

Historical attractions

Four ancient sites find place in list of heritage irrigation structures CHINA, PAGE 9



Experts stress use of renminbi in trade in services BUSINESS, PAGE 14



Spectacular performance Dance and martial arts mix wows London as Wing Chun debuts WORLD, PAGE 11

# CHINA DAILY

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President Xi Jinping hosts a welcoming ceremony on Tuesday for visiting Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Mnangagwa is on a state visit to China and will attend the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing. PHOTOS BY FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



President Xi Jinping hosts a welcoming ceremony on Tuesday for visiting Nigerian President Bola Tinubu at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing before their meeting. After their talks, the two leaders witnessed the signing of cooperation documents related to the Belt and Road and other matters.

## Xi vows to bolster solidarity with Africa

### China, Zimbabwe sign deals to deepen cooperation, cement ties

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and Zimbabwe released a joint statement on Tuesday to intensify and upgrade their comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation and build a high-level community with a shared future as part of their efforts to strengthen ties. The statement came as President Xi Jinping rolled out the red carpet for visiting Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. Mnangagwa is on a nine-day state visit to China, which started on Aug 29, and he will also attend the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation this week. The two presidents witnessed the signing of multiple documents on bilateral cooperation in areas such as Belt and Road cooperation, the Global Development Initiative and avocado exports to China. During their talks, Xi emphasized the deep-rooted traditional friendship between China and Zimbabwe, noting the significant progress in political mutual trust and fruitful cooperation between the two nations. He called on the two countries to build a "five-star ironclad" cooperation framework with pillars in politics, the economy and trade, security, culture and international coordination to foster a high-level China-

Zimbabwe community with a shared future. China supports Zimbabwe in safeguarding its sovereignty, security and development interests, and opposes external interference and illegal sanctions, Xi said. The nation is willing to further align its development strategy with that of Zimbabwe, and expand mutually beneficial cooperation in areas such as investment, trade, infrastructure, energy and minerals, clean energy and the digital economy, to help Zimbabwe and Africa enhance their capacity for independent development, he added. Xi congratulated Zimbabwe on assuming the chairmanship of the Southern African Development Community, and said that China is willing to strengthen international coordination with Zimbabwe, uphold the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and work together to defend international fairness and justice. He reiterated China's commitment to viewing relations with African countries as a cornerstone of its foreign policy, saying that China supports African countries in pursuing an independent development path and Africa becoming a significant player in the development of global politics, the economy and civilization. Noting that FOCAC is the most important platform and mechanism for enhancing solidarity and cooperation between China and

Africa, Xi expressed China's willingness to work with African countries to make the 2024 FOCAC Summit a milestone event in China-Africa relations in clarifying the direction and path for both sides to advance toward modernization. Mnangagwa spoke of his visit to the cities of Shaoshan, Xiangtan and Changsha in Hunan province, Shenzhen in Guangdong province and Nanjing in Jiangsu province before he headed to Beijing, and commended China's remarkable development achievements. He praised China's ongoing reforms unveiled at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in July, saying that the reform measures will not only further improve the well-being of the Chinese people, but also have a significant bearing on the future of the Global South and even humanity as a whole. China's assistance and cooperation have benefited the Zimbabwean people, creating new highlights in the friendship between Zimbabwe and China in the new era, he said. He said that Zimbabwe appreciates China's just stance on international affairs, and its constructive role in regional conflicts such as the Ukraine crisis and the Palestine-Israeli conflict. He also reiterated his country's commitment to the one-China policy, and said that Zimbabwe is ready to continue working as a close friend of China in southern Africa.

### Sino-Nigerian comprehensive strategic partnership established

By MO JINGXI mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on China and Nigeria to enhance strategic mutual trust, better align development strategies and promote people-to-people exchanges as the two countries announced on Tuesday the elevation of their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership. The announcement was jointly made by Xi and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, who is in Beijing for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and a state visit. During their meeting at the Great Hall of the People, Xi said the two countries have always respected each other as equals and have pursued strength through unity and engaged in win-win cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic ties more than half a century ago. In recent years, a large number of exemplary cooperation projects with strategic importance have been implemented between China and Nigeria under the FOCAC framework, he said. "I am willing to work together with Mr President to fully leverage the exemplary role of the China-Nigeria relationship and jointly pro-

mote new and greater development in relations between the two countries as well as between China and Africa," Xi told Tinubu. Nigeria is China's second-largest export market in Africa and is also a major investment destination and a major trading partner of China on the continent. Over the years, Chinese companies have constructed many signature projects in Nigeria, including the Lekki Deep Sea Port, the largest seaport in the country and one of the biggest in West Africa. As the two countries join hands to realize their respective modernization through high-quality cooperation, Xi stressed the necessity to promote integrated development between infrastructure, energy, mining and industries, and called for efforts to foster new growth points for cooperation in the digital economy, new energy and other areas. It is also hoped that Nigeria will ensure the safety of Chinese personnel and projects in the African country, he said. Xi said China supports Nigeria in combating terrorism, maintaining regional stability and playing a greater role in international and regional affairs. Furthermore, China will enhance multilateral coordination with Nigeria to jointly safeguard the interests of developing countries, he added.

Noting that FOCAC is not only an effective mechanism for promoting China-Africa practical cooperation but also a banner of South-South cooperation, Xi said China is willing to take the summit as an opportunity to inject new momentum into the development of China-Africa relations in the new era. Tinubu said that deepening economic cooperation and developing the comprehensive strategic partnership between Nigeria and China are crucial for the future development of his country. Nigeria, which has the largest population in Africa, hopes to become China's largest trade and investment partner on the continent and welcomes more investment from Chinese companies, and also hopes to expand mutually beneficial cooperation in such areas as agriculture and manufacturing, he said. This will assist Nigeria and West Africa in their modernization efforts and effectively alleviate poverty, the Nigerian president said, adding that his country will provide a secure environment for achieving this end. Tinubu also thanked China for providing important training opportunities for young people in Nigeria and expressed readiness to deepen people-to-people exchanges. After their talks, the two heads of state witnessed the signing of multiple cooperation documents related to the Belt and Road, applications of the Beidou Navigation Satellite System, peanut exports to China and other matters.

## Plans for 2063 should be launched now

For centuries, Africa has been like the big tree, the fruits of which always fell behind the fence, benefiting others rather than its own people. In the colonial period, its raw materials were looted, and its human resources were taken as slaves to produce crops and goods for others. In the post-colonial era, under different complex mechanisms, the same process continues. Special agreements with former colonial powers help multinational corporations to control large chunks of the mining resources of Africa under the "free market" label and neoliberal rules promoted and imposed by Western institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Financial resources are also fleeing the continent to Europe and tax havens elsewhere, bleeding the monetary and credit worthiness of

its nations. Its educated and talented youth are also leaving the continent in search of a better life abroad. The 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to be held in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday, is a major opportunity for African nations to launch a second liberation movement and together with China and the Global South, create a completely new paradigm of international economic cooperation. Many African nations are realizing that their resources must benefit their people, and that there is a better way out of poverty and into modernization. A major source of inspiration is China,

which was until a few decades ago, poorer than many African nations. The rise of China, of the BRICS, ASEAN, and the Global South in general, means that the level of ambition and vision has become commensurate with the new opportunities. Like China's ambitious plans for 2035 and 2049, Africa's plans for 2063 should be launched now with a new spirit: They have to be large in scale and effect, not piecemeal and micro projects that run into the sand like many aid programs that treat the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes. There is an attempt in Western circles to describe large scale infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative as "white elephants" with no tangible effect on the population. See *Plans*, page 2



INSIDE Virtues of bilateral cooperation Global Views, page 13 www.chinadailyglobal.com

## Event seen as a milestone for relations with continent

Ministerial officials from China and 53 African countries gathered on Tuesday in Beijing and unanimously approved drafts of the agenda and outcome documents to be adopted at the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Over 300 participants attended the 9th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC to make all-around preparations for the three-day summit that starts on Wednesday. Attendees at the conference included foreign ministers and ministers of economy of the 53 African nations as well as representatives of international and regional organiza-

tions such as the African Union. Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who was co-chair of the ministerial conference, said that during the summit this week, President Xi Jinping will work with African leaders to "draw a new blueprint for the development of China-Africa relations and lead the way forward for the Global South". The rise of the Global South, as represented by China and Africa, has a profound influence on the development process of mankind, Wang said, adding that the summit "will surely set a new milestone in the Global South's joint efforts in marching toward modernization". See *Meeting*, page 2



## 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

## CHINA, AFRICA ENHANCING PARTNERSHIP

**Editor's note:** President Xi Jinping held bilateral meetings on Tuesday with African leaders who are in Beijing to attend the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which opens on Wednesday and runs through Friday.

## BRI, Kenya Vision 2030 to be better aligned



William Ruto

President Xi Jinping called on China and Kenya on Tuesday to further promote Belt and Road cooperation, in order to advance regional economic and social development and bring benefits to the two peoples.

He made the remark when meeting with Kenyan President William Ruto in Beijing. Hailing the development of bilateral relations, Xi said that China and Kenya have been at the forefront of Belt and Road cooperation.

Both countries have jointly completed numerous flagship projects to enhance infrastructure connectivity, he said.

Xi called for further aligning the Belt and Road Initiative with Kenya Vision 2030 — a long-term development blueprint that aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country and provide a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment by 2030.

He underlined the need for both countries to strengthen collaboration in renewable energy, trade, the digital economy, poverty alleviation and agriculture.

Both nations should continue the tradition of friendship to treat each other as sincere partners based on mutual trust, as well as support each other in safeguarding sovereignty and independently exploring development paths that suit their respective national conditions, Xi said.

He also called on the two countries to work as strategic partners dedicated to upholding fairness and justice, enhance communication and coordination on international and regional issues, safeguard the common interests of the Global South, and promote regional peace and stability.

Ruto said the Kenya-China relationship is built on deep friendship, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual benefit.

BRI projects have significantly boosted Kenya's economic and social development, marking a new chapter in the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two nations, he said.

Kenya looks forward to leveraging the 2024 FOCAC Summit to further advance its comprehensive strategic partnership with China, Ruto added.

Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang also met with Ruto on Tuesday.

CAO DESHENG

## Chad encouraged to bolster trade, economic ties



Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno

President Xi Jinping and Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno announced on Tuesday the elevation of bilateral relations to a strategic partnership.

Mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Chad under the Belt and Road Initiative and FOCAC has yielded fruitful outcomes, Xi said during his meeting with the Chadian president.

China has been Chad's largest trading and investment partner for many years. Xi said that China is willing to further align its development strategies with the Central African nation and push for new progress in bilateral relations. He said that China will, as always, support Chad in pursuing an independent development path and safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests.

Xi said he welcomes Chad to make good use of the outcomes of the 2024 FOCAC Summit and deepen economic and trade cooperation, in order to strengthen its capability of independent development and also achieve common development.

China is ready to work with Chad to implement the Global Security Initiative, safeguard national security and stability, and work together as stabilizing forces for peace, Xi said.

According to a Foreign Ministry readout, the two countries will sign a number of bilateral cooperation documents related to the implementation of the Global Development Initiative, the development of human resources, exports of peanut and sesame to China, and coordination among media organizations.

The Chadian president expressed his appreciation of China's assistance for his country's economic and social development, and said that Chad is firmly committed to further deepening friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation with China.

Chad admires China's development achievements and is glad to see the country's continued growth, he said, adding that China's sustained development will bring more opportunities for the development of Chad, Africa and the world at large.

Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, also met with the Chadian guest on Tuesday.

ZHOU JIN

## Shared growth with Malawi to gain momentum



Lazarus Chakwera

President Xi Jinping and Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera met on Tuesday in Beijing and announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a strategic partnership.

Bilateral ties have developed steadily and soundly since China and Malawi established diplomatic relations in 2007, Xi said, adding that the two countries enjoy solid political mutual trust and fruitful mutually beneficial cooperation.

China hopes to further advance its friendly cooperation with Malawi and facilitate shared growth by implementing the outcomes of the 2024 FOCAC Summit, he said.

Xi emphasized that China supports Malawi in exploring a development path that suits Malawi's national conditions, and is willing to share with the African country the opportunities brought by Chinese modernization to assist its development.

China is ready to strengthen cooperation with Malawi in agriculture, telecommunications and infrastructure, and encourages Chinese companies to invest in Malawi, Xi said.

He called on the two countries to make good use of the Confucius Institute at the University of Malawi to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

China supports the smooth operation of Malawi's consulate general in Changsha, Hunan province, and encourages the two countries to strengthen exchanges and cooperation at local levels, Xi said.

He added that China hopes to strengthen coordination with Malawi on international affairs to protect the shared interests of developing countries.

Chakwera said that Malawi sees China as its most sincere friend. Malawi adheres to the one-China policy and supports China in protecting its core interests, he said.

Malawi supports strengthening the FOCAC mechanism, and will take this summit as an opportunity to advance Belt and Road cooperation, boost regional connectivity and deepen friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation with China, Chakwera added.

WANG QINGYUN

## Relations with Mauritania elevated



Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani

President Xi Jinping and visiting Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani jointly announced the elevation of bilateral relations to a strategic partnership during their meeting in Beijing on Tuesday.

China and Mauritania are good friends and brothers who trust and help each other, Xi told Ghazouani.

The Chinese president expressed appreciation to Mauritania for its firm support on issues concerning China's core interests, pledging China's continuous support for Mauritania in pursuing a development path suiting its national conditions.

Xi expressed willingness to advance joint cooperation on the Belt and Road, deepen cooperation in areas such as fisheries and infrastructure, and build China-Mauritania relations into a model of friendly exchanges and win-win cooperation.

He commended Ghazouani for his positive contribution as the rotating chairman of the African Union in preparing for the 2024 FOCAC Summit.

China is willing to work closely with Mauritania to build a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future, enhance the voice and representation of Global South countries in global governance, and jointly uphold international fairness and justice, Xi said.

Ghazouani said that Mauritania is proud of its friendly relations with China, and pledged his nation's firm adherence to the one-China principle.

In the face of numerous global risks and challenges, deepening cooperation with China is the hope of countries like Mauritania to achieve sustainable development, he added.

Furthermore, the two sides have highly consistent positions on the Palestinian question and other matters, Ghazouani said.

Mauritania highly appreciates and supports the major initiatives proposed by Xi, which provide solutions to common security and development for all countries, he said.

Mauritania looks forward to collaborating closely with China for the success of the summit and for promoting peace and development in Africa and the world, he added.

ZHAO JIA

## AU's greater role in promoting friendship backed



Moussa Faki Mahamat

President Xi Jinping reaffirmed on Tuesday China's support for the African Union to play a greater role in promoting China-Africa friendship, saying that the country is ready to take the 2024 FOCAC Summit as an opportunity to deliver more cooperation achievements.

Xi highlighted the deepening of political mutual trust between China and the AU in recent years, as well as their close coordination in international and regional affairs. Africa, as a significant player on the global stage, remains a key priority in China's foreign policy, he said.

In the context of the rapidly evolving global landscape, the growing influence of the Global South, which includes China and Africa, has injected stability and positive energy into world peace and development, Xi said.

He also underlined the need for both sides to enhance unity and support, and jointly safeguard international fairness, justice and the common interests of developing countries.

Faki hailed the rapid development of relations between the AU and China, and lauded China's long-standing support for Africa in fields such as infrastructure, healthcare, energy, industry and security. He also praised China for supporting Africa's struggles against colonialism, imperialism and racial discrimination.

The African side firmly adheres to the one-China policy and steadfastly supports China in safeguarding its core interests, Faki said.

He commended the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, all proposed by Xi, saying that these initiatives are committed to providing the people of all countries with peace and development opportunities.

Faki expressed the hope that China will continue to play a leading role in helping Africa achieve modernization and in promoting global peace and development.

Vice-President Han Zheng also met with Faki on Tuesday.

CAO DESHENG

## Plans: Goal should be industrialization

From page 1

This view has to be rejected, since it is only through major projects in transport, power, water, agriculture and industrial development that any meaningful development can be achieved. China itself is a good example. It was with mega projects like the high-speed rail system, the Three Gorges Dam and the South-North Water Transfer Project, that China's economy was boosted. Africa's plans have also to be long term in nature, and not merely attempting to fill short-term gaps. They need to utilize the highest technological and scientific levels available to leapfrog in the process of development.

China as a reliable partner has shown willingness to transfer technology to other partner countries. Finding new mechanism for long-term low interest credits for infrastructure projects is also a key factor now. Finally, the goal should be the achievement of industrialization of the nations of Africa that are projected to become a major economic factor in the coming decades. With a population of 1.3 billion which is poised to reach 2.9 billion by 2050, Africa will gradually become the largest consumer market of technology and industrial goods.

While China stood by and assisted many African nations in their struggle for liberation from colonialism since the 1950s, a qualitative shift took place in the relationship after the launch of the BRI in 2013. One major milestone stands out in this context. In the speech delivered during the 2015 FOCAC Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, President Xi Jinping said that it was entirely possible for African nations to leverage their resources to achieve modernization, and that "industrialization holds the key" to eliminating poverty. This is possible, he added, if the three main "bottlenecks of development" are resolved. These are "the lack of capital, lack of infrastructure, and shortage of skilled labor". Since then, China has contributed more than any other nation to help resolve these three by providing long-term, low interest credit to infrastructure projects and helping the capacity building of the labor force through education to the extent that by 2018, China surpassed both the United States and the United Kingdom with the number of African students enrolled in its universities.

Inspired by these developments, in 2017 my colleagues in the Schiller Institute and I composed a special report titled, "Extending the New Silk Road to West Asia and Africa: A Vision of an Economic Renais-

sance", which I recently had the great honor of personally giving a gift copy to China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi. In this report, we outlined the issues facing development in Africa and also the solutions that are now available due to China's involvement as a major industrial and technological powerhouse. We outlined a number of sectors that require urgent attention as continental projects that would have positive spillovers for every corner of the continent. Many of the projects have been on the drawing board for decades, but never managed to get the right partners to finance and build them. These include transcontinental connectivity with rail and roads, mega hydro-power projects like the Grand Inga Dam, the Transaqua Canal, which is a 2000-km long water transfer canal from the Congo River to save Lake Chad which has been shrinking, and other riparian multimodal transportation systems. The blue print also included pan-African nuclear power and space programs. Agriculture development to achieve food sovereignty for all nations of the continent must become a priority. However, irrigation infrastructure, fertilizer and machinery production must be localized within the continent. China-Africa agricul-

tural research cooperation since the late Yuan Longping's hybrid rice was introduced meant a great hope for the nations of Africa who import 80 percent of their staple food. Dealing with climate issues like drought and desertification is extremely important. China has become a model for controlling desertification and increasing the green cover of the land in an unprecedented manner. The lessons learned from China's Great Green Wall and development of modern agriculture in dry regions like Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region are of great benefit for Africa.

Although the world is facing unprecedented challenges and threats today, it is at the same time opening the gates for a potentially dramatic and positive change and a bright future for all mankind. Seizing the opportunity now with a grand and clear vision will determine the direction for Africa and the rest of the Global South. Success here and now will create the possibility for inviting the West and Global North to join a more equitable, peaceful and prosperous paradigm for mankind.

*The author is Vice-Chairman of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden, and Distinguished Research Fellow at the Guangdong Institute for International Strategies. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## Meeting: Delegates laud nation's firm support

From page 1

Commerce Minister Wang Wentao and Luo Zhaohui, head of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, briefed the meeting on the implementation of the outcomes of the 8th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC held three years ago, as well as on China-Africa development cooperation and China's assistance to the continent.

Since the establishment of FOCAC in 2000, the two sides have respected each other, treated each other as equals, and achieved mutual benefits and win-win results, said the delegates from Africa.

They thanked China for its firm support for Africa on multiple occasions and for speaking out to correct historical injustices inflicted upon Africa.

The African side expressed its willingness to work closely with China to make this year's summit a success, promote synergy between the AU's Agenda 2063 and the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the series of global initiatives, and realize common development and prosperity.

Observers noted that China and Africa have closely cooperated on global governance and sustainable

development, vigorously safeguarding the common interests of developing countries.

China has provided nearly 20,000 government scholarships to African countries and trained more than 10,000 short-term trainees.

Senegalese Foreign Minister Yassine Fall, also co-chair of the ministerial conference, said that China-Africa cooperation "has become a unique example of South-South cooperation".

Fall also expressed her appreciation for President Xi's support and his commitment to strengthening Africa-China relations. "This is especially precious, given the current context of emerging crises on many fronts, including geopolitics, security and climate," she said.

Over the past three years, China-Africa cooperation in many fields, ranging from infrastructure, agriculture, energy and health to peace and security, has "achieved tangible results" and is "dynamic and promising", Fall added.

Foreign Minister Wang noted that the two sides have kept pace with the changing times to ensure the efficient operation of the FOCAC mechanism, "continuously leading the trend of international cooperation with Africa".



# 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

## CHINA-AFRICA COOPERATION



# SOLID TRUST AND COOPERATION

China and Africa enjoy a high level of political mutual trust and in-depth pragmatic cooperation in various fields. Both sides have maintained close coordination in international and regional affairs to uphold the shared interests of developing countries.

### PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S 5 VISITS TO AFRICA

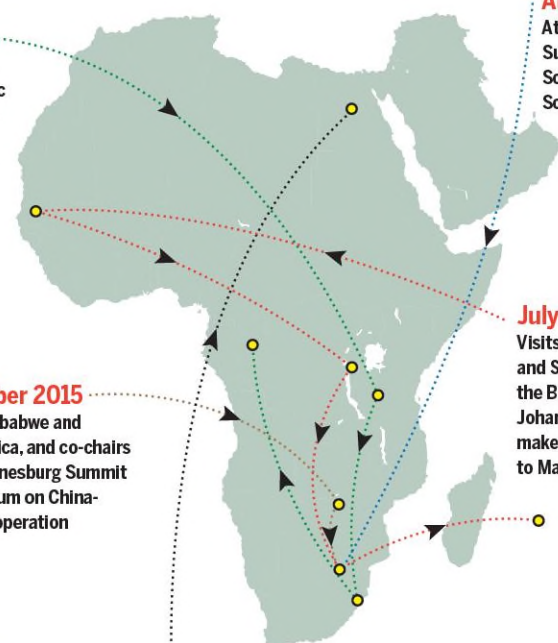
**March 2013**  
Visits Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of Congo, and attends the BRICS Summit in Durban, South Africa

**December 2015**  
Visits Zimbabwe and South Africa, and co-chairs the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

**January 2016**  
Visits Egypt

**July 2018**  
Visits Senegal, Rwanda and South Africa, attends the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg and makes a friendly visit to Mauritius

**August 2023**  
Attends the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, and visits South Africa



**15**  
China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years

**2.8%**  
Year-on-year increase in bilateral trade in the first seven months of 2024

**\$282.1 billion**  
Historical high in bilateral trade in 2023

**\$282 billion**  
Bilateral trade in 2022, with 11.1 percent year-on-year increase

**\$254.2 billion**  
Bilateral trade in 2021, with 35 percent year-on-year increase

**\$186.97 billion**  
Bilateral trade in 2020, with 10.5 percent year-on-year decrease

**\$208.7 billion**  
Bilateral trade in 2019, 20 times the amount in 2000

**30 million**  
Area: About 30 million square kilometers, taking up about one fifth of the world's land surface

In Africa since the beginning of this century, China has built:

**6,000**  
More than 6,000 kilometers of railways

**6,000**  
6,000 km of highways

**20**  
Nearly 20 ports

**80**  
Over 80 large electric power facilities

**130**  
More than 130 hospitals and clinics

**170**  
Over 170 schools

**45**  
45 sports venues

**500**  
Over 500 agricultural projects

**52**  
African countries and the African Union Commission signed Belt and Road Initiative cooperation documents as of June last year

**53**  
Of the 54 African countries have established diplomatic relations with China

**1.4 billion**  
Population: Over 1.4 billion, of which more than 60 percent are people under 25 years old

Africa is the second-largest continent in the world

### LANDMARK PROJECTS

- 1 Merowe Dam, Sudan
- 2 Headquarters of the African Union, Ethiopia
- 3 Addis Ababa-Adama Expressway, Ethiopia
- 4 No 1 National Highway, Republic of Congo
- 5 Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port, Djibouti
- 6 Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway, Kenya
- 7 Kribi Deep-Water Port, Cameroon
- 8 Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, Ethiopia and Djibouti
- 9 Expansion of Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport, Zimbabwe
- 10 The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters, Ethiopia

Sources: Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Administration of Customs, People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency

TEXT BY WANG QINGYUN, GRAPHICS BY MUKESH MOHANAN/CHINA DAILY



# 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

## Premier meets with Eritrean president

By WANG QINGYUN  
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Premier Li Qiang met with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki in Beijing on Tuesday, saying that China hopes to carry on its traditional friendship with Eritrea.

China stands ready to deepen political mutual trust with Eritrea, and work with the African country to consolidate mutual support on issues involving their core interests and major concerns, Li said.

China also hopes to better align its development strategies with those of Eritrea to provide more impetus for the modernization drives of the two countries, he said.

Li said China is willing to expand trade with Eritrea within the framework of high-quality Belt and Road Initiative cooperation, deepen ties in the mining industry, agriculture, infrastructure and education, and potentially work together in developing clean energy and the blue economy.

Li called on the two nations to maintain close coordination in multilateral areas to safeguard the interests of developing countries.

China will always remain a true friend to Eritrea and other African countries, Li said, adding that China hopes to work with African countries to do a good job in implementing the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

Afwerki said Eritrea firmly follows the one-China principle, and firmly supports China's position over the Taiwan question and issues related to the Xinjiang Uygur and Xizang autonomous regions, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the South China Sea.

In a meeting with Lesotho Prime Minister Sam Matekane in Beijing on Monday, Li said China hopes to continue to expand mutually beneficial cooperation with Lesotho and deepen cooperation in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, textiles, education and tourism.

## Companies promote industrialization

By OTIATO OPALI in Nairobi  
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When Alvis Ng'eno, a 30-year-old Kenyan, graduated from university in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in energy management, he had hopes of working in the energy sector.

However, Kenya's high unemployment rate meant he had to settle for the first opportunity that came his way.

Ng'eno began his professional journey in 2018 as a business development executive at Dynavolt Technology (Kenya), a Chinese solar power company. He handled responsibilities beyond solar power engineering, including management, which he credits for his transition from technical to administrative functions.

Later in the year, his Chinese supervisors, who had seen his potential for career growth, recommended him for a vacancy at the China Road and Bridge Corporation Kenya headquarters in Nairobi, where he began working as a payroll clerk.

"Following a three-month probation at CRBC, I was entrusted with additional responsibilities and promoted to employee relations and management," Ng'eno said. "By 2020, I was tasked with coordinating human resource operations and ensuring compliance with company policies. Based at the head office, I support and coordinate operations across various sections and branches."

His eagerness to work with Chinese companies was influenced by the fact that they offer locals exposure to large-scale projects and diverse roles, allowing employees to gain valuable experience across different areas of the business. There is also room for upward mobility through promotions.

Many other young people across Africa have found employment with Chinese companies in recent decades, becoming pillars in technology and management in various sectors, and promoting the continent's industrialization.

Liu Chenghui, CRBC Kenya's

deputy general manager, said that since the company was established in Kenya in 1984 it has built a large number of infrastructure projects, such as the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway and Nairobi Expressway, and also provided extensive training to local workers.

Through partnerships with local schools, CRBC Kenya has also trained over 2,800 high-quality railway professionals. In addition, Liu said it also creates employment and conducts technology transfer indirectly by supporting local industries and businesses through its infrastructure projects.

He cited the construction of the Nairobi Expressway, where CRBC extensively collaborated with over 200 Kenyan subcontractors, procuring more than 51,000 metric tons of steel, 15 million liters of diesel and 16,000 tons of cement locally.

According to a report released by the China-Africa Business Council last month, more than 3,000 Chinese enterprises had invested in Africa by the end of 2022, and Chinese investment in various areas such as infrastructure, manufacturing and trade has contributed to industrial upgrades in Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a vocational school set up by Sicomines, a China-DRC joint mining company, in Kapata village, Kolwezi, has become a magnet for young people living nearby who are seeking knowledge and training.

Selon Serge, a laboratory technician at Sicomines, said it has been adopting the latest technologies for mining, which were not taught at local schools. Graduates are trained in the new technologies after they join the company.

Ng'eno said Africa's labor force has greatly improved through cooperation with China owing to the nation's advanced level of technology. That exposure to Chinese methods and technologies enhances the workforce's expertise and capabilities, and promotes local industrialization, he said.



Journalists attend a news conference ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing on Tuesday. WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

## China makes pledge to upgrade partnerships

Envoy says digital and blue economies, green development to add dynamism

By ZHOU JIN  
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China's special envoy on African affairs highlighted the nation's unwavering commitment and unremitting actions in bolstering cooperation with Africa on Tuesday, saying the nation will continue to upgrade its pragmatic partnerships on the continent.

China and Africa will continue to expand cooperation in areas such as the digital economy, the blue economy — which is focused on oceanic resources — and green development, enhancing the alignment of economic and industrial structures and making their cooperation more dynamic, Liu Yuxi, special representative of the Chinese government on African affairs, told a news conference ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

This summit, scheduled from Wednesday to Friday, is the largest diplomatic event China has hosted in recent years in terms of scale and the number of attending foreign leaders, Liu said.

A declaration and action plan will be adopted during the summit, he said.

The declaration will reflect consensus between China and African nations on major issues,

including working together to advance modernization and building a high-level China-Africa community with a shared future, while showcasing their resolve and confidence in strengthening cooperation on global governance, peace and security, and trade cooperation, Liu said.

The action plan will serve as a playbook for the nation and the continent to advance high-quality cooperation over the next three years, he added.

Liu described China-Africa cooperation as "open, confident and pioneering" rather than exclusive, saying that it has become a fine example of practicing multilateralism.

The cooperation has supported Africa's development capacity, helped improve the continent's business environment and created better conditions for fostering international cooperation with Africa, he said.

"History will not go back to the old days of colonialism and Cold War confrontation. Africa should not become a wrestling ground for major countries," he said, calling on the international community to lis-

ten to the voices of the continent and adopt an open-minded attitude in supporting its peace and development.

The cooperation between China and Africa is highly complementary in nature and has huge potential, Liu said.

While Africa has a demographic dividend and is accelerating its urbanization, he said China has advantages in terms of funding, technology and development experience.

Chinese companies have made mutually beneficial investments in Africa that have met the continent's needs, he said, adding that private companies from China are gradually becoming the primary source of the nation's economic and investment cooperation with Africa.

Trade between China and the continent reached \$282.1 billion last year, with China's total investment in the continent reaching \$40 billion. China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, and has remained the largest export destination for Africa.

Liu highlighted the strong resilience of China-Africa cooperation, saying that it is moving toward sustainable, high-quality development with a diversified cooperation structure.

Cooperation between China and Africa is undergoing major transformations, with the market playing a bigger role, he said.

## BRI a boon for Africa's infrastructure

By SONG PING  
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"Looking back at the Belt and Road Initiative over the years, the first thing that strikes you is the projects, especially the infrastructure projects," former World Bank economist Mwangi Wachira said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

"In many cases, they have become symbols of development in most of the African countries."

Wachira emphasized that it is hard to understand what Africa has achieved over the past 20 years without talking about the BRI.

"The initiative has gone to the heart of development issues in most countries," he said, adding that BRI projects have not only paved the way for Africa's economic growth but have also become significant markers of China-Africa cooperation.

According to the Report on 2024 Chinese Investment in Africa released by the China-Africa Business Council on Aug 23, 52 African countries had signed memorandums of understanding with China under the BRI framework by the end of last year. Trade between China and Africa reached \$282.1 billion in 2023.

One of the authors of the report, Wachira said China has a stellar record of supporting the development of an integrated African market with infrastructure projects

such as Algeria's El Hamdania Central Port, Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway, Ethiopia's Eastern Industrial Zone and the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital.

Wachira, who served as an adviser to the Kenyan president and was involved in the final evaluation of the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway, said that the old railway had long been a bottleneck for regional cargo transport. The situation has changed dramatically thanks to the new railway.

"Today, goods can land in Mombasa and reach Naivasha in four days and Kampala in Uganda in six days, a significant reduction from the previous two-month journey," Wachira said.

"The saving of time is the essence of development, and the railway has become a major driver of economic growth in Kenya and East Africa, paving the way for regional economic integration."

Addressing claims by the United States and some of its allies that such BRI projects are debt traps, Wachira stressed that "most of Africa's debt is not owed to China but to Western institutions."

"It's the West which has trapped the Africans in debt," he said. Based on the International Debt

Report 2023 released by the World Bank, commercial bonds and multilateral debt accounted for 66 percent of Africa's total external debt in 2022, while China-Africa bilateral debt made up only 11 percent.

Compared to Western aid, Wachira said that China's support for African development is more foundational, addressing the root causes of the continent's issues.

"The need for roads, ports and railroads has existed for many years," he said. "Yet, it took China coming to Africa to start working on some of these projects."

Taking communication and telecommunications infrastructure as an example, he noted that China has been working in that sector in Africa since the 1990s and has built 70 percent of the continent's telecommunications infrastructure.

He said that if such projects had been funded or implemented by a Western country, they would have come with a long list of conditions or requirements, complicating Africa's development and effectively amounting to a form of recolonization.

"The BRI has revitalized African development through iconic projects and small enterprises," Wachira said.

"As long as this cooperation continues, it will bring mutual benefits, shared prosperity and a bright future for Africa-China relations."

Xie Yuqi contributed to this story.

## Business leaders to explore further cooperation

By ZHONG NAN  
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Nearly 800 Chinese and African business leaders will convene in Beijing on Friday to explore innovative pathways for enhancing China-Africa industrial cooperation, China's top foreign trade and investment promotion agency said on Tuesday.

As a part of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the 8th Conference of Chinese and African Entrepreneurs aims to pave the way for African countries to accelerate their integration into global industrial and supply chains, said Zhang Shaogang, vice-chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Zhang said that over 400 business representatives from more than 40 African countries will attend the conference. The participating companies span traditional industries such as energy, mining, infrastructure and trade, and emerging sectors like electronics and communication satellites.

Chinese and African entrepreneurs can leverage the platform to strengthen communication and collaboration, and work together to discover new opportunities to advance China-Africa economic and trade cooperation, said Sun Xiao, secretary-general of the China Chamber of International Commerce in Beijing.

By the end of last year, China's direct investment in Africa had exceeded \$40 billion, making it one of the largest sources of foreign investment on the continent. Over the past three years, Chinese companies have created more than 11 million jobs in Africa, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Over 1,000 Chinese businesses have invested in economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa, spanning sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and logistics. The zones have significantly contributed to local tax revenues, export growth and foreign exchange earnings.

In an article published in People's Daily on Tuesday, Commerce Minister Wang Wentao said China supports and encourages Chinese and African companies to create industrial development clusters, forming a virtuous cycle of trade and investment promotion.

"We will continue to heighten China-Africa connectivity, facilitate the smooth circulation of resources and elements and ensure that the benefits of development are better shared by the peoples of both sides," Wang said.

China has long been committed to deepening economic and trade cooperation with Africa, and the industrial ties between China and Africa have become increasingly close, said Lyu Daliang, director of the General Administration of Customs' department of statistics and analysis.

China has continued to deepen trade cooperation with African countries in recent years, with a rapid increase in the scale of both imports and exports, he said.

From 2000 to 2023, trade between China and Africa expanded from less than 100 billion yuan (\$14.05 billion) to 1.98 trillion yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 17.2 percent, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

After seeing its exports to Africa jump 73.5 percent to 310 million yuan in the first seven months of this year, Jiawei Tools (Suzhou), a power tool manufacturer based in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, plans to cultivate sales agents in key markets including South Africa, Nigeria and Benin.

"Driven by rapid industrial development, the demand for power tools in the African market has been steadily increasing in recent years," said Qin Lan, a manager at the company's overseas business unit.

## Set in stone



Tatenda Mavetera, Zimbabwe's minister of information, communications and technology and postal and courier services, tours an exhibition of stone sculptures at the China Millennium Monument Art Museum in Beijing on Tuesday. The exhibition features 100 sculptures from China and Zimbabwe. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY



# 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT



**Left:** Liu Zaochan (fourth from right) and a team from Uganda's National Agricultural Research Organization evaluate a crop's disease resistance. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Middle:** Local employees display rice seedlings at the Nigerian Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center near Abuja, Nigeria, in September. DONG JIANGHUI / XINHUA **Right:** Farmers harvest rice from a test plot in China-Uganda Agricultural Cooperation Industrial Park in Luweero, Uganda, in January. WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY



## 'Tailored solutions' help fill Africa's grain bags

By LI LEI  
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When Li Xiaoyun first arrived in Tanzania in the late 1990s as a young student, the arid lands of East Africa, reminiscent of his hometown in Northwest China, sparked a fire within him.

Returning to Tanzania in 2008 as a professor at China Agricultural University in Beijing, Li carried lessons from China's rapid progress in food productivity and compared corn yields between the fertile North China Plain and Tanzania's struggling fields.

A key difference captured his attention. Chinese farmers were planting more than 60,000 corn plants per hectare, while many of the Tanzanian farmers Li studied settled for about 15,000, resulting in significantly lower yields.

"This was an obvious difference, but many Tanzanian farmers didn't realize it," said Li, who is now the honorary dean of CAU's College of International Development and Global Agriculture due to his contributions to global agricultural exchanges.

Li is part of a group of Chinese agricultural researchers and development experts who have used their expertise to boost food productivity and alleviate extreme poverty over recent decades in Africa, home to some of the most malnourished people on the planet.

Unlike other previous aid efforts that often imposed technologies beyond Africa's development stage, Chinese experts advocated simple, cost-effective, and easy-to-implement techniques.

### Realistic approach

During his stay in Tanzania over the past decade, Li spearheaded reforms with the aim of bettering impoverished communities through improved agricultural practices.

He introduced the concept of "parallel experience", which advocates tailored solutions that are aligned with Africa's specific challenges and opportunities.

"Before our arrival, numerous teams from various countries had already provided assistance in Tanzania," he noted.

"Often, the solutions were not in line with Africa's development context," he said.

Li said that previous projects often skipped much-needed basic farming practices, such as dense planting techniques and intercropping, and promoted more costly methods that included irrigation and mechanized farming.

These ambitious projects clashed with the realities on the ground, such as the majority of Tanzanian farmers being unable to afford tractors.

The high cost of fuel and maintenance, and the lack of paved roads also made mechanized farming nearly impossible.

Diverging from these impractical suggestions, Li drew inspiration from China's agricultural traditions such as optimal planting density, organic fertilization, and crop rotation.

His team started teaching dense planting techniques in 2011 to bolster production.

In 2021, with backing from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Li and his team launched the "Small Beans, Big Nutrition" project.

The initiative teaches local farmers to intercrop corn and soybean, and make secondary soybean products such as soy milk and animal feed.

Intercropping enhanced soil fertility. Soy milk offered an affordable protein supplement, diversifying food resources and improving the nutritional health of smallholder farmers. Animal feed processing extended the local agricultural industry chain, Li said.

Currently, more than 100 families are reaping the benefits of the project, the foundation said.

In two villages linked to the project, soy milk shops have opened. Another village has established a small feed processing plant.

### Chinese experts draw on experiences at home to boost continent's food crops



It helps us reassess ourselves from a global viewpoint and through the African lens."

Li Xiaoyun, professor at China Agricultural University

African researchers learn growth status analysis of direct seeded rice in China. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Li's "parallel experience" theory is one example of China's efforts to enhance African food production through approaches tailored to specific conditions.

### Hardier rice

Drought-resistant rice is another example of how Chinese agricultur-

al knowledge is helping Africa increase production, protect wetlands, and combat climate change.

In late July, on the outskirts of Zanzibar, Tanzania, two small patches of rice began to turn yellow in the experimental fields, their plants bending under the weight of their heavy grains.

In the nearby comparison patch, the rice plants looked green and were more than 10 days away from reaching maturity.

These fields belong to the Zanzibar Agricultural Research Institute, and the rice ripening early was WDR73, a drought-resistant variety developed by the Shanghai Agrobiological Gene Center.

While it hasn't been officially approved in Tanzania yet, its success in Uganda, where it has been endorsed for nationwide use, impressed Salum Faki Hamad, a rice scientist at ZARI.

Hamad reached out to Liu Zaochan, the Africa project manager at the Shanghai center, to initiate the collaboration.

African countries such as Kenya have joined the Convention on Wetlands, which means they cannot increase planting areas at the expense of wetlands, Liu explained.

"In this context, water-saving and drought-resistant rice has become a great solution in the region," Liu said.

Since the late 1990s, crop scientists, including Luo Lijun at the Shanghai center, have been building a pool of over 200,000 rice gene samples for breeding purposes.

After decades of hybridization research, they successfully developed the drought-resistant rice strain in 2004. With a 40 percent reduction in water usage, the per hectare yield can exceed 11 metric tons.

Since the variety doesn't need to be grown in flooded fields, it can also reduce emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and prevent mosquito breeding.

Scientific research achievements related to the WDR73 variety were

recognized with the National Science and Technology Progress Award in 2020.

"Data has shown that the variety has curbed methane emissions by at least 70 percent," Liu said.

As the Belt and Road Initiative progresses, the center in Shanghai has been introducing the variety to partner countries over the past decade.

Liu said it has been grown in rice fields in northern Vietnam, Burundi and Kenya.

Agricultural research institutes in Iran and the United Arab Emirates have shown great interest in introducing the variety.

### Mutual benefits

Food security and agricultural development are a priority for cooperation between China and Africa.

Following the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue in Johannesburg, South Africa, last year, China published the Plan for China Supporting Africa's Agricultural Modernization, adding new momentum to the cooperation.

Li, from China Agricultural University, said China's assistance to Africa is mutually beneficial.

Through aid programs, "we have gained insights into new crop planting systems, how Africans tackle challenges like water scarcity, fertilizer shortages, and financial constraints, and especially their diverse food sources and methods to obtain more plant-based protein," he explained.

"It helps us reassess ourselves from a global viewpoint and through the African lens," he added.

At a news conference on Aug 20, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning was asked about recent Chinese media reports of an African student studying agricultural technology in China.

She said that China empathized with the aspirations of the African people to become free of hunger.

China-Africa agricultural cooperation has flourished in recent years, with significant achievements in expert technical assistance and training, transfer of advanced technology, construction of agricultural parks, and promotion of crop planting projects such as hybrid rice and fungi strains, Mao said.

This has greatly enriched the "grain bags" and "grocery baskets" of the African people and promoted African agricultural modernization, she added.



Chinese experts demonstrate how to plant water-saving and drought-resistant rice at a field in Burkina Faso in 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO LEI  
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Wang Gang is popular among residents of Pumpi, a remote village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Lualaba province, because he is good at planting and growing vegetables.

"Wang has not only taught me how to prepare farmland, fertilize soil, grow seedlings and move growing plants, but also given me knowledge about many types of Chinese vegetables and their nutritional composition as well as cooking methods," said Ilunga Germen Milongo.

Milongo, a homemaker, said she likes Chinese vegetables because they taste good, adding that she has obtained seeds from "the Chinese farm" that Wang heads, to grow plants in her little garden at home to feed her family.

"I want to thank Wang and the Chinese farm for teaching me planting skills and putting an end to the villagers' shortage of vegetables," she said.

Wang, 45, who grew up in China's eastern Shandong province, studied cultivation at Qingdao Agricultural University.

Since graduating in 2000, he has been in the farming business, with

## Agriculturalist, teacher cultivates ties with villagers

his work including the management of vegetable greenhouses for a South Korean agriculture company in Ulsan.

In late 2020, Wang heard that a State-owned company wanted to recruit an employee capable of growing vegetables in "infertile soil" in the DRC. He was curious about the job and applied for an interview with Norin Mining Lamikal, a subsidiary of China North Industries Corp.

"I was told about how difficult and expensive it was to buy vegetables at the work site of Norin Mining Lamikal in the village of Pumpi. They said that before me, some employees at the company had tried to grow vegetables at the work site, but all of their attempts failed.

"The information aroused my interest and curiosity. I thought it was a real challenge and I didn't believe that it was impossible to grow vegetables here," Wang recalled.

He was hired and sent to the Central African country in February 2021.

As soon as he arrived in Pumpi, he realized why he was needed.

Workers at Norin Mining Lamikal only had imported rice, cabbage and



Wang Gang (center) and local farmers display the soil in Lualaba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

a handful of local vegetables for their dining table. Villagers ate corn and cassava as their staple food, and their vegetables were restricted mainly to cabbage and edible amaranth. "Many local families had difficulties in getting enough food," Wang said.

The main problem happened during the rainy season, when a

large amount of organic matter in the soil was washed away by rainwater. At the same time, local people did not know how to fertilize their farmlands.

The first remedial measure Wang took was to organize a team of 10 local employees to search for alkaline organic soil in grasslands and forests surrounding Pumpi.

After finding fertile soil, the team transported it back to newly established farmland in the village.

Wang had reclaimed the land and fertilized it using the traditional Chinese method of putting leaves and wood chips on the bottom, placing grass and half-decomposed animal manure in the middle, and laying earth and mature compost on the surface.

He also instructed local employees on how to spread limestone powder and plant ash to fertilize the earth and improve its suitability for new kinds of vegetables.

Since then, Wang has worked with local employees to gradually expand the farmland. It now covers about 1.33 hectares and has successfully grown a wide variety of vegetables, including tomato, cucumber, eggplant, chili pepper, lettuce, kidney beans and bitter melon.

After achieving his goal of supplying fresh vegetables for Norin Mining Lamikal employees, the agriculturalist decided to share his knowledge and skills with the villagers to help them ensure they have enough food.

Since the end of 2022, a training

program has been implemented in Pumpi, offering free lessons to residents. Wang's company provides the seeds, fertilizer and agricultural equipment, and program participants are allowed to consume or sell what they produce.

"The villagers are enthusiastic about taking part in the training because we teach them everything needed for growing vegetables," he said, noting that more than 1,000 people have graduated from the training program.

"I will stay here in the near future because I want to help more local people. We have begun to expand the training base and will introduce more types of vegetables," he added. Katanga Musola Gustave, a villager with a large family who is a member of the training team, said Wang is a very good teacher and respected by the locals.

He said Wang has taught them basic knowledge and skills, how to choose suitable soils and blend them, which sowing methods are fit for specific vegetables, and ways to prevent and deal with plant diseases and insect pests.

"Sometimes, when I find good soil, I take pictures and send them to Wang to ask for his suggestions," he said, adding that Wang was very patient and responsible.



# 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

## Mutual synergy to boost China-Africa links

Total value of trade between two sides grew to around \$282bn in 2023

By ZHONG NAN

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Strengthened by closer political ties as well as complementary economic advantages, China and Africa are poised for diversified business cooperation and increased trade volumes in the coming years, said analysts and business leaders.

Amid rising protectionism, geopolitical risks and challenges in global economic recovery, they said that China, the world's manufacturing powerhouse, and Africa, with its wealth of natural resources, expanding consumer market and growing entrepreneurship, are eager to foster pragmatic cooperation with an open mindset.

Both sides aim to expand common interests and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, said Wang Linjie, a spokeswoman for the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

China is willing to work with African countries to promote the healthy and sustainable development of economic and trade ties, ensure the stability of the global industrial and supply chains, and inject more stability and certainty into global economic growth, Wang said.

Total trade value between China and Africa grew to \$282 billion in 2023, statistics from China's General Administration of Customs showed.

This momentum has continued in the first seven months of 2024, with bilateral trade value surging 5.5 percent on a yearly basis to 1.19 trillion yuan during this period.

China mainly exports steel, computers, construction machinery, trains, trucks and buses, building materials, manufacturing equipment, electronics, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, garments



Employees work on Africa-bound fabric products at a textile company in Binzhou, Shandong province. GUO XUELI / XINHUA

and household appliances to Africa. Chinese-made passenger vehicles and solar cells have also become popular in many African countries in recent years.

In addition to mining and energy-related products, African countries' shipments to China include grains, fruits, coffee, tobacco, flowers, timber, handicraft articles, chemicals, plastics, rubber, electro-

**1.19**  
trillion yuan

value of trade between China and Africa in Jan-July period

mechanical, leather, textiles and apparel products.

Xiao Hao, a professor specializing in China-Africa economic and trade cooperation at Hunan University in

Changsha, Hunan province, said China and several African countries have already fostered fresh growth opportunities in areas such as green development, digital economy and the modernization of industry and agriculture.

"By pursuing these avenues, they can embark on a path of modernization marked by mutual support and shared rejuvenation among devel-

oping countries," said Xiao.

For instance, Chinese companies, including automaker Beijing Automotive Group Co, technology heavyweight Huawei Technologies Co and home appliances manufacturer Hisense Group, have all built manufacturing, service and innovation facilities in African countries, including South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Morocco and Egypt,

over the past decade, according to information released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Noting that infrastructure development remains a crucial driver for job creation, economic stimulation and foreign investment in Africa, Liu Xingguo, a senior researcher at the China Enterprise Confederation in Beijing, said Chinese companies will play a key role in helping advance Africa's industrialization and building modern infrastructure facilities that will solidify the continent's economic growth.

This is exemplified by China Gezhouba Group Co Ltd's construction work in Kenya. The Chinese company, a subsidiary of State-owned China Energy Engineering Group Co Ltd, completed the main construction of the Thwake Dam Project in the East African nation in June.

Tang Yazhou, China Gezhouba's country branch head for Kenya, said the dam is the largest water conservancy project in the country to date, integrating water supply, irrigation and power generation. It is a big-ticket project under the Belt and Road Initiative framework and a flagship project of Kenya Vision 2030.

Located about 120 kilometers from Nairobi, Kenya's capital, the dam is 78.5 meters high and spans 1.5 kilometers, with a total fill volume of about 12 million cubic meters.

"Upon completion, the dam will have a water storage capacity of 688 million cubic meters, bringing significant economic benefits to the southeastern region of Kenya by providing water supply, electricity and agricultural irrigation," said Tang, adding that the project will alleviate water and power shortages for over 3 million local residents.

## Close ties with African nations to be bolstered by CIIE

By MA LINMIAO

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As the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation opens on Wednesday, it marks another chapter in the growing partnership between China and the African continent.

The trade relationship has experienced significant growth over the past decade, fueled by strategic investments, trade agreements and robust diplomatic ties.

Statistics reveal that China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, with trade reaching a record \$282.1 billion in 2023.

This partnership is looking to be strengthened by the China International Import Expo, which has become a critical platform for fostering economic ties and promoting mutual growth.

The annual CIIE, now gearing up for its seventh edition this November in Shanghai, is not merely a showcase for global products entering the vast Chinese market; it serves as a vital bridge connecting African nations with opportunities in trade, investment and economic development, thereby reinforcing the goals set forth at the FOCAC.

### 'Rare opportunity'

Since its inception in 2018, the CIIE has rapidly grown in stature, becoming one of the world's most influential trade fairs. For African countries, the CIIE represents an opportunity to connect with Chinese consumers, investors and business leaders, and to secure lucrative trade deals that can boost their economies.

"The CIIE presents African companies with a rare opportunity to seize market opportunities in China and around the world," said Costantino Bt. Costantinos, who served as an economic adviser to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Past CIIEs have served as a launchpad for African products in the Chinese market. Exhibitors have showcased an array of products, from agricultural commodities like coffee, tea and cocoa to artisanal



From left: African drummers perform at the sixth China International Import Expo in 2023. Benin pineapples are a standout success at the CIIE 2023. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

crafts, textiles and manufactured goods.

For instance, while Kenya began exporting frozen avocados to China in 2019, it leveraged the CIIE 2022 to debut fresh avocados, aiming to boost exports.

As a result, 30 percent of Kenya's fresh avocado exports now go to China, with the export value surging from \$1.08 million in 2022 to \$7.6 million in the first nine months of 2023.

South Africa, China's largest African trade partner and a key member of BRICS — an intergovernmental organization including Brazil, Russia, India and China — was honored as the guest country at the 2023 expo. The event saw the debut of several countries, including the Central African Republic, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zimbabwe, highlighting the increased participation in this global trade platform.

To support African participation, the expo has provided free booths and tax incentives to some nations.

For example, due to a strong interest in food among Chinese consumers and policy support, Benin pineapples took center stage at the CIIE 2023, resulting in a significant number of orders. An exhibitor from

Benin expressed satisfaction, noting the opportunity to secure major deals with Chinese companies.

The introduction of Benin pineapples at the sixth CIIE also opened doors for potential investment.

"In addition to ordering Benin pineapples, we plan to invest in building factories in Benin, leveraging our planting technology and advanced management expertise," said the head of Africa business at a Shanghai-based company.

Simon Pierre Adovelande, Beninese ambassador to China, sees the debut of Benin pineapples at the sixth CIIE as testament to the collaboration between China and Benin in advancing the Belt and Road Initiative. He has high hopes for economic and trade exchanges between the two countries.

The African agricultural products subsection, which made its debut at the sixth CIIE in November 2023, highlighted a range of distinctive produce.

"Sesame seeds from Mali, our primary agricultural product showcased at the expo, are of exceptional quality with high oil content, making them ideal for oil extraction," said a staff member at the subsection.

A Malian exhibitor observed that within just a few days of the expo,



several Chinese companies approached them to discuss the purchase of sesame seeds. "The CIIE has provided us with both the opportunity and the platform to enter the Chinese market, and we are optimistic about our export prospects," the exhibitor said.

### Key contribution

With the theme of "High-Standard Opening-up for Universally Beneficial and Inclusive Economic Globalization", the seventh Hongqiao International Economic Forum will take place alongside the CIIE. Its focus is promoting inclusive and beneficial economic globalization. Topics are to include artificial intelligence, new energy storage, industrial growth, sustainability and South-South cooperation.

During a consultation in Johannesburg, South Africa on April 12, experts and stakeholders contributed insights into the agenda for the seventh Hongqiao Forum.

Discussions centered around strengthening ties between China and Africa, with a focus on global openness, economic governance and sustainable development.

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, chief executive of the South African Institute of International Affairs, noted that the

forum's emphasis on global openness aligns with the trend of enhancing global economic governance.

The forum is also expected to address the importance of digital infrastructure in closing the development gap. As Africa's digital economy expands, there's a need for investment in technology to support widespread internet access and digital literacy.

During a consultation meeting for the seventh CIIE and Hongqiao Forum held at the United Nations headquarters in New York on May 9, UN

Under-Secretary-General Rabab Fatima emphasized that least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states are facing complex challenges. She highlighted that trade could be a vital engine for these nations, driving economic growth, creating jobs and reducing poverty.

"China has become a crucial trade partner for many of these countries, and platforms like the CIIE and Hongqiao Forum have played significant roles in fostering this partnership," said Fatima.

The seventh Hongqiao Forum is set to be a crucial platform for in-depth discussions, highlighting the diverse perspectives and collab-

“The CIIE presents African companies with a rare opportunity to seize market opportunities in China and around the world.”

Costantinos Bt. Costantinos, who served as an economic adviser to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

orative efforts that characterize the China-Africa partnership. The insights and outcomes from these discussions are expected to influence the future of economic and developmental cooperation between the two, positioning the forum as a landmark event in global economic dialogue.

### 2024 edition

With China expanding unilateral market access to least-developed countries and optimizing visa-free entry policies, foreign enterprises are showing increased enthusiasm for the CIIE.

As a result, the contracted exhibition area for the seventh edition has exceeded 360,000 square meters. More than 150 companies have signed contracts for seven consecutive years, underscoring the event's growing significance and appeal on the global stage.

The expanded African agricultural products subsection is expected to be a major hit this year. This section will promote greater economic inclusion while celebrating the rich diversity of global agricultural products, according to the CIIE Bureau.

"The CIIE is once again ready to offer unparalleled opportunities for African businesses, nations and organizations to showcase their achievements, forge new partnerships and contribute to a more inclusive and prosperous global economy," said an official from the CIIE Bureau.



## 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

Costantinos Berhutesfa Costantinos

## Sino-African camaraderie in its prime stage

In the complex tapestry of African post-colonial development diplomacy, Sino-African cooperation has upended the donor-beneficiary narrative and precipitated a win-win infrastructural and transformational development in a few years. As a result, Africa will account for 11 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2024. As the global economy emerges from the dramatic supply chain disruptions, Africa is emerging as the next pole of growth.

Recent geopolitical upheaval and geo-economic crises have escalated tensions in Africa. Notwithstanding the coups and defaults, with the post-Cold War order rickety, Africa's huge arable land area, rare earth minerals highly sought for the energy transition, oil and natural gas, fisheries and timber, and a young population have become assets and are instrumental in African leaders getting invited to attend summits from China to Europe to the United States.

While population growth is slowing in every major economy, Africa, with a billion and a half people today, is expected to contribute a major percentage of the young people entering the global workforce by the 2030s. By capitalizing on its natural resources and youths, Africa can become the engine of labor dynamics in the decades to come. Perceptive statesmanship can be the forerunner in these jamborees of summits for partnerships that outlast the one-way ticket to exploitation.

Africa is not merely an arena for Sino-US contest, as it has impartially steered its international relations to the benefit of all its partners. Africa has cemented summit-level partnerships with China, the European Union, the Gulf countries and the US (in alphabetical order). The Africa-EU partnership is a multi-actor partnership including non-state organizations. The US has released an Africa strategy, in which it undergirds the continent's critical locus to advance US global priorities.

It is Africa's fast-growing young population, largest free trade area, most diverse ecosystems, and one of the world's largest regional voting groups in the UN that is the harbinger of these partnerships. Moreover, it is presumed to help tackle the climate crisis, address global food insecurity, strengthen an open and stable world order, shape the rules of the world on vital issues such as trade, cybersecurity and emerging technologies, and combat terrorism and transnational crimes.

Nonetheless, unlike the aforementioned partnerships that front-load



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

their aim against Africa's pressing infrastructure primacies, Sino-African cooperation is mutually beneficial in nature. Sino-African ventures in human development and critical infrastructure have transformed the lives of millions of African people in less than a decade. Life expectancy, a major indicator of livelihood security, has been augmented in the past two decades to a degree never realized before.

Ethiopia is an apt example of such a transformation. In Ethiopia, investments have given birth to an unprecedented thousands of kilometers of paved roads, a major railway and high-tension transmission lines fed by clean energy from 20 new hydro-dams, which in turn are powering new industrial parks, rural towns and agricultural hinterlands. More than 380 higher education institutions including 50 public universities and modern cities have been built in record time in the country. To cap it all, life expectancy has increased by more than 20 years in

two decades.

The resurging advent of China on Africa's development front follows the game-changing Tanzania-Zambia Railway built by China in the 1970s. Today, Sino-African camaraderie is in its prime stage, with investments, under the Belt and Road Initiative framework, fueling infrastructure and industrial development in Africa. China is now the main trading partner of Africa. South-South cooperation is indeed in full bloom, despite the relentless Western media labeling the investments as a tool to set a "debt trap".

China has partnered with Africa in financing, technology transfer and human resources development. Hence, Africa's sustained rapid and broad-based growth, which hinges on public-private investments, agricultural transformation, a consumer goods revolution and emerging export industries, will facilitate a rapid pace of economic expansion.

The massive investments in public

infrastructure deliver a wide range of public goods while simultaneously propping up the African private sector, which too is building and maintaining brand-new public facilities. An agricultural transformation, involving a proliferation of modern commercial farms as well as increasing the productivity of smallholder farmers, is a realistic possibility in the next few years. This transformation could become a key driver of rural economy-wide growth.

In the spirit of multilateralism and genuine efforts to uplift humankind, China has taken steps to fill in a colossal void in advancing human development and building agricultural and manufacturing infrastructure.

*The author, a UN senior policy adviser in New York, is chair of the African Union Anti-Corruption Advisory Board and a professor of public policy at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Wang Ting and Zhang Zhihao

## Popularization of science key to sci-tech partnership

Children and teenagers in eight African countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa, had a one-of-a-kind experience on Sept 6, 2022, as they received, via video link, valuable information on living and working in space from Chinese astronauts.

Answering the children's questions were Chen Dong, Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, Shenzhou-14 mission astronauts on board China's Tiangong Space Station. The astronauts responded to the inquisitive African students' questions on living and working in space, covering everything from the types of experiments conducted on board to how to eat and take a shower in micro-gravity.

Smiles and looks of amazement lit up the video conference room at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, when the Chinese astronauts showed aerial photographs of the Sahara Desert and Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, as well as the dazzling display of lights in major African cities at night. The photographs were taken from the windows of the Chinese space station located at an orbital altitude of about 400 kilometers from Earth.

After the event, many of the students said they didn't know the African continent looked so beautiful from outer space. Some even said the interaction with the astronauts had aroused their interest in space technology, adding that they hoped to become astronauts and represent Africa in future space missions.

The entire event was made possible by the 8th Ministerial Conference on the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2021. The conference adopted the FOCAC Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024) that highlighted the importance of exploring ways to make science popularization a part of China-Africa cooperation on space research to encourage African countries with space exploration potential to achieve their goal.

Science and technology cooperation is crucial for addressing common challenges and building a China-Africa community with a shared future. But to fully harness the power of science and technology to build a bright future, enhancing people's knowledge about science — through science popularization — is just as crucial as promoting sci-tech innovation because it would lay the foundation for nurturing sci-tech talents, facilitating the commercialization of research results, and deepening cooperation in fields such as education, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

That's why China and Africa attach great importance to strengthening cooperation in science popularization. China issued a guideline in September 2022 on how to intensify science popularization in the new era, with special emphasis on strengthening global dialogue and cooperation, and improving scientific culture. Similarly, the African Union's "Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024" and "Agenda 2063" highlight the importance of science education, building a scientific culture and deepening global cooperation.

Accordingly, the two sides have held several dialogues and deepened cooperation in order to popularize science, especially among children and adolescents.

In November 2023, the Chinese Association of Natural Science Museums, UNESCO and the Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy signed a tripartite letter of intent to help African countries build natural science museums and other science popularization facilities, and provide science and technology-related services. And in December, the Children and Youth Science Center of the China Association for Science and Technology and the Network of African Science Academies signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate sci-tech-related people-to-people exchanges, and sharing of science education resources.

Also, the eighth annual Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camp and Teacher Workshop in Kunming, Yunnan province, in July saw the participation of more than 300 students and teachers from 37 countries and regions, many of them from African countries. In the same month, another event saw African teachers and students visiting universities and museums in Shaanxi province to experience firsthand China's latest developments in artificial intelligence and space technology.

On the international front, sci-tech institutes from Africa have consistently supported the World Conference on Science Literacy and the World Organization for Science Literacy, both spearheaded by the CAST in collaboration with dozens of other sci-tech organizations.

The World Organization for Science Literacy has member institutes from Algeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, demonstrating African people's strong desire to deepen China-Africa cooperation on science popularization.

Hopefully, the ongoing FOCAC Summit will help deepen cooperation in science and technology and intensify sci-tech-related cultural exchanges. The two sides should use the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the UN's resolution on the "International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development" adopted in August 2023 to launch new science popularization activities in areas of mutual interest, such as to combat climate change, conserve biodiversity, increase the share of clean energy in the total energy mix and safeguard food security and use AI for public good.

The two sides should also explore new ways of increasing sci-tech exchanges among children and adolescents, enhancing dialogue, conducting joint research in science literacy evaluation and improvement, sharing educational resources for science popularization, enhancing coordination and collaboration between Chinese and African sci-tech organizations, and jointly contribute to the realization of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

*Wang Ting is the director-general of the China Research Institute for Science Popularization; and Zhang Zhihao is the international organization specialist of the institute. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

Alpha Mohamed Jalloh

## China's tech advances Africa's traditional agriculture

In an era of rapid technological advancement, the collaboration between China and Africa in the agricultural sector holds immense promise for both sides and the world at large. Sino-African cooperation in agriculture has been a cornerstone of diplomatic and economic relations for decades, but the integration of cutting-edge technology into this cooperation has the potential to revolutionize agriculture in Africa, advancing modernization and contributing significantly to global food security.

African countries' capability to improve food security is relatively low. In many African countries, people are still engaged in traditional farming rather than mechanized farming. They still use hoes, shovels, traditional plows and manual labor, which inhibits growth in the agricultural sector. When it comes to development, a country can realize rapid industrialization only if it is self-sufficient in food.

Over the years, African countries and their Western partners have entered into a series of partnerships in agriculture without benefiting much from them. In today's world, if a country has been doing the same thing for years without much success in achieving food security, common sense dictates that it change its approach in order to realize that important goal.

With its vast areas of arable land and favorable climate, Africa is poised to

become a major player in global food production. However, the continent faces significant challenges, including outdated farming techniques, limited access to modern technology and inadequate infrastructure on the way to acquiring that role.

Thanks to its expertise in agricultural technology and impressive track record of transforming its own agricultural sector, China offers invaluable resources and knowledge to help Africa overcome these challenges. The deepening agricultural ties between China and Africa are based on mutual benefit. For example, by gaining access to advanced technologies and learning modern farming practices from China, Africa can greatly boost agricultural production, which will improve people's livelihoods which in turn will expand the consumer market that China can gain from.

China has gotten the requisite technologies and expertise to help Africa address the perennial problem of feeding itself and realize food self-sufficiency.

The introduction of advanced agricultural technologies would be a game-changer for Africa's agricultural sector. Precision agriculture, which uses GPS and remote sensing to optimize crop production, can significantly increase the yield while reducing the use of water, fertilizers and pesticides. This technology not only boosts productivity but also promotes sustainable farming practices, which are crucial for long-term food security.

In addition, the use of drones and satellite imagery for crop monitoring allows farmers to detect and address issues such as pest infestations and

nutrient deficiency in real time. This leads to more efficient use of resources and minimizes crop loss, ensuring that more food reaches the market and thus homes. China's experience in developing and deploying such technologies can be directly applied to Africa.

Through joint ventures, technology transfer and training programs, Chinese experts can train and work alongside African farmers to teach the latter how to use those devices and programs, and tailor them to serve the specific needs of different regions on the continent.

Beyond primary production, technology plays a crucial role in strengthening agricultural value chains and easing market access. China's expertise in logistics, storage and processing can help reduce post-harvest losses, and thus solve one of the biggest problems facing Africa. For example, the introduction of cold chain logistics, which involve temperature-controlled storage and transport, can drastically reduce spoilage of perishable goods, ensuring that a higher percentage of produce reaches consumers in optimal condition.

Furthermore, e-commerce platforms and mobile technology can revolutionize market access for African farmers. By establishing a direct connection between farmers and buyers, these platforms can eliminate intermediaries, ensure fair pricing, and open up new markets, both locally and internationally. China's experience with platforms such as JD, Pinduoduo and Alibaba's Taobao can serve as a model for similar initiatives in Africa, in order to empower smallholder farmers monetarily.

The modernization of Africa's agri-

cultural sector through technology-enhanced Sino-African cooperation will have far-reaching implications for global food security. As Africa increases its agricultural output, it can contribute more to stabilizing global food supply, particularly in a world where climate change and population growth are putting increasing pressure on the food system.

Moreover, by adopting sustainable farming practices, Africa can play a pivotal role in reducing the impact of agriculture on the environment, which is essential for the long-term viability of food production. China's commitment to pursuing green development and its experience in balancing economic growth and environmental protection can help guide Africa to build a sustainable agricultural model.

The future of Sino-African cooperation in agriculture is bright, with technology serving as the driving force behind the modernization of Africa's agricultural sector. By leveraging China's technological expertise and Africa's vast agricultural potential, this partnership will not only transform agriculture in Africa but also greatly contribute to global food security. With the world facing unprecedented challenges, Sino-African collaboration in agriculture offers a beacon of hope, demonstrating how international cooperation and technological innovation can create a more secure and sustainable future for all.

*The author is director of the China Africa Institute at the University of Makoni, Sierra Leone. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



## 2024 FOCAC SUMMIT

# Luban Workshop earns international fame

Training centers play crucial role by honing graduates' professional skills and guiding them toward successful careers

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin  
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Tola Tsegaye Alemu, a 34-year-old PhD student at the Tianjin University of Technology and Education and a key instructor at the Luban Workshop in Ethiopia, has garnered international recognition for his profound insights into teaching methodologies among the 33 workshops spanning Asia, Europe and Africa.

The Ethiopian teacher is currently receiving invitations to various international forums, including the upcoming Second World Vocational and Technical Education Development Conference scheduled to take place in Tianjin later this year. They are aimed at enhancing the vocational technological skills of African students.

"Africa's vocational education is still in its starting stages due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, varying materials and teaching resources. Consequently, certain vocations face difficulties in some countries, lacking established models to guide students toward successful careers. The Luban Workshop plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges and fostering improvement," he said.

Alemu serves as an educator at the Technical and Vocational Training Institute in Ethiopia, where a Luban Workshop was established three years ago through a collaboration between his institute and Tianjin University of Technology and Education, or TUTE.

His university stands as a leading vocational institution in Ethiopia, the headquarters of the African Union, and is recognized for its high-quality personnel training and educational programs.

## Top-tier educators

The Luban Workshop has been endorsed by the AU as a premier training center, producing top-tier educators for more than 10 vocational universities across Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Alemu's presentation on the workshop's teaching model — the EPIP model (Engineering, Practice, Innovation, and Project) — received international acclaim during the workshop's third-anniversary celebrations in July.

His journey began with research on Lu Ban, an ancient Chinese woodcraft master and inventor, and the EPIP teaching model, developed in collaboration with Lyu Jingquan, vice-president of TUTE and one of the workshop's initiators.

Over the years, Alemu has applied this model with his students and fellow educators, culminating in successful outcomes.

After three years, he said he witnessed a positive impact of the Luban Workshop in his country, with graduates securing promising job opportunities, including positions with foreign companies operating in Ethiopia. "They operate robots with high skills they've learned from the workshop," Alemu said.



Students from the University of Antananarivo operate machines at the Luban Workshop in the capital of Madagascar on April 26. XINHUA



Tola Tsegaye Alemu, an instructor at the Luban Workshop in Ethiopia, talks with a friend at the Tianjin University of Technology and Education on Aug 9. YANG CHENG / CHINA DAILY



Students operate robotic arms at the Integrated Polytechnic Regional College-Musanze, a public higher learning institution in Musanze town of northern Rwanda, on April 15. JI LI / XINHUA

These graduates showcase advanced skills acquired at the workshop, enabling them to proficiently operate robots and excel in their respective fields.

To date, the Luban Workshop initiative in Africa has expanded significantly since its inception in March 2019, with 17 Luban Workshops established in 15 countries, such as Egypt, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire.

Offering diverse majors, including railway, machinery, electrical equipment, manufacturing, automobile, information technology,

metallurgy, and e-commerce, the workshops have empowered more than 10,000 young people.

The Luban Workshop is also offering training programs in Tianjin, exemplifying its commitment to global educational collaboration.

Notably, in September 2023, 12 Moroccan students completed a short-term training program at the Luban Workshop in Morocco before embarking on a three-year undergraduate program at the Tianjin College of Commerce in China, specializing in cross-border e-commerce, according to Ma Lei, Party secretary of the college.

"The collaboration ... aligns with the vision of Moroccan King Mohammed VI to enhance youth labor skills and cultivate high-skilled labor in emerging industries," he said.

## Growing demands

The students are expected to meet the growing demands of Morocco's e-commerce market, which has sustained an annual growth rate of more than 20 percent, he said.

The cultural exchanges facilitated by the Luban Workshop extend beyond technological expertise, fostering a deeper understanding of Chinese culture among participants.

Alemu, known by his Chinese name Tu Zegang, draws inspiration from the traditional Chinese term — *wu yu ze gang*, namely "without greedy ambition, people have true strength from heart".

His presentation on philosophy and figures such as Mozi, during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC)

and the great inventor Lu Ban, resonated with Chinese educators and students.

Many Chinese experts hailed Alemu's presentation on Chinese culture and history.

Through initiatives like the Chinese Clothing Culture Month organized by the Tianjin College of Commerce, participants such as El Ouatiq Mohammed, who has the Chinese name Long Mude, have embraced Chinese traditions and symbols, such as the dragon, symbolizing luck, prosperity and bravery in Chinese culture.

"I understand that the Chinese hold *long* — the dragon — in high regard, as it symbolizes luck, prosperity and bravery. This is why the character *long* is incorporated into my Chinese name," he said, while previously many Westerners could not understand it and often mistook the Chinese dragon with the dragon in the West, which represents rudeness and evil in some fields.

These cultural exchanges not only enrich the educational experience but also strengthen the bonds between nations, promoting mutual understanding and appreciation.



Scan the code to see the video.

## Vocational program a morale booster for African students

By EDITH MUTETHYA  
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Humphrey Mwambaji, a technologist at the Luban Workshop in Machakos University, 60 kilometers west of the Kenyan capital Nairobi, is a testimony to the workshop's impact on African students and the industry.

The technological prowess of Mwambaji, who graduated from the university in April 2023 with a Bachelor of Science in Telecommunication and Information Technology, impressed the management of the university which hired him in January.

In 2022-23, he participated in an information technology competition hosted by Chinese company Huawei that saw him progress to international level. The competition involved examining his theoretical knowledge and hands-on information and telecommunication skills, as well as his ability to work as a team member.

"The Luban Workshop is where my mind opened up to the network-

ing industry. It's quite different when you are pursuing a self-led course and an instructor-led course. Here, I had an instructor who taught and directed me, the reason behind my technological prowess," he said.

"As a staff member, I'm now mentoring students to improve their ICT (information and communications technology) skills as well as motivating others to take advantage of the technical skills that are offered at the workshop."

Established in 2019, the Luban Workshop is a partnership between Machakos University and Tianjin City Vocational College. It is one of the 17 Luban Workshops established across Africa with the help of China to provide vocational training to support the continent's industrialization.

Erick Omuya, the chair of the Department of Computing and Information Technology at Machakos University, said the Luban Workshop offers training in cloud computing and information technology, as well as in other emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

He said the workshop has boosted the morale of the students because they can access state-of-the-art machines.

It has also increased the university's capacity, consequently reducing the student-lecturer ratio, he said.

"Most of the students have their own machines as they learn and do practical work, hence are able to gain technical skills," he said.

The lab, he said, has motivated students to come up with innovations such as the Blind Eye, a mobile phone-based application that uses AI to guide the visually challenged to navigate their environment. The university is working on a proposal to collaborate with the Kenya Society for the Blind on the commercialization of the app.

Another innovation is an application that uses AI to assess the mental status of the security officers; whether they are disturbed, distressed or stressed.

"The system uses sentiment analysis. Picking information can be verbal or text-based and then it analyses it and assigns the officer a counselor," he said, adding the stu-

dent who came up with the application is currently working with the Kenya Defense Forces.

Other innovations are virtual and documented realities applications such as Metaverse Safaris, which use AI and virtual reality to view tourist sites without physically going there.

Omuya said plans are underway to create an innovation corner in the lab where the applications will be kept.

## Generating collaborations

The lab has also generated collaborations between Machakos University and other universities, as well as collaborations between the university and industry players such as Huawei and Konza Technopolis, a technology hub proposed to be constructed about 60 km south of Nairobi.

With the help of the lab, Omuya said the university established a new course in 2021, called the Bachelor of Science in Cloud Computing and Information Security. The first cohort of 30 students is expected to graduate next year.

At least 1,000 students have been

trained by the lab since its establishment, Omuya said.

Franklin Mutisya, an instructor at the Luban Workshop at Machakos University, said the lab has been able to bridge the gap between academia and industry by integrating the new standards with the university curriculum.

He said the lab has also benefited the local community by offering short-term courses on the Internet of Things, data communication, cloud computing and related courses. The courses are evaluated through the Huawei Academy.

As China and Africa gather for the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing, Omuya hopes there will be discussions around expanding collaborations on the Luban Workshop, culture, technologies, computing, and engineering, among others, to promote China-Africa higher education collaborations.

Jiang Jiang, the Chinese head of the Luban Workshop in Ethiopia, said that before the establishment of the workshop in April 2021 in the country, only theoretical knowl-

edge was taught, but now students have the opportunity to practice at the workshop, as well as access high-end training platforms in industrial automation to boost their practical skills.

The workshop has also helped to train senior technical staff from the industry to improve their skills. They also provide short-term training for the community.

It offers courses in industrial sensor technology, industrial control, mechatronics, and industrial robotics.

"The Luban Workshop hopes to cultivate a large number of qualified industrial automation talents for Ethiopia to fill the talent gap in the industrial field, help Ethiopia's scientific and technological development, and even export talents to other countries and regions in Africa," Jiang said.

To date, Jiang said the Luban Workshop in Ethiopia had organized 37 training programs at various levels and trained 1,673 local teachers and trainees, including 1,321 undergraduates, 137 master's degree students, and 215 key African teachers.

# Three sites make geological heritage list

Inclusion signifies locations possess highest research, scientific value

By YAN DONGJIE

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Three locations in China have recently been included in the list of "The Second 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites" by the International Union of Geological Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences said on Tuesday.

During the 37th International Geological Congress held on Aug 27 in Busan, the Republic of Korea, Guilin Karst in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the Permian vegetation of the Wuda Fossil Site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, and the Dashanpu Middle Jurassic Dinosaur Fossils Site in Sichuan province were included in the list by the IUGS.

The IUGS said a Geological Heritage Site is a significant location with exceptional geological features and of utmost scientific importance. These sites serve as global references and have made substantial contributions to the advancement of geological sciences throughout history.

Being included on this list signifies that these locations possess the highest research value and scientific level in the field of geology globally. Furthermore, their current preservation status has garnered high recognition from the international community, said Zhang Jianping, vice-chair of the International Commission on Geoheritage, and professor at China University of Geosciences (Beijing).



A fisherman sails a raft in a river in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. Guilin Karst has been included in the list of "The Second 100 IUGS Geological Heritage Sites" by the International Union of Geological Sciences. WEN SHAOJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

The first list of IUGS Geological Heritage Sites was disclosed in Spain in 2022, with China securing seven such sites, making it one of the countries with the highest number of sites selected in the round.

Among these sites are the Ordovician rocks of Qomolangma — also known as Mount Everest — in the Xizang autonomous region, the Early Cretaceous Rhyolitic Columnar Rock Formation of Hong Kong, and the Shilin Karst in Yunnan province. "The Permian vegetation of the

Wuda Fossil Site is actually an in-situ forest that formed the No 7 coal seam in the Wuda Coalfield. Therefore, it is the best answer to the public about what plants formed coal, what the appearance of the forest that formed coal was like, and it is the best popular science material on the formation process of coal resources," said Wang Jun, director of the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Wang said that the unique formation method allows the site to vividly reproduce the magnificent landscape of the terrestrial ecosystem present approximately 298 million years ago.

From October to December last year and July to August this year, the team from the NIGP went to Wuda for several fossil relocation and protection tasks. Currently, the local government is also promoting construction of the "Plant Pompeii City" museum.

"The fossil discovery site is located in the Wuda Coalfield, where many coal mining companies are still in operation. Therefore, the focus of the next step is on how to balance mineral development with fossil protection, as well as how to protect fossils during the production process," Wang said, adding that experts and local governments will continue to discuss and formulate reasonable and scientific protection measures that are in line with the actual situation.

# Four ancient projects added to WHIS

By HOU LIQIANG

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Another four ancient Chinese irrigation projects have been designated as World Heritage Irrigation Structures, increasing the number of Chinese facilities on the WHIS list to 38, said the Ministry of Water Resources.

The inclusion of the Karez system in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the Huizhou Weirs in Anhui province and the Wuyuan Weirs in Jiangxi province (joint application), the Fengyan terraced field system in Hanyin, Shaanxi province and the Jufeng weir system in Chongqing municipality onto the list was announced during the 75th International Executive Council Meeting, the highest decision-making body of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, in Australia on Tuesday.

An invention that provides water through a technique derived generations ago in Turpan, where the average annual precipitation is only 16 millimeters while the corresponding evaporation rate measures 3,000 mm,

the Karez system consists of well-like vertical shafts connected to underground channels that surface in the form of ditches and small ponds.

The channels are supplied with water from melted ice and snow in Xinjiang's Tianshan Mountains, while the underground structure of the wells prevents water from evaporating.

Conveying water from deep underground to the surface and traversing more than 5,000 kilometers within Xinjiang, the Karez wells are considered one of China's greatest surviving ancient man-made structures, along with the Great Wall and the Grand Canal.

The system has provided inhabitants in Turpan with water for drinking and irrigation for thousands of years. It's so important to the life of many locals like Eskander Kadir, a member of the Uygur ethnic group, and the 73-year-old said: "We are the children of Karez wells. The taste of the water in Karez is better than tap water. We drink it and provide it to guests when they visit."

Huizhou weirs are an ancient irrigation system in Huizhou district, Huangshan, in Anhui while Wuyuan weirs are in Wuyuan county, Jiangxi. Huizhou district and Wuyuan border each other and both fell into the jurisdiction of ancient Huizhou, a prefecture-level administrative region in long-ago times.

Huizhou currently boasts over 500 ancient weirs, including five that are over 500 years old, with the oldest one dating back 1,697 years. Wuyuan has over 2,052 stone-made weirs, which are a lot smaller than their counterparts in Huizhou, with 1,181 of them over a century old.

The large-scale development of the Fengyan terraced field system in Hanyin, which provides irrigation water to about 3,467 hectares of farmland, happened during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Positioned at the junction of northern and southern China, Hanyin's regional rainfall is insufficient to sustain necessary water flow in terraced fields throughout the year. To address the problem, ancient farmers built dams and



Visitors line up to enter a scenic spot with the Karez system in Turpan, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in June. LIU JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

ponds on the mountainsides to store water for irrigation. Over 300 years ago, in order to irrigate more areas, they carved out some water diversion channels on cliff faces.

Built in 1767, the Jufeng weir system in Chongqing is an irrigation project featuring dam-fed water diversion, which benefits almost 1,070 hectares of farmland. With its design well-tailored to the irrigation needs of local hilly areas, the system

stands out as the oldest and largest stone-made, river-blocking dam with an aqueduct that is still in operation.

China's World Irrigation Engineering Heritage encompasses a wide range of irrigation engineering types, establishing the nation as a leader with the most diverse and extensively distributed heritage, said the Ministry of Water Resources.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

# War of resistance museum to enhance HK's patriotic education

By ATLAS SHAO in Hong Kong

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A new museum highlighting the history of the war of resistance was inaugurated in Hong Kong on Tuesday, becoming a pivotal education hub for Hong Kong residents to explore the past of the Chinese nation and carry forward the patriotic spirit of its heroes.

The Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence, which is located in Shau Kei Wan and converted from the original coastal defense museum, opens to the public on Wednesday, with its inaugural thematic exhibition narrating the tactics of Hong Kong fighters.

Tuesday also marks the Victory Day of Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. During the inauguration ceremony, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said that the spirit of the Chinese people demonstrated during wartime will

always inspire the nation to overcome difficulties and strive for its great rejuvenation.

Lee added that the museum will be an important site for patriotic education, enriching public awareness of history, especially among young people.

Lee hoped that the education system and other sectors of society can actively organize students and the general public to visit the museum, collectively commemorating history.

The inaugural thematic exhibition "Brothers in Arms: War of Resistance Activities of the East River Column in Shenzhen and Hong Kong" lasts from Wednesday to next summer, with a focus on narrating Shenzhen and Hong Kong people's heroic fighting against Japanese invaders with rich content and exhibits, including oral history and interview clips with veterans.

Particularly, it sheds light on the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the Dong Jiang Column — a guerrilla force tasked by the Communist



A visitor poses for photographs before the unveiling ceremony of the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence on Tuesday. ANDY CHONG / CHINA DAILY

Party of China to undertake anti-Japanese campaigns during World War II.

Highlighted exhibits and images of the exhibition come from both Hong Kong and Shenzhen, including a commemorative medal of the

70th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, which was awarded by the central government in 2015.

To help prepare other thematic exhibitions related to the war of

resistance, the museum also launched a campaign to encourage the public to donate historical relics and photos related to the war. The collection period extends from Tuesday to August 2025.

In addition to the exhibition, the museum will also launch a series of programs to promote patriotic education, including lectures, field trips and workshops, as well as a flag-raising ceremony and drill performance on National Day.

On Tuesday, senior Hong Kong government officials and representatives of various sectors also attended an official ceremony to commemorate the Victory Day of Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

The National People's Congress designated Sept 3 as Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in 2014, and the HKSAR government has been hosting official commemorative activities in the SAR correspondingly since then.

# Tianjin University launches first BCI program

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin

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Tianjin University has announced the launch of the nation's first brain-computer interface (BCI) undergraduate program for its fall semester, marking a critical step forward in this frontier technology globally.

BCI technology allows direct communication between the brain and an external device, such as a computer or a prosthetic limb.

The program was established through a joint effort of the School of Future Technology and the Medical School of Tianjin University, according to the university.

"In response to increasing demand in the BCI sector, Tianjin University is leveraging resources from various departments, including the medical school, electrical automation and information engineering, microelectronics, intelligent computing, mathematics, and materials science and engineering," said Xu Minpeng, assistant director of the university's BCI Laboratory and head of the Haihe BCI project.



We are focusing on upgrading independent BCI chips in a bid to support the core technologies of BCI's future development."

Cheng Longlong, a data scientist at China Electronics Corp and general manager of CEC Cloud Brain Co

Top talent in BCI will form a comprehensive interdisciplinary research and teaching team encompassing fundamental theories, device systems and translational applications, Xu said.

The university intends to cultivate outstanding engineers and scientists capable of designing, manufacturing and researching future bio-intelligent electronic interfaces, thereby leading advancements in BCI technology and industrial development in bio-information integration.

Among the hundreds of applicants, only 20 will ultimately make it, according to school authorities.

In May, the university's Haihe BCI Laboratory announced a group of commercial and industrial projects covering finance, technology and industrial clusters.

Ni Guangjian, deputy head of the laboratory, said: "The lab will advance leading technological innovation, relying on the Tiankai Higher Education Innovation Park and Binhai High-tech Zone. It is also mapping out a blueprint for the BCI Industrial Zone in a bid to accelerate the industrialization of high technologies."

Cheng Longlong, a data scientist at China Electronics Corp and general manager of CEC Cloud Brain Co, said, "We are focusing on upgrading independent BCI chips in a bid to support the core technologies of BCI's future development."

In July, China said it would set up a BCI standardization technical committee under its Ministry of Industry and Information Technology to guide enterprises to enhance industrial standards and boost domestic innovation.

## WORLD

# Security a key area of cooperation

China-Africa exchanges can promote economic development, peace: Experts

By OTIATO OPALI  
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Intensified cooperation between China and Africa has not only promoted economic and trade development, but also contributed to peace and security in Africa, experts said.

Cavince Adhere, an international relations specialist from Kenya, said that China's foreign policy is about respect, equality and common development. He added that China has become a major country that is preoccupied with exporting peace and development to its international partners.

As Africa's largest trading partner, China's partnership with the continent has been defined by extensive consultation and consensus building and responding to the needs and requests of African countries without imposing extraneous terms or conditions, Adhere said.

"China has not imposed their idea of governance on African countries," he said. "China is pushing for amity of civilizations, learning from each other and seeking points of convergence rather than superimposing its will on African countries."

He lauded initiatives by China to promote peace, including the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum, which has become a focal point of security cooperation between the two sides.

Besides offering to help train African militaries and security personnel, China actively contributes its troops to the United Nations' peacekeeping missions on the continent as part of the nation's peaceful development policy. Beijing has also been active in supporting counterpiracy operations on the continent while seeking common ground on ways to resolve global security challenges and upholding international justice.

"China's decision to appoint a peace envoy for the Horn of Africa in 2022 demonstrates Beijing's willingness to constructively engage in Africa's peace and security prospects," Adhere said. "It is emblematic of recent action steps taken by Beijing to support novel aspects of peace and security such as conflict mediation."

He said China's peace initiative in Africa is unique because its approach elevates development as a guarantor of peace and security while also championing multilat-

eralism. The continent is endowed with natural resources but has been held back by domestic and cross-border conflicts and other forms of security challenges such as terrorism.

Adhere also noted that guided by its noninterference policy, China's leadership emphasizes that its role in boosting Africa's security is focused on limited, multilateral intervention and building the continent's capacity to pursue solutions to its unique problems.

## Noninterference policy

While reiterating China's noninterference policy during a UN Security Council meeting in May, Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, stressed the importance of respecting the leadership of African nations and their knowledge of how to best address their continent's problems. He rejected interference in African internal affairs, including applying pressure and sanctions.

"Africa should be a big stage for international cooperation, not an arena for great power competition," Fu said. "The international community should focus on helping African states fully display their strengths, turning their human and resource endowment into real productivity."

Africa has seen a steady rise in Chinese peacekeeping activities, including in West Africa, where China has steadily expanded the number and variety of personnel it contributes to UN peacekeeping missions. These include military observers in Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire; medics, engineers and police in Liberia; and armed infantry in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

Despite China's efforts to help Africa attain security, some experts argue that challenges still exist, and more can be done to achieve peace on the continent.

Mikewa Ogada, a security researcher in Kenya, said that China and Africa can make more efforts to give civil society stakeholders in regional peacekeeping efforts a louder voice at future conferences such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and the China-Africa Peace and Security Forum.

This will help highlight the realities of those most affected by conflict in the discussions and improve coordination among stakeholders, she said.



Police officers scuffle with a protester as families and supporters of Israeli hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip hold a rally calling for their release in Tel Aviv on Monday. JACK GUEZ / AFP

## Pressure piles on Netanyahu over Gaza

JERUSALEM/GAZA — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces mounting international and domestic pressure after the killing in Gaza of six captives, with US President Joe Biden saying Netanyahu is not doing enough to secure the release of hostages.

Britain said on Monday it would suspend some arms exports to Israel, citing a "clear risk" they could be used in a serious breach of international humanitarian law.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said he was "deeply disheartened" by London's decision, while the premier said he sought forgiveness for failing to save the latest hostages killed.

"Hamas will pay a very heavy price for this," Netanyahu said during a news conference as he rejected making any "concessions" in Gaza cease-fire talks.

Abu Obeida, a Hamas spokesman, said remaining hostages would return "inside coffins" if Israel maintains its military pressure on Gaza.

A statement said "new instructions" had been given to militants guarding the captives on what to do if Israeli troops approached.

In Washington, Biden met US negotiators working alongside Qatar and Egypt to try to secure a truce deal that would free the remaining hostages in Gaza in return for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Asked by reporters if he thought Netanyahu was doing enough to

secure a deal for the release of hostages, Biden replied, "No."

Netanyahu said on Monday Israel must retain control of the key Philadelphi Corridor on the Gaza-Egypt border, where Israel says Hamas smuggles weapons into Gaza. Egypt and Hamas deny those claims but the border remains a significant sticking point in negotiations.

## Vital corridor

Netanyahu called the corridor vital to ensuring Hamas cannot rearm via tunnels. "This is the oxygen of Hamas," he said.

"Hamas has to make the concessions," said Netanyahu, whose critics have accused him of prolonging the conflict to stay in power.

Israelis were gripped by grief and fury after the military said on Sunday the bodies of six hostages, all captured alive during Hamas' Oct 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the conflict, were recovered from southern Gaza.

A strike announced by the Histadrut trade union seeking a hostage deal brought parts of Israel to a standstill on Monday, although some cities were largely unaffected.

With Gaza lying in ruins and the majority of the 2.4 million residents forced to flee, often taking refuge in cramped and unsanitary conditions, disease has spread.

After the first confirmed polio case in 25 years, a vaccination drive got underway on Sunday with localized "humanitarian pauses" to the fighting.

However, an AFP journalist reported troops blowing up homes in Gaza City and warplanes hitting a house to the east overnight into Tuesday.

The territory's civil defense agency said Israel carried out a deadly strike on a tent sheltering displaced people in southern Khan Younis, as well as bombarding central Gaza.

About 160,000 children received the first polio vaccine dose on Sunday and Monday in central Gaza, the territory's health ministry said.

Palestinian mother Basma al-Batsh told AFP on Sunday she was "very happy" the vaccination drive was happening.

Since the conflict erupted, violence has surged in Israel's border area with Lebanon and in the West Bank, where the Israeli military launched a large-scale offensive last week.

The Palestinian health ministry said on Monday at least 26 Palestinians have been killed in the northern West Bank over the past week.

Three Israeli police officers were also killed in a shooting Sunday in the southern West Bank, an area where three Palestinians have also been killed in recent days, according to the territory's health ministry.

In Lebanon, the health ministry said an Israeli strike on a vehicle in the south killed two people on Monday.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Briefly

### CHINA

#### Spanish Prime Minister Sanchez to pay visit

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will pay an official visit to China starting on Sunday. During his four-day tour, Sanchez will meet Chinese leaders and exchange views on issues of common concern, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday. China and Spain are comprehensive strategic partners. Spain is the fifth largest trading partner of China within the European Union, while China is the largest trading partner of Spain outside of the EU. China is willing to take Sanchez's visit as an opportunity to promote new progress in bilateral relations, deepen mutual trust through high-level exchanges, and address global challenges through high-quality cooperation to enrich the partnership between the two countries, Mao said.

#### Vice-president to attend forum in Russia

Vice-President Han Zheng will attend the Ninth Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia, and visit Mongolia from Wednesday to Sunday, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday. Han will attend relevant activities under the framework of the forum and meet Russian leaders, Mao said. Beijing looks forward to deepening China-Russia "Northeast-Far East" cooperation, and jointly promoting the development of the region, she added. In Mongolia, Han will have in-depth talks with Mongolian leaders on issues of mutual concern, Mao said, adding that China is willing to work with its neighbor to enhance friendly mutual trust, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, and promote sustained, stable and healthy development of bilateral ties.

### AFGHANISTAN

#### IS claims suicide attack that kills 6 in capital city

The Islamic State on Tuesday claimed a suicide attack in the Afghan capital that killed six people a day earlier, saying it had targeted the government's prosecution service. The Islamic State said in a statement on Telegram that "the suicide bomber waited until the time when the prosecutor's employees were leaving their shifts" before detonating in the middle of a crowd. On Monday night, Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadrani said six people had been killed and 13 more were wounded.

CHINA DAILY—AGENCIES

## Venezuela slams US seizure of plane used by Maduro

CARACAS — Venezuela on Monday denounced Washington's seizure of a plane used by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro as part of a "repeated criminal practice".

The United States has seized the plane in the Dominican Republic, claiming that its acquisition violated US sanctions.

"Venezuela denounces to the international community that once again, the authorities of the United States of America, in a repeated criminal practice that cannot be classified as anything other than piracy, have illegally confiscated an aircraft that has been used by the President of the Republic, justifying themselves on the coercive measures (sanctions) that they unilaterally and illegally impose around the world," Foreign Affairs Minister Yan Gil said on Telegram.

Venezuela made it clear that "it reserves the right to take any legal action to repair this damage to the nation, as well as all other damage caused by the criminal policy of unilateral coercive measures", Gil added.

The United States seized the airplane, citing sanctions laws, the Justice Department announced on Monday.

The aircraft, a Dassault Falcon 900EX, was seized and then transferred to the Southern District of Florida at the request of the US "based on violations of US export control and sanctions laws", according to the statement.

The incident, which came a little over a month after Maduro's reelection, represents the latest chapter in the long-standing tense relations between the US and Venezuela.

The US has been pursuing a policy of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation against the Maduro government in support of opposition leaders.

An Executive Order issued in August 2019 prohibits US persons from engaging in transactions "with persons who have acted or purported to act directly or indirectly for or on behalf of, the Government of Venezuela", according to the Justice Department statement.

Meanwhile, the US State Department offered a reward of up to \$15



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's aircraft is seen in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Monday, after being seized by US law enforcement officials. MIGUEL GUTIERREZ / AFP

million for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Maduro.

Also on Monday, Venezuela ordered the arrest of presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez, who is accused of crimes, including forg-

ing a public document, incitement to disobedience of laws, conspiracy and sabotage, according to a report by Bloomberg.

XINHUA



Chinese peacekeepers in South Sudan are awarded the UN Peace Medal of Honor at a ceremony at the Super Camp of Wau on Oct 28. XINHUA

## NASA responds to 'pulsing sound' from Starliner

LOS ANGELES — NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams, who launched aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft to the International Space Station, or ISS, in June, have reported repetitive "pulsing sound" coming from the spacecraft, NASA confirmed on Monday.

The two astronauts called the NASA ground crew on Saturday

asking for help with the sound, according to US media reports, citing audio recordings between astronauts and the Mission Control Center in Houston.

"A pulsing sound from a speaker in Boeing's Starliner spacecraft heard by NASA astronaut Butch Wilmore aboard the International Space Station has stopped," NASA Commercial Crew said on X.

The feedback from the speaker was the result of an audio configuration between the space station and Starliner, according to NASA.

The space station audio system is complex, allowing multiple spacecraft and modules to be interconnected, and it is common to experience noise and feedback, said NASA.

"The crew is asked to contact Mis-

sion Control (Center) when they hear sounds originating in the communications system. The speaker feedback Wilmore reported has no technical impact on the crew, Starliner, or station operations, including Starliner's uncrewed undocking from the station no earlier than Friday, Sept 6," said NASA.

Boeing's Starliner spacecraft is scheduled to leave the ISS on Sept 6

and return to Earth with no astronauts onboard.

Last week, NASA removed two astronauts from the upcoming SpaceX Crew-9 mission to make room for Wilmore and Williams awaiting ride back home at the space station.

NASA astronaut Nick Hague and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov will launch no earlier than Sept 24 on the Crew-9 mission to the station. NASA astronauts Zena Cardman and Stephanie Wilson, previously announced as crewmates, will be reassigned on a future

mission, according to NASA.

The updated crew complement followed NASA's decision to return the Boeing Crew Flight Test uncrewed and launch Crew-9 with two unoccupied seats.

Wilmore and Williams will fly home with Hague and Gorbunov in February 2025.

The two were Boeing's first crew, arriving at the space station in June for what was supposed to be a week-long stay.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

## WORLD

# Farmers voice concern over possible tariffs

Soybean growers fear trade war and straining of ties between US and China

By **BELINDA ROBINSON**  
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From the vast, fertile fields of Iowa and Illinois and several other farming states, US farmers used 30 million hectares of farmland to generate more than 48 million metric tons of soybean exports last year, worth \$27.8 billion worldwide, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA.

The US is behind Brazil, second in the world in soybean production, creating 29 percent of the total global output, according to the USDA. China ranks fourth. The No 1 soybean export market for the US is China, which, in 2023 bought \$15.06 billion worth of the versatile bean.

In the run-up to the 2024 US general election, the \$124 billion soybean industry, which accounts for 0.6 percent of the country's GDP, is closely watching any talk on trade policies by both presidential candidates, Vice-President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump, especially on tariffs.

Harris hasn't revealed whether she will enact any new trade tariffs or keep the existing ones in place as President Joe Biden has done.

The Biden administration has kept most of his predecessor's levies in place, and in May, raised some others on an additional \$18 billion in Chinese imports, such as electric vehicles and semiconductors.

Trump proposed earlier this year a new set of trade tariffs of 10 percent across the board on foreign goods and 60 percent on goods from China if he wins reelection in November.

Soybean farmers are worried that any new tariffs could spark another trade war and further strain relations between the world's two largest economies.

Josh Gackle, a third-generation farmer from Kulm, North Dakota, is president of the American Soybean Association. He farms 1,130 hectares of soybeans along with corn, wheat and barley.

"China is a very important trading partner, and we want to try and keep that happening," Gackle told China Daily. "On new tariffs, free trade is probably always better."

In 2018, the Trump administration enacted import tariffs ranging between 10 percent and 50 percent on approximately \$283 billion of US imports. As a countermeasure, China imposed a 25 percent tariff on \$50 billion worth of US goods in 2018, including pork and soybeans. This cost US agricultural producers around \$27 billion in lost export revenue from 2018 to 2019, the USDA found. Around 95 percent was due to the trade war with China.

US farmers were given \$61 billion worth of bailouts to offset the losses after US agricultural exports fell dramatically between 2018 and 2020, the Financial Times reported.

By 2019, a trade agreement was reached between the US and China

steadying the industry.

Gackle said the trade war had "a big impact on US soybean producers, but we came back in phase one, and the administration and China worked together to try and build back some of that trade relationship and it happened."

In a study about why tariffs hurt working people in the US by the Washington-based Peterson Institute for International Economics, or PIIE, the authors Kimberly Clausing and Mary Lovely argue that tariffs could actually end up stinging US families, farmers and exporters the most.

"Economists have long understood that tariffs burden domestic purchasers of imported goods because imports are the difference between domestic demand and domestic supply, a tariff affects both sides of the market," according to the study.

## 'Real distress'

Lovely is a professor emeritus of economics at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University and a senior fellow of PIIE. She told China Daily: "During the 2017 to 2018 trade war, agriculture was negatively affected by China's retaliatory tariffs. Former president Trump used tariff revenues to compensate farmers hurt by retaliation because the damage was big enough to cause real distress in some areas of the US."

The 60 percent tariffs on Chinese goods proposed by Trump could increase household costs by \$1,950, the conservative-leaning American Action Forum estimated.

The PIIE study also warned that import tariffs risk a loss of business as trade partners like China set up new contracts with other countries.

The billion-dollar US soybean industry relies on 500,000 people employed in some capacity, with total wages in the sector averaging \$10 billion, according to a 2023 study called The Economic Impact of the US Soybeans and End Products on the US Economy, by the National Oilseed Processors Association and the United Soybean Board.

After the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, producers are weary of anything that could destabilize things.

The US Soybean Export Council, or USSEC, represents the entire soy supply chain, including farmers, processors, commodity shippers, merchandisers, allied agribusinesses and agricultural organizations. It works to attain market access for the use of US soy for human consumption, aquaculture and livestock feed in more than 80 countries worldwide.

"China is so big, they take 60 percent of the soy that goes into global trade," Jim Sutter, CEO of USSEC, told China Daily. "They're a huge market. If you don't have them, it's a problem."

"We went through a lot of pain as a soy industry and as a country in the last trade war. Let's learn from that."

## In deep water



People carry their belongings as they wade through a flooded street after heavy monsoon rains in Vijayawada, India's Andhra Pradesh state, on Monday. Intense monsoon rains and floods in the country's southern states have killed at least 33 people, with thousands rescued and taken to relief camps, disaster officials said. CHANDU LUMBURU / AFP

## Wing Chun wows London audiences

By **JULIAN SHEA** in London  
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The worlds of dance and martial arts may not have the most obvious crossover, but lovers of both art forms will head to Sadler's Wells dance theater in north London this week to see the Shenzhen Opera and Dance Theater put on a show combining them to spectacular effect, *Wing Chun*.

The show's two-stranded storyline tells the tale of legendary martial arts master Ip Man, who has also inspired a film being made about his life.

There are set to be 12 performances in London, running until Sept 7, and then in October the company will perform four shows in Paris.

*Wing Chun* made its domestic debut in December 2022, before its first overseas visit to Singapore in September 2023 and its 200th performance will take place during the London run.

Before the London premiere on Friday, China's Ambassador to the United Kingdom Zheng Zeguang praised the show and its cast for increasing cultural understanding.

"I am sure (the performances) will help the UK audience better understand both Chinese martial arts and the philosophy and value championed by the practitioners," he said, while also praising Shenzhen for its growing role as a cultural hub. "Shenzhen is at the forefront of China's reform and opening-up and technological innovation. Nowadays, the city is also building itself into a leader of culture."

Zheng highlighted the city's role by mentioning how the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra had toured the UK this year and also highlighted a recent visit to the city by the United Kingdom's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Zeng Xianglai, executive vice-president of the Shenzhen International Cultural Exchange



Actors from the Shenzhen Opera and Dance Theater perform during the UK premiere of *Wing Chun* at Sadler's Wells in London on Friday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Association, also praised the show as a cultural ambassador for the region and a traditional product showcased within it.

"*Wing Chun* showcases the allure of exquisite traditional Chinese culture through the harmonious fusion of two Chinese intangible cultural heritages: Wing Chun and gambiered Guangdong gauze," he said. "This innovative fusion not only bridges ancient Chinese kung fu and contemporary dance but also promotes mutual exchange, learning and communication, transcending cultural boundaries."

## Positive reviews

The show has been well received, with The Guardian newspaper praising its "smart staging, sleek designs, awesome revolving sets, tricks of the light, a pulse-quickening soundtrack, uplifting storytelling, and above all, exceptional dance, acrobatics and martial arts".

At a public question and answer session, the show's creative team and performers gave some insight into the lengths they went to put it together.

"The biggest challenge was combining martial arts with dance," said Zhou Liya, who for the sixth time shares a joint choreography credit with collaborator Han Zhen. "Most dancers have foundation-level knowledge of martial arts, but that's not enough for a production like this, so they spent over a year learning different martial arts styles from the masters, so they were familiar with what was required."

In the main role of Ip Man, dancer Chang Hongji is the central character in a uniformly top-class cast, and he revealed the extreme level of study that went into the demanding role.

"I spent a lot of time researching my character and my moves, so when it looks like we are taking hard falls, we don't get injured. We spent many hours finding the right level of force to make the required impact without hurting ourselves," he said.

With a castmate, he gave audience members a close-up view of the intricate moves used in fight scenes, which require hundreds of repetitions to look authentic.

## EU chief's gender parity bid suffers blow

By **CHEN WEIHUA** in Brussels  
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European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who will start her second five-year term, was dealt a heavy blow when most of the 27 member states of the European Union defied her instruction to nominate two candidates — a woman and a man — in order to form a gender balanced leadership.

Bulgaria is the only member state which nominated a woman and a man as instructed, while 17 states have submitted a male candidate only. Nine countries — Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden — nominated a woman only. Von der Leyen herself represents Germany, while Kaja Kallas, the former Estonian prime minister, will become the bloc's foreign policy chief.

The nominating by Belgium of its federal minister for foreign affairs and trade, Hadja Lahbib, announced on Monday, and Romania's swap on Monday of Roxana Minzatu, an MEP and former minister of European Funds, to replace MEP Victor Negrescu, a male candidate submitted earlier, have made the situation slightly better.

Von der Leyen earned big applause in 2019 by forming a commission with 13 women including herself and 14 men. It was the most gender balanced commission in the EU's history. She was also the first woman to become the commission president.

## Interviews and hearings

In the coming weeks, von der Leyen will start to interview those candidates and assign them various policy portfolios. After that, the European Parliament will hold hearings for the candidates. It has been the case in the past that a few candidates will fail to win approval.

News media reported that von der Leyen is still trying to pressure member states which nominated male candidates to make the switch like Romania.

European Commission deputy chief spokesperson Arianna Podesta told a news conference on Monday that von der Leyen "has been very clear in what her ambition is, which is a gender balance college".

Outgoing European Commission Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager, from Denmark, vented her outrage on Monday at the gender imbalance.

"Unfortunately it's a demasking of the lack of efforts when it comes to equal opportunities and gender balance," she told the press.

Alberto Alemanno, a professor of EU Law at HEC Paris, a business school, said on X that "the next European Commission could be the most gender-imbalanced in two decades".

## China remains key source for Los Angeles tourism

By **RENA LI** in Los Angeles  
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China continues to be one of Los Angeles' top tourism sources despite a modest recovery in the industry in 2023.

So far this year, the city has welcomed more than 400,000 Chinese visitors, highlighting the resilience and importance of the market to LA's tourism industry.

Adam Burke, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board and vice-chair of the World Tourism Alliance, said it's "impossible" to overstate the importance of Chinese visitors to Los Angeles.

"In 2019, Los Angeles welcomed 1.2 million Chinese guests — a record number that made it our top overseas market," Burke told China Daily. "As global travel trends evolve, the enduring connection between Los Angeles and Chinese travelers remains a cornerstone of our international tourism strategy."

The significant influx of Chinese tourists can be attributed in part to

the successful China-US Tourism Leadership Summit earlier this year. The summit brought together key stakeholders from both nations and fostered stronger ties and collaboration, encouraging travel and tourism exchanges.

The event highlighted the mutual benefits of tourism as a bridge between cultures, emphasizing the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation to enhance the travel experience for visitors from both countries, according to Burke.

"With so many new attractions and experiences in LA, there has never been a better time to visit our City of Angels. Through 50 years of people-to-people exchanges, we have formed enduring bonds of friendship that hold the promise of a brighter future," said Burke, adding that cultural and economic ties have been strengthening over decades, reflecting the long-term value of Chinese tourism to the region.

Local businesses and attractions have felt the positive impact of the steady stream of visitors, contributing

to the economic vitality of the Southern California region.

From luxury shopping districts like Rodeo Drive to iconic landmarks such as the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Chinese tourists have become a vital part of the city's tourism landscape.

As the global travel industry continues to recover, Los Angeles remains optimistic about further growth and engagement with Chinese tourists. "The return of visitors is seen as a key component of the city's post-pandemic economic-recovery strategy."

A significant boost to this optimism came at the end of August, when United Airlines restored its Los Angeles-to-Shanghai nonstop service, becoming the only US carrier to fly the route.

On the evening of Aug 30, United Airlines Flight UA199 took off from Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Los Angeles, resuming direct flights between the two cities.

The resumption is an important milestone, marking a key step in the broader recovery of air travel between China and the United States,

according to Rofia Larsson, vice-president of Global Tourism Development at the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board.

"This route reconnects Shanghai and Los Angeles, two diverse and dynamic cities. It not only provides convenience for Chinese tourists visiting Los Angeles but also offers American tourists opportunities to explore China's beauty and culture," said Larsson, who attended the resumption celebration with representatives of the US Tourism Bureau and California Visitors Bureau in Beijing.

It is anticipated that the restored route will help reignite the flow of Chinese tourists to Los Angeles and beyond.

"Los Angeles has always attached great importance to the Chinese market. As an important gateway for Chinese tourists to visit the United States, we continue to create new attractions and experiences with enthusiasm. We welcome more Chinese tourists to this vibrant City of Angels," Larsson added.

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## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Beijing Summit set to be new marker for historical achievements of the FOCAC

While some Western countries try to throw a wrench into the works by raising concerns about governance standards, transparency, debt sustainability and the environmental impact related to Chinese investments in Africa, China and the majority of African nations regard their relations as being cooperative, supportive and mutually beneficial.

For China, Africa is a significant development partner, due to its resources, markets, economic opportunities and investment potential, and its engagement with African countries is a prime example of South-South cooperation, which emphasizes solidarity among developing nations in the face of Western exploitation and suppression.

For most African countries, China is a valued partner providing trade opportunities, investments in infrastructure and diversification of support for their development efforts beyond the traditional ex-colonial powers, whose assistance is often conditional and exploitative.

Established in 2000, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has become a significant driver of China-Africa ties. A platform for collective dialogue between China and African countries, the FOCAC has helped the two sides strengthen cooperation in a wide range of areas, including trade, investment, infrastructure development, industrialization, agriculture, health, education and cultural exchanges.

The FOCAC has spurred a growth in bilateral trade volumes. While Chinese investments in infrastructure projects, such as roads, railways, ports and energy facilities, have helped boost economic development in many African countries.

Statistics show China has remained Africa's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching a record \$282.1 billion in 2023. And by the end of that year, China's stock of direct investment in Africa had exceeded \$40 billion.

The FOCAC has also promoted capacity building in Africa through cooperation in areas such as education, healthcare and the development of human resources. China has provided scholarships for African students to study in Chinese universities and supported training programs for African professionals in various fields.

The meeting, being held in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday, will be the fourth time that the FOCAC has been held in the form of a summit, and with the leaders and representatives of over 50 African countries, as well as representatives from African regional organizations and international organizations attending to explore the theme "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future", it is regarded by both sides as an opportunity for them to consolidate their friendship, deepen practical cooperation and strike a strong note in advancing cooperation among Global South nations.

It is expected that the top Chinese leader will elaborate on new ideas and propositions for advancing China-Africa ties and announce new actions and measures for China's practical cooperation with Africa in the keynote speech he will deliver at the opening ceremony.

And the participating leaders are expected to adopt two outcome documents, a Declaration and an Action Plan, that will set the tone for implementing high-quality China-Africa cooperation over the next three years. They will also participate in four meetings focusing on state governance, industrialization and agricultural modernization, peace and security, and high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

When it comes to refuting the Western smearing of China's cooperation with the continent, nothing is a better rebuttal than the continuous and solid progress that has been made in improving African people's livelihoods and well-being. While the allegations that loans provided by China for infrastructure projects that might not be economically viable and could lead to debt distress for some African countries have been shown to be politically motivated, as the data show that the debts of African countries are mainly owed to private sector creditors in the West, who charge African countries high interest rates.

In an increasingly turbulent world, afflicted with crises and challenges, the solidarity and strong cooperation momentum between China and African countries can not only help instill certainty and confidence in the world, but also provide some solutions to help address the deficits in global development, governance and trust. No wonder the 2024 FOCAC Summit has drawn worldwide attention.

## EU should heed rational view of relations

The European Union has followed Washington's lead in making efforts to desinicize its economy and industries after freezing a hard-negotiated EU-China investment deal three years back.

The bloc has continuously hyped up the need to reduce its so-called economic dependency on China, as well as human rights issues related to China, and adopted an increasingly interventionist approach to China's neighborhood and the Taiwan question, even while admitting the latter is China's internal affair.

Some in the EU have also echoed Washington's scaremongering that China is a "strategic threat" to Europe, citing its ties with Russia. However, these voices keep a studied silence over other countries that have retained normal trade relations with Russia, such as India, as well as the fact that it is the United States that has been the sole beneficiary of the Ukraine crisis, economically and geopolitically at the EU's expense.

But even those EU China-bashing politicians cannot deny that China has never taken the initiative to harm the EU's interests, as the limited moves it has taken so far targeting the EU, including its latest anti-dumping probes into dairy imports, brandy and pork products from the bloc following the EU threatening to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, are invariably countermeasures against the moves the bloc has made.

Nor can the China naysayers claim that most EU members have bought the anti-China stance they have been painstakingly peddling over the past three years. Most major EU members, including Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands have actually kept stable and productive relations and open communication channels with the world's second-largest economy.

As such, it should be no surprise that the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell reminded the bloc of the necessity of developing a rational perception on China amid wide concerns that the EU will be plunged into a trade war if it blindly follows the US' lead.

Speaking at a recent event in Spain, Borrell said: "We mustn't be naive." He urged the EU to uphold its own strategic autonomy in dealing with China given the US' disregard for the EU's interests.

"They [the US] don't ask us when they ban the import of Chinese cars. They're not going to ask us where those Chinese cars are going if they're not going to the US ... I am sure they will go to the European market, and this is generating a competitiveness issue with our industry," he said.

Borrell insisted that the bloc had no interest in "containing China's rise", and said it "cannot embark on systematic confrontation with China". He said that Europe must not oppose China's rise, because its rise is a fact — it is not only selling cheap T-shirts, it is at the cutting edge of all technologies, as he put it. "To oppose ourselves to the rise of China as a power is impossible — China is a great power."

Although Borrell is set to retire in October, with Kaja Kallas, the prime minister of Estonia, being nominated to succeed him, those remarks should continue to resound in the EU's policymaking circle alerting the bloc of the danger of allowing itself to be misled by the US. For the EU, the road ahead forks in two directions — its choice is between the road on which it will be "divided in paucity" or the one on which it will be "united in diversity", as its motto goes.

As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, China attaches great importance to China-EU relations, and believes that the two sides should view each other as partners, not rivals. Cooperation, rather than competition, should be the defining feature of the relationship; autonomy, rather than reliance, its key value; and win-win cooperation, rather than confrontation, its future.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic relations. China stands ready to work with the EU to deepen strategic communication, carry out dialogue and cooperation, properly settle differences and frictions, and make sure the China-EU relations will become more stable and constructive. By remaining partners, they can deliver more mutual benefits and contribute more globally.

Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## 'Havana Syndrome' and more such lies shatter US' credibility

The US National Institutes of Health's latest announcement that it would stop investigating the "Havana Syndrome" — a mysterious illness marked by hearing loss, dizziness, nausea, migraines, fatigue and other symptoms that was supposedly afflicting US diplomats posted abroad since 2016 — means Washington finally admitted that the whole thing was a self-orchestrated lie to groundlessly smear other countries and impose sanctions on them.

The mysterious illness was so named because the symptoms were first reported by US diplomats posted in the Cuban capital of Havana, making Washington claim that Cuba was using a "secret weapon".

In fact, a number of US intelligence agencies jointly announced in March 2023 the results of an investigation into the mysterious ailment, saying it may have been caused by environmental factors, undiagnosed medical conditions or

stress. The results overturned a finding more than a year ago by a team from the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, which linked the syndrome to "directed" radio frequencies. But this has not stopped US politicians and media from using it to repeatedly politicize medical and scientific issues.

The US has a long tradition of fabricating lies to discredit and suppress other countries, or to justify its violence and plunder around the world; the "Havana Syndrome" is just another example of its decades-old lying targeting countries it does not like. As former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who once served as CIA director, said, "we lied, we cheated, we stole."

After all the US presented a test tube containing washing powder as evidence of "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, while labeling China's mechanized cotton fields in Xinjiang as places of "forced labor".

A number of international companies have fallen victim to the US' suppression and bullying for "endangering US national security". Washington has blown the fake whistle literally everywhere, from staging the "White Helmets" video of false-flag air strikes and chemical attacks on civilians to pave the way for its military intervention in Syria, to openly supporting rioters and stirring up trouble in Hong Kong. It has groundlessly accused the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China of creating debt traps for partner countries, in total disregard of the fact that the US is the biggest de facto creator of international debt problems.

However, lies are only lies, and truth ultimately prevails. The "Havana Syndrome" farce should serve as a reminder to the US that it should stop fabricating lies to smear other countries to avoid a bigger loss of its fragile credibility.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

## Promoting cross-border service trade for prosperity

The policy document released by the State Council, China's Cabinet, on the cross-border service trade on Monday has touched on all key points in the sector, thus addressing the major concerns of all.

The service sector plays a major role in modern economies, and the importance of cross-border service trade should not be underestimated. In 2023, the domestic service sector accounted for 54.6 percent of the country's GDP, exceeding 50 percent for nine successive years, while the cross-border service trade volume reached 3.6 trillion yuan (\$505.5 billion) in the first half of 2024, registering a 14-percent growth compared with last year.

Proper policy encouragement and guidance are needed to further boost the flourishing cross-border service trade and that's what the newly released policy document seeks to do. Among the new moves is establishing and improving a negative list management system, which will, doubtlessly, further strengthen the rule of law in the sector.

Also, research will be undertaken for constructing a national cross-border trade service information platform, thus strengthening information-sharing among different departments.

According to the policy document, the role of the platforms for opening-

up, such as pilot free trade zones and free trade ports, will be strengthened, too, so as to test the pressure and gradually open up the nationwide cross-border service trade.

Other new measures include strengthening the docking of domestic rules with international rules, making the cross-border talent flow more convenient, optimizing the management of the cross-border flow of funds, encouraging innovation in key sectors etc. Covering different aspects of the cross-border service trade, these moves will provide a solid regulatory framework for it, thus supporting its long-term prosperity.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## Sign of strengthening South-South cooperation

China and South Africa elevated their bilateral ties to an all-round strategic cooperative partnership for the new era on Monday. They also issued a joint statement on the same day during South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's visit to Beijing.

Strengthening solidarity and cooperation between China and South Africa is in line with the two peoples' common expectations and the historical process of the Global South's rising trajectory.

To that end, the two countries will work together to advance their bilateral relationship and make joint efforts to promote high-quality cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, according to their joint statement.

The two sides should fully leverage such mechanisms as the China-South Africa Joint Working Group

and the Joint Economic and Trade Committee to further expand economic and trade ties and improve the current trade structure, increasing market access. There is much potential to be released in the digital economy, artificial intelligence and the development of human resources. The two countries should be committed to providing a stable, fair and enabling business environment for companies from both sides and to ensuring the safety and legitimate rights and interests of the relevant personnel, projects and institutions.

The two countries are also working together to promote the building of an equal and orderly multipolar world and economic globalization that is universally beneficial and inclusive.

As such, they are making active efforts to restore development as the centerpiece on the agenda of inter-

national cooperation, and working for the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

They continue to uphold the core values and basic principles of the World Trade Organization, oppose decoupling and disruption of supply chains, resist unilateralism and protectionism, and call for reform of the international financial system and improved development financing for African countries to achieve common prosperity.

The more complex the international situation becomes, the more the Global South countries need to uphold independence, strengthen unity and cooperation, and jointly safeguard international fairness and justice. China and South Africa are setting a good example in this regard.

— LIYANG, CHINA DAILY

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# GLOBAL VIEWS

IVEN ZYUULU

## Virtues of bilateral cooperation

China and Zambia are contributing to regional peace, stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region and the world at large by working together

China and Zambia have enjoyed warm and cordial bilateral relations marked by cooperation and mutual respect. The relationship between the two countries was founded by Zambia's founding father Kenneth David Kaunda and Chairman Mao



Zedong 60 years ago and continues to grow. It is worth noting that the current leaders, President Hakainde

Hichilema and his counterpart President Xi Jinping, have raised the relationship to that of Comprehensive Strategic and Cooperative Partnership, the highest classification applied to China's African partners, because of the strong bond of cooperation Zambia shares with China.

China assists Zambia with many projects, such as the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway. It was built at a very critical moment when southern Africa was undergoing liberation wars. The railway line benefited not only Zambia but the whole of southern Africa, which critically needed the support and resources from Zambia, and everyone who believed in democracy and supported the liberation wars. China also supported Zambia in the construction of many roads and bridges, which include the Serenje-Mansa and the Mongu-Kalabo roads and more recently the construction of the Kenneth Kaunda International Airport, the Kenneth Kaunda Wing of the Mulungushi International Conference Center and the Kafue Lower Hydro-power Station, among other projects.

The infrastructure has not only expanded Zambia's productive

**The FOCAC framework has expanded beyond economic cooperation to include cultural exchanges and people-to-people interactions. The people-to-people contact has also become stronger, as seen by increased business and cultural visits between the two peoples.**

capacities in many areas but also improved people's lives through improved access to healthcare, safe travel and improved opportunities for education.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, aimed at enhancing infrastructure connectivity and economic cooperation, is a good framework for strengthening the relations between Zambia and China, encouraging them to work together and building on their shared interests and goals, including the promotion of people-to-people relationships. Through this framework, the China-Zambia relationship has not only grown but diversified to many other areas, such as infrastructure construction, investment, trade, education, health, tourism and culture, among other things.

Zambia enjoys duty-free market access to a wide array of products

originating in China apart from investments under the FOCAC. Chinese foreign direct investments in Zambia have been a significant factor in Zambia's economic development over the past decade. In fact, Zambia has become one of the countries enjoying the most Chinese direct investment in Africa. Therefore, while it is helping to resolve some of the immediate challenges such as enhancing managerial capabilities that exist in many developing countries, giving market access to products from Africa, Zambia included, the FOCAC framework is also closing the infrastructure gap, hence building productive resources, entrepreneurial capabilities and production linkages that will increase the African countries' productive capacities through energy access, improved road networks, improved health facilities and educated people through both short- and long-term scholarships to various Chinese universities.

Balancing development with environmental sustainability is crucial. Both China and African countries recognize the need to mitigate the impact of climate change by fostering the promotion of sustainable development and encouraging a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. The FOCAC framework is a good platform to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation measures because China, the largest developing country, combined with Africa, which has a large number of developing countries, can make a significant contribution with measures to pro-

vide sustainable development and address climate change at the global level. China, by sharing its expertise in the renewable energy space with the African countries through investment in renewable generation capacities, has been helping in reducing Africa's carbon footprint, contributing to efforts to promote sustainable energy solutions.

China and Zambia are contributing to regional peace, stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region and the world at large by working together, practicing principles of sincerity, real results, amity and good faith. These principles, by

emphasizing mutual benefit, fair play, and sincere cooperation, are contributing to the trust, strong ties and partnership by facing up to and resolving common global challenges.

The FOCAC framework has expanded beyond economic cooperation to include cultural exchanges and people-to-people interactions. The people-to-people contacts have also become stronger, as seen by increased business and cultural visits between the two peoples. Currently, a Zambian cultural dance company is on a six-month tour of China, followed by a reciprocal visit by the Chinese equivalent.

A Chinese film crew also paid a visit to Zambia in June to experience the country's tourism attractions and learn about the two countries' shared history by visiting the TAZARA memorial monument. These and numerous other interactions define the very relationship between China and Zambia.

*The author is ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of Zambia to the People's Republic of China. 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.*



MAXUEJING / CHINA DAILY

ZHOU XIAOZHU AND HAN QINKE

## Light up Africa with green energy

By ensuring coordination and alignment among various cooperation mechanisms to guarantee effective implementation, China can lead in promoting just energy transition and green development

Just energy transition has become a hot topic in the context of the global green and low-carbon transition, and the world's major economies are accelerating the global transition process through a variety of international cooperation mechanisms.



Zhou Xiaozhu



Han Qinke

In recent years, as developed economies have achieved a structural decline in carbon dioxide emissions, the share of carbon emissions from emerging economies has steadily increased. Since 2021, developed economies such as the United States and the European Union have actively promoted the Just

Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), a multilateral intergovernmental financing cooperation mechanism, to help the most vulnerable populations affected by the transition. This is done by providing financial aid to developing countries, especially those with a high percentage of coal and other fossil fuels in their energy mix. JETP assists grantee countries in realizing just energy transition by accelerating the phasing out of coal power and promoting renewable energy development. So far, South Africa, Indonesia, Vietnam and Senegal have joined JETP. The donor countries have promised an initial funding package of nearly \$50 billion in the form of grants, concessional loans, non-conces-

sional loans and guarantees.

However, the actual progress of JETP has lagged far behind expectations. On the one hand, JETP emphasizes the acceleration of coal power phase-out and renewable energy development, but the donor countries have not been able to provide low-cost and high-efficiency renewable technologies and capacity. More importantly, the types and scale of funding cannot sufficiently meet the actual needs of the grantee countries. On the other hand, coal power still dominates the energy sector in most of the grantee countries. Given the rapid increase in power demand, the pace of clean energy development is unlikely to meet the fast-growing power demand of these grantee countries. As a result, they lack the motivation to phase out or phase out coal power. In addition, recent election results in the US and European countries may also bring uncertainty to the future of JETP.

Take South Africa as an example. As of 2023, the proportion of coal power in South Africa was as high as 80 percent. Factors such as aging and backward power infrastructure and the serious debt problem at ESKOM, South Africa's state-owned electricity utility, have brought great challenges to South Africa's power supply and energy security. The dominance of coal power cannot be altered rapidly. As projected by South Africa's Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (2023-27), nearly \$98 billion is needed for a just energy transition there. In comparison, developed countries have committed about \$11.6 billion in JETP, of which concessional loans and commercial loans account for about 80 percent, and



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

grants only 6.2 percent, with only a small amount of these funds having been actually put into place so far.

In addition to JETP, major economies around the world, including the European Union, the United States and China, have launched strategic plans and cooperation mechanisms to support developing countries, especially in Africa, to

obtain a stable and affordable electricity supply. Among them, the EU has prioritized "green transition" and "energy access" in its Europe-Africa Partnership, as outlined in its "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa". Additionally, Africa is listed as a key focus in the Global Gateway program, which supports the sustainable develop-

ment of partner countries and strengthens infrastructure construction. The US has launched the Power Africa program, which aims to support the installation of at least 30GW of cleaner and more reliable electricity generation capacity in Africa by 2030, driving increased inclusiveness and low-carbon economic growth, and promoting health, education and prosperity. China continues to support green development in Africa through South-South Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative.

In recent years, China and African countries have strengthened cooperation in green development, particularly in the energy sector. The China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035, released in 2021, pointed out that China and Africa shall improve development quality with green cooperation, comprehensively advancing their climate cooperation and promoting transition to clean and low-carbon energy. As for energy cooperation, China will support Africa in increasing the proportion of clean energy utilization, such as hydropower and nuclear energy, actively develop renewable energy based on the level of development and energy needs of countries, provide stable and affordable power supply with distributed power supply technologies for remote African areas, and support the development of the photovoltaic industry.

As of now, through cooperation mechanisms such as South-South Cooperation and the BRI, Chinese companies have participated in constructing a series of energy projects, which are technologically advanced and environmentally friendly, in over 40 countries and regions across Africa. These projects range from photovoltaic, wind power, hydropower, to biomass, with a total of 120GW of installed capacity and 66,000 kilometers of grid lines. These efforts have not only enhanced Africa's power supply capacity but also effectively promoted the energy transition. In recent years, a number of "small and beautiful" projects have landed in Africa, contributing to the improvement of local livelihoods and the promotion of green development. Meanwhile, China has also

been providing support for energy professional training and energy sector development in Africa, attracting government officials, technical personnel, and researchers from over 30 African countries to visit China.

To deepen cooperation with developing countries, especially Africa, in just energy transition, China needs to innovate its cooperation mechanisms in technology and finance, in order to achieve synergy in green development, energy security and social justice.

First, by taking advantage in renewable energy, clean coal power technology, and equipment manufacturing, China can offer greater support to developing countries in scientifically assessing and choosing their own energy transition pathways. Priority should be given to renewable energy development, while steadily optimizing coal power through measures such as capacity replacement, upgrading and retrofitting.

Second, China should strengthen cooperation with multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the New Development Bank, the China-Africa Development Fund and the Silk Road Fund. This includes leveraging green finance, transition finance, and other mechanisms to support sustainable development in emerging economies, actively participating in and effectively mobilizing international fundings.

Third, while continuing to promote China-Africa cooperation under the framework of South-South Cooperation and the BRI, China may also take on a role in other international energy transition mechanisms. By ensuring coordination and alignment among various cooperation mechanisms to guarantee effective implementation, China can lead in promoting just energy transition and green development.

*Zhou Xiaozhu and Han Qinke are analysts at Peking University Institute of Energy. 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.*

# BUSINESS



Workers operate an assembly line of smart excavators at Sany's factory in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in February 2023.

ZHANG WENKUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Chinese firms buoy African mkt

Development plans, demand for wide range of goods excite nation's exporters

By ZHONG NAN  
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In response to African countries' efforts to stimulate economic growth, broaden market access and unlock consumer potential, Chinese companies will deploy more resources and manpower on the continent in the years ahead, to capitalize on growing demand for goods ranging from daily necessities to industrial machinery.

Exporters and trade experts said such moves will be consistent with China's continuous efforts to strengthen its trade ties with Africa and exploit the growing opportunities in Africa's rapidly developing economies.

Many African countries have solid medium- and long-term development plans, such as South Africa's National Development Plan 2030, and Kenya and Egypt's Vision 2030 strategies, they said.

As many African countries are experiencing steady economic growth and urbanization, Chinese companies, with their expertise in manufacturing and related services, are well-positioned to meet these needs, said Liu Jisen, a professor specializing in African studies at Guangdong University of

Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

Sany Heavy Equipment Co Ltd, a Shenyang, Liaoning province-based mining and construction machinery manufacturer, exported 91.34 million yuan (\$12.83 million) worth of mining trucks, parts and other types of mining equipment to Africa in the first seven months. Its main export destinations in Africa included Eritrea, Mozambique, South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana and Morocco.

Huang Dexiang, head of Sany Heavy Equipment's overseas sales unit, said the company's African clients are increasingly demanding smarter control systems and electric-powered products, driving the Chinese firm to consistently innovate and launch new offerings.

"The electrification trend for construction machinery with small operating radiuses and fixed activity is gaining momentum in many African countries," said Huang, adding that some of the company's African customers are now eager to adopt electric-powered loaders and dump trucks for use in factories, mines and ports.

According to statistics from Shenyang Customs, Liaoning prov-

ince exported construction machinery worth 310 million yuan to Africa in the first half, up 54 percent year-on-year.

The deepening of China-Africa trade cooperation is based on shared interests and pursuit of mutual benefits, said Sang Baichuan, dean of the Institute of International Economy, which is part of the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

This not only serves as strong evidence of the positive outcomes from China's high-quality economic development, but also plays a key role in promoting social development in Africa and improving the living standards of the local population, said Sang.

Sharing similar views, Cheng Xiaohong, a professor at the center for African studies, which is part of Hunan Normal University in Changsha, Hunan province, said the expanding consumer market in Africa offers decent opportunities for Chinese companies to export products ranging from trains and telecommunications equipment to consumer goods.

For example, Shaoyang Sunshine Hair Products Co, a Shaoyang, Hunan province-based wigmaker, has made significant improvements in the comfort and realistic looks of its products to meet the demand from African consumers

in recent years.

"We have registered several proprietary brands in countries like South Africa and Nigeria. They have emerged as top-selling brands in those markets," said Huang Yongxiang, the company's chairman.

Shaoyang exported wigs and hair-related products worth 830 million yuan to Africa during the January-July period, including products worth 550 million yuan shipped to South Africa, data from Changsha Customs showed.

On China's import front, a burgeoning middle-income group and rising demand for new-style beverages have lifted the country's coffee imports from Africa, positioning the nation as a big player in the global coffee market.

The growing popularity of specialty coffee and premium blends has driven market growth in China, with consumers increasingly discerning the quality and origin of their coffee, said Wang Rui, a sales manager at Suzhou Sudou International Trade Co, a coffee bean trader in Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

"In addition to importing coffee beans from Brazil, Colombia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the United States, we have expanded our purchase volume from African countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya in recent years," she said.

## Experts stress RMB use in trade in services

By SHI JING in Shanghai  
shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

Financial infrastructure in China should be further improved to facilitate the use of the renminbi in trade in services as certain services are playing a bigger role in China's overall foreign trade, experts said on Tuesday.

They made the comments after the State Council, the country's Cabinet, said in a circular on Monday that the nation will expand the cross-border use of the renminbi in trade in services.

This is part of the efforts to optimize cross-border capital flows, which are aimed at establishing and improving a negative list management system for cross-border trade in services.

Yuan-denominated cross-border financing and refinancing for trade purposes will be further supported, according to the State Council's document.

He Qing, a professor at the School of Finance, which is part of Renmin University of China, said cross-border use of the RMB for financing purposes is still on a small scale at present. While the RMB interest rate is now lower than that of other major currencies, more companies may consider RMB financing thanks to its lower costs.

But the current supply of cross-border RMB financial tools and products cannot meet companies' diversified financing demand. More room for development can be expected in this regard by making the most of the time window of interest rate gaps, he said.

Meanwhile, foreign exchange management measures should be completed, exploring hierarchical management based on companies' credit. In this way, foreign exchange services will be accessed more easily for trade in services and outbound investment in the services sector, according to the State Council's circular.

The value of China's trade in services jumped 14 percent year-on-year to 3.6 trillion yuan (\$505.5 billion) in the first half, said the Ministry of Commerce in early August.

While trade in travel-related services spiked 477 percent year-on-year to 961.7 billion yuan in the first six months, contributing to the overall surge in trade in services, trade in knowledge-intensive services like intellectual property royalties and

entertainment services rose 3.7 percent to top 1.4 trillion yuan.

According to Tang Wenhong, assistant minister of commerce, the transformation toward trade in services featuring digitalization, smart technologies and green transition has been accelerating. New technologies and novel business models have emerged quickly in trade in services, including digital games, short videos and online literature.

Banks' foreign exchange services should improve and change accordingly, said Liu Bin, head of the Current Account Management Department at the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

In response to the new trends and business models in trade, banks should be given more autonomy to review businesses, evolving from case-by-case review to due diligence and business rationality assessment. Banks are encouraged to come up with innovative review methods to further optimize their business procedures. Therefore, companies can be granted more convenient foreign exchange services, said Liu.

Wang Jing, a researcher from the BOC Research Institute, said banks should further integrate their financial products and services with the actual scenarios in foreign trade. They should come up with more diversified and even tailor-made solutions to better address the needs of companies conducting foreign trade, she said.

Zhang Ming, deputy director of the Institute of Finance & Banking, which is part of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, suggested that construction of the infrastructure for the RMB's cross-border use should be completed at a faster pace to facilitate trade.

To that end, the Cross-border Interbank Payment System, which was launched in 2015 to integrate channels for RMB cross-border payments and settlements, should be given more play. The number of direct CIPS users should be increased, with the system's efficiency further improved, said Zhang.

CIPS can also team up with other cross-border clearing systems such as INSTEX in Europe so that a safer and more inclusive cross-border payment and clearing network can be built, which will also be conducive to the further internationalization of the RMB, he said.



A conference to promote the cross-border use of the renminbi is held in Lusaka, Zambia, in September 2023. PENG LIJUN / XINHUA

## Guizhou chemical project advances green goals

By ZHENG XIN in Beijing  
and YANG JUN in Guiyang

A phosphate and coal chemical integration project located in Southwest China's Guizhou province, the largest industrial project in the province's history, will further transform local resource strengths into industrial and economic advantages, experts say.

With a total investment of approximately 73 billion yuan (\$10.25 billion), the project, once operational, is expected to achieve an annual output value of over 120 billion yuan and consume a substantial amount of raw materials each year, including 13.21 million metric tons of coal and 4.7 million tons of phosphate.

With advanced domestic equipment and technology processes to create a complete industrial chain for new energy and new materials, the project, located in Bijie, injects new momentum into the research, development and production of new energy power batteries and materials, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

"The project's scale and ambition highlight the growing recognition of the need to align traditional resource extraction and processing industries with the demands of a greener economy, which will transform Guizhou's resource-rich regions into hubs of

The project's scale and ambition highlight the growing recognition of the need to align traditional resource extraction and processing industries with the demands of a greener economy ..."

Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University

advanced industrial activity, potentially positioning the province as a key player in the global market for new energy materials."

The project is a joint investment by three private enterprises: Tsingshan Holding Group Co Ltd, the world's largest supplier of strategic resources like nickel and chromium, Huayou Holding Group, a leading global enterprise in new energy lithium battery materials, and Huaofon Group, the world's largest producer of adipic acid.

The project will contribute to Guizhou's efforts to establish a

national base for deep processing of resources and to advance the research, development and production of new energy power batteries and materials, according to the local government.

Huayou, for example, is expanding its capacity globally, and Guizhou's abundant phosphate and coal resources make it an ideal location for this integration project.

Lin said that by integrating phosphate and coal processing with new energy and materials production, the project not only leverages the region's abundant natural resources, but also moves it up the value chain into more technologically sophisticated and economically lucrative sectors.

It not only maximizes the economic value derived from these resources, but also minimizes waste and environmental impact. By channeling these resources into the production of new energy power batteries and related materials, the project aligns with global trends toward electrification and renewable energy, making it a critical part of the supply chain for green technologies, he said.

The involvement of industry leaders like Tsingshan and Huaofon, each with a strong technical background, ensures that the project will benefit from cutting-edge technology and processes, which is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in the

rapidly evolving global market for new energy materials, particularly in a context where innovation and efficiency are key drivers of success, he added.

According to Lin, as the world increasingly shifts toward sustainable energy solutions, demand for advanced materials like those used in new energy power batteries is skyrocketing. The Guizhou project's focus on producing these materials positions it to meet growing global demand, particularly as industries and governments worldwide strive to reduce carbon emissions and transition to cleaner energy resources.

The project is located in Zhijin county, which has coal reserves with estimated reserves of 15.18 billion tons, accounting for 20 percent of the province's total. Phosphate reserves amount to 3.5 billion tons, ranking among the top in the province.

In 2024, Zhijin is expected to achieve an industrial output value of approximately 12.7 billion yuan. The leading industries — coal-phosphate chemicals and modern energy — are expected to generate about 11.8 billion yuan, accounting for some 92.9 percent of the county's total industrial output value above a designated scale.

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### Briefly

#### Chinese mainland shares close mixed

Chinese mainland shares closed mixed on Tuesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index down 0.29 percent to 2,802.98 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 1.17 percent higher at 8,268.05 points. Combined share turnover covered by the two indices stood at 580.6 billion yuan (\$81.52 billion), down from 705.73 billion yuan recorded on the previous trading day. Banking and insurance-related shares as well as the oil and gas exploitation sectors suffered major losses. The ChiNext Index, tracking China's Nasdaq-style board of growth enterprises, gained 1.26 percent to close at 1,556.32 points on Tuesday.

#### BYD leads Israel's electric car sales

Chinese auto giant BYD sold the highest number of electric cars in Israel from January to August, totaling 12,890 units, according to figures released by the Israel Vehicle Importers Association. BYD's

top sellers in Israel during the period were the Atto 3 crossover, Dolphin hatchback, and Seal fastback sedan. Meanwhile, BYD ranked fifth in overall vehicle sales in Israel, which includes both gasoline and electric cars. In the first eight months of the year, Chinese brands accounted for 68.3 percent of Israel's electric car sales, totaling 33,753 units.

#### Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 85 pips to 7.1112 against the US dollar on Tuesday, said the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the greenback is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## LIFE

# Courtyard gardens and cocoons

Although they have only just finished a technical assistance project for agricultural vocational education in Ethiopia in late July, An Taicheng and Du Limei, professors from the Shanxi Agricultural University and a married couple, are busy preparing for their October journey back to the Ardaita Agricultural Technical Vocational Education Training College.

"We want the people there to see our efforts at the agricultural cooperative, and its potential to create economic benefits, while integrating into local life," says Du, 53, adding that they plan to help develop the sericulture industry as part of their upcoming project.

The couple will embark on their journey for a 304-day stay at the university from Oct 1 to July 31 next year.

During the just-concluded round of assistance, which ran from last October until July, An and Du carefully raised some 3,000 silkworms brought from the Shanxi Sericulture Science Research Institute, Shanxi Agricultural University, creating a solid foundation for the planting of a mulberry tree garden at the Ardaita Agricultural TVET College next year.

"We plan to plant a 1-hectare mulberry garden next year, which will help meet the local demand for silk," says An, who is 57 years old.

The agricultural technician hopes to help local residents not only harvest silk cocoons, but also learn how to turn silk threads into silk quilts, allowing them to benefit from agribusiness.

In sericulture and the production of silk, farmers care for the silkworms through their entire life cycle, growing the mulberry trees that provide the leaves upon which the worms feed, produce silkworm eggs, and spin cocoons.

The cocoons are collected and carefully unraveled before being spun into silk threads, which are then cleaned and dyed. The thread is then used to make a variety of products.

"Introducing advanced agricultural techniques to Ethiopia will help enhance the friendship between our two peoples," Du says, adding that they also gave a course on Chinese culture, including tea and silk, to their students.

"As most of the students are in their 20s, they are interested in Chinese culture and want to learn more about the country. By making use of this precious opportunity, we want to leave a good impression of our culture with these young people," she says, adding that they are curious about Chinese history, and want to learn how to use chopsticks.

During April and June, they gave three agricultural technology training courses to about 100 people.

Silk and small-scale farming initiatives part of couple's efforts to boost agriculture in Ethiopia, **Wang Qian** and **Zhu Xingxin** report in Taiyuan.



**Above:** Du Limei (second from left, front) and An Taicheng (second from right), professors from the Shanxi Agricultural University and a married couple, demonstrate their certificates of appreciation issued by the Ardaita Agricultural TVET College for their outstanding contribution in Ethiopia.

**Right:** An uses cocoons to form five Chinese characters, *Zhong Ai Sang Can Jian* (Sino-Ethiopian mulberry cocoons).

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Introducing advanced agricultural techniques to Ethiopia will help enhance the friendship between our two peoples."

**Du Limei**, professor from the Shanxi Agricultural University



They prepared teaching materials covering horticultural knowledge, breeding techniques, technical maintenance for tractors, and common faults which affect their chassis

and electrical system, and advice on troubleshooting.

In addition to planting mulberry trees and raising silkworms, they planted castor bushes, watermel-

ons, corn, sunflowers, potatoes and onions. They also introduced China's successful experience of courtyard economies to farmers, creating microeconomic units.

Generally speaking, the courtyard economy is a form of business in which rural families carry out small-scale agricultural production at home, or in surrounding areas, for self-sufficiency or commercial profit. It is a part of the agricultural economy.

Under An and Du's instruction, local residents have grown more than 30 types of vegetables, and planted over 500 roses and other herbs in their backyards to beautify their work and living environment.

At the Ardaita Agricultural TVET College, the couple has set up an edible mushroom production industry, translated teaching materials into Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, and have shared mushroom management and production techniques with teachers and students.

"There is promising potential to develop the mushroom industry in Ethiopia," An says.

He adds that the next step will be to scale up production, to grow multiple batches of mushrooms.

In a letter of recommendation, the college thanked the Chinese instructors for their hard and conscientious work, and requested they continue their work at the college this coming term, stating that based on their research and teaching, they

will make great achievements.

For the upcoming college term starting next month, An and Du have suggested establishing a mulberry development and research center, with investment in basic facilities, including humidity controllers, thermometers, a mulberry leaf cutting machine and silkworm appliances.

An says that although there is a long history of farming silkworms in Ethiopia, sericulture there is still in an early phase, and there is much room for improvement.

Ethiopia is just part of the bigger picture of the Chinese government's agricultural cooperation with Africa. For years, China has been dedicated to the upgrading of farming technology on the continent.

Over the past decade, about 24 agricultural technology demonstration centers have been established by Chinese experts across Africa, according to data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

They are pivotal in advancing agricultural technology, successfully transferring over 300 agricultural techniques, a process that has increased crop yields by about 30 to 60 percent, benefiting more than 1 million farmers.

The trade volume of agricultural products between China and Africa last year is expected to exceed \$10 billion, nearly double that of a decade ago, and the goal for the next decade is to surpass \$20 billion, according to Xinhua News Agency.

Meanwhile, China is ready to explore further pathways of agricultural cooperation, and work with the international community to help the continent achieve the goals set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme to advance modern agriculture.

To help agricultural modernization, China aims to focus on initiatives to increase production capacity of crops, carry out innovative cooperation programs in agricultural science and technology, and set up demonstration projects on poverty reduction.

In respect of personnel exchange, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has sent 542 agricultural experts, like An and Du, over the course of 23 terms, to countries like Ethiopia, and had trained more than 10,000 managerial and technical personnel in Africa as of last year.

An and Du received a certificate issued by the Chinese embassy in Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Ministry of Labor and Skills for their excellent performance during the last university term.

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## Hunan hospital's ongoing medical partnership with Africa

By **ZOU SHUO** in Changsha  
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Ninety-one-year-old Zhang Youming still has vivid memories of delivering babies in Algeria 61 years ago as part of the first batch of Chinese doctors sent to Africa.

In 1963, the gynecologist and obstetrics specialist at the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University in Changsha, Hunan province, was one of 13 doctors sent by the government to Algeria, which had just become an independent country.

She performed over 1,000 surgeries in two and a half years in the country, delivering many babies safely into the world.

When Zhang arrived at the hospital, she found most of the patients spoke Arabic and some spoke French, so she tried to learn both languages at night to communicate more easily with patients.

She clearly remembers saving one mother, who was hemorrhaging due to placenta previa, a condition in which the placenta covers the mouth of the cervix, and who later named her baby "Chinese" in Arabic.

"She gave her baby the name because she knew that I was a Chinese doctor and she wanted her baby to know that a Chinese person had saved his life," Zhang says.



**Left:** A medical professional from the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University treats local children for free in Sierra Leone.

**Right:** Li Hejun (right), professor of orthopedics with the Hunan hospital, puts a bandage on a patient suffering from bone fracture. He was a member of Hunan province's first medical team sent to support Africa in 1973. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Since 1963, Second Xiangya has sent 60 medical workers in 25 groups to Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Algeria, according to Li Zhihong, president of the hospital.

The workers were from departments including internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, infectious diseases, anesthesiology, radiology and ultrasound, and treated hundreds of thousands of

patients. Second Xiangya is one of the earliest tertiary hospitals in Hunan to send medical support teams to Africa, and has sent the most number of medical workers among hospitals in the province, he says.

Li Hejun, a now 86-year-old professor of orthopedics, was sent to Sierra Leone in 1973.

When he first arrived, conditions were as poor as the workers

had expected. It did not have many resources and so the workers brought medical equipment with them, he says.

The male doctors had to sleep on the floor and even though the conditions were basic, Li said they were eager to work there.

"Every bit of the hospital was built by Chinese doctors and we started from scratch. We only needed to practice medicine in

China, but in Sierra Leone, we were doctors, teachers, engineers, electricians and plumbers."

Teng Zhaoyu, a 51-year-old engineer at the Second Xiangya hospital's blood purifying center, was sent in 2016 during the Ebola epidemic to work at the Sierra Leone-China Friendship Hospital.

Hunan province sent 20 medical workers to Sierra Leone in February and June of 2016, and

Teng was the head of the medical team.

"We were prepared for the worst before we went and some of us left goodbye notes for the family," he says. "However, as the team leader, I promised my coworkers and their families that I would bring them home safely."

The friendship hospital only had one doctor, so the Chinese doctors took over. Many local government officials visited for treatment, and after a senior official at the Sierra Leonean health ministry underwent surgery to remove fibroids, she was impressed by the work of the Chinese medical team, and arranged for 11 local medical workers to work at the hospital.

During the course of just over a year at the hospital, the team received around 40,000 patients and performed about 200 surgeries, Teng says.

Apart from treating patients, they also made great efforts to train medical workers and establish a working system and schedule for the hospital, so, hopefully, one day it can become one of the best hospitals in West Africa, he says.

Zhu Youfang contributed to this story.

## LIFE

About seven years ago, 33-year-old Tsering Dondrub, a business owner in Shangri-La county, Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Southwest China's Yunnan province, purchased three traditional Tibetan houses in Wugong village, Xiaozhongdian town of the county, a half-hour drive from downtown area.

The three freestanding houses built nearly half a century ago had been unused for five years and would maintain this status for another three years until a bookstore brand moved in for its new branch.

Shangri-La was a key staging post in the Yunnan-Xizang branch of the Ancient Tea-Horse Caravan Route, a trade route that started in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and prospered in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911) connecting Pu'er in Yunnan with Lhasa in today's Xizang autonomous region.

It continues to be an important point along the north-south National Highway 214, which starts from Qinghai province, runs through Xizang and Yunnan's Shangri-La, Lijiang and Dali, and ends in Pu'er. There are 26 ethnic groups in Shangri-La and about 33 percent of the population are of the Tibetan ethnic group.

Wugong sits just beside the highway. Villagers used to live by growing highland barley and raising yaks and sheep. About 20 years ago, there were 67 people and 10 households, which has expanded to 139 people and 31 households.

Born into a family of blacksmiths, Tsering Dondrub and his father kept refining their skills in making machetes and tableware in their spare time.

With the national highway, a high-speed railway and an airport, Shangri-La, the mysterious region described in the novel *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton published in 1933, has become easier to access in recent years.

Tourism has boomed, bringing visitors from home and abroad to the outlying village, who have showed a strong interest in traditional Tibetan culture.

Having been often invited to craft Tibetan knives and containers by tourists, Tsering Dondrub and his father opened a workshop beside the highway, which soon became lucrative.

Since 2009, under the trademark Kasa Dao (Kasa Knife), Tsering Dondrub has been running the business of making and selling traditional Tibetan products both online and in shops. By 2021, with integrated businesses, including rural tourism, iron products and ethnic cultural products, he has seen revenues exceed 7 million yuan (\$985,125).

He bought the three old houses seven years ago, not far from a reservoir, with plans to renovate them into hostels. However, by 2020, Tsering Dondrub had still not found a partner who was willing to renovate the three houses, which otherwise would be torn down.

In May 2020, Chinese bookstore brand Librairie Avant-Garde, headquartered in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, opened its new branch in a village in Shaxi ancient town of Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, Yunnan. Its founder Qian Xiaohua and rotating chairman Zhang Ruifeng soon started looking for other opportunities in the province.

They came to Shangri-La at the invitation of the local government because, since 2014, their bookstores renovated from derelict old houses in rural areas have successfully brought vitality back to those hollowed-out villages, setting good examples for rural revitalization in China.

They were taken to the commercial areas in Dukezong ancient town and other places, but Qian always prefers a venue with a good view that has not yet been touched by commerce.

"We always want to create a place to realize our idealism about bookstores, rather than simply for business," Zhang says.

When Tsering Dondrub first showed them the three ramshackle Tibetan houses, they were quite impressed, but there were dozens of such houses nearby. A year later, when they viewed the houses again, Qian decided to rent them. Otherwise, they were very likely to be torn down like other deserted houses.

They invited architect Zhao Yang to design the renovation plan.

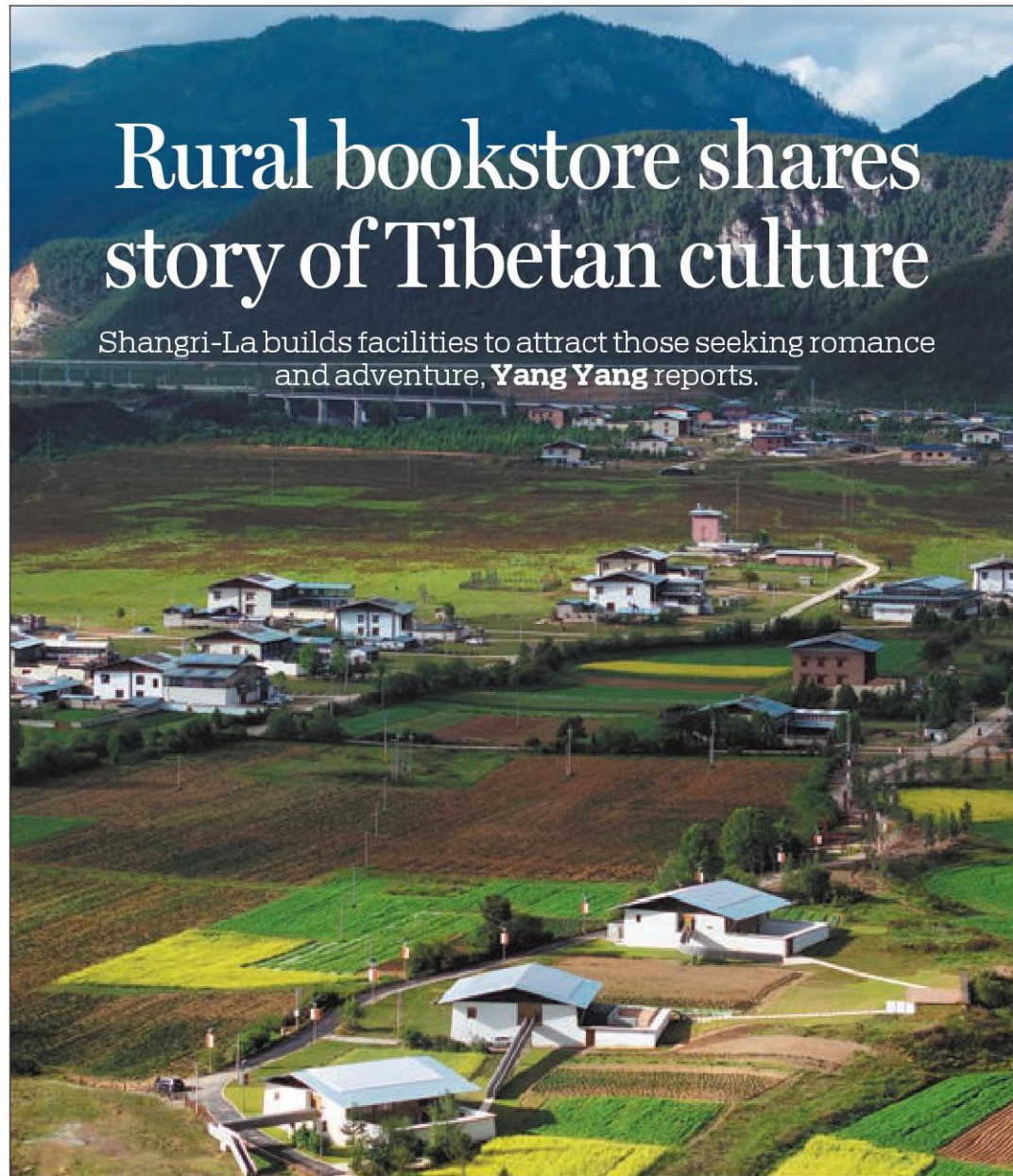
Zhao, a graduate of Tsinghua University and Harvard University, is now based in Dali. For years, he has been trying to put his architectural idealism into practice — to talk to nature with an open mind.

"A good house is like a tree. If a tree grows well, it's because it grows in the right place — it can adapt to the local water, soil and sunlight conditions," he was quoted in a previous interview. "What I have learned from building houses in rural areas is that there are no definite rules about design, which changes according to local conditions."

Before the bookstore, Zhao already completed two works in the places lived in by Tibetans. One is the Nyanchu River tourist center, which was completed in 2009 and is located in Nyingchi county in Xizang along National Highway 318.

Another is the Sunyata Hotel in Yunnan's Dechen county, which opened at the end of 2018 and sits across the holy Tibetan Meili Snow Mountain. Its predecessor was the renowned Migratory Bird Inn.

In 2022, when Zhao first saw the three rundown Tibetan houses standing in the field, he says he felt this place fits the bookstore's brand ethos.



## Rural bookstore shares story of Tibetan culture

Shangri-La builds facilities to attract those seeking romance and adventure, Yang Yang reports.



**Clockwise from top:** The new branch of bookstore brand Librairie Avant-Garde in Wugong village, Shangri-La county, Yunnan province, which was built on three traditional Tibetan houses. Guests and tourists at the bookstore on its opening day in late June. Residents from the nearby villages attend the opening ceremony of the bookstore. It houses 15,000 books on humanities and social sciences as well as creative cultural products and a cafe. Zhang Ruifeng, rotating chairman of the bookstore brand, talks on the branch store's opening ceremony. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Typical of traditional Tibetan houses in Shangri-La, the three houses represented the architectural system established by people who had lived there for hundreds of years.

"Their architectural form, the slope of the roof, the way it handles rainfall, and the choice of materials all blend harmoniously with the surrounding environment," Zhao says. "So, we need first to understand and appreciate them before considering whether we can add something new."

Zhao and his team carefully entered the houses, closely observed them and found people like Tsering Dondrub to tell stories about the village.

Zhao was surprised to find that the wooden structure of the three houses is different from those of the houses of the Han people in their building logic.

In the wooden structure of a Han house, the pillars on the first and second floors are often a single piece of wood. However, the pillars on the first floor of a Tibetan house were shorter, more slender and simpler than those on the second floor. The first floor was inhabited by livestock and the

second floor by people.

"That is fascinating for an architect like me, who grew up with a modern architectural education. I see it as a precious anthropological legacy that we should carefully preserve," he says.

What also fascinates Zhao is the textured surface of the pillars on the first floor that reveals how they were made — possibly with just an axe — and a painting featuring the eight auspicious symbols every Tibetan household has, along with other anthropological information, which he managed to keep.

With an altitude of more than 3,400 meters, Shangri-La sees its temperature drop to about -20 C in winter and people would open small windows on the thick rammed-earth walls for insulation and security, making the rooms so dark that during the days, people needed artificial lighting indoors.

In summer, Shangri-La enjoys abundant sunshine, but rich rainfall causes problems for people living under roofs made of wooden tiles, which they regularly need to replace.

Zhao found that the wooden structures

were well-preserved, but the roofs had fallen into disrepair.

Considering that a modern bookstore needs proper lighting, Zhao supplanted them with roofs made of translucent polycarbonate panels and galvanized steel roof trusses, inspired by the sunrooms widely used in Shangri-La.

The three houses were renovated for different purposes — books, coffee and creative cultural products.

"We tried our best to preserve all the wooden structures in the original space," Zhao says.

"We made the smallest changes to the inner structure, so the second floor of the cafe is like a museum of the traditional residences in Shangri-La. We lifted the roof to let light in and brighten the residence."

Another fascinating point is that each house had a granary. Builders left a square opening on the rammed-earth facade and covered it with wooden slats for ventilation. "Since we don't need granaries in a bookstore, we removed them. We transformed the openings into doors and built concrete walkways that connect the three houses and

with the land, which is an important part of my design," Zhao says.

Zhao believes that the bookstore should be an outgrowth of the vast land on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, helping people connect with the soil and experience its authenticity. He created the walkways to encourage people to go out and stroll through the fields, mountains, rivers and clouds.

The building process was by no means easy.

The construction team coming from outside knew that they needed to delegate part of the work to the villagers according to local customs. After the harvest in September, villagers were free so the team hired them to tear down broken walls to increase their incomes while building good relations with them.

However, the villagers lacked the required skills, so the construction team had to carefully instruct them.

Another problem was rebuilding the rammed-earth walls to enclose the yards. Having no idea what to do, the team members turned to the villagers. To their surprise, though this type of wall had almost been abandoned in Shangri-La, elderly villagers still retained memories of building houses with their fathers.

"I was so frustrated that I thought we should abandon the plan of building rammed-earth walls. However, with the help of the local people, we continued. Nothing is more 'site-specified' than this. Looking back, it is such a gift from the land to our project," writes the on-site architect Liao Fuhong in his construction notes.

Offering a view of the Haba Snow Mountain across the Jinsha River, the upper stream of the Yangtze River, the bookstore houses 15,000 books on humanities and social sciences and 100 types of creative cultural products with local elements. Readers can also find books about local cultures, geography, languages and history.

"It's great that there are so many books about Tibetans and Shangri-La at the bookstore. These books can connect different cultures," Tsering Dondrub says.

In the house for creative cultural products, people can find refrigerator magnets inspired by natural and cultural landmarks, such as the Ganden Sumtseling Monastery, an important Tibetan Buddhism site in Yunnan, the Haba Snow Mountain, prayer wheels, bookmarks inspired by Tibetan scripts and brooches inspired by Tibetan Opera masks.

At the cafe, visitors can have a highland barley-flavored latte or yak butter latte.

"The bookstore showcases how distinctive the old houses in Shangri-La are innovatively revitalized and imbued with new content and new appearances with more possibilities for the future," Zhang says.

The Shangri-La branch is the sixth rural bookstore of Librairie Avant-Garde since its first one in Bishan, Anhui province, in 2014. "We have rural bookstores in the Bai, She and Yi ethnic areas — and now the Tibetan ethnic area," he says.

In *Lost Horizon*, Hilton describes a library in Shangri-La that has a large collection of books, ancient and modern, domestic and foreign.

"Zhongdian was renamed Shangri-La (based on the introductions in Hilton's work) in 2001, so it must have an idealistic bookstore," Zhang says.

However, building a bookstore in such a remote place is not only symbolic. In the short term, the bookstore, like its many precursors, can boost tourism, the economy and culture.

"Every place has its unique history. What we can do is feature the local forte through our platform so that tourists can see traditional local architecture or learn about the local culture, history and geography through the books we present," Zhang says.

Since its opening, the revenue reached 270,000 yuan in the first month, which "is better than expected," Zhang says, adding that "maybe it's because summer is the peak season for Shangri-La tourism."

In other seasons, especially winter, "business might be sluggish because the altitude naturally prevents many people from visiting, but we will keep going," he says.

In the long run, the bookstore will exert a seminal influence on the residents with books and various cultural events, he says.

"We cannot turn people into book lovers within six months. But over five years, or one or two decades, the residents will see so many people reading and caring about their history and culture, which will not only help increase their incomes but also encourage them to cherish, protect and pass on their culture and be proud of it," Zhang says.

In September, Librairie Avant-Garde will open a Lisu ethnic bookstore in the Grand Canyon of the Nujiang River, on the Gaoligong Mountain bordering Myanmar, duplicating its previous experiences.

Chinese poet Yu Jian, 70, a guest attending the bookstore's opening ceremony, said that he was surprised to see a bookstore in such a "remote" place.

"The bookstore is great but I am wondering how they will survive because there aren't many readers of Mandarin books since most Tibetan people don't understand Mandarin," Yu says.

"However, the bookstore transcends traditional models. It's not about making money. It's more like a 'temple' inspiring people's respect for books and bookstores."

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