseas scholars, including Kunio Hirose from Osaka in Japan.

Born in 1975 and now a professor at Iwate University's Center for Hirazumi Studies, Hirose has researched ancient Chinese writing since 1998.

From 2008 to January this year, Hirose was a researcher at the Center for Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Paleography at Fudan University in Shanghai. With his work mainly focusing on bamboo slips and silk manuscripts from the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BC-AD 220), he contributed to the sorting and interpreting of the Mawangdui silk manuscripts — specifically the medical classics.

Hirose's journey in ancient Chinese writing began unexpectedly.

At first, Hirose was a bachelor's student at the Faculty of Law of the University of Tokyo, and he had no connection with ancient writing or the Chinese language. When his graduation was delayed to 1998, he encountered a reading lesson about the Chinese classic *The Book of Rites* at the university's Faculty of Letters, which focuses on humanity and society from a variety of perspectives.

Impressed by this extremely earnest student and his efforts to learn Chinese, the lecturer later introduced Kunio Hirose, Hirose to his colleague Professor Tomohisa Ikeda, who guided him to the Mawangdui silk manuscripts and other ancient Chinese writings.

Then Hirose began to delve into the world of ancient Chinese writing. Since 1999, he completed post-graduate and doctoral programs and joined the Fudan center.

"I have always been interested in ancient characters and writings from around the world but was poor at learning foreign languages. However, when I happened to read a book about oracle bone inscriptions, I found myself able to understand the ancient books, thanks to the similarities in Japanese and ancient Chinese characters. Moreover, I have been fond of China's ancient history and philosophy since I was young and have read several Japanese translations of ancient Chinese classics," says Hirose.

Hirose is the main editor of three medical and healthcare books included in the two editions of the *Mawangdui Bamboo Slips and Silk Manuscripts*. In his research, Hirose made remarkable breakthroughs in identifying printed scripts, binding the silk pieces and decoding the texts.

"As the Mawangdui silk pieces were originally folded in a box, some characters were printed on the folded layers above or below. Though it is very challenging to not know how the silk pieces were unfolded at first, these printed scripts still played a critical role in helping understand the texts and identifying the original characters — especially those that were broken or missing," explains Hirose.

Despite the obstacles, Hirose has enjoyed the years studying the Mawangdui manuscripts and says he would insist on his research wherever he is.

"Among all the excavated ancient Chinese bamboo and silk manuscripts, the ones in Mawangdui are outstanding and extremely valuable as they have clear datelines and are well-preserved and rich in content," says Hirose. "There is no doubt that China is taking the lead in terms of ancient writing research. The interpretation of ancient characters and texts requires a sharp eye on character shapes and a good sense of language. From these aspects, it is difficult for overseas scholars to surpass their Chinese counterparts."

However, it is worth noting that some overseas researchers may sometimes boast unique advantages.

"Overseas scholars were not born or raised in China, which means they will not follow the way of thinking or living as Chinese natives. Instead, they tend to understand the ancient Chinese language in their mother tongue, which can enable them to look at questions objectively and think outside the box, noticing problems that Chinese scholars may take for granted," Hirose adds.

Ancient 'mini library' unearthed

Half a century after the first excavation of Mawangdui Han Tombs, amended version of old manuscripts, preserved on silk, is published, Wang Xin reports in Shanghai.

The Mawangdui Han Tombs in Changsha, Hunan province, which have been recognized as one of the greatest archaeological findings of the 20th century, have offered not only massive pieces of artifacts but also presented a mini "library" of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220).

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the excavation of the Mawangdui Han Tombs. On Sunday, after four years of efforts in making revisions and additions, an amended version of the *Mawangdui Bamboo Slips and Silk Manuscripts* was published, which is compiled by Hunan Museum and the Center for Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Paleography at Fudan University in Shanghai, to celebrate the special occasion.

The two institutions committed decades to demystifying the characters and texts found on bamboo slips and silk manuscripts excavated from the Mawangdui tombs.

In June 2014, the first collection of Mawangdui bamboo slips and silk manuscripts was published. Compiled by the center and Hunan Museum, the seven-book collection reveals the complete raw materials of bamboo and silk manuscripts for the first time, offering a most comprehensive and accurate interpretation.

"There is no end in sight for the sorting and interpreting of the Mawangdui silk manuscripts. Although we have made many annotations, there is still much work unfinished. New silk pieces were published and a large number of scattered pieces have not been bound yet," says paleographer Qiu Xigui, chief editor of both collections and the leading professor at the center.

Liu Zhao, head of the center and organizer of the amendment and an editor of the collection, pointed out that the Mawangdui Han Tombs represent one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century in China and the world.

"The thousands of artifacts excavated from Mawangdui depict a vivid, dimensional and stunning picture of the colorful Han Dynasty's social life. The bamboo and silk manuscripts discovered from the tombs are like a mini library, opening the door to learn more about the thoughts of the dynasty," says Liu.

According to a recent announcement from Hunan Museum, the Mawangdui Han Tombs were initially excavated between 1972 and 1974 and have produced 26,937 artifacts after decades of excavations.

The unearthed artifacts include the remains of Lady Xin Zhui, wife to an aristocrat and also called by some scholars as Lady Bi. Also unearthed were lacquerware, textiles and bam-



Above and below: Silk paintings excavated from the Mawangdui Han Tombs in Changsha, Hunan province.



Below: Silk manuscripts excavated from Mawangdui.



boo and silk manuscripts. The lacquerware unearthed from Mawangdui totals 1,017 pieces, 869 of which are intact. The textiles unearthed — mainly silk and hemp — total 24,490 pieces, including 212 intact pieces. The bamboo and silk manuscripts total 1,430 items, including silk books and paintings, wooden tablets and bamboo slips.

The center's research and the compiled collections focus on the bamboo and silk manuscripts, which tally over 130,000 characters. The texts include more than 50 classics with topics ranging from politics, military, philosophy, medicine and healthcare, astrology and more. Among the classics are *I Ching* (The Book of Changes) and *Tao Te Ching*, a philosophy book by Lao Tzu (571-470 BC).

"Our center's work is not only about recognizing the characters but also interpreting the texts and unlocking the historical, cultural and philosophical value in the content. ... Some of the classics have been passed on till today. However, many have not been handed down, which will offer us new knowledge and are of extremely high academic value," says Liu.

The restoration process has not been easy. The silk pieces that have survived thousands of years are extremely fragile. Moreover, as most silk pieces were originally kept folded multiple times in a box with blank spaces and leaves in some layers, they closely clung together with printed scripts, making the main texts difficult to read after being immersed in water for ages. The collection's first version has drawn extensive attention, discussion and feedback since its publication in 2014. A year later, over 60 scholars and experts gathered at a meeting to discuss the books' revisions. By May 2020, more than 500 papers and works were published based on the collection and raw materials, and the amendment was put on the schedule. Later in January 2022, Hunan Museum sorted over 230 new pictures of silk pieces for research.

During the four-year amendment, over half the center's professors and researchers have made contributions. While each specializes in one or several classics, the center also hailed the team's work in ensuring comprehensive and accurate output, according to the center.

The amended collection makes up about 1,000 pieces of revisions and complements. In addition, other major amendments include the rewriting of several classics, picture publication of the newly uncovered raw silk pieces, modification of over 60 silk pieces in the previous version, about 230 new bindings of silk pieces and color tuning of silk pieces to better display the texts and patterns.

"As Professor Qiu said, the research on Mawangdui sees no end — not only in the ancient writing field but also in diverse sectors such as artifacts, textiles, chemicals and technology. It is a long-term and sustainable subject," says Liu. "We believe the research on Mawangdui will flourish in the upcoming years and the Mawangdui Han Tomb culture will play a bigger role in showcasing traditional Chinese culture and telling China's story."

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Below: The seven-volume book is a collection of the latest research, released on Sunday.



LIFE



Violinists Lyu Siqing (right, front) and Wallace Lee (left, front) share the stage with students from Beijing and Hong Kong at the Mong Man Wai Concert Hall, Tsinghua University, in Beijing last Friday.
PHOTOS BY WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

In a small backstage room, the air is buzzing with a mix of excitement and nervous energy as teenagers from Beijing and Hong Kong prepare to give a joint concert as part of the Beijing-Hong Kong Students Tsinghua Summer Music Camp. The room is scattered with sheets of music, instruments, and personal belongings. Dressed in concert attire, the teens exchange last-minute tips and encouragement. Some practice, or adjust their instruments, while others chat animatedly to release tension.

At 7 pm, the concert at Mong Man Wai Concert Hall in Tsinghua University starts.

During the performance, which took place last Friday, the conductorless string ensemble performed famous Chinese and classical pieces, among them Zhang Jingping's *Celebration of a Bumper Harvest* and Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, K 525*, with the aim of demonstrating the students' musical talent, and celebrating the harmony resulting from their collaborative effort.

"The anticipation is almost tangible. I am happy to see these young people celebrating music and cultural exchange, creating a tapestry of youthful excitement with their different backgrounds and vibrant personalities," says well-known violinist Lyu Siqing, who is artistic director of the camp.

In addition to Beijing, the students also gave a joint concert at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on Sunday.

Lyu, who is known for his exquisite technique and musical insight, performed the Chinese classic violin concerto, *Butterfly Lovers*, by He Zhanhao and Chen Gang.

"Though I have played it many times, this time it was different, as it was brought to life not only by me, but also by these young, talented musicians," says Lyu.

"This is the ultimate reward," he adds. "Seeing these young musicians come together, learn from each other, and perform with such passion — it's what makes mentoring so fulfilling."

Between Aug 13 and 19, the camp brought together 27 students from Beijing and Hong Kong, and for the teenagers, Lyu's mentorship has been transformative.

"I joined this music camp because of him. He's not just teaching us how to play better. He's showing us how music can connect and deliver emotion," says 16-year-old Wong Ching-ho from Hong

Tsinghua music camp forges bonds

Teen students perform two post-event concerts in Beijing and Hong Kong, **Chen Nan** reports.



Clockwise from top: Students from Beijing and Hong Kong pose at the Mong Man Wai Concert Hall, Tsinghua University, in Beijing after the concert last Friday; students warm up before the concert; and Wallace Lee gives a speech before the concert.

Kong, who has been playing violin since he was 3.

Wong adds that he visited Beijing and Shanghai as a tourist when he was a child. This time, he stayed in Beijing, sharing a dorm with other teenagers, rehearsing and visiting popular sites around the capital.

"It's more than just music that we created together. I made new friends and we will keep in touch," he says.

Angela Pei Tsz-hin, 13, is also a violinist from Hong Kong. Speaking fluent Mandarin, she says that she grew up speaking both Cantonese and Mandarin, as her father is from Tangshan in Hebei province.

"I often travel back to the Chinese mainland, but this is the first time I've been part of the music camp, living and playing music with people of my age," says Angela.

"When we first came together, there were moments of discord," she continues. "But through practice and encouragement from Lyu, and from one another, we've learned to harmonize musically. When we stepped on the stage, we all felt proud since we had done something great together."

The music camp began in 2023. It is the brainchild of Wallace Lee, a 22-year-old Hong Kong native and a talented violinist. A graduate of Tsinghua's School of Social Sciences, Lee was first violinist in the university symphony orchestra in 2021. He also launched the organization, Xin Tsing Friends, which deepens cultural bonds and unity between young people from Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland.

"When I studied at Tsinghua University, I lived with three other students in the dorm. They came from different parts of the Chinese mainland. They taught me how to ride a bike, and I visited their hometowns," says Lee, noting that he wants to use music as a universal language, to connect young people with their roots, and promote mutual understanding.

"During the summer camp, we rehearsed Chinese music, especially pieces inspired by folk music. For students from Hong Kong, it was a fresh and interesting experience," says Lee. "We shared experiences under Lyu's mentorship, and have forged a strong bond that transcends regional boundaries."

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How I learned to relax and love Olympic diving

When LeBron James was in the 2004 Olympics, I was wondering if



Haydn James Fogel
Second Thoughts

I could sleep through three more years of high school. When he won gold at the 2008 Olympics, I was trying to decide my future career. After his 2012 Games victory, I still had no idea where to take my life, but I had a sense I would find the answers outside the United

States. Now, I have a family and a career in China, and James has just won his third Olympic gold medal. People eventually get around to changing, but sports are eternal.

These past few weeks, I've witnessed a change in the sports conversation at work, and on Chinese social media. There appears to be an increasing emphasis on celebrating athletes and their stories, rather than their accomplishments. The previous habit of admonishing athletes for falling short of gold is being replaced with adoration of character. Never mind that Zhou

Yaqin won a silver medal; everyone instead fell in love with her "little sister energy" when she saw her Italian peers bite their medals, and emulated the tradition.

As the gold medal race between the US and China inched toward an eventual tie, one of my coworkers said, "Who cares? Every single person at the games worked hard to be there. They've already won."

I think she was right. Even more so, her statement belies a depth of introspection into the universality of sportsmanlike competition and the sacrifices anyone must make to

accomplish their dreams.

We project ourselves onto Olympic athletes. James might be an impossible human specimen designed in a lab to consume the hopes and dreams of would-be basketball champions, but he also has gray in his beard, just like me. And yes, I once emulated the cool behavior of my older brother, much like Zhou.

James in Team USA was my reason for watching again after all these years, but it was my Chinese partner who encouraged me to follow Chen Yiwen, Pan Zhanle, and a

badminton gold/marriage proposal double feature. For her, these were stories of human triumph.

During the 2008 Games, I could only be bothered to follow American athletes. They spoke my language and moved with my culture. I was young.

A broader grasp of world knowledge has provided me the space for introspection, and to gain a measure of who I am. The more I've learned about myself, the more I see myself in others. I see myself in my partner, my coworker, James, Zhou, and all the other athletes rep-

resenting different countries at the Games.

It might be fun to debate which is more impressive, Chen Yiwen's physics-defying droplet dives (seriously, is she made of feathers?) or Grandpa James' soft-touch layup following a 360-degree spin in traffic, but that ultimately misses the point. We grieve their losses alongside them and raise them up in their success. They are, just like us, human.

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