

Talking policy

Data showcases improvement in conditions of manufacturing sector BUSINESS, PAGE 9



Israelis go on strike to force government into accepting truce deal WORLD, PAGE 8



Shining in City of Light

Sichuan cuisine wins high praise as menu wins over France LIFE, PAGE 14

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

China, South Africa elevate ties



President Xi Jinping and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa greet children at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. Xi held talks with Ramaphosa, who is on a state visit and will be attending the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. LI XUENEN / XINHUA

Nations reaffirm cooperation on global issues, will help each other meet development goals

By XU WEI
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping and visiting South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the elevation of bilateral ties to an all-around strategic cooperative partnership for the new era on Monday, charting new directions for bolstering diplomatic relations and pragmatic cooperation.

Xi hosted Ramaphosa at the Great Hall of the People in a welcoming ceremony marked by red-carpet treatment and a guard of honor, underscoring Beijing's unwavering commitment to deepening ties with Africa's most industrialized nation.

The two leaders jointly witnessed the signing of bilateral agreements on the application of the Beidou Navigation Satellite System, two-way trade, market access for agricultural products and cultural heritage, further cementing the partnership.

A joint statement issued after the talks reaffirmed the commitment of both nations to collaborate on global issues and support each other's development goals.

"Despite the ever-changing international landscape, the missions of

both our countries to pursue modernization and promote China-Africa cooperation remain unchanged," Xi told the South African president, emphasizing the historic and global significance of stronger China-South Africa ties.

Ramaphosa is also among African leaders visiting China for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, scheduled from Wednesday to Friday.

"In the new era and on the new journey, strengthening unity and cooperation between China and South Africa aligns with the shared expectations of the peoples of both countries, resonates with the historical process of the Global South's growth and expansion, and holds significant contemporary relevance and global impact," Xi said.

The meeting came one year after Xi's state visit to Pretoria, and South Africa is the country in Africa most visited by the Chinese president.

Xi outlined three key directions for the newly elevated partnership: pursuing mutual progress to advance political trust, deepening win-win economic cooperation, and fostering people-to-people exchanges.

He advocated enhanced cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, artificial intelligence and new energy. Xi also pledged increased opportunities for South African youth, through

scholarships and vocational training, to ensure that the benefits of the partnership extend to future generations.

The Chinese president explained that FOCAC is a model of South-South cooperation and leads international cooperation with Africa.

The nation's doors to African countries will open wider and wider, and China is willing to work with South Africa and other African countries to continuously create new momentum for cooperation, promote high-quality development in China-Africa cooperation, and ensure that the "express train" of China-Africa cooperation runs faster and better, he said.

Ramaphosa told Xi that the elevation of bilateral ties will strengthen mutually beneficial political and economic ties for the benefit of both countries and their people.

According to a statement from the South African presidency, Ramaphosa reaffirmed that "political rapport is the foundation of an unwavering and valuable friendship".

"Our two countries share many common objectives. Building on the firm foundation of solidarity, we continue to provide support in promoting our interests and those of the African continent and the Global South," he said.

South Africa is willing to continue being a trustworthy and reliable friend of China, Ramaphosa said, adding that his country aims to enhance people-to-people exchanges and cooperation in education and culture.

China is South Africa's largest trading partner, and South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa. In 2023, bilateral trade reached \$55.62 billion, accounting for nearly 20 percent of China-Africa trade. Over 200 Chinese companies have invested in South Africa, creating more than 400,000 local jobs, according to the Chinese embassy in South Africa.

Zhou Yuyuan, a senior research fellow and deputy director at the Center for West Asian and African Studies at the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, said the fact that Xi and Ramaphosa have made mutual visits over the past year serves as another testament to the "golden era" of China-South Africa relations.

"It signifies that China and South Africa see each other as a priority partner and strategic partner in their foreign relations," he said, adding that cooperation between China and South Africa in strategic and emerging sectors will spur the African country's development and provide valuable experience for China-Africa cooperation.

The elevation of ties will pave the way for taking China-South Africa cooperation to higher levels and broader scopes, he added.

Premier Li Qiang also met with Ramaphosa in Beijing on Monday. Li said China would like to work with South Africa to implement the important consensus reached between the two heads of state and jointly promote the steady development of bilateral ties and cooperation.

After talks, it's time to take more important steps

Whenever officials from China and the United States meet, world leaders take note. There have been positive exchanges, most notably the San Francisco vision that came out of the conversations between President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden in November of 2023. And there have been negative exchanges, the most unfortunate being the manner in which Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke during meetings in Alaska in early 2021.

The most recent dialogue between officials from the two countries should be placed in the positive category. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan wrapped up solid talks with President Xi, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and General Zhang Youxia, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, while he was in Beijing a few days ago.

The talks focused, as expected, on issues germane to both countries: the Taiwan question, the South China Sea issues, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and more. Though there were no major breakthroughs on these thorny topics, the reality is both sides clearly understand the positions the other side holds. Neither side is asking the other to abandon their principles; rather, there is quiet confidence that on issues with significant agreement, such as combating climate change and fighting off the next pandemic,

WORLD WATCH
By Anthony Moretti

more bilateral talks can be had and ideas can be shared.

As the US presidential election occurs in roughly two months and as President Biden is not seeking re-election, it is incumbent on him to advance US-Chinese relations before either former president Donald Trump or Vice-President Kamala Harris enters the Oval Office in January 2025.

Recognizing that, the Chinese president affirmed his country's "commitment to the goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-US relationship remains unchanged". Meanwhile, Sullivan indicated that President Biden remains "committed to responsibly managing this consequential relationship to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict".

Indeed, words matter, and so domestic and international audiences should continue to hold the administration to account: If the White House wants a relationship that "does not veer into conflict", then there are some important steps that can be taken now, and these actions would send a message to whom ever replaces Biden that they ought not to be abandoned.

See Relations, page 11

Cultural attraction



Bystanders enjoy a lion dance performance on Saturday during the 22nd Washington Chinese Cultural Festival in Washington, DC. MINLU ZHANG / CHINA DAILY See story, page 8

VISITING MEDICAL EXPERTS LIFT XIZANG HEALTHCARE STANDARDS

Treatment, public awareness about diseases improved through national program

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing, YANG CHENG in Tianjin and PALDEN NYIMA in Lhasa



Fifteen years after returning from the Xizang autonomous region, endocrinologist Li Naishi is still devoted to the treatment and prevention of diabetes in the autonomous region. Li helped establish the endocrinology department at the Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital in Lhasa, the best medical facility in Xizang, where he trained local doctors to deal with common endocrine diseases. Li also helped spread awareness about diabetes among the public. He is one of thousands of experts who have brought change

to the region over the past three decades, as participants in a national program to aid Xizang. Li, from Peking Union Medical College Hospital in Beijing, volunteered to work at the hospital in Lhasa from June to September 2009 as a member of a visiting medical team. At the time, knowledge about diabetes among the local population was low, despite the incidence of the disease rising due to rapid economic development and traditional dietary habits, he said.

See Xizang, page 4

Gambian leader vows to deepen partnership

By XU WEI

Gambian President Adama Barrow said he is looking to cement ties with China during the upcoming 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, emphasizing that Beijing's role in Africa stands out due to its approach of equal partnership and mutual benefit.

In an exclusive written interview with China Daily, Barrow lauded the "pivotal role" of China in the development of the West African country, "particularly through substantial investments in infrastructure, agriculture and education".

"China's advancements in green technology and sustainable practices are of particular importance to Africa,

as we seek to develop our economies while minimizing environmental impact," Barrow said. "We are eager to learn from China's experience in reducing carbon emissions, managing natural resources sustainably and promoting renewable energy."

This year's summit represents an opportunity to deepen Gambia's strategic partnership with China and other African nations, he said.

The Gambian president, who will take part in the FOCAC summit for the second time, is among dozens of



Adama Barrow

African leaders who are gathering in Beijing for this year's summit, scheduled from Wednesday to Friday.

Barrow said he believes that "the summit will provide a platform to discuss the evolving global challenges and the ongoing global health crises".

"We believe that by working together, China and Africa can develop innovative solutions that benefit both sides and contribute to global stability and prosperity," he said.

China is Gambia's largest trading partner. Last year, the volume of

trade between the two nations, which resumed diplomatic relations in 2016, reached \$520 million, up 5.6 percent year-on-year.

Barrow was a successful property developer who had never held public office before he was elected Gambia's president in 2016. He secured a second term during the presidential election in December 2021.

Under Barrow's leadership, Gambia has significantly deepened ties and mutual cooperation with China. "China has played a pivotal role in our national development, particularly through substantial investments in infrastructure, agriculture and education," he said.

See Ties, page 2

www.chinadailyglobal.com
Member of ANN

Newsstand prices:
US \$1 Canada C\$1
UK 1.1 EU 1.1
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120
thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat;
Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Nation to better align BRI with African goals

Ahead of FOCAC summit, country aims to boost infrastructure, trade with continent

By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China plans to further align its Belt and Road Initiative with the long-term development agendas of African countries, aiming to boost infrastructure connectivity and trade cooperation across the continent, Chinese officials said on Monday.

Ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which will be held from Wednesday to Friday in Beijing, officials emphasized that the alignment is expected to inject new momentum into Africa's socioeconomic development.

The summit will focus on expanding partnerships in emerging sectors such as green development and the digital economy.

Fifty-two African countries and the African Union have signed cooperation memorandums with China under the BRI framework, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

Xu Jianping, director-general of the NDRC's Department of Regional Opening-up, said China aims to establish new cooperation plans with more African nations during the summit.

"We are looking to deepen the alignment between the BRI and the African Union's Agenda 2063, while also ensuring synchronization with the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals," Xu said. "China will work closely with African nations to enhance infrastructure cooperation and implement new initiatives that align with their economic and social development needs."

However, funding infrastructure projects in Africa remains a significant challenge.

The African Development Bank estimates that between \$130 billion and \$170 billion is needed annually for infrastructure development, with a financing gap of

\$68 billion to \$108 billion.

Despite these challenges, Chinese companies have played a substantial role in advancing infrastructure development across Africa. They have built or refurbished over 10,000 kilometers of railways, nearly 100,000 km of roads, about 1,000 bridges, close to 100 ports, 66,000 km of power transmission lines and 150,000 km of backbone communication networks, Xu said.

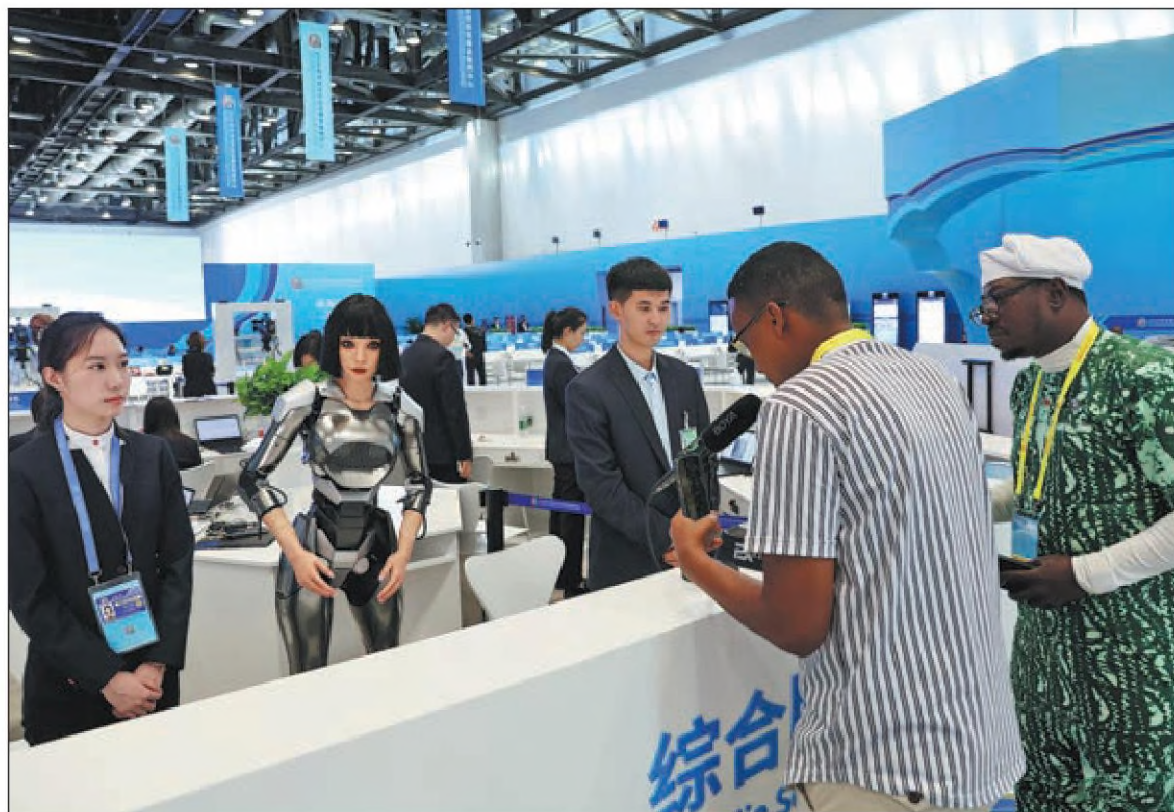
Beyond physical infrastructure, China is also focused on deepening institutional connectivity with African nations in areas such as trade and investment. This includes emerging sectors such as green development and the digital economy, Xu said.

As of June, China had given trade advantages to 27 of Africa's least-developed countries by imposing zero tariffs on 98 percent of their products. Bilateral agreements promoting and safeguarding investments have been signed with 34 African nations, and 21 countries on the continent have entered into agreements to prevent double taxation, according to the NDRC.

With these improvements in physical and institutional connectivity, China-Africa trade reached a record \$282.1 billion last year. And by the end of last year, China's direct investment in Africa had surpassed \$40 billion, according to NDRC data.

Bai Ming, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said Chinese investment is crucial for promoting industrial diversification and driving economic growth in Africa.

"By encouraging a mix of enterprises to operate within these African nations, China is helping to transform African economies, reduce reliance on traditional sectors and support the emergence of new economic drivers essential for long-term prosperity," Bai said.



Foreign journalists interact with a humanoid robot at the media center for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on Monday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

Media center welcomes thousands of journalists

By CHENG SI
chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn

The media center for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation went into trial operation in Beijing on Monday, providing services for more than 3,000 journalists from around the world.

The three-day summit, which will run from Wednesday to Friday, brings together leaders and representatives from China and African nations to discuss bilateral cooperation.

Zhao Shuang, who oversaw the media center's design, said the team drew inspiration from traditional Chinese architecture and gardens, incorporating these elements with African motifs such as images of wild animals and Mount Kilimanjaro's ice cap to symbolize the friendship and connection between China and African countries.

"We wanted to highlight cultural elements that resonate with people, which is why our design blends traditional and modern aspects," Zhao said.

"It took us a month and a half to develop and finalize the design."

The media center also emphasizes futuristic and technological features, including a humanoid robot that assists journalists and staff members with inquiries.

Volunteers provide language services including Chinese, English and French for international journalists.

Ma Wenbo, a postgraduate student at Beijing International Studies University, was reassigned to the media center on Monday after serving as a volunteer at a hotel designated for journalists.

Ma began his volunteer work for the summit on Saturday.

"All those international journalists I've met are well-educated and



The forum is crucial as it provides a platform for China and African countries to discuss the best ways to cooperate."

Abubakar Harith Bakar,
a journalist from Tanzania

kind. I've helped several journalists from Malawi with transport and equipment issues, and they've treated me like a friend ever since, which has been very touching," Ma said.

Journalists from other countries have also praised the media center, complimenting its design,

convenience and security measures.

Abubakar Harith Bakar, a journalist from Tanzania on his third visit to China, said the media center is well-organized.

"The forum is crucial as it provides a platform for China and African countries to discuss the best ways to cooperate," Bakar said.

"I am particularly interested in cutting-edge topics like artificial intelligence, as the world is changing rapidly, and I hope Africa can seize these development opportunities."

Motheba Augustina Tsunyane, a journalist from Lesotho, is covering the major event in China for the first time and was impressed by the media center's operations.

"People here have been very welcoming, and the Wi-Fi and other services are very convenient," Tsunyane said.

Stronger cooperation sought on climate change

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

China is looking to deepen its cooperation with African countries to tackle climate change and enhance their capacity to address environmental challenges, a senior official said on Monday.

During a news conference ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which will run from Wednesday to Friday in Beijing, Chinese officials emphasized the importance of green development in China-Africa relations.

Li Yonghong, deputy director of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment's Foreign Environmental Cooperation Center, highlighted the achievements made through

platforms such as the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Center and the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition.

"More than 170 partners from 40 countries, including seven African nations, have participated in the coalition," Li said.

"Joint research efforts, including studies on climate change and sustainable development in China and Africa, have resulted in the publication of various reports."

He said China has trained over 1,500 participants from African countries in areas such as environmental management, pollution control, the green economy and climate change to boost capacity in green development.

The coalition has promoted

green industry cooperation by implementing eco-friendly technologies such as photovoltaic power generation, wastewater treatment and electric vehicles in participating countries, Li said, adding that "green and low-carbon development has become a key aspect of China-Africa cooperation".

He said Africa accounts for just 2 percent of global green energy investment in the past decade, and underscored the need for the continent to become more involved in the global green transition to effectively address urgent environmental challenges.

In 2021, during the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation on Combating Climate Change was

adopted. The declaration aims to increase clean energy investment in Africa and support continental efforts to combat climate change.

Li also mentioned that China has signed 19 memorandums of understanding on South-South cooperation to address climate change with 17 African countries. Under the agreements, China has provided equipment such as a micro-satellite system, a solar photovoltaic power station and over 3,000 solar streetlights.

Last September, China proposed a climate change cooperation project in Africa, focusing on the needs of the photovoltaic resources sector and the development of clean energy. "The initiative aims to help African countries address their electricity challenges," Li said.



Highway patrol officers organize equipment at a toll station on the No. 1 National Highway in the Republic of Congo on July 31. The 536-kilometer highway, constructed by China State Construction Engineering Corporation, links the capital city of Brazzaville with the Atlantic port of Pointe-Noire. WANG GUANSEN / XINHUA

Ties: 'China has become a reliable partner for many African nations,' says president

From page 1

"Looking ahead, I see enormous potential in expanding our cooperation into new sectors. Technology, for instance, is a critical area where China's expertise can help us leapfrog stages of development, particularly in digital infrastructure and innovation," Barrow said.

"This is crucial for integrating Gambia into the global digital economy and improving access to information and services for our citizens. We are also exploring opportunities in e-governance, which will allow us to streamline public administration and make government services more efficient and accessible," he added.

Barrow called renewable energy another promising field, and said that China's leadership in solar and wind power technologies could help his nation sustainably meet its energy needs.

Gambia has been an active participant in the Belt and Road Initiative, benefiting from several key infrastructure projects, including major highways, bridges and energy facilities, that are currently underway or in their planning stages.

The Gambian president said such projects are crucial for enhancing connectivity and powering the African nation's economy, and have been instrumental in addressing some of its most pressing development challenges, including improving transportation networks and ensuring a reliable energy supply.

Barrow emphasized that "concerns about 'debt traps' are often based on misunderstandings or misrepresentations of the BRI's objectives".

"In Gambia, we approach these partnerships with a clear strategy, ensuring that all agreements are made transparently and with a full



China respects our sovereignty and works with us to achieve our development objectives, rather than imposing external agendas. This relationship is built on trust and, as a result, China has become a reliable partner for many African nations."

Gambian President
Adama Barrow

understanding of our financial responsibilities. The improvements in infrastructure directly contribute to economic growth, job creation and, ultimately, the betterment of the lives of Gambians," he said.

The historical — and sometimes paternalistic — engagement of other global powers makes China's role in Africa stand out with its unique approach of equal partnership and mutual benefit, Barrow noted.

"China respects our sovereignty and works with us to achieve our development objectives, rather than imposing external agendas. This relationship is built on trust and, as a result, China has become a reliable partner for many African nations," he said.

China's role in Africa is also a balancing force in a world where global power dynamics are constantly shifting, Barrow said. "By aligning with China, Gambia can better

position itself to take advantage of emerging opportunities and address challenges in a rapidly changing world," he added.

The partnership between Gambia and China has brought tangible benefits that have improved the lives of Gambians, according to Barrow.

He cited the example of the Gambian healthcare sector, in which Chinese support has led to the construction of hospitals and the provision of advanced medical equipment. These have greatly improved the quality of healthcare services available to Gambian people, he said.

So far, China has sent six groups of medical teams to Gambia, comprising a total of 62 personnel. Currently, 10 medical team members are working in the African country.

Barrow is set to sit down with President Xi Jinping for a bilateral

meeting during the upcoming summit. The Gambian leader lauded the Chinese president as a "leader of remarkable vision and determination," adding that Xi's leadership "has not only propelled China to new heights, but has also had a profound impact on the global stage".

Xi's major global initiatives have demonstrated a commitment to fostering global connectivity and shared prosperity, which resonate strongly with Gambia's own development goals, Barrow said.

"President Xi's focus on building a community with a shared future for mankind is particularly inspiring, as it aligns with our belief in multilateralism and international cooperation," he said. "We deeply admire his dedication to creating a more equitable and sustainable world, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration under his guidance."



2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

TALKS PUT SOLIDARITY IN SPOTLIGHT

Editor's note: President Xi Jinping started holding bilateral meetings on Monday with foreign leaders who will attend the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which is scheduled in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday.

Ties with DR Congo will be enhanced

President Xi Jinping pledged on Monday to enhance bilateral cooperation in agriculture, mineral processing and vocational training with the Democratic Republic of Congo, and continue to help the African country turn its resource advantages into growth drivers.

Xi made the remarks when meeting with DR Congo President Felix Tshisekedi in Beijing.

Noting that China and DR Congo elevated their bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in May 2023, Xi said that many consensus reached at that time have been implemented.

Bilateral practical cooperation in various fields serves as a model for developing countries to jointly advance modernization, Xi added.

He said that China is willing to work with DR Congo to safeguard the common interests of developing nations and encourage Global South countries to seek peace and development in the face of major global changes.

Tshisekedi said he views China as DR Congo's top priority partner for cooperation, and hopes to learn from China's successful experience and continue to deepen friendship as well as practical cooperation with China in various fields.

FOCAC provides an important opportunity for African countries to realize their development dreams, Tshisekedi said, adding that he believes the 2024 FOCAC Summit will deliver successful outcomes and more tangible results to the African people.

Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang also met with Tshisekedi on Monday.



Felix Tshisekedi

Friendship with Mali to be carried forward

President Xi Jinping and his Malian counterpart Assimi Goita announced on Monday the elevation of China-Mali bilateral ties to a strategic partnership.

China is ready to carry forward its bilateral traditional friendship with Mali, continue to firmly support each other, and provide assistance within its capacity for Mali's economic development and improvement of people's livelihoods, Xi said during his meeting with Goita in Beijing.

China will continue to encourage Chinese companies to invest in the West African country, and deepen cooperation in areas such as agriculture, energy, mineral development and infrastructure construction, Xi said, adding that China hopes Mali will provide security guarantees and policy facilitation for Chinese enterprises.

Xi emphasized that China always supports African people to independently determine their future, and would like to join hands with Mali and other African nations to support each other in achieving modernization through paths that suit the national conditions of those countries.

Goita expressed his gratitude to China for aiding Mali's economic and social development, and said that Mali hopes to further consolidate its friendship with China as well as deepen mutually beneficial cooperation.

There is but one China in the world, and Mali firmly adheres to the one-China principle, he said, adding that both countries respect each other's national sovereignty and independence and oppose interference in other countries' internal affairs.

Mali appreciates China's efforts and contributions to promoting regional and world peace and development, and looks forward to closer multilateral cooperation with China, Goita added.

Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, also met with the Malian president on Monday.

Comoros seen as model of partnership equality

President Xi Jinping and Comorian President Azali Assoumani announced the elevation of ties between the two countries to a strategic partnership as they met in Beijing on Monday.

Noting that China was the first country to have established diplomatic relations with the Comoros, and that next year will mark the 50th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations, Xi said the two countries have given each other firm political support and conducted fruitful pragmatic cooperation in various fields.

The two countries have set an example of relations between countries of different sizes, featuring equality, solidarity and cooperation, Xi said.



Azali Assoumani



A Chinese knot installation with the logo of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is seen near the China National Convention Center in Beijing on Monday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

China stands ready to conduct poverty-reduction cooperation with the Comoros and support the people of the Comoros in leveraging their country's geographical advantages and maritime resources for development, Xi said.

China is willing to help the African country achieve its goal of eliminating malaria by 2025, Xi added.

He said China hopes to take the 2024 FOCAC Summit as an opportunity to expand pragmatic cooperation with the Comoros in trade, investment, infrastructure, marine fisheries and climate change.

Xi said China will uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and strengthen communication and collaboration with the Comoros.

Azali said the Comoros hopes to strengthen friendly ties with China and make the ties a model of Africa-China cooperation.

The Comoros supports China in safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity and achieving national reunification, Azali said.

The Comoros hopes to strengthen communication and collaboration with China within multilateral frameworks, promote unity and cooperation among developing countries and resolve regional conflicts through dialogue, Azali said.

Li Xi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, also met with Azali in Beijing on Monday.

Resilience, vitality of Togo relations noted

President Xi Jinping and Togolese President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe announced the upgrading of bilateral relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership during their meeting in Beijing on Monday.

Xi commended Gnassingbe for his significant contributions to China-Togo relations and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, emphasizing China's firm support for Africa's unity, self-improvement and integration process.

He expressed China's willingness to enhance political mutual trust with Togo, expand pragmatic cooperation in infrastructure, agriculture, water conservancy and mutual connectivity, deepen multilateral coordination, and promote regional unity and stability.

Gnassingbe said that FOCAC has become a significant pillar for promoting the development of African countries and friendly relations with China.

Gnassingbe said that Togo looks forward to strengthening cooperation with China in areas such as infrastructure, science and technology, and the digital economy.

His country firmly adheres to the one-China policy and supports China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its positions on the Taiwan question and issues related to the South China Sea, Gnassingbe added.



Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe

Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, also met with Gnassingbe on Monday.

Bonds with Djibouti taken to new level

President Xi Jinping and Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh announced the elevation of China-Djibouti ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership as they met in Beijing on Monday.

Xi said he highly appreciates the fact that Guelleh has attended all the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summits that have been held, and he hopes to work closely with Guelleh for the success of the 2024 FOCAC Summit.

Emphasizing that this year marks the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Djibouti, Xi said the two countries have stood together through thick and thin over the past decades.

China will support Djibouti in operating projects such as the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, which connects Ethiopia and Djibouti, and the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone to help turn Djibouti into a regional commercial, trade and logistics hub, he said.

Xi also said that China will work with Djibouti in running the country's Luban Workshop, which was launched in 2019 and was the first in Africa, to provide more high-quality talent to meet the needs of Djibouti's economic development.

China supports Djibouti in making new contributions to peace and development in the Horn of Africa and Africa as a whole, Xi said.

Guelleh said that Djibouti is satisfied with the vitality of the bilateral ties and hopes to work with China to continue to advance the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway and other important projects.

He also said that Djibouti hopes to strengthen communication and collaboration with China to promote regional security and development.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, also met with Guelleh in Beijing on Monday.

Shared development with Seychelles stressed

President Xi Jinping underlined on Monday the need for China and Seychelles to prioritize support for each other's core interests and major concerns, and remain committed to strengthening strategic mutual trust, shared development, common security and their traditional friendship.

He made the remarks during his meeting with

Seychelles' President Wavel Ramkalawan in Beijing.

Xi welcomed Seychelles' continued participation in the China-Indian Ocean Region Forum on Development Cooperation to accelerate sustainable development of marine resources and transform Seychelles' blue economy potential into its developmental momentum.

China is willing to enhance emergency response and disaster reduction cooperation with Seychelles, support it in combating pirates and other illegal activities, and encourage the launch of direct flights between the two countries, Xi said.

He also said that more students from Seychelles are welcome to study in China.

Ramkalawan said the friendship between Seychelles and China is built on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Seychelles firmly adheres to the one-China policy and supports China in achieving national reunification, he added.

The two presidents announced the elevation of China-Seychelles relations to a strategic partnership.



Wavel Ramkalawan

Solid friendship with Eritrea emphasized

China and Eritrea should work as good brothers with close affinity, good partners for win-win cooperation and good friends jointly upholding fairness and justice, President Xi Jinping said on Monday during his meeting in Beijing with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki.

Xi emphasized the long-standing mutual trust and strong support between China and Eritrea since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1993.

He praised Eritrea's commitment to an independent foreign policy, saying that China is willing to deepen political mutual trust and promote practical cooperation with the African country to achieve common development.

Xi called for utilizing initiatives and platforms, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, to deepen bilateral cooperation on energy, infrastructure and agriculture, in order to assist Eritrea in its industrialization and agricultural modernization.

Afwerki, who first visited China 57 years ago, praised China's remarkable development achievements and increasing global influence, acknowledging China's significant role in the reform of the global governance system.

He expressed Eritrea's commitment to the one-China policy and the desire to deepen cooperation with China in energy, infrastructure, maritime affairs and other fields.

He emphasized the importance of China-Africa cooperation in helping African countries achieve development.

Win-win cooperation with Guinea underlined

China is willing to work with Guinea to ensure the 2024 FOCAC Summit is a complete success, so that it unites the forces of the Global South to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, President Xi Jinping said on Monday.

He made the remark when meeting with Guinean President Mamady Doumbouya in Beijing.

Xi emphasized that strengthening unity and cooperation with African countries and other developing nations is the cornerstone of China's foreign policy.

Noting that October will mark the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Xi said that over the past 65 years, both countries have upheld mutual respect, supporting each other in pursuing an independent development path.

He underlined the need for both countries to strengthen cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, development of resources, rural development, poverty reduction and healthcare, and help Guinea transform its resources strength into development momentum.

Doumbouya hailed the development of bilateral relations, and said that Guinea adheres to the one-China policy.

He thanked China for its valuable support in Guinea's economic and social development, and said that Chinese investment in Guinea has promoted his country's economic development and improved people's livelihoods, serving as a model of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation.

— CAO DESHENG, ZHOU JIN, WANG QINGYUN

INDEPTH

Xizang: Healthcare boosted by expert help

From page 1

"Their diet is unique, with very high-calorie content in food such as highland barley and butter tea. Besides, they went from everyone not eating enough to having enough food thanks to improved transportation due to the Qinghai-Xizang Railway."

There were a lot of overweight people and diabetics. However, many were unaware they had diabetes for years, and did not seek medical help until they felt sick.

At that time, the hospital didn't have an endocrinology department.

Li was responsible for the hospital's diabetes patients, some of whom were very young.

"Diabetes can lead to severe chronic complications such as retinal detachment and blindness. It affects the kidneys, causing renal failure. Diabetes cannot be cured. Without proper control and a change of lifestyle, complications can arise within a decade," he said.

Culture and cures

Dietary habits were a problem Li had to address to treat diabetes. People in Xizang have been eating highland barley and drinking butter tea all their lives, a practice that is part of their culture. Li recalled one patient aged about 40 who didn't believe that diabetes had anything to do with consuming butter tea.

Li had introduced the continuous glucose monitoring system to the hospital, which was considered high-tech at the time. The first day he asked the patient to drink butter tea before testing the patient's blood sugar level. The second day the patient drank soybean milk and was tested again.

After seeing the drastic difference in blood sugar levels, the patient began to take Li's advice.

"That patient is from the Han ethnic group," Li said.

"For Tibetans, a change of diet can be more difficult. I don't want to disrespect their custom, so through the years endocrinologists in Lhasa and I have been trying to find a way to help Tibetan diabetes patients accept a dietary plan that can prevent a rapid increase in blood glucose levels while also taking into account their lifestyle habits."

The hospital's endocrinology department opened in 2011 and started its own ward in 2023.

Now Li revisits the hospital about once a year to help with medical research. He shares his medical knowledge with local doctors.

Li is also guiding local doctors to write a popular science book about diabetes in the Tibetan language, which aims to help spread awareness about the disease. He hopes the hospital can be an example for other medical institutions in the region to improve the overall management of endocrine diseases.

Despite all his medical achievements in Xizang, Li said what impressed him most during his stay was when a patient who couldn't speak Mandarin quickly found a stranger on the street to help him translate.

Personal connections

Under the Xizang aid program, about 2,000 doctors from 17 provinces and municipalities have brought advanced equipment, medical skills and health management methods to



Clockwise from top: Doctors from a hospital in Mudanjiang, Heilongjiang province screen children for congenital heart disease on June 27 in Khangmar county, Xizang autonomous region.

SU DAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE
Visiting doctor Li Naishi examines a diabetes patient in Xizang, PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY
Peng Hongjun, a doctor in the medical team sent to aid Xizang, checks a child in Lhokha on Aug 9.

YANG DONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Tibetan residents are simple and kindhearted, showing great trust and sincerity toward doctors. The doctors are also attentive to their patients."

Zhao Huiying, a doctor from the department of critical care medicine at Peking University People's Hospital in Beijing

the region since 2015, said Guo Luo, deputy director of the Xizang Health Commission.

The outpatient volume of hospitals is double what it was before 2015, with the success rate of treating critically ill patients close to 90 percent.

The average life expectancy in the region has reached a historical high of 72.19 years old, Guo said.

Doctors from top hospitals across the nation have been sent to the Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital, as well as people's hospitals

in all other cities and Ngari prefecture, and 13 major hospitals in the region's counties.

Like Li, Zhao Huiying from the department of critical care medicine at Peking University People's Hospital in Beijing, is one of the doctors to take part in the Xizang aid project.

Zhao was also sent to the Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital. From 2021 to 2022, she spent 14 months working in the intensive care unit, which receives 800 to 1,000 patients annually.

Cases of hypertension, cerebral hemorrhages and septic shock are more common in plateau areas as people's blood viscosity tends to be higher, she said.

Zhao remembers one patient who had an infection that started in the mouth and gradually spread to the neck, chest and brain. She has also treated patients with pulmonary edema caused by altitude sickness.

Zhao said she was touched when her co-workers donated blood to a father and son who survived a car accident.

"Tibetan residents are simple and kindhearted, showing great trust and sincerity toward doctors. The doctors are also attentive to their patients," she said.

"When they offered me a *hada*, a traditional Tibetan silk scarf symbolizing purity and auspiciousness, to show gratitude, I also felt touched."

As most people in Xizang are Buddhists, they don't fear death and believe they will move on to another life. However, Zhao still felt sad when a parent stopped treatment of a young daughter with multiple organ failure.

Over the years, Zhao has seen local doctors' clinical skills improve, along with their awareness of disease prevention. People have also become more willing to see a doctor when they are sick.

She still participates in an offline medical conference once a year in Xizang. "I hope local doctors can learn to understand complex surgeries, and the demand for medical help from outside Xizang can be reduced," she said.

Thanks to the Xizang aid program, numerous patients with rare diseases have been cured. Some hospitals from outside Xizang have invited patients to their cities for better surgery free of charge.

Treating youngsters

Lobsang, 13, and 12-year-old Tso-mo from Chamdo in Xizang celebrat-

ed their birthdays together on June 16 at the Teda International Cardiovascular Hospital in Tianjin.

Lobsang had undergone successful surgery for his patent ductus arteriosus, a congenital heart condition, and the medical team had arranged gifts and a birthday cake for him.

The teenager expressed his enduring gratitude to the doctors who identified his condition during a free heart screening in his hometown conducted by the hospital.

Tsomo was also identified during the screening as having congenital heart disease in the form of a ventricular septal defect, and underwent successful surgery two days after Lobsang.

Coincidentally, Tsomo's birthday fell around the same time, and the medical staff decided to celebrate the boys' birthdays together.

They are among the lucky children and teenagers diagnosed in Xizang and treated in Tianjin by the hospital.

Since 2006, the hospital's doctors have made 10 trips to high-altitude regions in Xizang, conducting heart screenings of 2,000 individuals, with 148 receiving treatment, including surgical interventions.

Hospital president Liu Xiaocheng said for every 1,000-meter increase in

altitude, the incidence of heart disease rises by one per thousand of the population. Plateau regions pose increased risks for congenital heart diseases. The problem is exacerbated by limited medical resources, leaving some teenagers undiagnosed and untreated.

Huang Hui, a doctor at Teda, said members of the medical team enjoyed the screenings were aware of the importance of the work they were doing.

"When we arrived, we were impressed by the long line of patients and began checking to find those children who needed help," Huang said.

Liu affirmed the hospital's long-term commitment to serving patients in Xizang, and its willingness to provide advanced medical care and expertise. "Our trip to Xizang will never end and the hospital will always be ready for patients," he said.

According to the Xizang Health Commission, after nearly 10 years of medical support for the autonomous region, more than 4,400 projects and technologies have been implemented.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

30 years of support for development

By **PALDEN NYIMA** in Lhasa
palden_nyima@chinadaily.com.cn

Thanks to support from the central government — and the efforts of outside provinces, cities, and State-owned enterprises — the Xizang autonomous region has taken great development strides over the past 30 years.

Following decisions and arrangements made by the central government, the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee and other central authorities have dispatched 10 batches of nearly 12,000 cadres and skilled workers to the region over the past three decades.

Song Liqiang, deputy head of the regional organization department and team leader of the 10th group sent to aid Xizang, said the number of people being sent to the region had gradually increased from 622 at the beginning to 2,117 in the latest effort. Over the 30 years, nearly 10,000

orphans and impoverished students have been given support, while more than 8,300 patients with congenital heart disease, cataracts, and skeletal diseases have received free treatment, Song said.

"The Aid Xizang project has promoted the high-quality development of the plateau economy," he said.

"Using industrial parks and scenic projects, it has promoted the development of Xizang's advantageous industries, attracting over 1,140 enterprises, and creating hundreds of distinctive brands," Song said.

Beneficiaries of the assistance range from performers and producers of the Princess Wencheng opera to a vegetable plantation in Panam county. All the projects have facilitated "the transformation and upgrading of the Tibetan economy," Song said.

In 1994, the central government decided to rally national support for Xizang under the policy of "pairing-

up" assistance for the region. Seventeen provinces and cities as well as 78 central State organs and people's organizations and 27 centrally administered State-owned enterprises were designated to assist in specific areas of Xizang to stimulate the development of the plateau region.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, more than 9,500 assistance projects have been implemented in Xizang.

The projects focus on what Xizang needs and the aspirations of the people, Song said. In 2023 alone, this strategy attracted 25.17 billion yuan (\$3.5 billion) in investment and 146 high-level talents, he added.

Assistance has also been provided for the construction of an ecological civilization in Xizang through major environmental work such as afforestation, greening projects, desertification control, grassland ecological protection, and restoration



A teacher from a primary school in Palgon county, Xizang, distributes nutritious meals to students on June 22. TENZIN NYIDAR / XINHUA

work along the region's major rivers.

In order to consolidate border areas and benefit residents, projects such as construction and renovation of municipal facilities, improvement of living environments, enhancement of public services, and beautification work have been implemented.

The assistance has also accelerated urbanization in border counties, and developed industries such as logistics, tourism, mineral resources, and clean energy, Song said.

Ethnic groups in Xizang have seen their lives drastically improve, particularly through the upgrading of healthcare and medical facilities.

The Xizang Autonomous Region People's Hospital has steadily advanced to achieve "triple A" status, and people's hospitals in six cities, including Lhasa, are now also classified at this level.

Chen Pu, a researcher at the Economic Strategy Research Institute of the Xizang Academy of Social Sciences, said that the assistance project has effectively promoted the development, stability, and security of the region, and improved people's livelihoods.

"Amid the national economic downturn, the overall effectiveness of group-assisted aid and intellectual aid to Xizang has continued to expand and advance, supporting pillar industries, key areas, key products, and crucial technologies in the assisted areas," said Chen.

"This has facilitated the transformation of Xizang's resource advantages into economic strengths, propelling the region's major economic indicators since the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-25)."

CHINA

Companies search for PhD graduates abroad

Returnees specializing in science and engineering in demand as recruitment of doctoral students increases

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

With the job market for college graduates in China remaining uncertain, electrical appliance manufacturer Midea has said it is increasing its recruitment, particularly among Chinese graduates who've studied overseas.

Midea, listed on the Shenzhen stock exchange and valued at about \$60 billion, operates in more than 200 countries and regions around the globe, with 33 R&D centers and 40 production bases, so its demand for internationally minded professionals remains high, the company said.

In July, Midea hosted six job fairs in the United States, including at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University, where it attracted some 300 graduates to take an interest in its opportunities. Most of the technical positions were aimed at PhD graduates, Midea said.

"Almost all the positions attracted competition among Chinese students pursuing further studies abroad, and many are currently in the interview process," said Liu Ruiqun, director of global campus recruitment at Midea Group.

"To align with the group's development strategy, our demand for international talent continues to increase and the scale of our recruitment of overseas graduates has continued to rise over the years. Also, we're increasingly focusing on highly educated groups," she said.

The jobless rate among those aged 16 to 24 was 13.2 percent in June, and the urban unemployment rate for those aged between 25 and 29 was 6.4 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Despite these figures being higher than desired, multinational companies like Midea still require returnees with PhD degrees to make good use of their professional knowledge, international vision and capabilities for innovation.

"We welcome excellent students in top professional fields from universities both from home and abroad. It's basically about whether a certain discipline of a school is competitive globally, and matches the technology required by our group," Liu said.

In March, four Chinese giants in technology, electric vehicle batteries and fast-fashion online retail held recruitment fairs at seven universities in the United Kingdom seeking Chinese graduates with excellent qualifications and skills.

Some Chinese enterprises, especially those in the industries of automobiles, internet, healthcare, new energy and investment, have been looking to go global in recent years.

Industry observers have said that such enterprises have reached a phase of their development where they need high-end talent to support them, making sure they are at the forefront of industrial development, while they can provide a platform for technical talent to unleash their professional skills.

In July, the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China resolved to improve the modern enterprise system with Chinese characteristics, and support and guide all kinds of enterprises to improve their efficiency of resource utilization, operation and management, and accelerate building more world-class enterprises.

The session also resolved to improve the resilience and safety of

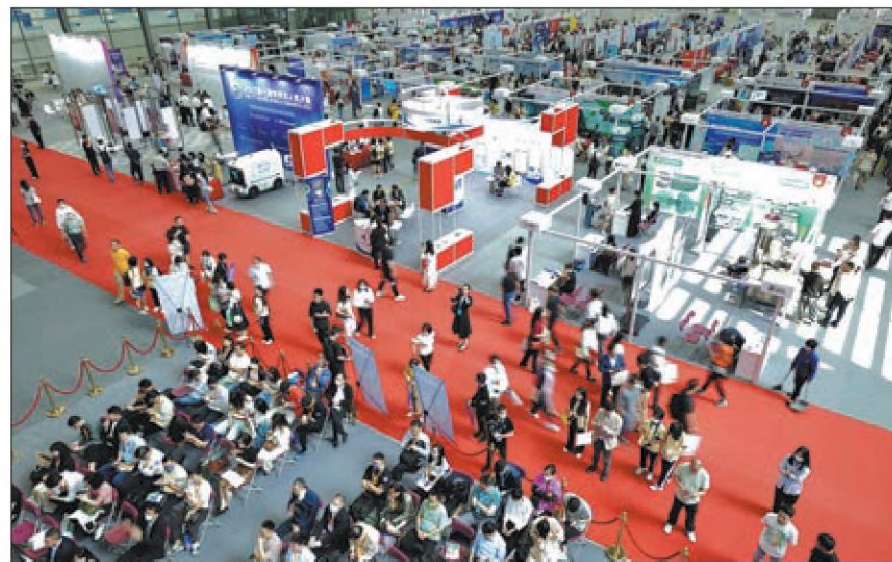


Clockwise from top: Chinese electrical appliance manufacturer Midea organizes a career talk at a university in Boston, United States. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

A career fair dedicated to returning overseas students draws participants in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in April last year. CHEN WEN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

An employer talks with a candidate at a section dedicated to overseas doctoral graduates at a job fair in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, in June last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Participants cheer during an activity aimed at connecting overseas students returning to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, in July last year. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



industrial and supply chains, especially in fields such as integrated circuits, medical equipment, instrumentation, basic software, industrial software and advanced materials.

Wang Qian, China country manager of professional network LinkedIn, said she believes there will be a better future for Chinese enterprises and returnees with PhD degrees.

“Enterprises may need to create an environment that allows high-end talent to exert their greater ability. Similarly, returnees with excellent education experience may need to adapt to the culture of Chinese enterprises.”

Wang Qian, China country manager of professional network LinkedIn

“Enterprises may need to create an environment that allows high-end talent to exert their greater ability. Similarly, returnees with excellent education experience may need to adapt to the culture of Chinese enterprises. So both parties need some time to prepare,” Wang said.

According to LinkedIn data, there are currently more than 90,000 Chinese businesses operating overseas

with overseas recruitment needs. Such enterprises have recruitment demands for as many as 4.5 million overseas positions.

Recruiting someone with a PhD degree is different from someone with a master's or bachelor's degree, as the latter usually master general skills, while PhD students are likely people with specific work experience in a particular field, said Wang.

“For example, if someone completes PhD studies at a lab of a foreign university, that means he or she specializes in research in a very specific field. If a company believes such a field matches the technologies that it currently needs, it will look for candidates from those labs,” she said.

Liu said Midea started recruiting Chinese students studying overseas in 2017, but it only accounted for fewer than 10 percent of its total recruitment at that time. It has since grown to over 10 percent, she added.

Wang from LinkedIn said Chinese tech companies are increasingly eyeing highly educated returnees from universities in the fields of science and engineering in countries such as Singapore and the UK.

“Although the overall size of recruitment among companies has decreased due to the macroeconomic environment, the proportion of recruiting overseas returnees has increased. For many companies, their number of positions offered to highly educated returnees increased by 50 to 100 percent last year compared with the previous year,” she said.

For Midea, the increasing need for PhD graduates from overseas is derived from the group's adjustment in its main strategy, which focuses on a forward-looking vision to secure leading technological ability for the future, said Liu.

“That requires future-oriented technological R&D capabilities, and thus has led to our change in need for talent,” Liu said.

The Shanghai Institute of Material Medical at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which conducts R&D into new drugs, started overseas recruitment in 2018. In the following year, more than 10 Chinese with PhD degrees and outstanding work experience overseas joined the institute as principal investigators.

“Over the past years, we've continued to escalate our scale to recruit returnees from overseas. It has also come as a result of China's development in the pharmaceutical field,” said Piao Song, head of recruitment at the institute.

“While Shanghai is gathering pace to build itself into a science and technology innovation center, talent at all levels are welcome. We offer young researchers job positions as principal investigators, which means they can work on projects according to their own ideas, and this is very different from following the boss at a lab overseas,” she said.

Industry insiders have noted that PhD graduates from domestic universities are competitive as well. They possess some other advantages.

“For example, they may have profound networking with local academic and industrial circles, and have more practical experience of working on domestic projects,” said Wang.

Jasmine Jiang, cofounder of Zhike, which provides career counseling for job seekers, said, “They may have a better understanding of the domestic innovation system, so that they may have more chances to push their innovative technologies into industrialization.”

Overseas educated Chinese returning for job opportunities

By ZHOU WENTING

Xu Yu, 30, who graduated from a Spanish university with a PhD in chemistry last year, recently began considering job opportunities in Chinese companies and returning to China for work.

He used to prioritize working as a teacher at a university in either China or Spain, but gradually changed his mind due to the excessively fierce competition.

“Ultimately, I felt that staying with family is a main concern for

me when deciding where to find a job, and my family is in China. Also, the salary provided by businesses, which is usually double or even triple what a university can offer, is fairly attractive,” said Xu, a native of Qingdao, Shandong province.

“China is a land of opportunities nowadays. I don't think it is a second-best option to return to China for work,” he said.

Some highly educated returnees and human resources specialists said that as Chinese businesses and institutions are becoming increas-

ingly competitive in key industries, and as they offer an increasingly open and diversified corporate culture, they are gaining popularity among those with overseas education backgrounds.

“I don't think there's a big difference between working at home and abroad now. Perhaps in around 2010, people might believe it was better to work abroad or in a foreign-funded company, but people's concept of job hunting has changed,” said Xu.

Jasmine Jiang, co-founder of

Zhike, which provides career counseling for job seekers, mainly those educated in the United States, said that the number of returnees was rising, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. China becoming stronger and shrinking job opportunities in the US were among the factors affecting their decisions, she said.

“These returnees are targeted candidates for Chinese businesses with cross-border business and those seeking international expansion, and the job titles, salaries and

benefits they offer are competitive,” she said, adding that returnees in the fields of public health as well as data science and computer science are favored by Chinese enterprises in recent years.

Many Chinese companies have reached a phase of development that the platforms and career opportunities provided allow highly educated returnees to continue to deepen in their research fields and exert their talent, said Jiang.

Li Yuyang, who is expected to graduate with a master's degree

in international health management from a university in the United Kingdom next year, said that she plans to return to China for work after graduation, and will consider credible private companies with rapid development and abundant opportunities for personal growth.

“For me, an ideal job is China-based and involves regular international exchanges,” said Li, a native of Ningbo, Zhejiang province.

When looking for an employer, she said she will pay attention to the corporate culture, whether it allows diversity, values employee development and encourages innovation.

CHINA

Jilin family preserves ancient knotting art

Xu Xiaoxue, an inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage in the province, keen to pass on the skill to more people

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

Xu Xiaoxue said she requires nothing but a single thread to connect the world with China and its intangible cultural heritage. Her skillful hands can create exquisite Chinese knots by meticulously intertwining a single thread and some beads, exhibiting a rare display of intangible cultural heritage to the world.

Hailing from Jilin province, Xu, 41, said: "I will never forget the words of my mother-in-law. When I started learning the knotting skills, she told me that knotting embodies people's hopes for life."

Her husband's family is in the business of making the decorative art that dates back to ancient times when people tied knots to record events. According to her, the tradition of the family's skills in knot tying can be traced back to the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Xu started to learn the craft of creating Chinese knots from her mother-in-law, Yu Hongyan, in 2005. As a third-generation inheritor of the provincial intangible cultural heritage of knotting in Jilin, Yu was proficient in various folk crafts such as knot tying, straw weaving and willow weaving and had her own unique understanding of knotting art.

Under Yu's guidance, Xu gradually mastered various techniques such as flower knotting, rope knotting and straw weaving, becoming the fourth generation inheritor.

To rejuvenate the traditional art, Xu constantly explored innovative techniques. She continued to innovate and create hand-knotted rope products that cater to contemporary aesthetic demands.

"Artistic innovation knows no bounds," she said. "As knotting craftsmanship has entered a new era, I hope to actively develop new products that not only showcase exquisite traditional folk craftsmanship but are also accepted and recognized by the market."

Building upon her mastery of over 500 traditional flower knotting art, she has rediscovered over 50 ancient techniques and developed more than 30 new ones.

Xu has also made innovations in the selection of materials and color combinations, making her rope knotting handicrafts more dynamic



Clockwise from top: Xu Xiaoxue (right) poses with three visitors while attending a fair to promote Chinese knots she made in Changchun, Jilin province. Xu works on one of her knotting works at her studio in Changchun. Xu introduces her works to some visitors at a promotion event in Changchun. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

and vibrant. "Traditional Chinese knotting primarily uses materials such as hemp, cotton and polyester cotton threads," she said.

"In addition to these traditional materials, I have developed some new environmentally friendly materials suitable for contemporary trends."

Furthermore, Xu has integrated jewelry, jade, precious metals, wood carvings and other handcrafted items into the ropes, transforming the form of knots from flat to three-dimensional, designing them uniquely into exquisite handicrafts.

In terms of color combinations, Xu has gone beyond the bright red and

yellow colors of traditional Chinese knots, conducting color tone comparisons among thousands of colors to design color schemes suitable for different age groups, presenting this ancient art of Chinese knotting in a completely new light.

Since Xu founded her own brand *Rope Search For* in 2009, she has

taken it upon herself to inherit the art of knotting and promote knotting culture.

She actively pursues creative inheritance and innovative development, driving the protection and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of knotting in Jilin.

"The inheritance and develop-

ment of intangible cultural heritage rely on systematic protection in terms of learning, teaching, application, production and research," said Xu. "And the key lies in the people."

Therefore, while building her own business, she took on apprentices to pass on her skills and conducted public welfare training courses.

So far, she has conducted nearly 200 knotting art training sessions in primary and secondary schools, universities and communities.

She has taken on over 700 apprentices at home and abroad, helping more than 100 apprentices of them establish their own stores or studios in over 50 cities nationwide.

In order to involve more people in the inheritance of knotting skills and to allow the knotting project to help more individuals, she has assisted women in mountainous regions in starting their own businesses.

"I provided them threads and patterns bearing the brand name and told them the required craftsmanship specifications," she said.

"After collecting their finished products, I sold them collectively to help them improve their income."

To bring the art of knotting to more people, Xu also published short videos via platforms such as Douyin and Weibo, continuously expanding the influence and dissemination of knotting art, especially among young people.

She has also established stores in cities such as Changchun in Jilin, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Dongguan in Guangdong province, and Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Through simultaneous promotion on online platforms and offline entities, Xu received over 100,000 customers annually.

During the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Xu represented her skills at the Winter Olympics site, demonstrating the unique knotting techniques and works from Jilin to more than 1,700 visitors across the world.

"I felt that the thread in my hand was even more powerful when I was able to connect the intangible heritage projects of Jilin, Chinese traditional culture, and the world with a single thread," she said. "It filled me with the power to help more people understand intangible cultural heritage."

Contact the writers at zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Support from Suzhou benefits Xinjiang students

By ZHENG CAIXIONG

zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Ning Lianfeng, headmaster of Artux Kunshan Yucai School, is proud to see how the school has evolved during her time in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Before Ning left the city of Artux for home, a "future classroom" had been built, connecting it with educational resources in Kunshan city, which is under the administration of Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

"Students in the 'future classroom' in Xinjiang can now attend classes taught by renowned teachers in Suzhou," she said.

Meanwhile, renowned teachers from Suzhou can also be invited to give special lectures for students in Artux, she added.

Ning, who is originally from Suzhou, reluctantly bade farewell to teachers and students on campus when her time in Xinjiang ended in early July.

Xie Xiaogang, deputy headmaster of Artux Kunshan Yucai School, traveled to all high schools in Artux during his four and a half years in Xinjiang to establish a joint team for junior high school Chinese language teaching.

Xie also taught more than 20 local Chinese language teachers. According to authorities, Suzhou has sent 111 officials and 840 skilled professionals to aid Xinjiang's development and has established nearly 800 projects in the northwestern Chinese region since 2010.

The officials and professionals from Suzhou have drawn on the wisdom and experience of Suzhou's development, focusing on practicality and innovation, and working

together with their Xinjiang counterparts on the path of high-quality development, authorities said.

In addition to educational aid to Xinjiang, Suzhou has invested in science and technology, new energy, culture, new materials, medical and agricultural projects in its targeted aid to cities and counties in Xinjiang, including Horgos and Artux cities and Gongliu county.

Horgos is an important window for China to open to the West and a "golden port" connecting Asian and European continents. Its foreign trade, cross-border e-commerce and related industries have developed rapidly in recent years.

To meet the growing demand, Horgos Technical School, which was built by Suzhou's Xinjiang-Aid Working Group, closely follows the local situation and has opened 10 program majors including international trade, e-commerce and modern logistics.

The school, which officially started operation in 2020, now has more than 1,400 students.

In Artux, a Kunshan medical team has conducted a mentorship program to guide and train local medical staff and has promoted the construction of a comprehensive medical technology building, while carrying out major cancer and pre-delivery screening for local obstetrics and pregnant women.

Since the establishment of a digital angiography operating room in Gongliu, more than 200 cardiac surgeries have been carried out, while in Horgos, doctors from Suzhou have promoted the establishment of the city's first emergency and intensive care medicine unit.

According to authorities, the new



A student reads at the library of Artux Kunshan Yucai School in Artux, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

campus of Artux People's Hospital is fully funded by Kunshan.

Suzhou authorities said the city has contributed a total of 6.98 billion yuan (\$983 million) in aid to Xinjiang. They said the city will seek common development with Xinjiang, comprehensively strengthen two-way cooperation and deepen integration to promote the high-quality development of aid to the region.

Yu Mingsheng, vice-chairman of Xinjiang Federation of Industry and Commerce, said he hoped to construct an exchange and cooperation platform for enterprise between Xinjiang and Suzhou to promote high-quality socioeconomic development.

Yu said Xinjiang expects to deepen industrial synergy in new energy, new materials and related sectors and expand cooperation in trade logistics, foreign investment, trade facilitation, cultural tourism, and agricultural and related industries in the months to come. In early August he led an inspection delegation to visit Suzhou and held meetings with officials and entrepreneurs to expand cooperation.

Redesigning *hanfu* in the post-2000 era

JINAN — At a *hanfu* or traditional Chinese dress workshop in Caoxian county, East China's Shandong province, dressmakers are cutting creamy white silk and sewing a dress with golden silk thread.

Li Zhen, who runs the company, said that traditional *hanfu* are mostly long dresses, making summer the off-season for buying them. However, the company has designed shorter versions this summer, featuring half-skirts and midi skirts, to meet the needs of customers during the warm weather.

"We consulted with the designers online, and the designs of our products were adjusted several times to our satisfaction," Li said.

As a small county famous for e-commerce and *hanfu*, Caoxian is actively exploring new consumer trends to turn summer from off-season into peak season.

The willingness of consumers to buy speaks for itself. In the exhibition hall of Youai Yuncang, a *hanfu* center, a simple and elegant dress attracts much attention. "This is our new product for the season, but it doesn't have a name, because it sold out as soon as it hit the shelf," said Li Zilei, head of the center, adding that the dress is made of acetate imitation fabric. Compared with the traditional horse-faced skirt, it has no folds, and is thinner and more of a drape, suitable as daily wear for female consumers of all ages.

"I like to wear a horse-faced skirt like this with light fabrics in summer. It's cool and beautiful," said Hu Xinyue, a *hanfu* fan.

With the increasing exposure of traditional Chinese clothing such as *hanfu* and the horse-faced

skirts, the neo-Chinese style, a mixture of classical attire and everyday clothes, has become a fashionable item for today's young generation.

During the graduation season this year, Gao Yanjun, who runs a *hanfu* business, worked with a number of universities to integrate elements of *hanfu* and school characteristics into the uniforms of students.

"I like traditional Chinese culture," said Xu Qian from Shanghai. "The neo-Chinese style clothing features traditional Chinese cultural attributes and is suitable for daily wear. When I visit historical and cultural tourist attractions with it on and take photos, I feel I'm a protagonist in a beautiful painting."

Kong Fanxing, director of the culture and tourism department of Caoxian, believes that the young generation will provide the impetus for the development of *hanfu* and traditional culture, and thus form a virtuous circle of sustainable development.

Hanfu designers of the post-00s generation are injecting vitality into the industry. Zhang Zichen, a new graduate majoring in fashion design, participated in a *hanfu* experience activity last October and was attracted by traditional Chinese culture. She decided to return to her hometown to design *hanfu*. She has successfully signed a contract with a company.

"The summer fashion boom is a testament to market approval of us, designers of the post-00s generation," she said.

According to data from e-commerce platforms, 1,200 of the top 2,000 online *hanfu* stores in China are from Caoxian. At present, nearly 100,000 people are participating in the business.

The entire process, from dyeing and cutting to sewing the clothes can be completed here within 5 kilometers, forming a complete industrial chain and brand incubation system.

XINHUA



Yao Chixing (right), a manager of a *hanfu* workshop, introduces its products to a customer in Caoxian county, Shandong province. LIANG BEN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

WORLD

By WANG MINGJIE
and DJ CLARK in Paris

One hundred years after the previous Summer Olympics in France, the world's premier sporting event returned to Paris with great fanfare this year and Chinese companies played a significant role in making them the success they were.

Today, innovative Chinese companies are at the forefront of key Olympic and Paralympic Games infrastructure.

Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce giant, provided cloud-based broadcasting capabilities, pioneering AI-powered multicamera replay technology to elevate the viewing experience for fans. Many other Chinese companies also made their mark.

Taishan Sports, a leading supplier of sports equipment from Shandong province, provided the judo and wrestling mats, continuing its legacy of serving in seven Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Hebei Zhangkong Barbell Manufacturing supplied the specialized barbells used in the weightlifting events, building on its reputation as a trusted supplier for the Olympics.

Chris Tung, president of strategic development at Alibaba Group, said: "Our goal is to use technology to innovate the Games. With cloud-based broadcasting, the audience will be able to see more different versions of videos in real time, not only on TV, but also across the short-video platforms and mobile devices they love to watch."

Emphasizing the global significance of the Olympics, he added: "When it happens, it's magical — it captures the attention of people worldwide. Naturally, it forms a powerful platform for us to showcase the innovative applications we've been developing around the world."

Tung underscored the importance of providing an engaging experience for viewers, saying: "There are billions of people who love to watch the Olympics on TV or online. For those not present at the venues, it's important to deliver the Games in a more engaging and exciting way. That's where AI and cloud platforms can elevate the viewing experience by presenting the most exciting moments with enhanced clarity."

At the Paris Olympics, Alibaba introduced its latest multicamera replay service, allowing broadcasters to freeze the action at any moment and rotate around the still image. Tung believes this feature adds a new level of excitement and engagement for viewers.

Alibaba's vision extends beyond enhancing the broadcast experience. The company showcased its technological prowess through events like Alibaba Wonder Avenue on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, where it demonstrated the future of shopping with AI-powered solutions.

Throughout the Games, Alibaba welcomed fans to explore how technology is revolutionizing the e-commerce experience. An intelligent shopping assistant, powered by Qwen, Alibaba Cloud's proprietary language model, offered a personalized service to each visitor, highlighting the power of AI through Qwen's multilingual and image-generation capabilities.

According to Tung, Alibaba's success in leveraging the Olympics is largely due to its youthful and talented workforce. In an interview with China Daily at Alibaba's new headquarters in Hangzhou, Zhejiang



The Eiffel Tower displays the Olympic rings during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. DJ CLARK / CHINA DAILY



Left: The Taishan Sports team prepares the judo venue ahead of the Paris Olympic Games. Right: Tourists pass through the Alibaba Wonder Avenue, a showcase room for Alibaba's technological prowess on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chinese firms shine,
achieve excellence at Games

Companies enhance viewing experience for fans, provide top-class sports equipment

province, before the Olympics, he said: "Our employees are generally young. With over 200,000 employees, the average age is under 35."

Tung said young people are attracted to Alibaba because it offers them the chance to "make a difference" in an environment that is open and where the possibilities are endless.

"Many of our innovative initiatives come from young, newly hired employees who bring forward ideas that benefit both our business and the world," he said. "And they actually see these ideas come to life. We have many examples of this."

Gaining recognition

Alibaba's contributions to the Paris Olympics have been recognized by the International Olympic Committee, or IOC.

During the event, Thomas Bach, president of the IOC, said: "Alibaba plays an essential role when it comes to supporting technology during the Olympic Games, greatly increasing the efficiency and sustainability of Olympic Games operations. Our partnership also extends beyond the Olympic Games, with Alibaba playing a defining role in our Olympic AI Agenda, helping us harness the great potential of AI in a responsible way. All these examples highlight how Alibaba is the perfect partner when it comes to shaping our digital future."

He added that the partnership with Alibaba was a perfect embodiment of the Olympic motto "Faster, Higher, Stronger — Together."

While Alibaba, a major global

“Our goal is to use technology to innovate the Games. ... It forms a powerful platform for us to showcase the innovative applications we've been developing around the world.”

Chris Tung, president of strategic development at Alibaba Group



technology player, was selected to support Olympic operations, smaller Chinese companies also made significant strides on the international stage during the Olympics, including Taishan Sports, which began as a small family-run business in 1978 in Shandong province.

The company has since grown into a global leader in its field and, in 2023, was chosen as the exclusive supplier for judo and wrestling events at the Paris Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Speaking in front of the Eiffel Tower, near the Champ-de-Mars Arena that was chosen to house judo, wrestling and wheelchair rugby events at the Olympics and Paralympics, Zhuang Lulu, the company's France representative, said: "After more than 40 years of dedication, we have supported seven Olympic Games, three Youth Olympic Games, seven World University Games and seven Asian Games."

"We have now become a globally renowned brand that sets and leads international sports equipment standards."

For the judo events alone during the Games, the company provided more than 2,100 high-technology, eco-friendly mats embedded with chips. Additionally, Taishan Sports supplied a range of pre-competition training and indoor fitness equipment for the Chinese national team's training base during the Paris Olympics 2024.

"Each stage of the process — from research and design to raw material supply, production, and quality inspection — is strictly controlled to ensure compliance with international certifications, showcasing Chinese manufacturing on the global stage," Zhuang said.

While Taishan Sports is now a global leader in the sports equipment industry, it is remarkable to consider that more than 40 years ago, the company's founder, Bian Zhiliang, started it all from his own home, working on a kang, a traditional heatable brick bed common in northern China.

"At that time, there was no factory. We worked right on a kang bed, sewing these mats by hand. We had no specialized equipment, just our hands, a few large needles and a couple of scissors. We even used a kitchen knife to cut the judo mats and stitched them together," Bian said in an interview at his factory museum in the small town of Laoling, Shandong province.

Bian explained that Taishan Sports was able to provide the judo and wrestling mats for the Paris Olympics and Paralympics due to its innovative products and unparalleled global service.

"It's not just about the mats, we're showcasing our new leading materials to the world. Our products now account for over 60 percent of training and competition needs across more than 200 countries and regions," he said. "This included the Tokyo Olympics, where judo, Japan's national sport, used Taishan mats. Our materials demonstrate unmatched technological innovation and quality, especially in ensuring athletes' safety."

According to Bian, Taishan Sports has been one of the largest equipment suppliers in Olympic history. The company's equipment witnessed athletes winning 122 gold medals out of the total 302 at the Beijing Olympics, a feat unmatched by any other global company.

In recognition of Taishan Sports' work and service during the Paris Games which was marked by "zero errors, zero malfunctions, and zero complaints", Bian was appointed honorary vice-chairman of the International Judo Federation during the event.

In addition to Taishan Sports, Chinese manufacturer Zhangkong Barbell from Hebei province also

made a significant impact at the Paris Olympics, serving as the exclusive supplier of weightlifting equipment for the Games.

The company first entered the Olympic stage at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, breaking a six-time Olympic streak held by Japanese companies as the sole suppliers of Olympic barbells.

Building on its experience from the Beijing Olympics, Zhangkong Barbell went on to supply equipment for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, and now the 2024 Paris Olympics, marking its fourth appearance as the Olympic weightlifting equipment supplier.

"The production of specialized equipment for the Paris Olympics began in October 2023," Zhang Zhiguo, the company's general manager, told People's Daily. "We assembled a technical team to conduct extensive experiments and tests, ultimately creating products that meet both the aesthetic requirements of the Organizing Committee and the quality standards of the International Weightlifting Federation."

High standards

Although weightlifting equipment may seem straightforward, it demands exceptionally high technical standards during manufacturing.

"In the past, weight plates were secured with screws and rubber rings. Upon impact, gaps would form between the rubber ring and the metal plate, potentially causing misalignment and affecting the concentricity and stability of the plates," explained Zhang.

To address these issues, the company developed its own press machine using integrated pressing technology, which can produce a rough weight plate in just 30 minutes, doubling production efficiency and effectively eliminating alignment problems.

The barbells, designed for long-term use despite impacts and vibrations, require raw materials with extremely high tensile strength, elastic limits, and fatigue resistance. To further reduce barbell vibrations, the company updated its original rubber formula.

"The improved weight plates now come to a stop after a secondary bounce, with a maximum bounce height of just 10 centimeters, exceeding national standards and increasing the product qualification rate from 60 percent to 95 percent," Zhang said.

"We share the same aspiration as our athletes — to shine on the Olympic stage for our country. Looking ahead, we aim to develop and produce more products that support national fitness and youth sports development, with the goal of creating a globally recognized Chinese sports brand."

This summer in Paris, it has been evident that Chinese companies have not only contributed to the success of the Games but have also showcased China's emergence as a global leader in technology and manufacturing. Their innovations and commitment to excellence have made a substantial impact on both Olympic and Paralympic events, demonstrating their ability to support athletes of all abilities and furthering China's standing on the world stage.

Contact the writers at wangmingjie@mail.chinadailyhk.com.

Volunteers cherish chance to take part in Olympics

By WANG MINGJIE in Paris

As the spotlight shifted from the Olympic Games to the Paralympic events in Paris, the stories of Chinese volunteers who made their mark during the Games are emerging as a testament to international camaraderie and cultural exchange. Among them, Zheng Jiaxin and Liu Xinyi stand out for their dedication and the unique perspectives they brought to the grand event.

With a remarkable 45,000 volunteers contributing to the Paris 2024 Games, Zheng, a 29-year-old Chinese expatriate who works at the Postal Bank in France, took two weeks off to volunteer during the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Having lived in Paris for seven years after moving from China to study big data and finance, Zheng found volunteering at the Olympics a deeply personal and meaningful endeavor.

"Volunteering for the Paris Olym-

pics was a way for me to give back to the city that has welcomed me with open arms," she said. "It was also an opportunity to celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France."

Zheng's role was crucial in helping manage the influx of spectators and ensuring a smooth experience for everyone involved. Her decision to dedicate part of her annual leave to volunteer highlighted her commitment.

"Even though I sacrificed 10 days of my vacation time, it was worth every moment," she said. "I wanted to repay the kindness I received when I first arrived in Paris. It felt like a way to contribute to a major event in the city I now call my second home."

For Zheng, the Olympics were more than just a series of events, they were a symbol of global unity and cultural exchange.

"We came together with a shared purpose — to showcase the friendly

and united spirit of Chinese volunteers," she said. "Being a part of this global celebration and helping others was incredibly fulfilling. It was a chance to promote not only my own culture but also the values of cooperation and respect."

Zheng's sentiments were echoed by Liu Xinyi, a 25-year-old master's degree student in sociology at Sciences Po Paris, who contributed as a volunteer at the Paris Media Center during the Games.

Liu, who arrived in Paris in August 2021, had been inspired by the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a child.

"I grew up in Beijing and the 2008 Beijing Olympics left a deep impression on me when I was 9 years old. It was the first time I encountered other cultures and foreigners and the first time I was involved in an international event. I remember the openness and inclusiveness of Beijing during that time, so I truly cherish this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said.

At the Paris Media Center, Liu's role involved assisting journalists from around the world and ensuring they had a smooth experience covering the Olympics.

"I was responsible for greeting journalists, helping them navigate the center, and coordinating events," she explained. "The opportunity to use my multilingual skills and interact with media professionals was incredibly rewarding. It also allowed me to see the inner workings of international media coverage up close."

Liu's work came with its challenges, including early mornings and a demanding schedule.

"Waking up at 6 am every day was tough," she admitted. "But the chance to attend news conferences and meet renowned figures, like French historian Patrick Boucheron, made it all worthwhile. The most valuable lesson I gained from being part of the Olympics and Paralympics volunteer team was the



Left: Liu Xinyi, a 25-year-old master's student at Sciences Po Paris, volunteers at the Paris Media Center during the Paris Olympic Games. Right: Zheng Jiaxin, 29, who works at the Postal Bank in France, volunteers near the Louvre in Paris during the Games.



PHOTOS BY DJ CLARK / CHINA DAILY

importance of maintaining curiosity and showing respect and enthusiasm for other cultures. This diversity greatly aided us in providing tailored services to journalists from different countries."

As the Paralympics began, the stories of Zheng and Liu highlighted the significant impact volunteers have had on the Paris 2024 Games. Their contributions

embody a broader spirit of international collaboration and mutual respect, reflecting the values that the Olympics and Paralympics aim to promote.

For both, the memories of their volunteer work will remain a cherished part of their time in Paris and a symbol of their commitment to fostering international understanding.

WORLD

Israelis go on strike in bid to force truce deal

JERUSALEM — Strike action brought parts of Israel to a halt on Monday in a bid to raise pressure on the government to secure the release of the remaining hostages in Gaza, after the military recovered the bodies of six captives.

Relatives and demonstrators have accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of not doing enough to bring the hostages back alive and during mass rallies on Sunday called for a truce deal to help free dozens who remain captive.

The military said on Sunday the bodies of six hostages, who were all captured alive during Hamas' Oct 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the conflict, had been recovered from a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip, prompting outpourings of grief and fury.

The Israeli Health Ministry said post-mortem examinations showed the six had been "murdered ... with several close-range gunshots" shortly before they were found by troops.

The Histadrut trade union called a nationwide strike beginning at 6 am "for the return" of the remaining 97 hostages.

Several major cities across Israel joined the strike, closing schools and municipal services for several hours. Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv was operating "as usual", a spokeswoman told AFP, but



A man takes cover behind a column as smoke and dust billow from an explosion during an Israeli strike on the outskirts of Gaza City on Sunday. OMAR AL-QATTA / AFP

takeoffs were halted for two hours.

The strike followed a day of mass protests on Sunday that saw tens of thousands on the streets of Tel Aviv and elsewhere, part of a series of anti-government rallies during the war. On Monday, protesters again blocked roads in Tel Aviv.

Histadrut chief Arnon Bar-David said he wanted to "stop the abandonment of the hostages", adding that "only our intervention can shake those who need to be shaken", an apparent reference to top Israeli decision-makers who have opposed a truce or stalled after months of negotiations.

Following an intervention by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, Israel's Labor Court ruled the general

strike must end at 2:30 pm, saying the strike had no economic basis and was largely political. Histadrut accepted the ruling.

Fighting continues

In the Gaza Strip, civil defense rescuers said an Israeli strike on Sunday killed 11 people at a school where Israel's military said a Hamas command center was based.

The fighting continued on Monday, coinciding with the second day of localized "humanitarian pauses" to facilitate a vaccination drive after the first confirmed polio case in 25 years.

Louise Wateridge, spokeswoman for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said 87,000 children received a first dose of the polio

vaccine on Sunday in central Gaza.

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini called the inoculation campaign a race against time to reach more than 600,000 children in the war-torn territory of 2.4 million people.

"For this to work, parties to the conflict must respect the temporary area pauses," he said.

The Israeli military campaign against Hamas has so far killed at least 40,786 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry. The UN rights office says most of the dead are women and children.

The Oct 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Positive talks between US, China urged

Expert calls for interactions on trade, finance, instead of resorting to tariffs

By YIFAN XU in Washington
yifanxu@chinadailyusa.com

Positive dialogue and interaction are necessary between the United States and China on finance, trade and economics, instead of resorting to tariffs, an observer has said.

"Such dialogue leads to positive trade interactions," said Anthony Moretti, department head and an associate professor of the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania.

"It increases the potential for foreign-owned businesses in both nations. It carries with it the potential for good jobs for thousands of people."

Moretti referred to the fifth China-US Financial Working Group Meeting held in Shanghai on Aug 15-16.

"There exist two parallel tracks when you think of the US and China," he said.

"The political track is filled with all kinds of negativity from the US. Whether it be tariffs, other forms of sanctions, dubious legislative items or the daily negative rhetoric, not much in the way of positive news comes out of that."

"But the business community understands how essential it is for the US and China to find ways to keep as many doors open as possible and to ensure that optimistic dialogue exists."

Describing the conversation, William Pesek, a columnist focusing on global economics, politics and financial markets, called the "US-China financial stress hotline a well-timed connection" in an Asia Times article.

"The US and China's agreement to name point people to handle future 'financial stress events' in the world's two biggest economies and beyond could hardly be better timed," he said.

"This dialogue framework is the most notable deliverable from last week's meeting of the Financial Working Group created last year following US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's 2023 China visit."

Nicholas Tabor, deputy assistant secretary for international financial markets at the US Treasury Department, said in a speech in June that China and the US account for some 40 percent of global banking assets, and "are the home authority to 12 of the world's 30 global systemically important banks."

"The domestic financial stability of the US and China has significant implications for global financial stability, and our policies have an outsized effect on how financial risks evolve globally," Tabor said.

"Working directly with our Chinese counterparts can help advance many of Treasury's priorities, including our financial stability objective, our climate goals and the effectiveness of our global efforts to combat money laundering and illicit finance."

The process of establishing

channels of communication has progressed, but "much remains to be done," he said.

Moretti said green technology is good for China, the US and the world, so it is meaningful to make efforts to "assist companies ... that create products that are cost-effective and good for the environment."



But the business community understands how essential it is for the US and China to find ways to keep as many doors open as possible and to ensure that optimistic dialogue exists."

Anthony Moretti, department head and an associate professor at Robert Morris University

"(The politicians) know that cooperation in areas such as pandemic research, overcoming food insecurity, and creating good-for-the-climate products brings positive results when China and the US are working together," he said.

US President Joe Biden has touted green initiatives but also announced new tariffs on Chinese imports, including electric vehicles, amid US officials' accusations about Chinese manufacturing "overcapacity" and their concerns about "national security."

Make no sense

"If you say you believe in something, then demonstrate a real commitment to it," Moretti said, adding that the tariffs imposed by the Biden administration on Chinese EVs "make no sense".

"Washington wants a healthier climate, and yet it is deliberately blocking cars that are affordable, of good quality and good for the globe from US consumers. It defies common sense to preach a message of being climate-friendly and then slam the door on one such opportunity," he said.

"If the US showed a commitment to long-term strategic thinking, as China has when it comes to the most modern technologies, then it would enjoy strong market share for such products."

"They did not. So the criticism of China for doing so is weak."

Moretti said more governors and mayors are leading business delegations to China.

"Those local and state leaders understand that American jobs created by Chinese-based companies are as good as those from US-based companies. That is another example of win-win cooperation. We need to see more of that."

Briefly

IRAN

Weather blamed for Raisi helicopter crash

The helicopter crash that killed Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi was primarily caused by weather conditions that included thick fog, Iran's state TV said on Sunday. The main cause of the crash was the "complex climatic and atmospheric conditions of the region in the spring", the special board investigating the dimensions and causes of the helicopter accident said, according to state broadcaster IRIB. The report added that "the sudden emergence of a thick mass of dense and rising fog" caused the helicopter's collision into the mountain. It ruled out deviations from the flight route, incorrect route information and external interference as factors in the crash.

UNITED STATES

Hotel staff in walkout as contract talks fail

Some 10,000 US hotel workers began a multiday strike in several cities on Sunday after contract talks with hotel operators stalled, the Unite Here union said. Workers at 24 hotels are on strike in some major travel destinations, including San Francisco, Honolulu and Seattle, it said. The strike comes amid a 9 percent increase in domestic travel for the Labor Day weekend compared with last year, according to AAA booking data. Strikes could also soon start in Baltimore, New Haven, Oakland and Providence, the union said, as hotel workers and operators struggle over wages and pandemic-era job cuts.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Stormy waters

People wade through a storm surge along Manila Bay amid heavy rains brought by Tropical Storm Yagi in Manila on Monday. The fierce storm, which has battered the Philippines for the second day, has caused floods and landslides, killing at least 14 people, officials said on Monday.

JAM STA ROSA / AFP



Germany's far right wins regional poll

By JONATHAN POWELL in London
jonathan@mail.chinadailyuk.com

Germany's far right has achieved its most significant regional electoral triumph since World War II, as the Alternative for Germany, or AfD, party won a major victory in the eastern state of Thuringia, a result it has hailed as a "historic success".

The victory on Sunday for the anti-immigrant AfD represents a setback for Germany's political center, particularly for Chancellor Olaf Scholz's ruling coalition of three parties, which suffered losses in the vote.

"The results for the AfD in Saxony and Thuringia are worrying," Scholz said in a statement to Reuters. "Our country cannot and must not get used to this. The AfD is damaging Germany. It is weakening the economy, dividing society and ruining our country's reputation."

The AfD, founded in 2013, won 32.8 percent of the vote in Thuringia,

outperforming the mainstream center-right Christian Democratic Union, which secured 23.6 percent.

In the neighboring state of Saxony, the AfD finished a close second, by just half a percentage point, to the Christian Democratic Union, which leads the national opposition.

A new populist-left party, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, secured third position in both states.

Dealing a blow to Scholz

The far right's success deals a blow to Scholz's coalition just a year before the federal election, with his Social Democratic Party and coalition partners, the Greens and liberal Free Democrats, all performing poorly in Sunday's vote.

Despite the AfD achieving a historic first by becoming the strongest party in a state election, it is almost certain to be excluded from power as all other rival parties have so far ruled out any direct cooperation with it, Deutsche Welle reported.

The AfD is led in Thuringia by Bjorn Hocke, regarded as one of the party's most extreme figures.

Hocke has faced legal consequences twice this year alone for employing prohibited Nazi slogans during his campaign events and is known for his frequent use of Nazi-like rhetoric.

Speaking after the vote, Hocke said he felt "a great, great deal of pride" and told public broadcaster ARD that his party would analyze the results before approaching potential coalition partners.

When questioned about his party's classification as extremist, he said: "Please stop stigmatizing me. We are the number one party in Thuringia ... You don't want to classify one-third of the voters in Thuringia as right-wing extremists."

The AfD, campaigning on a central demand for drastic changes in immigration policy, ran on a platform calling for the mass deportation of refugees from Germany.

Washington event weaves cultures together as Guizhou shines

By MINLU ZHANG in Washington
minluzhang@chinadailyusa.com

The 22nd Washington Chinese Culture Festival began on Saturday, fostering new opportunities for diverse cultures to connect and learn from each other.

The crowd often erupted in cheers during the lion dance performances, particularly when Anaje Kilpatrick, an African American, performed. Many attendees were surprised to see a non-Chinese person participating in the traditional dance.

Kilpatrick has been practicing Chinese kung fu for six years. "I started with tai chi. Then I joined Wong People at the Chinese Cultural

Center in Chinatown, where I began learning kung fu. Since lion dance incorporates many kung fu stances, that's how I got into it, and I love it," Kilpatrick told China Daily.

Meanwhile, as China seeks to boost foreign tourism, the southwestern province of Guizhou is taking it one step further by participating in Saturday's event to promote its tourism.

At the festival, Nafisa Rustan, a volunteer at Guizhou's ethnic groups workshop, told China Daily: "We are showing the different minorities of Guizhou. There's Miao (people), and there's Dong (people). And there's all the drawings and the figurines, and they all represent one of the 17 minorities in Guizhou."

Rustan, who is also from an ethnic group, expressed her enthusiasm: "I just like learning about other minorities ... And I think it's also really awesome sharing the culture of the Chinese."

Five workshops at the event showcased Guizhou's rich cultural heritage, including traditional batik, ethnic clothing and a photo exhibition of its scenic beauty.

"The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive," volunteer Zou Ying told China Daily. "Everyone is saying that if they visit China, they must go to Guizhou."

Attendee Nicole He shared her surprise at seeing Guizhou's traditional batik art in person.

"I had seen a documentary about Guizhou's batik on TV, but I never expected to encounter it here. The colors in batik aren't always easy to get right on the first try. You need to understand the process and work on it for a long time. These materials are rare, so I was amazed to see them here in DC," she told China Daily.

The most common feedback from visitors about the Guizhou workshops was that they were "very unique", volunteer Maggie Wu told China Daily. The opportunity to witness authentic culture brought to Washington had many foreign guests excited, Wu said.

It was a great platform for showcasing Chinese culture, she said.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com

readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:

x.com/chinadaily

facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON

National Press Bldg, Suite 1108

529 14th Street NW

Washington, DC 20045

Tel: 202-662-7249

Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO

225 Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco,
CA 94104

Tel: 415-348-8288

Fax: 415-348-8386

SEATTLE

800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100

Seattle, WA 98104

Tel: 206-922-2868

HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford, Suite 100

Houston, TX 77077

Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA | TORONTO

4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor

Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8

Tel: 416-481-5706

CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 - No. 1411

BUSINESS

MORE NEWS WHENEVER YOU WANT IT · CHINADAILY.COM.CN/BUSINESS

Briefly

Urbanization effort in Cixi gathers pace

The urbanization of Cixi in Ningbo, Zhejiang province has gathered speed as a participating State-owned builder reported major construction progress on a key livelihood project. According to China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp, its builders delivered late last month a kindergarten in Xinchenghe area in Cixi. The local government has labeled it as a key livelihood project since it will cater to pre-school education and serve people living in the newly developed area of the city. CR24G said more livelihood projects supporting the development of the Xinchenghe area are expected to come up in the short term.

Listed firms record steady performance

Companies listed on China's A-share market maintained steady operations in the first half of the year, data from the China Association for Public Companies showed. The combined operating revenue of the listed companies reached 34.89 trillion yuan (\$4.9 trillion) during the period, while their net profits stood at 3.13 trillion yuan, the association said, citing the H1 financial statements of 5,340 firms.

Logistics sector sustains growth

China's logistics sector continued steady expansion in August thanks to growing logistics demand, an industry report showed on Monday. The index tracking the country's logistics market stood at 51.5 percent in August, up 0.5 percentage point from the previous month, according to the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing. The warehousing index gained 3.7 percentage points compared with the July figure, reaching 50.2 percent in August, data from the federation revealed.

Chinese mainland shares close lower

Chinese mainland stocks closed lower on Monday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index down 1.1 percent to 2,811.03 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 2.11 percent lower at 8,172.21 points. The combined turnover of stocks covered by the two indices stood at 705.73 billion yuan (\$99.36 billion), down from 876.59 billion yuan recorded the previous trading day.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY



An employee works on the production line of a combine harvester manufacturer in Qingzhou, Shandong province. WANG JILIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Policy talk heats up on mixed factory data

Additional support measures seen as necessary to reach annual growth target

By ZHOU LANXU and OUYANG SHIJIA

China's manufacturing data put up a mixed performance in August, thus increasing the necessity of launching additional macroeconomic policy support measures to ensure the achievement of the country's annual growth target, economists and analysts said.

The Caixin China General Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, a privately gauged indicator of the operating conditions of the country's manufacturing sector, rose to 50.4 in August, up from 49.8 in July, media group Caixin said in a report on Monday.

Rising past the 50-mark that separates expansion from contraction, the latest data signaled that conditions in the manufacturing sector improved following a brief deterioration in July. The rate of improvement was only marginal, however, the report said.

Survey respondents revealed that better underlying demand conditions and promotional efforts underpinned the latest rise in new orders, though export orders were subdued, falling marginally for the first time so far this year.

Monday's data contrasted with the official PMI figure released on Saturday.

The official PMI for the manufacturing sector dropped from 49.4 in July to 49.1 in August, staying in contraction territory for the fourth consecutive month, said the National Bureau of Statistics.

Wang Zhe, a senior economist at Caixin Insight Group, said: "The Caixin manufacturing PMI for August returned to expansionary territory, but the growth was limited. Considering the government's ambitious annual economic growth target, the challenges and difficulties in stabilizing growth over the coming months will be substantial."

China's GDP expanded by 5 percent year-on-year in the first half, in line with the annual growth target. The growth momentum continued in July as consumer spending recovered, the speed of which, however, missed expectations while property woes continued to drag down fixed-asset investment.

"Prominent issues such as insufficient domestic demand, significant uncertainties in external demand and weak market optimism persist. There is still room for fiscal and monetary policy adjustments. There is an increasingly urgent need for China to enhance policy support and ensure the effective implementation of earlier policies," Wang said.

Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said at a symposium last week that the PBOC will maintain a supportive monetary policy stance and explore incremental policy measures. The PBOC bought a net face value of government bonds worth 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion) in open market operations in August, injecting liquidity into the market.

Huang Hanquan, head of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, which is affiliated with the National Development and Reform Commission, said policymakers should consider initiating a batch of new incremental policies.

"On the fiscal policy front, we can optimize the utilization of existing funds and explore ways to revitalize government assets. On the monetary policy front, there is room for further monetary policy easing, including reductions of the reserve requirement ratio and interest rate cuts.

"China's economy will continue the recovery trend with a series of stimulus policies taking effect gradually, especially the use of funds for supporting the implementation of major national strategies, building up security capacity in key areas, driving large-scale equipment upgrades and promoting trade-in programs for consumer goods," Huang said.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxu@chinadaily.com.cn

Bank profits stable against all odds in H1

By LIU ZHIHUA and ZHOU LANXU

Despite challenges like lending rates trending down, China's commercial banks have reported stable revenues and profits during the first half of the year, thanks to their cost cuts and improved efficiency, the interim results of listed banks showed.

Experts, however, urged them to optimize the financial resource allocations made for the real economy and key sectors, and seek new growth points, amid market talk the country may further adjust housing credit policies and lower existing mortgage rates.

China is considering allowing homeowners to refinance as much as \$5.4 trillion of mortgages to lower borrowing costs for millions of families and boost consumption, Bloomberg reported on Friday.

According to the report, homeowners will be able to renegotiate terms with their current lenders before January, when banks typically reprice mortgages. They will also be allowed to refinance with a different bank for the first time since the global financial crisis of 2008-09.

Lou Feipeng, a researcher at Postal Savings Bank of China, said reducing existing mortgage rates may have a negative short-term impact on banks' operations.

"However, even with rate reductions, mortgages still represent high-quality assets for banks compared to other loans, and by lowering the rates to discourage early payments, banks will not incur extra costs and can continue to profit from such assets," Lou said.

Moreover, by lowering existing mortgage rates, they can encourage consumer spending, thereby facilitating economic recovery that can benefit banks in the long run, he said.

Dong Ximiao, chief researcher at Merchants Union Consumer Finance, said commercial banks should continue to increase their support for the real economy, particularly for small and micro-sized enterprises. That will optimize the allocation of financial resources and create new growth points via larger loan volumes, compensating for lower rates.

He also said banks should enhance the ability to attract high-quality deposits and reduce liability costs by improving comprehensive services. They should also actively develop high-value-added intermediary businesses such as wealth management.

Vivian Xue, director of Asia-Pacific Financial Institution at Fitch Ratings, however, said a mandatory, blanket rate reduction across all outstanding residential mortgages is less likely, as mortgage pricing typically varies significantly across regions and borrower groups.

Moreover, a broad-scale and material lowering of rates may add to the pressure on banks' net interest margins and profitability, Xue said.

Dong also said lowering mortgage rates should be used as a special policy tool, rather than regularly, although it is fair to cut mortgage rates of existing loans for second homes since such reductions have been applied to first homes.

Contact the writers at liuzhihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Bright spots stand out in film market slump

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

China's summer film box office from June 1 to Aug 31 grossed 11.64 billion yuan (\$1.63 billion) from 285 million admissions as audiences, particularly younger viewers, patronized a range of genres against the backdrop of a market slump.

According to statistics from the National Film Administration, Chinese films pulled in 8.48 billion yuan, or nearly 73 percent of the total. The percentage of box office generated by the imported films in the total box office increased to 27 percent compared to 12 percent in the same period last year.

Chen Jin, a data analyst at LightHouse, said: "The supply of films during this summer was relatively sufficient in terms of quantity, and themes were also more diversified."

Successor, *A Place Called Silence*, *Alien: Romulus*, *Moments We Shared* and *Deadpool and Wolverine* were the highest-grossing films this summer. But, overall, compared to the same period last year, both box-office revenue and audience numbers fell significantly.

According to the Chinese entertainment service platform Maoyan, both box-office receipts and the number of moviegoers this summer shrunk by nearly half. Some sections among regular filmgoers steered clear of cinemas as there were fewer popular films.

Only two films managed to surpass the 1 billion yuan mark in box-office earnings this summer. The success of *A Place Called Silence* and *Alien: Romulus*, ranking second and third among the Top 5, respectively, showed that suspense and thriller genres have been growing in popularity over the past two years.

The proportion of young viewers under the age of 20 increased by 1.2 percentage points during this summer. Although the growth rate is relatively small, it is the first rebound in the proportion of

young audiences since 2020.

In the first half, box-office receipts totaled 23.77 billion yuan, down 9.51 percent year-on-year, and over 70 percent of the level reached in the same period of 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic).

Chinese films grossed 18.53 billion yuan, or 78 percent of the total. Foreign films raked in 5.19 billion yuan, or 22 percent of the total. In all, 548 million tickets were sold in the first half, down more than 9 percent year-on-year.

According to listed film production companies' financial reports, box-office receipts during Spring Festival and Tomb Sweeping Day broke records. They, however, remained flat in May and June as there were no blockbusters.

In the first half, China Film Co Ltd produced and released 18 films, netting 12.88 billion yuan at the box office, accounting for 69.5 percent of the total earned by Chinese films. That, however, was not enough to boost its financials as both revenue and net profit declined.

During the first half, China Film's revenue was 2.12 billion yuan, down 26 percent year-on-year, while profit was down 43 percent at 204 million yuan.

Similar declines were seen at movie producers such as Tangle Film and Television, Huayi Brothers, Bona Film, Hengdian Film and Television.

Huayi Brothers reported a first-half revenue of 308 million yuan, down 9 percent year-on-year, and generated a net profit of 24.71 million yuan, up 117 percent, thanks mainly to income from investments.

Two companies, however, bucked the trend. Shanghai Film's first-half revenue rose more than 2 percent year-on-year to 381 million yuan, which lifted its profit by nearly 5 percent to 69.08 million yuan.

Enlight Media's revenue surged by more than 120 percent year-on-year to 1.33 billion yuan, and profit increased by more than 133 percent to 473 million yuan.

Kuaishou goes full throttle on AI video tool

By FAN FEIFEI

fanyifeifei@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese video-sharing platform Kuaishou Technology is doubling down on artificial intelligence-powered video generation models and plans to provide more data traffic support for premium content creators.

This is part of the company's efforts to accelerate its monetization push and improve the production of high-quality video content.

Cheng Yixiao, founder and CEO of Kuaishou, said more than 23 million content providers have gained income from the platform in the past year, while the number of creators earning more than 10,000 yuan (\$1,407) each month have increased by 14 percent year-on-year.

Currently, Kuaishou has nearly 400 million daily active users, with the average number of works uploaded by content creators each day surpassing 40 million, and the number of active creators who have over 10,000 followers up 20 percent on a yearly basis, Cheng said.

The company has recently updated its self-developed Kling AI model, which comes with new features such as improved video quality, monthly subscription services for users, image-to-video and video extension capabilities. Currently, Kling has more than 1.6 million users and has generated over 16 million videos.

The move marks the latest effort



A view of the booth of Kuaishou Technology during an expo in Shanghai. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

by the short-video platform to speed up commercialization of products in the highly competitive AI video generation market since US-based AI research company OpenAI, which pioneered the text-to-video AI models with the announcement of Sora in February, took the world by storm.

Released in June, Kling can process text into video clips of up to two minutes long with 1080p resolution, while supporting a variety of aspect ratios, Kuaishou said at the time. The model can interpret prompts to generate high-quality videos that mimic the physical world and create imaginative scenes from text instructions.

Kuaishou will continue to enhance the Kling AI model to further improve its performance, and explore more business-to-business or B2B monetization possibilities, aiming for significant gains in the near future, Cheng said in an earnings call after the company's second-quarter results announcement in August.

Moreover, the company will step up investments to offer data flow support and upgrade algorithms for content creators and livestreaming hosts. According to its latest financial results, gross merchandise volume, or GMV from e-commerce business grew by 15 percent year-on-year to 305.3 billion yuan in the second

quarter.

Ma Shicong, an analyst with Beijing-based internet consultancy Analysys, said Kuaishou has accumulated ample experience and technical strengths in AI, video, livestreaming and algorithms over the past few years.

The company, Ma added, hopes to seek new sources of revenue and speed up its monetization efforts by expanding its footprint in the fast-developing AI-generated content segment amid fierce competition from local rivals such as Douyin.

"AIGC-related technologies will improve the productivity of content production and the process of developing text-to-video generation models necessitates higher requirements for computing capacity, algorithms and high-quality data," said Pan Helin, a member of the Expert Committee for Information and Communication Economy, which is under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

He said more efforts are needed to bolster the efficient circulation of data elements, and expand application scenarios of video generation models in a wider range of segments.

The number of netizens in China had reached nearly 1.1 billion as of June this year, with short-video users accounting for 95.5 percent of the total netizens, according to a report released by the China Internet Network Information Center.

BUSINESSFOCUS



Left: Chinese divers Quan Hongchan (left) and Chen Yuxi celebrate after winning the women's synchronized 10m platform diving gold medal at the Paris Olympics on July 31. ZHANG YUWEI / XINHUA
Right: Plastic slippers are on display at the exhibition hall of a shoemaking company in Wuchuan, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Diving gold sparks Wuchuan's global drive

Guangdong's shoemakers seek to coast on 17-year-old Quan Hongchan's stunning show in Paris and her stylish slippers

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
and LI WENFANG in Guangzhou

In defending her women's 10-meter platform diving title at the just concluded 2024 Paris Olympics, China's Quan Hongchan, 17, not only hit the headlines again, but also popularized plastic clown fish slippers, a Chinese product she wore at the natatorium.

Business opportunities have since boomed for the plastic shoe manufacturers in Wuchuan, a county-level city under the administration of the coastal Zhanjiang city in Guangdong province, hometown of Quan where she is affectionately called Chan Bao or Baby Chan.

On social media, many netizens expressed a desire to buy the "champion-style" slippers Quan wore in Paris, with some even suggesting the footwear symbolizes Guangdong people's relaxed lifestyle. When the gold medalist returned to her Guangdong Experimental High School in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, in late August to share her joy and to teach the students her special water splash minimization technique, she wore the same pair of plastic slippers during her meetings with her teachers and schoolmates.

Yang Dilin, director of the Wuchuan Plastic Shoe Industry Association, urged shoemakers in Wuchuan to seize the "golden opportunities" to carry out technological innovation, bring in high-quality personnel to further enhance the industry and help the city achieve high-quality development in the future.

"Footwear companies should get ready for future production expansion," he said.

Quan's performances are expected to spur sales of plastic slippers and help local plastic shoe factories attract more orders from home and abroad in the following months. According to Yang Jiewei, general manager of Quanxing Shoes Group (Guangdong) Co, the company's plastic shoe orders have increased by at least 10 percent after the Paris Olympics.

Yang's company, a major plastic shoe manufacturer in Wuchuan, produced more than 50 million pairs of plastic shoes with an output value of about 300 million yuan (\$42.2 million) in 2023, with more than 60 percent from overseas sales.

Located in the southwestern part of Guangdong, Wuchuan, known as "the capital of plastic shoes", now boasts more than 400 plastic shoemakers, representing one-third of the country's total.

Plastic shoes, together with mooncakes and down jackets, have now become the three pillar industries in Wuchuan, playing important roles in Wuchuan and Zhanjiang's economic development.

Yang said Wuchuan can now produce more than 2.5 billion pairs of plastic shoes annually, achieving an annual shoe production of more than 8 billion yuan, accounting for nearly one-fourth of Wuchuan's GDP. "Wuchuan's plastic shoe products have now included 10 categories, over 200 varieties of more than 2,000 styles, including Eva fashion



A worker is busy at a plastic shoe production line in Wuchuan, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

shoes, sandals, slippers, flip-flops, rain boots, casual shoes and orthopedic shoes," Yang said.

Wuchuan's plastic shoes are brightly colored and have a wide range of styles, attracting many consumers from home and abroad, he said, adding that plastic slippers, which were once considered tacky in childhood, have recently become fashionable. "Wuchuan, one of the country's three major plastic shoe production bases, has more than 100 independent brands, including four famous trademark brands of Guangdong provincial level and 20 of Zhanjiang city level," said Yang.

"In addition to domestic markets, the plastic shoes Wuchuan compa-

nies produce have been sold to more than 50 countries and regions in Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South America since 2003, as Wuchuan's plastic shoes come in an endless variety of styles and patterns, which can meet people's constantly changing aesthetic needs.

"And in recent years, local shoe manufacturers have been continuously expanding in the ASEAN markets as well."

The shoe industry in Wuchuan covers upstream, midstream and downstream segments, including raw material production, industrial design, mold development and manufacturing, ingredient processing, finished product production, logistics distribution and market

transactions, making Wuchuan's slipper industry strong and competitive, he said.

Meanwhile, the division of labor in the shoe industry is relatively clear, which has driven the development of industries like mechanical equipment manufacturing, transportation, raw material wholesale, product retail and packaging, he said.

Wuchuan should grasp the golden opportunity to further consolidate its position as a major plastic shoe manufacturing base in the country by strengthening the industrial agglomeration effect and improving product quality and competitiveness, he said.

To increase sales, Yang urged the local industry to strengthen the construction of online sales channels and expand market coverage through the internet and e-commerce platforms.

Shoe companies should also be encouraged to participate in various shoe exhibitions both domestically and internationally to enhance the exposure of their products, while brightening brand awareness.

At the same time, shoe companies should also go all out to expand their presence in the global markets, especially the ASEAN markets, while consolidating the traditional markets in Africa and Central and South America in the following years, as the exports of plastic shoes, which constitute a pillar industry in Wuchuan, play a crucial role in the city's economic development, said Yang.

Shoe manufacturers should strictly control the quality of raw materials and establish a sound

quality management system to ensure that every pair of plastic shoes meets high standards.

Yang also urged shoe manufacturers in the city to continue to increase their investment in research and development, actively introduce advanced production technologies and equipment, cultivate and attract excellent design talent, and strengthen cooperation with professional design institutions to deeply understand fashion trends and consumer needs, in order to continuously introduce novel and unique styles in the months to come.

To help Wuchuan increase plastic shoe exports, Zhanjiang Customs has continuously optimized the business environment at the import and export ports and helped local as well as foreign companies to solve their urgent and difficult problems in foreign trade sector.

According to Customs data, Wuchuan shoemakers sold footwear products valued at 96.6 million yuan to the rest of the world in the first seven months of this year, playing a big part in the city's overall economic development.

Insiders have forecast plastic shoes will have even brighter prospects because of the celebrity effect, when manufacturers could produce more fashionable products and further improve quality in the following years.

Li Yongsi contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

'Capital of plastic shoes' embraces innovation, deepens R&D

By ZHENG CAIXIONG
in Guangzhou

Plastic shoe manufacturers in Wuchuan, Guangdong province, are wasting no time in carrying out technological innovation and expanding investment in research and development while gearing up to expand production.

The move aims to meet the growing demand in both domestic and overseas markets for quality plastic shoes after local diver Quan Hongchan, 17, won gold medals at the 2024 Paris Olympics, and was seen wearing local footwear products, popularizing them, said local shoe manufacturers.

Technological innovation is key to companies' development and product competitiveness, said shoe manufacturers in Wuchuan, known as "the capital of plastic shoes".

Wuchuan, which has more than 400 registered plastic shoe manufacturers, now produces more than 2.5

billion pairs of plastic shoes annually.

Ou Yadi, general manager of Wuchuan Zhongtai Shoes Co, said Wuchuan slippers have become fashionable among young people, prompting local shoe manufacturers to invest more in technological innovation and R&D to develop more new products to meet demand.

Ou said a slipper company now has to develop as many as 20 to 30 new products every year and classify different categories such as outdoor, indoor and fashion to meet the lifestyle needs of different groups of people.

"What ordinary people see is just a pair of slippers, but it takes multiple processes from raw materials entering the factory to the final product, and therefore, expanding investment in R&D is a must for companies to expand at home and abroad in the future," he said.

Wuchuan people, who are serious about making plastic slippers, have



A worker operates a shoemaking production line in Wuchuan, Guangdong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

to rely much on innovation to further improve their product quality and develop more fashionable products if

they wish to increase their presence in both domestic and overseas markets in the coming months, he said.

Yang Jiewei, general manager of Quanxing Shoes Group (Guangdong) Co, said the company established the Zhanjiang EVA (ethylene vinyl acetate copolymer) slippers green manufacturing technology research center last year, injecting innovative power into the materials and design of Wuchuan plastic shoes.

The company also introduced fully automated machinery with advanced production technology, complete detection means, strong technical force and strict management, he said.

"While improving production technology, the company has strengthened the investment in product design and R&D and now develops more than 1,000 new types of plastic slippers every year."

Yang said his team always pays attention to hot topics and understands what young people like, then incorporates popular elements into the designs of plastic shoes. He cited

the instance of the clown fish plastic slippers that diving champion Quan wore in Paris, which sparked a spike in demand for them. The slippers Quan wore are made of EVA materials, he said.

Yang's company, which employs about 2,000 people, produced more than 50 million pairs of plastic shoes valued at more than 300 million yuan (\$42.2 million) last year.

Xiao Yanfeng, general manager of Guangdong Guangfusan Footwear Co, said the company would continuously develop new products, reduce costs and improve quality through technology innovation, to meet an expected surge in demand in the coming months.

Guangdong Guangfusan Footwear now produces about 20 million pairs of plastic shoes worth more than 80 million yuan annually. Shoes worth as much as 70.5 million yuan are exported.

Li Yongsi contributed to this story.

COMMENT

Editorials

Planned tariff hikes targeting China self-serving show by US politicians

As the US presidential election approaches, raising tariffs to appear tougher on China may seem a vote-winning choice for politicians in Washington. But as the domestic chorus of opposition indicates, few others are benefiting from them. That is why the United States Trade Representative's Office has again delayed an announcement of its final determination on steep tariff increases on Chinese products including electric vehicles, batteries, semiconductors and solar cells.

Under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, the USTR initiated an investigation to determine whether "China's acts, policies and practices related to technology transfer, intellectual property, and innovation are unreasonable, unjustifiable or discriminatory". The Joe Biden administration in May announced a quadrupling of tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to 100 percent, a doubling of duties on semiconductors and solar cells to 50 percent, as well as new 25 percent tariffs on lithium-ion batteries and other strategic goods including steel to protect US companies from what it claimed was Chinese excess production.

The White House initially said the new tariffs would take effect on Aug 1, but the USTR on July 30 delayed their implementation until sometime in September, saying it needed more time to study the more than 1,100 industry comments it had received. It set a new deadline of Aug 31 to announce the tariff plan. But a USTR spokesman said on Friday the agency "continues to develop the final determination regarding proposed modifications" to tariffs on Chinese goods, adding it will make the final determination public in the coming days.

Various concerns and objections have been expressed, as the planned tariff hikes have not been welcomed by many US industries and even some Congress members. Those critical of the tariffs point to the increased costs they impose on US businesses that rely on imports from China, which affects the profitability, competitiveness and ability of these businesses to offer affordable products to consumers.

Also, many US businesses have complex global supply chains that involve components and products from China, and many companies have complained about the tariffs disrupting their supply chains, leading to uncertainties, delays and increased operational challenges. The tariffs have also negatively impacted US businesses that export their products to China, as the ongoing trade tensions and uncertainties surrounding US-China trade relations have created a volatile and unpredictable business environment.

As a result, concerns have been raised about the long-term consequences of the tariffs, including potential damage to relationships with Chinese partners, loss of market share, and the difficulties faced in making long-term investment decisions.

And, since the costs of the tariffs are passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices for goods, they have the effect of reducing consumer purchasing power, which in turn dampens overall economic growth.

An analysis from nonpartisan Tax Foundation estimates that the tariffs the Donald Trump administration imposed on Chinese imports from 2018 till the end of 2020 has already cost Americans about \$80 billion as US families have had to pay an additional several hundreds of dollars annually due to the tariffs.

And rather than protecting jobs in the US, higher tariffs on Chinese products have only led to job losses.

Sanjay Patnaik, director of the Center on Regulation and Markets at the Brookings Institution, has looked at the record of the Trump and Biden administrations in terms of tariffs, and he told the NPR last week that "the latest studies show that there is a net loss in jobs, at least of 140,000 to 275,000 jobs across industries".

With the effectiveness and impact of Section 301 trade remedies being so prominently called into question, the US would be better served by the Biden administration — or its successor if the buck continues to be handled like a hot potato and is passed to it — heeding those advocating for a more strategic and collaborative approach to address trade issues with China.

Neither hostages nor cease-fire on his mind

The widespread protests and strikes that swept across Israel on Sunday after the recovery of the bodies of six hostages that had been held by Hamas would seem to have increased the pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach an agreement on a cease-fire with the militant group.

But the anger over the deaths of the hostages, who were reportedly killed hours before their bodies were recovered in a tunnel in Rafah on Saturday, may have served the opposite purpose by prompting the Israeli leader to dump the ongoing cease-fire talks that involve Israel, the United States, Egypt and Qatar.

Hamas had initially prepared to release the six hostages as part of the temporary cease-fire pact that had appeared so near in the latest round of negotiations. But although Washington claims the death of the hostages will not derail the talks, the incident might give the Israeli prime minister, who blames the tragedy on Hamas, a new excuse to carry on with his operations in Gaza and the West Bank.

The large-scale Israeli military aggression into multiple towns in the West Bank launched from last week, under the excuse of fighting terrorism, when the cease-fire talks were at a critical juncture, indicates participating in negotiations might be just a stalling tactic of Netanyahu to fend off the pressure from home and abroad.

After about 11 months, despite the heavy losses that have been incurred in the Gaza Strip and beyond, Netanyahu has never been so close to realizing his goals, which include eliminating Hamas from Gaza and turning the Palestinian enclave into a buffer zone under Israel's control.

That explains why US officials have called for new urgency in reaching a deal as they have acknowledged that the incident may have thrown the negotiations into tumult, with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan saying that "the next few days will be critical" in the push to free the hostages still held in Gaza.

The sticking point of the talks is whether Israel will continue to maintain its control of the Philadelphia Corridor, which is a 14-kilometer strip of land along Gaza's border with Egypt. Netanyahu insists on Israel's control of the corridor that he thinks would prevent Hamas from smuggling arms through the tunnels beneath it.

That also serves to indicate that he has never sincerely considered the cease-fire deal, which Washington has told the world he supports, as it entails Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza.

"The significance of this is that Hamas won't agree to it, so there won't be an agreement and there won't be any hostages released," said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant at a Thursday meeting of the Israeli security Cabinet.

Notably, in their statements late on Saturday, neither US President Joe Biden nor Vice-President Kamala Harris applied pressure — either explicit or implied — on Netanyahu to reach a deal. That's undoubtedly a worrying sign that Netanyahu will continue to stick to his guns with the de facto go-ahead of the US.

By taking advantage of the Hamas attack on Oct 7 to expand Israel's territory, and form a new buffer ring around it, Netanyahu would be able to hold power firmly in his hand, rendering the hostages' deaths as a sacrifice for his own political life, and as well as the necessary costs for him to make indelible "historic contributions" to his country.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

China Daily
15 Huixin Dongjie Chaoyang District,
Beijing 100029
News: +86 (0) 10 6491-8366
editor@chinadaily.com.cn
Advertisement: +86 (0) 10 6491-8631
ads@chinadaily.com.cn
Subscription: +86 400-699-0203
subscription.chinadaily.com.cn
App: www.chinadaily.com.cn/mobile/daily.html

China Daily UK
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK
+44 (0) 207 398 8270
editor@chinadailyuk.com

China Daily Asia Pacific
China Daily Hong Kong
Unit 1818, Hing Wai Centre, 7 Tin Wan
Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong
+852 2518 5111
editor@chinadailyhk.com
editor@chinadailyasia.com

China Daily USA
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036
+1 212 537 8888
editor@chinadailyusa.com

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254 (0) 20 242 8589 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Training of top innovative talent goal of college courses reform

The Ministry of Education effected major changes to undergraduate major courses in colleges and universities in 2023, with altogether 3,389 undergraduate majors being added, canceled and/or adjusted, as announced in March.

This reform of undergraduate majors was a specific step toward implementing the reform plan issued by the ministry and multiple departments in March 2023 to adjust and optimize the setting of majors for higher education. It was announced that about 20 percent of disciplines and majors in colleges and universities are to have been optimized and adjusted by 2025; a number of new disciplines and majors that adapt to new technologies or industries would be set up; and those that did not adapt to economic and social development would be eliminated.

A resolution passed by the central authorities in July said that China will promote the reform of colleges and uni-

versities by classification, establish a discipline setting adjustment mechanism and personnel training model driven by scientific and technological development and national strategic needs, and introduce some urgently needed disciplines and majors.

It was inevitable that many disciplines and majors would be removed once the administrators realized that the colleges and universities had introduced a large number of outdated disciplines and majors in the past. As the comprehensive reform of China's colleges and universities deepens, the two key issues which first need to be resolved are the cultivation of top-notch innovative talent and the construction of first-class disciplines.

The latest round of disciplines and majors adjustment is expected to provide strong support for future training of top-notch innovative talents in China.

However, some of the new majors set

up by some colleges and universities lack solid, extensive and accurate market research, and many universities still run new majors while overlooking real market and industry demands. For example, some colleges and universities have added a lot of "trendy" majors, such as artificial intelligence, intelligent construction, and other kinds of "intelligent plus" new engineering majors, but they still don't have the much-needed professional teachers and teaching material, teaching methods and training programs. While many of the old majors have been eliminated, those who were teaching those majors have been retained to teach the students new majors with old knowledge, which is like being a case of old wine in new bottle.

To optimize majors, colleges and universities should impart new professional knowledge rather than just giving the majors a new name.

— WUYIXUE, CHINA DAILY

Purer germanium will do wonders for economy

The China Institute of Atomic Energy has succeeded in producing germanium-68, which has a nuclear purity higher than 99.9 percent and meets demands for medical use, by using a 100 Mega electron-volt high-current proton cyclotron accelerator. Without doubt, this is good news for domestic hospitals, patients, as well as enterprises.

Germanium-68, which is a radioactive isotope of germanium, is useful because it can decay into gallium-68, which is widely used in positron emission tomography for detecting tumors. Gallium-68 has a half-life of only 68 minutes while that of germanium-68 is about 271 days, which means the latter can be more easily and conveniently stored than the

former. Medical companies usually produce germanium-68 and store it till it decays into gallium-68 before using it.

China has long been the world's largest producer of germanium and gallium, accounting for over 65 percent of the world's total of both, and it is the largest exporter of germanium and gallium, and yet it relies heavily on imports of germanium-68 to meet its demands. What happens is foreign companies buy germanium and gallium from China at a low price and sell the radioactive isotope back at a higher price.

It was not until late 2022 that Chinese scientists announced progress in producing germanium-68 and now the latest achievement has gone one step

further in that direction.

By saving on customs, transportation and other related import costs, the domestically produced germanium-68 will surely be cheaper, which in turn will mean lower-cost PET scanning for patients.

Further, with a nuclear purity higher than 99.9 percent and metal impurity lower than 10 ppm, the domestically produced germanium-68 meets mainstream international medical use standards, too, improving its prospects for export. Combined with China's limit on export of germanium and gallium since August 2023, China's rich reserve of germanium and gallium will play a bigger role in its economy.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

Relations: Doing away with tariffs a good first step

From page 1

Ditching the onerous tariffs Washington has placed on Chinese products would be a wise first move. Tariffs do not work. According to the Tax Foundation, the tariffs initiated by former president Trump and then expanded upon by President Biden "will reduce long-run GDP by 0.2 percent, the capital stock by 0.1 percent, and employment by 142,000 full-time equivalent jobs". The foundation adds that the tariffs amount to "an average annual tax increase on US households of \$625".

Trump and Biden insist that tariffs are protecting the US people and helping the US economy. The data tell a much different story. Worse, Trump has promised to add even more tariffs, should he again become president.

Abandoning provocative military exercises in the South China Sea would also send a positive signal that the US wants coopera-

tion and not confrontation. US political and military officials argue that such exercises are needed because they allow the US and its regional allies to prepare for any aggressive actions that China might take. Yet the evidence is clear: China is not seeking military conflict — on land, sea or air — in the region or elsewhere.

A recent article in the respected magazine *The Diplomat* reviewed one aspect of Chinese military operations — overseas bases. The authors suggested Washington would be wise to "avoid over-investing in preparations for a near-term contest" with China that would begin from one of those bases. They added that much of the hype about the Chinese and their military plans seems woven into a convenient narrative that the country is a threat and therefore, preparations for conflict must be made. Such rhetoric is useful because it justifies "otherwise non-essential missions, force structure, and capabilities for parts of the department that feel left behind in the focus on China".

Washington also should ensure that

Chinese scholars and students face no hostility when they enter the country. The disgraceful way these Chinese citizens were treated upon arrival in the US late last year drew international headlines and a stinging rebuke from Beijing. Some students were held for hours as officials unfairly questioned them about their families and any connections to the Chinese military. Other students were immediately deported. Such actions absolutely contradict the US belief in opening doors to scholars and students from other countries.

Viewed another way, shortsighted tariffs, illogical military rhetoric and embarrassing treatment of the Chinese people are the equivalents of strike one, two and three. In baseball, that means the batter is out. In international politics, it means new strategies should be introduced.

The author is department head and an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Organizational Leadership at Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania, the United States. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

COMMENT

Felix Dakora

Capacity building key to bridging AI gap

The 78th UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution "Enhancing international cooperation on capacity-building of artificial intelligence" on July 1. This China-led proposal was co-sponsored by more than 140 UN member states, and highlighted "capacity building" as key to addressing the many issues surrounding artificial intelligence in a tumultuous world.

AI technology is advancing at a dazzling speed. Yet another noticeable trend is the ever-widening gap



among countries in terms of stages or sophistication of applying AI to different fields. While some countries are already making great leaps in exploiting various "large language models" and "generative AI", there are still those which are yet to work on their readiness. Such is the seriousness of the "digital divide" that has been pinpointed by the China-led UN resolution. Ignorance of it will not only create huge challenges to the technology itself but its international governance as well.

To prevent AI from entering the track of disparity, the international community must work together with some sense of urgency. Capacity building is the key. Only by helping those lagging behind practically can the whole world benefit from AI technology fairly. The unanimous passing of the China-led UN resolution is a timely response and reflects such a need in the international community.

The China-led UN resolution is specific on what "capacities" must be included in the capacity building initiative and how exactly the international community should act. It recognizes that the lack of digital infrastructure connectivity and skills, including education, expertise and human capacity, remains a fundamental challenge in many developing countries, especially the least-developed countries. To address the problem, it stresses the importance of enhancing coordination and cooperation among and within countries and increasing investment in AI capacity-building, as well as international organizations and all relevant stakeholders, to take active measures.

To ensure such capacity building is necessary, for the world needs dialogue, not confrontation on AI. In its "Global AI Governance Initiative" published in October 2023, the Chinese government called for a consensus through dialogue and cooperation, and by promoting AI technology to the benefit of humankind. At the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai, China reiterated its call for upholding the "people-oriented" principle, respecting countries' sovereignty, promoting "equality and mutual benefit", "fairness and non-discrimina-



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

tion", and taking measures to "enhance the representation and voice of developing countries in the global governance of AI".

In sharp contrast, the United States is keen to evoke confrontation. On May 22, the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee passed a proposal to impose export controls on AI models, interfering with the industry's open-source tradition of popularizing technolo-

gy and expanding the scale of research and development, with the intention of "protecting American AI and other supporting technologies from being exploited by foreign adversaries".

The fundamental reason the US chose to invest in such a Cold War-style game is that it hopes to use AI as a magic weapon to continue its technological hegemony. Facts have proved that the US government's sabotage will only undermine

international cooperation in AI, causing it to move from close cooperation to "decoupling" in the fields of academia, open-source technologies and community.

But the US stance on AI is not what the world wants. The China-led UN resolution on capacity building was supported by more than 140 countries, sending a strong message to the international community that bridging the gap, not fighting for hegemony, ought to be our priority.

In Africa, AI has already started making a difference in various sectors. Nigeria has increased its agricultural output and ensured food security through AI-driven smart irrigation, as well as by determining its fertilizer needs, as well as crop health monitoring systems. Kenya has developed agricultural AI tools, using data analysis capabilities to empower agricultural production, and analyzing satellite images to predict natural disasters and rainfall to optimize crop planting times. During the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine developed rapidly in Africa, especially in Ghana, where doctors have accumulated rich experience in using AI technology for telemedicine and initial disease screening.

With such wide application, the proposed capacity building is only going to turbo-charge the momentum of AI development in Africa. The continent itself has also realized its significance. The African Consensus of Rabat, which was adopted at the inaugural High-Level Forum on Artificial Intelligence held from June 3 to 5 in Morocco, recognized Africa's capacity of AI have remained underdeveloped and/or undeveloped.

Similarly, at a virtual meeting attended by 130 African ministers, the African Digital Compact was passed. This strategy called for Africa-owned, people-centered, development-oriented and an all-inclusive approach to accelerate African countries' AI capabilities in infrastructure, talents, datasets innovation and partnerships.

The call for capacity building on AI provides yet another opportunity for China and Africa to work together. China and Africa are no strangers to such kind of cooperation. Across the continent, China has invested in such infrastructure facilities as roads, bridges, airports and government offices, which are a living proof of not only that the two sides have achieved, but how sophisticated this partnership can be in a win-win partnership for both parties. It is thus exciting to look forward to a flourishing AI capacity building initiative. After all, Africa has the youngest population in the world, in addition to its vast agricultural land and abundant mineral resources, all ready to be powered by AI technology.

The author is former president of the African Academy of Sciences. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

The author is former deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily. kangbing@chinadaily.com.cn

Turkiye a country worth visiting and learning from

During my recent three-week visit of Turkiye, I found myself comparing the Middle East country with China in terms of history, culture and, of course, tourism industry.

A cross-continental country once a center of the ancient Greek and Roman empires, and later the heart of the Ottoman Empire, Turkiye had long been my dream tourism destination because of its culture and splendid ancient relics, as well as its unique landscapes. When planning the trip, my wife and I read quite a few Turkiye-related articles which warned us of the country's "political instability", and "poor public security" in certain parts of the country. Some of the articles said cheating and pickpocketing were rampant in some areas, inflation is uncontrollable and tourism services unsatisfactory in some parts of the country.

Although my wife and I prefer going on self-arranged vacations, we decided to play it safe this time by joining a weeklong local tour group to test the waters, and spending the remaining part of our tour on our own. At the end of our tour, we realized that we had been unnecessarily worried about security. While our cautious arrangement did benefit us in the sense that it gave us an overall view of Turkiye in a few days, not even once did we feel any danger even when walking through the narrow lanes of Istanbul or strolling along the beaches of Antalya late in the evening.

In the public section of Lara Beach, all facilities including parasols, lounge chairs, changing rooms and shower are free.

Armed with firearms, policemen and policewomen could be seen at street corners, especially in areas frequented by tourists, while the pickpockets seemed to have vanished from the scene, even though cash is still widely used by both local residents and tourists. My experience further convinced me that stories and opinions about some countries by Western media outlets, including some influential Western media outlets, are not reliable, especially when they disseminate to serve certain countries' political purposes.

China, too, has been the target of the attacks of Western media, which, when not accusing China of being a threat, would be claiming that "China collapse" is just around the corner.

Istanbul is a city of glamour. Grand mosques, historical ruins and relics dot the landscape. After taking a "Turkish bath" in a 1,000-year-old bath house, you can relax over a cup of Turkish tea in a bar across the street built even before the bath house. Taking a cruise across the Turkish Straits that divides the Asian and European continents, one can't help but recall the wars and peace which were once regular features of the region. The glorious ancient buildings still standing on both sides of the straits serve as reminders of the prosperity that comes with peace, and peace is what we should treasure the most today.

With a population 16 of million, Istanbul is an international city. When asking someone about an address or the location of a historic site, you should be cautiously selective because there is a high possibility of that person turning out to be a non-local or a tourist just like you. Data show that less than 30 percent of Istanbul's population can be called local residents with the rest being immigrants from other countries and regions. A number of cities in China trying to become global cities should learn from Istanbul authorities how to govern a city with people of different ethnicities, faiths and creed, and maintain harmony.

While the ancient opera houses, cave hotels and thousands of mosques are fascinating, the highlight of my visit to Turkiye was swimming in the Mediterranean Sea at Lara Beach in Antalya. In the public section of Lara Beach, all facilities including parasols, lounge chairs, changing rooms and shower are free. In fact, along the beaches which are several kilometers long, there is a changing room and shower every 50 meters, making Antalya a paradise for people like me who love swimming.

The free services they provide reminded me of my bad swimming experience in the tropical Chinese city of Sanya in Hainan province, which, despite the repeated complaints of swimmers, is yet to provide such services, free or paid. I hope Sanya can learn something from Antalya.

Indeed, Turkiye is a country worth visiting.

Tang Duoduo

China's journey toward becoming a financial power

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held in July, resolved to comprehensively deepen reform to advance Chinese modernization and achieve high-quality development.

Finance is the lifeblood of an economy, crucial for building a strong country; as such, it is essential for advancing Chinese modernization. True, China has become a major financial power thanks to its huge market. But it still has to make strenuous efforts to become a truly strong financial power.

High-quality financial development is key to achieving high-quality development. Only through long-term accumulation of wealth can a country turn its advantages in production and trade into financial advantages, and develop from a strong trading power to a strong financial power.

The communique issued by the third plenary session said that sound macro regulation, along with effective governance, is essential for ensuring that China fully harnesses the institutional strengths of a socialist market economy. This means China needs to improve its macro regulation systems, and implement coordinated reforms in the fiscal, taxation, financial and other major sectors.

Financialization and high leveraging are notable characteristics in a modern economy. Under "high leveraging", financial factors easily reshape economic cycles into complex interactions with financial cycles, making it difficult to manage the macro-economy.

Traditional macroeconomic governance focuses on stabilizing economic cycle fluctuations and striking a balance between unemployment and inflation.

In sum, the plenum has taken measures to advance Chinese modernization, improve the governance of the financial cycle and promote high-quality financial development.

Modern macroeconomic governance, however, pursues financial stability that seeks to balance broader economic and financial stability.

Managing the financial cycle, a new phenomenon in China, has theoretical significance — regulation and management are different from Western financial models so that they meet urgent practical demands — for safeguarding economic and financial security, which is essential to realize Chinese modernization.

The third plenum said the country is firmly committed to accomplishing the goals for this year's economic and social development, ensuring effective implementation of macro policy, while striving to boost domestic demand, prevent and defuse risks in the real estate sector, reduce local government debt, and promote small and medium-sized financial institutions, and other key sectors.

After the 2008 global financial crisis, the government implemented effective financial risk prevention and mitigation measures, facilitating the upward movement of the financial cycle. But the COVID-19 pandemic slowed monetary and credit growth, reduced consumer spending and private investment, and slackened asset prices, triggering the

downward movement of the financial cycle. As a result, risks emerged in key areas such as the real estate, local government debt, and small and medium-sized financial institutions.

Therefore, the government's macro-control policy should be aimed at helping the private sector prevent and defuse financial risks and achieve economic recovery, because the most significant feature of the downward movement of the financial cycle is the private sector's deleveraging.

Western governments, in general, do not intervene during the financial cycle's upward movement, which leads to bursting of asset bubbles and thus a severe financial crisis. On the other hand, China ensures that finance serves the real economy. In 2013, China launched a campaign to end shadow banking by, among other things, intervening during the financial cycle's upward movement. Consequently, the proportion of the financial industry's added value to GDP has remained stable around 8 percent and the ratio of shadow banking to GDP has declined from the peak of 81.9 percent in 2016 to 39.2 percent in 2023.

Both economic and financial cycles have upward and downward movements. The higher the upward movement, the deeper the downward movement would be. So, by controlling the ascent of the financial cycle, the government prevented the downward movement from hitting a record low.

Governments in Western developed economies intervene during the financial cycle's downward movement for two reasons. First, they do so to counterbalance the effects of the private sector's deleveraging by increasing spending. Instead of reducing spending, they use expansion-

ary policies to boost the economy and break the vicious circle of low growth increasing the debt burden, and high debt suppressing growth.

Second, Western governments balance various interests and leverage the redistributive effects of policies to overcome a financial crisis. Also, Western governments often accord priority to large financial institutions in their bailout policy, harming the interests of the public and widening the wealth gap.

China is pursuing high-quality development and Chinese modernization to better serve the people, especially to improve people's livelihoods, and realize common prosperity. So its fiscal structure favors grassroots operations and promotes technological breakthroughs.

However, it should also take measures to root out some local financing platforms, real estate enterprises and financial institutions that expanded suddenly and excessively in the early stages of their development, and use central funds to ensure apartments are handed over to homeowners on time, and help viable property developers fix their balance sheets. Private sector deleveraging is a long, complicated process that can be fixed only through systemic and gradual reform.

In sum, the plenum has taken measures to advance Chinese modernization, improve the governance of the financial cycle and promote high-quality financial development.

The author is the director at the Macroeconomics Research Center, Institute of Economics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

GLOBAL VIEWS

ALPHA MOHAMED JALLOH

Collective endeavor

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation will build consensus on practical measures to implement the agreed road map for cooperation

South-South cooperation is a fundamental pillar that seeks to address the injustices of the past and rigorously find a constructive pathway of truth and reconciliation for the good of the world. This South-South cooperation has to be strengthened in order to realize the full potential that will translate to the development of our countries.



South-South cooperation must explore more opportunities within the frameworks of trade, infrastructure, health, education and technology for the interest of our people, which will help ensure peace and stability. China has demonstrated its willingness to work with African countries in trade and other areas, all geared toward promoting a win-win situation for the good of mankind. In that light, we should work and stand together for the growth and development of both China and Africa.

The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation will build consensus on "major issues such as joining hands to advance modernization and building a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future". The road map is clear and there has been a commitment on both sides to follow the action plan. Since the establishment of the forum as a ministerial mechanism in 2000, it has adhered to the principles of planning together, building together and benefitting together, and above all advancing the development of the forum and implementation of its outcomes, propelling China-Africa relations to make great strides forward and achieve leapfrog development. This year's theme resonates with the zest to see change and take practical actions with a specific timeline.

The leaders of China and Africa will come together to discuss pertinent issues such as state governance, industrialization, agricultural modernization, peace and security, high-quality Belt and Road cooper-

No nation can prosper if it can't feed its people. In that regard, China has the expertise and technological advancement to help Africa feed itself.

ation, as well as the eighth Conference of Chinese and African Entrepreneurs and other related activities. These are planned activities with a clear pathway to achieve the intended purpose. China and Africa must ensure they adhere to the outcomes of the meeting and fully implement the agreed communiqué.

We expect in state governance each country has its sovereign powers and must be respected. The Taiwan question should be emphasized and seek the complete cessation of the Western powers' support for the Taiwan secessionists to allow the due process of the island's reunification with its motherland. We would like African countries to consider having visa-free travel across the continent just as Kenya has started to implement. African countries have similar concerns and we hope to see genuine implementation of the road map based on sincerity and integrity that seeks to address poverty.

In the free trade agreement we have seen a great reduction in bureaucracy in the trade sector. We applaud the Chinese embassies in Africa for facilitating visas for African countries to come and do business in China. China is the largest trading partner of many African countries today, and so far we are happy with the reforms and innovation that has been employed in the business domain. We speak to many Africans doing business in China; they are satisfied with the Chinese market and it is our



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

hope during the FOCAC deliberations to make it known.

Institutional reforms and capacity building for African countries are critical factors that have to be paid attention to. We have seen a lot of Africans who over the years have acquired skills from China to set up their businesses in Africa, and we would like to see an increase in scholarship opportunities given to African citizens for us to

position our youthful population on the trajectory of development.

China and Africa must come up with a comprehensive package on "Africa feeds itself". No nation can prosper if it can't feed its people. In that regard, China has the expertise and technological advancement to help Africa feed itself. All we need to do is to engage the Chinese experts to transfer skills, while Africa has arable

land that is fit for purpose. With this integrated effort, "feeding Africa" will be achievable.

The author is director of the China Africa Institute at the University of Makeni, Sierra Leone. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU XIULI AND MA JUNLE

From big to strong

Fostering new quality productive forces will play a key role in modernizing China's agriculture

To drive China's agricultural and rural modernization, it is especially urgent to develop new, high-quality productive forces characterized by advanced technology, high efficiency and superior quality.

Following years of development, the efficiency and profitability of China's agricultural production has been increasing, and the overall capacity of its agricultural science and technology has been improving. By the end of 2021, there were over 72,300 employees working for China's agricultural scientific and research institutions, and about 500,000 employees in over 50,000 agricultural technology extension centers nationwide. The independent innovation capability of the seed industry has been greatly improved.

China's strength in agricultural science and technology has entered the first echelon internationally, laying a solid foundation for accelerating the development of new quality productive forces in the sector.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened in 2012, China has been advancing rural revitalization and accelerating agricultural and rural modernization in an all-round way. Specifically in the field of seed breeding, China has scored an array of key breakthroughs and landmark achievements in the conservation of genetic resources and innovation in major varieties.

Furthermore, the construction of high-standard farmland in China has been accelerating. By the end of 2022, the country had 1 billion *mu* (66.67 million hectares) of high-standard farmland, which significantly improved the total factor productivity of the agricultural sector.

But at the same time, science, technology and innovation have become the main arena for global strategic competition. The development of new quality productivity in the field of agriculture depends increasingly on information, digital, synthetic and other technologies, and is bound to encounter more intense international competition.

Although China has made great progress in seed breeding, there is still a gap in frontier technology compared with major agri-



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

cultural countries. In the context of intensifying geopolitical competition and in the face of the all-round containment and blockade endeavors of the US, original research results and key core technologies need to be developed and new quality productive forces cultivated in China's agricultural sector.

The problems and challenges confronting China's agricultural sector have further intensified the urgency of developing new quality productive forces in the sector.

According to the Third National Agricultural Census in 2016, smallholder farmers

accounted for more than 98 percent of the total agricultural operating entities, and they operated 70 percent of the country's total arable land. The small-scale operation of cash-strapped smallholder farmers has resulted in the slow penetration of sci-tech innovation and difficulty in promoting industrialization and modernization, thus restricting the development of new quality productive forces.

Furthermore, a lack of cutting-edge agricultural technologies, especially major original achievements, insufficient investment, and a serious shortage of high-level agricul-

tural scientists and technicians have made it difficult for China to meet the requirements for developing new quality productive forces in the agricultural sector.

The most arduous task in building a modern socialist country in an all-round way still lies in the countryside. Currently, compared with new industrialization, digitalization and urbanization, the modernization of agriculture and rural areas is lagging behind, and the current situation of "big but not strong agriculture" needs to be changed.

First, China should make full use of both international and domestic markets, improve efficiency and build comparative advantages amid the mutual reinforcement between the domestic and international circulations, and achieve high-level sci-tech self-reliance by utilizing the free flow of global production factors and complementary advantages.

To enhance international cooperation in agricultural science and technology, China should strive to bolster exchanges and partnerships with top agricultural research institutions, increase joint and targeted research in advanced agricultural technologies, and facilitate the cross-border flow of innovation resources in this sector.

For example, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research has abundant agricultural germplasm resources and cutting-edge technologies, in particular rich management experience and knowledge in addressing agricultural development and poverty in developing countries. Strengthening cooperation with the CGIAR will significantly enhance the effectiveness of bilateral efforts.

Second, focusing on the core technologies of new quality productive forces in the agricultural field, China should launch special scientific programs for the world and build a number of agricultural sci-tech research and development platforms shared by the world.

Efforts should be made to deepen bilateral and multilateral international cooperation mechanisms, such as Belt and Road joint laboratories and various national natural science foundations, in order to facili-

tate joint research on cutting-edge agricultural science and technology.

Also, it is imperative to focus on joint research in natural sciences. Social science research including the organization and management of global agricultural sci-tech innovation, policy formulation, and regional and national research needs to be strengthened as well.

Third, to cultivate more agricultural sci-tech talents, it is important to continue bringing in scarce high-level agricultural sci-tech professionals and to enhance follow-up supportive programs for them.

Efforts should be also made in developing new agricultural sciences and promoting cutting-edge interdisciplinary research. Increasing the reserve of frontier agricultural sci-tech talents can be achieved through talent cultivation programs, such as strengthening the basic disciplines plan.

Fourth, China should deeply participate in global agricultural governance to enhance its influence on the agenda setting of agricultural science and technology, rules and standards, and development trends.

For example, the World AgriFood Innovation Conference initiated by China Agricultural University has made a good attempt to promote international agricultural sci-tech innovation and participate in global food and agriculture governance by establishing an industry-university-research collaboration mechanism.

Last but not least, it is imperative to deepen reform across the board to create a new-type of relations of production that is compatible with the new quality productive forces. Specifically in the field of agriculture, even traditional productive forces have not been fully released at this stage. It is thus an urgent task to promote the smooth flow of more production factors to agriculture and rural areas, break through the choke points between smallholder farmers and large markets, introduce new types of agricultural producers, operators and managers, and expand new forms of business to promote agricultural and rural development.

Xu Xiuli is dean of the College of International Development and Global Agriculture and professor of Humanities and Development Studies at China Agricultural University. Ma Junle is associate professor of Shandong Academy of Social Sciences. The authors contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LIFE



Sichuan cuisine served at the China House in Paris during the 2024 Paris Olympic Games includes (from left) dishes like spicy chicken, Dongpo pork, and popular staple foods, such as dumplings and panda-shaped mooncakes. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sichuan's offerings shine in City of Light

Menu of cooperation during Olympics helps bring China, France closer, reports **Li Yingxue** in Paris.

This summer, the vibrant flavors of Sichuan cuisine, such as chicken tofu pudding, spicy chicken, Dongpo pork, and pickled vegetables, made a striking impression in Paris, the City of Light. In the prelude to Mid-Autumn Festival, which falls on Sept 17 this year, the city even offered mooncakes shaped like charming pandas.

At the Rothschild Mansion, situated near the Arc de Triomphe and serving as China House during the 2024 Paris Olympics, nearly 10,000 guests from home and abroad were treated to this exceptional Chinese fare.

Chinese and French cuisines also engaged in a vibrant exchange at a Sino-French food event held last month at China House, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, utilizing cuisine as a cultural bridge.

Chez Papa, a well-known Parisian restaurant, offered classic French dishes, including confit duck legs, snails and sheep's milk cheese, while Chinese chefs presented Sichuan classics, such as spicy chicken and Dongpo roast duck. The diverse array of flavors from both culinary traditions received widespread acclaim from attendees.

Behind the exquisite dishes delighting guests during the Paris Olympics was a dedicated team of 10 seasoned chefs from the Meizhou Dongpo restaurant chain. These chefs and culinary professionals worked nonstop for nearly a month to ensure top-notch service.

During the Paris Games, the chef team welcomed an array of distinguished guests, including International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, Olympic champions Zheng Qinwen and Qin Haiyang, as well as previous Olympic gold medalists including Wu Dajing, Hui Ruoyi, and Tian Liang. This marks the restaurant chain's third appearance at the Olympics, following its participation in the 2008 Beijing Games and the 2022 Beijing Winter Games. This year's Paris Olympics is its first venture into providing dining services for an overseas China House.

"French cuisine is celebrated as the 'pinnacle of Western dining,' renowned for its delicate flavors, rich sauces, and elegant presentations. In contrast, Sichuan cuisine, with its millennia-old tradition, offers a rich variety and distinctive style," says Wang Gang, founder of the restaurant chain. "When representing Chinese cuisine, it must be

unique, flavorful and presentable."

To deliver an exceptional dining experience, the restaurant chain assembled a 24-member service team, including 10 chefs with over 15 years of experience each.

"Our extensive experience at the Olympics has equipped us with a robust set of practices and techniques, enabling us to handle challenging situations with confidence — reflecting the true Olympic spirit," Wang says.

The carefully curated menu features traditional Sichuan specialties, such as Kung Pao shrimp, sugarcoated popcorn and iced jelly. Additionally, to meet diverse guest needs, the team prepared multiple menus, including daily offerings, banquet, halal, tea break, and Sino-French culinary exchange options.

Wang says that their dishes have been met with enthusiastic acclaim from international guests, staff, volunteers and athletes. "Guests have praised our offerings as 'delicious and a true taste of home,' with particular acclaim for the spicy chicken and Kung Pao shrimp," Wang says.

"We remain dedicated to our mission of 'serving people around the world,' embracing the Olympic spirit, pushing boundaries, and turning the impossible into possible," Wang says. "Our goal is to introduce the world to Chinese cuisine and foster a deep appreciation for Sichuan flavors."

Gold medal

The restaurant chain's first encounter with the Olympics was in 2008, when it served as the official catering provider for the Olympic Village (Paralympic Village) during the 29th Olympic Games.

"This was an incredibly exciting opportunity for our team. We provided catering services for 130,000 people over 106 continuous days and nights," Wang recalls.

The high-quality food and service earned them special honors and a gold medal for "Chinese Taste, Olympic Standards".

In 2022, they served as the "Official Catering Provider for China House" and "National Team Meal Service Provider" at the Beijing Winter Olympics. Their service received high praise from Bach, who referred to the restaurant chain's chefs as "Olympic chefs," according to Wang.

For the Paris Olympics, Wang states that they were fully committed to delivering a high standard of Chinese culinary culture and exceptional taste.

Zhu Zhiwei, 46, one of the chefs



From top: The Sichuan culinary team at the China House in Paris welcomes an array of distinguished guests, including IOC President Thomas Bach (center, front row) during the Paris Games. Guests from home and abroad being served Chinese food by the team.

who worked in Paris, says that their preparations for the trip began right after the Lunar New Year. Together with his colleagues, he coordinated with the China House setup team on kitchen layout and dining equipment details.

In May, Zhu and food safety manager Song Jing visited Paris to inspect the venue and source ingredients. "The work required is com-

parable to opening a new restaurant in France," Zhu says.

On July 12, the first team of 10 members flew from Beijing to Paris to start setting up equipment, purchasing ingredients, and testing recipes. Eight days later, a second team of 14 joined them.

Key Sichuan seasonings, such as Doubanjiang (fermented bean paste), Sichuan peppercorns, and

pepper, were transported from Beijing, while fresh ingredients were sourced locally.

Each morning in Paris, Zhu and his team scoured farmers' markets and Asian supermarkets to find seasonal vegetables and unique spices that best represent Sichuan cuisine.

"The salt and sugar here appear similar to those in China but taste different. For example, French salt is saltier, while French sugar is less sweet," Zhu explains. "This necessitated adjustments to our seasoning ratios and continual recipe refinements."

For instance, to match the flavor of Kung Pao shrimp in France, 35 grams of local sugar are required compared to 23 grams in China. Zhu and his team are dedicated to perfecting their recipes to bring an authentic taste of Sichuan to Paris.

"Spicy chicken is a beloved dish on many Sichuan family tables, but achieving perfection requires precise timing and ingredients," says Zhu, who has been crafting Sichuan cuisine for 27 years. "In Paris, spicy chicken is the most popular dish, and it's almost always ordered at every table."

Unique blend

As the Paris 2024 Olympics unfolded, Chinese cuisine made a

significant impression, extending beyond the offerings at China House.

Various Chinese food and beverage brands had set up shop in Paris, using the global sports event to highlight the diverse and appealing flavors of Chinese cuisine. Across Parisian landmarks, such as the Arc de Triomphe, the Seine River, the Hotel des Invalides, and the Eiffel Tower, a red food truck featuring panda and bamboo designs drew a lot of attention.

The truck, operated by Sichuan pickled vegetable brand Jixiangju, offered a unique blend of French and Sichuan flavors. Among its offerings were the bamboo shoot salmon baguette, bamboo shoot ham croissant, and bamboo shoot stir-fried beef baguette.

These fusion dishes have garnered praise from both Parisians and Chinese students living in the city.

Many students have shared their experiences on social media platforms, such as Xiaohongshu, one of whom commented that "the spicy and tangy flavors instantly reminded me of home, easing my homesickness".

Chinese tea has also made its mark in Paris, a city traditionally known for its coffee culture. The pop-up shop of Chagee brought a touch of jasmine tea to Paris, attracting nearly 2,000 visitors on its opening day in July.

Meanwhile, Heytea's "Paris Viewing Room", a pop-up in the 11th arrondissement, has seen robust sales, with over 1,000 cups sold on the first day and revenue exceeding 10,000 euros (\$11,134). Two special-edition sports-themed items quickly sold out.

Zhu, noting the presence of various Chinese restaurants in Paris, from Cantonese and Sichuan to popular street foods, such as chicken pot and spicy hotpot, appreciates the city's diverse and authentic Chinese dining scene.

Looking ahead to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, Zhu is already anticipating the next adventure.

"In the United States, we won't need to transport so many ingredients and spices from China. With local supplies and equipment available at our restaurants in the US, preparing Sichuan cuisine at the next Olympics should be even easier than in Paris," Zhu says.

Contact the writer at liyixue@chinadaily.com.cn

Teen pilot on round-the-world flight to raise funds for cancer

DOHA — Despite being only 19, Chinese American Ethan Guo has already flown solo across four continents. His "small goal" is to complete a solo flight around all seven continents in the coming weeks.

On May 31, Guo departed from Memphis, Tennessee. So far, he has flown across four continents — North America, Europe, Africa and Asia — covering 15 countries and regions.

According to the plan, he still has 30 countries and regions to visit, with just 20 days to go. Along the way, he has encountered engine trouble and visa issues.

"Plans often change, and it's uncertain whether I will be able to

finish on time," he said in Doha late last month.

Born in Tianjin, Guo spends his time between China and the United States. Over the past couple of years, he has spent more time in the latter.

Guo began learning to fly in the US when he was 13, starting with a one-hour introductory lesson.

It was enough to spark a dream of flying around the world, so he completed high school early and began preparing for his journey.

At 17, he obtained his Private Pilot License and was Instrument Flight Rules certified. The IFR are rules which allow properly equipped aircraft to be flown under instrument

meteorological conditions.

After that, he began reaching out to companies, in search of sponsors to support his dream.

At first, many found the young man's proposal hard to believe, thinking he was just daydreaming, but eventually, some started to back him.

In 2022, Guo first broke the record for the fastest flight around the contiguous US, completing the journey in 12 days, surpassing the previous record of 16 days.

However, six months ago, his record was broken by someone else. Guo doesn't feel discouraged, as his ambitions extend far beyond this record.

His primary goal was to learn, gain experience, and prepare for his round-the-world journey, and more positively, the new record brought him more attention, and helped him secure more sponsorships.

While flying solo around the world is cool, it's also filled with challenges and dangers.

Last year, when he made his first solo attempt, Guo came close to death when his engine malfunctioned, and the plane began to shake as he was flying by a mountain.

Fortunately, he managed a successful emergency landing.

Flying over the ocean, with no land below for over 3,000 kilome-

ters, adds to the risk.

The plane is equipped with a small lifeboat just in case.

"I'm flying a Cessna 182Q, which is 50 years old. Is it safe?" he says, laughing. "Not much of a choice. But the engine is new."

Even if he secures a new world record, this is not what matters most to him. Guo says that his real goal is to use the flight to draw attention to childhood cancer, and raise funds for research.

His cousin's diagnosis in 2021 had a profound impact, motivating him to take action.

"I admire my cousin. He and other kids from around the world who are fighting cancer have inspired

me to fight on and overcome my fears," he says.

"I want to use every opportunity to raise awareness of childhood cancer and of the necessity to increase research efforts to find prevention and treatment methods."

All the money Guo raises is directly donated to a renowned US hospital, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which treats the toughest childhood cancers and pediatric diseases.

"Life is short, and I want to do as much as I can to make the world a better place," he says.

XINHUA

CULTURE



Dancers from the Beijing Dance Academy and the Art Vocational College at the Lanzhou University of Arts and Science in Gansu province perform works based on Dunhuang's ancient murals at the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum in Beijing on Aug 21. PHOTOS BY ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Bringing Dunhuang's murals to life

Artist and choreographer responsible for devising dance tradition based on Mogao's images are focus of touring exhibition, **Chen Nan** reports.

In a grand hall at Beijing's Chinese Traditional Culture Museum, a captivating scene unfolds as 93-year-old artist Chang Shana and 89-year-old choreographer Gao Jinrong walk into the room holding hands.

Their bond has been forged by their shared vision of breathing life into Dunhuang's ancient murals through dance, ensuring that their beauty and significance continue to captivate and inspire.

Home of the Mogao Caves — a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was created between the 4th to the 14th centuries — Dunhuang is renowned for its Buddhist murals and statues, masterpieces that not only vividly illustrate the spread of Buddhism across China, but are also enduring symbols of Chinese civilization.

As Chang and Gao pored over images of the frescoes, their conversation flowed effortlessly, blending reverence for the past with excitement for their creative endeavor.

Their meeting was part of an ongoing exhibition on tour at the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum, *Everlasting Beauty of Dunhuang*. The 400-odd exhibits include Chang's reproductions of the murals, and are a showcase of the lifetime achievements of the respectable scholar of the Dunhuang art.

During the meeting, young dancers from the Beijing Dance Academy and the Art Vocational College at the Lanzhou University of Arts and Science in Gansu province, performed pieces choreographed by Gao based on the murals, transforming their timeless beauty into a live dance experience.

To the sound of elegant and archaic melodies, dancers performed hip twists and knee bends, extended their arms, and moved gracefully to the rhythm of instruments like drums and *gongs*. Their facial expressions, graceful hand movements, flexible arm positions, and costumes, were all based on images depicted in the murals.

"The dances and the murals are both integral parts of the cultural and artistic heritage of Dunhuang. The murals in the Mogao Caves often depict scenes of dance and dancers, which provide valuable insight into the dance styles, costumes, and cultural practices of the era," says Gao, who is the founder of the Dunhuang dance teaching system, and a prominent expert of the Dunhuang dance at the Lanzhou University of Arts and Sciences. She has dedicated her entire life to dance, devoting her energy to uncovering and developing Dunhuang's rich artistic heritage.

The dancer-turned-choreographer was inspired by the murals when she created the highly successful dance drama, *Silk Road Flower Rain*, in 1979. Over the course of a year, Gao visited the Mogao Caves five times, meticulously studying



Clockwise from top: Ninety-three-year-old artist Chang Shana (left) and 89-year-old choreographer Gao Jinrong at the Chinese Traditional Culture Museum in Beijing on Aug 21. Dance poses from the Dunhuang murals inspired Gao to create dance works.

each of the 400 caves with a flashlight and candles.

She replicated over 200 dance poses from the murals and read thousands of pages from artistic and historical literature, taking extensive notes. Her challenge was to translate the static images into dynamic, fluid movements.

"I was intrigued by Dunhuang dance, which is characterized by its delicate and graceful movements. The murals capture an ethereal and elegant charm reminis-

cent of celestial beings," says Gao. "They helped us understand how dance was an essential part of religious and cultural rituals, reflecting both the spiritual and social aspects of the time."

Gao expresses her gratitude to Chang Shana's father, Chang Shuhong (1904-94). Chang Shuhong was the founding director of the Dunhuang Academy, and committed his life to the protection and conservation of the caves.

"Chang Shuhong gave me 102 sketches

of Dunhuang dance by Wu Manying of the Chinese National Academy of Arts. The line drawings were key to my artistic inspiration when it came to creating the Dunhuang dance teaching system," says Gao, who compiled the *Dunhuang Dance Teaching Outline* and taught the first group of students in the genre at the Gansu Arts School in 1980.

In 2011, the Gansu Arts School was integrated with the Lanzhou University of Arts and Sciences, which established a Dunhuang Dance Heritage and Development Research Center to further develop and promote the genre as a distinctive feature of its artistic education.

For Chang Shana, Dunhuang occupies a special place.

"Dunhuang is my hometown. Father often said, 'Shana, don't forget you are from Dunhuang,'" says Chang Shana.

"These murals are not just artistic masterpieces but also serve as windows into the spiritual and cultural life of the ancient China. Each figure and movement they capture tells a story of ritual and reverence, and creates a vibrant historical tableau," she says.

"By reinterpreting Dunhuang's visual and spiritual elements through dance, Gao and the dancers bridge the gap between past and present, creating a new understanding of ancient traditions."

Born in Lyon and raised in Paris until she was 6, Chang Shana returned to China during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45). When she was 12, she arrived in Dunhuang, where she endured harsh desert conditions working alongside her father as he made sketches of the Buddhist murals and statues in the Mogao Caves.

Her deep affection for Dunhuang has endured, influencing her work in painting and design.

Following in her father's legacy, Chang Shana replicated wall paintings and figurines from different periods. In 1948, she moved to Boston to study art and museology, and then returned to China to work with the renowned architect Lin Huiyin, who offered her a job as an assistant lecturer at the architecture department of Tsinghua University, and introduced her to design and education.

Lin's mentorship inspired Chang to incorporate Dunhuang elements into her design projects, including on silk scarves, as well as in the interior decorations for notable Beijing landmarks such as the Great Hall of the People.

The *Everlasting Beauty of Dunhuang* exhibition is Chang Shana's latest tribute to her father's dedication, continuing her lifelong commitment to preserving and celebrating Dunhuang's artistic heritage.

Contact the writer at chenan@chinadaily.com.cn



Online
Watch the video
by scanning
the code.

Displaying Chinese aesthetics in Hong Kong stage performance

HONG KONG — To the music of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, nearly 20 Hong Kong dancers put on a display of the shared origin of martial arts and dance through demonstrations of martial arts including tai chi, *tuishou* (a kind of battling techniques) and *sanda* (freestyle fighting).

Miranda Chin, artistic director of Hong Kong-based Miranda Chin Dance Company, says that countless artists around the world have interpreted *The Rite of Spring* through their own cultures, which inspired her to create a dance drama that integrates Chinese elements and aesthetics.

After more than 20 years of refinement, *He and The Rite of Spring* ("he" means "harmony" in Chinese) made its debut at French

May, an art and cultural event in Hong Kong, in June last year.

It was one of 12 arts projects in Hong Kong to receive awards from the China National Arts Fund 2024. The funding enabled Chin's dance company to go on tour throughout the year.

Later this year, the company will take the production to France. Chin looks forward to seeing a foreign audience appreciate Chinese culture, which values harmony and peace, through music that is familiar to them.

Chin began creating the dance drama in 2002 when she developed a passion for tai chi and martial arts. Based on ancient Chinese sacrificial rites, Chin incorporated tai chi and the other previously mentioned battling arts in her initial creation.

"Being able to devise new connotations for a classic like *The Rite of Spring* from the perspective of Chinese aesthetics and modern dance not only reflects the beauty of traditional Chinese culture, but also shows the innovation of contemporary artistic creation," says Chin.

She says she will continue to explore possibilities for the integration of Chinese and European cultures in the future.

As a dancer in the 1960s, Chin was exposed to a range of dance styles, including ballet and jazz. Of them all, she was most passionate about Chinese dances.

"The costumes, music and movements of Chinese dance are rich, which fascinates me," Chin says, adding that she has always sought to understand



Left: A scene from the dance drama *He and The Rite of Spring* when it was brought to Shanghai by the Miranda Chin Dance Company in April. Right: Miranda Chin. PHOTOS PROVIDED AND BY WANG SHEN / XINHUA



her culture through dance.

Over the decades, Chin has choreographed and directed nearly 100

dances, many of which were rooted in Chinese culture. "I hope these dances will serve as ambassadors of

cultural exchange, spreading Chinese culture more widely," she says. XINHUA

LIFE

A TV series viewers can bank on

Relationships at remote subbranch provide audience with a dividend of interest, **Xu Fan** reports.

Thriving in the banking world isn't just about numbers — it's about noticing the details.

That's how Lin Qiang, portrayed by actor Bai Yu in the popular TV series *Bank on Me*, showcases this skill on his first day as the newly appointed deputy head of a modest-sized subbranch of a major bank.

In a short amount of time, Lin identifies an elderly visitor dressed casually as his target customer. By observing the differences in the way he wears his shoes, Lin accurately deduces — sort of like Sherlock Holmes — that the man is a frequent golfer and is accustomed to his feet adopting a specific angle of play. Engaging the customer in conversation about his hobby, Lin quickly gains his favor and successfully sells a wealth management product worth 700,000 yuan (\$98,305) within five minutes.

This scene is one of the most talked-about plotlines of the TV series on major social media and review platforms like Douban. Comprising a total of 26 episodes, it has been airing on CCTV-8, the television drama channel of China Central Television, since Aug 18.

Under the helm of Shen Yan, Magnolia Award best director winner at the 23rd Shanghai TV Festival, the drama is written by veteran playwright Zhang Ting, an award-winning scriptwriter known for acclaimed dramas such as *Wild Bloom* and *The Long River*.

Loosely based on an online novel, the story follows Lin, a former deputy general manager at the credit approval department of a major bank. After a falling-out with his superior, he is transferred to a remote subbranch.

Despite this setback, Lin excels by creating an investment program for college students to better utilize pocket money and securing a large loan for a local fishing company. As he investigates a questionable loan, Lin becomes entangled in a web of mysteries.

Zhang tells China Daily that he was inspired to write the script because he developed a strong interest in the online novel *Qian Tu* (literally, "a career in money"), on which the TV series is based.

"The novel is written entirely from an insider's perspective, offering those of us whose main interaction with a bank is likely just for getting cash or saving money, a fresh and in-depth view of the financial world. It's like being invited into the kitchen of a restaurant to see how the dishes are prepared," Zhang explains.

During the preparation process, Zhang and his fellow creators visited several banks, engaging in detailed conversations with the presidents as well as staff members at various levels, and thoroughly studying terminologies and industry regulations, as China launched a new financial regulatory reform last year.

Yan Jin, the chief producer, echoes that the intensive research and interviews have provided many inspirations for the plotlines.



Scenes from *Bank on Me*, a popular TV series that highlights the financial system's anti-corruption efforts, starring actor Bai Yu (top) as the protagonist Lin Qiang, a capable deputy head of a subbranch of a major bank. The drama also features actors (pictured above from left) Dong Yong, Li Naiwen, Wang Zhifei, and Wang Youjun portraying bank executives or staff members. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A poster for the TV series.

Besides, they also recruited a professional to supervise all the details, ensuring that the dialogues and props accurately reflect reality in the financing sector, she adds.

Zhang says, "The financial mechanism is complicated and intricate. However, it can be easily understood by examining human nature."

The fraud and corruption cases featured in the series revolve around desire and greed, illustrating how individuals are tempted to exploit vulnerabilities and loopholes for illegal gain, he adds.

A fresh highlight — the drama also reflects a trendy change in China's workplace, showing how the young generation born between the 1990s and the 2000s no longer handles office relationships or lis-

tens to bosses as obediently as their predecessors.

"The thousands of years of culture and tradition in China have, in a sense, formed a society based on personal relationships. Many things are not necessarily done strictly according to rules, but rather based on personal connections and relationships," says Zhang.

However, now young people are reluctant to exhaust their time and energy on cultivating relationships and instead prefer to focus on doing their work following regulations and rules. This demonstrates that China is experiencing a shift in social dynamics, moving away from reliance on personal relationships toward a more rule-based

approach. "It's really a good change," says Zhang.

A storyline that reflects this transformation is when Lin, the protagonist, first arrives at the subbranch and encounters difficulties with Zhang Jiaming, a 50-something assistant and right-hand man of the president. Despite lacking banking expertise, Zhang Jiaming is skilled in flattery, famously going as far as personally tasting pet food to impress his boss. Utilizing his manipulative tactics, he unjustly distributes bonuses among his colleagues despite not contributing any real effort. Through determination and cleverness, Lin manages to confront the president, reform the bonus distribution system, and

rectify the unfair practices.

"The drama will be released overseas in the future. We also hope that foreign audiences can see from the drama the changes and progress in China, witness the spirit of contemporary Chinese youths who are determined to strive forward in the complex workplace environment, and who have the courage to speak out against injustice and unfairness," says Yan.

"We hope that foreign audiences can feel a contemporary China full of vitality, creativity, and a sense of responsibility," she adds.

Li Weixu contributed to this story.

Contact the writer at xufan@chinadaily.com.cn

Chess, mahjong or Go show that brain power is more than a game

The 2001 Ron Howard hit, *A Beautiful Mind*, had Russell Crowe playing real-life troubled master mathematician John Nash in which he introduces his "game theory" to great effect, and to the particular interest of the intelligence agencies.

Game theory is a branch of math that analyzes situations in which parties make interdependent decisions.

When he's not being debriefed and/or interrogated by the suits in Langley, which is a huge chunk of his adult life, he did find the time to put his powers of persuasion to "good use" in singles bars, where he demonstrates to some highly motivated peers how the theory could better ensure one didn't go home alone.

However, I have a more contro-

versial bar-stool stumper of a proposal, or debate question if you will. Which of these "thing"-based games — the things being either pieces, tiles or stones — are the most challenging and, by analogy, the greatest generator for growing gray matter? I should pause here to dispel a popular myth that some "brain games" — like crossword puzzles or Sudoku — can stretch out our cerebrums. However, we're pretty much stuck with a finite number of neurons between our ears from birth, and we can only whack a few million here and there with bad habits or long NFL careers. Mind you, there's no quota on brain cell counts from life's starting line, but learning new languages or taking up woodworking can enhance the connections, or synapses, between cells, rendering them more elastic over time. So getting back to my contentious debate question, "let's go to the videotape," as Warner Wolf likes to say.

The historical origin of chess remains a matter of heated debate, and yes fanatics of the game tend to jealously guard the integrity of their "sport".

Reminds me of the time a "chess" friend of mine recalled encountering a rousing "Catch My King" tourney on Christmas Day beside the check-in counter of a Four Seasons Hotel, with participants all lauding the virtues of their favorite pastime. He said the experience left him incensed, as he said: "Nothing I hate more than bumping into a bunch of chess nuts boasting in an open foyer."

Indisputable proof that chess existed in a manner approximating its modern manifestation before the 6th century simply doesn't exist. The game unfortunately doesn't have an Abner Doubleday as does baseball. Ancient game pieces unearthed in Russia, China, India and Central Asia sometimes even involved dice, and sometimes

had playing boards of 100 or more squares — making historical origins even dicier.

One possible progenitor from the 7th century was the war game chat-uranga — Sanskrit for a military formation mentioned in the Indian epic *Mahabharata*. The Risk-esque game, with a tinge of You Sank My Battleship, is often deemed the earliest ancestor of modern chess' different pieces with varying powers — unlike checkers and Go — and ultimate success was based on claiming one piece, the king.

The game spread to the east, north, and west, taking on sharply different characteristics. In the East, carried by Buddhist pilgrims, Silk Road traders and others, it was transformed into a game with inscribed disks that were often placed on the intersection of the lines of the board rather than within the squares.

About 750, chess reached China, and by the 11th century it had come

to Japan and Korea. Chinese chess, the most popular version of the Eastern game, has nine files and 10 ranks as well as a boundary — the river, between the 5th and 6th ranks — that limits access to the enemy camp and makes the game slower than its Western cousin.

Given the variety of pieces and their permissible movements, one could argue that chess trumps the game of Go due to the diverse cast of characters alone. After all, Go involves only a seemingly bottomless bag full of either black or white stones, actually discs roughly the size of a US dime. But any Go-er worth their weight in jade stone would argue that woe to him who poo-poo's Go for its seeming simplicity. Because the moment a participant takes his eye off the big picture, the person sitting across the table from him is ready to pounce on any mental oversights, and claim instant victory.

And finally, we come to mahjong

— a tile-based four-player game born in 19th century China. Similar to the Western card game rummy, mahjong is a game of skill, strategy and sometimes just dumb luck, played with a set of 144 tiles using Chinese characters and symbols. In turn, players draw and discard tiles until they complete a legal hand using the 14th drawn tile to form four melds (or sets) and a pair (eye). The game's name originates from the Chinese word for sparrow — as the clacking of tiles during shuffling resembles the chattering of the small birds.

Since you've dutifully read this far, I'm going to award you, honorable reader, with an answer to the question "Which game is best for boosting brain power?" The most honest answer, just as one asking "Who invented chess?" is one still up for debate.

Contact the writer at andrew@chinadaily.com.cn