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Resurfacing on screen

Documentary reminds world of the Lisbon Maru incident

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# CHINA DAILY

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## China expects growth amid US Fed rate cut

Experts: Renminbi-denominated assets could attract foreign capital inflows in months ahead

By ZHOU LANXU and OUYANG SHIJIA in Beijing and HENG WEILI in New York

Renminbi-denominated financial assets are likely to see more foreign capital inflows in the months ahead as the United States enters an interest rate cut cycle, giving Chinese policymakers more room to maneuver toward steady economic growth, analysts said.

The renminbi and Chinese equities rallied on Thursday after the US Federal Reserve's first rate cut in over four years.

The renminbi, or the Chinese yuan, strengthened by 293 basis points in the onshore market to 7.06 against the US dollar on Thursday, the strongest level since June 2023.

The Shanghai Composite Index, a benchmark of Chinese A shares, went up 0.69 percent to close at 2,736.02 points on Thursday, amid a wider rebound of emerging market stocks, with the MSCI index for emerging market stocks rising 1.09 percent as of Thursday evening.

Analysts said a major driver of the rebounds on Thursday was that the US Fed's rate cut on Wednesday has signaled that the US has entered its first post-COVID monetary easing cycle, which will make financial assets of emerging market economies more attractive than before and give those economies more scope for policy easing.

On Wednesday, the US Fed slashed interest rates by 50 basis points and sent its target interest rate range to 4.75 to 5 percent amid easing inflation and a weakening labor market, more aggressive than a usual cut of 25 basis points.

With the Fed's focus shifting more to stabilizing the labor market, the US central bank is on track for further cuts of about 50 basis points by the end of the year and approximately 100 basis points in 2025, according to the Fed's projections on Wednesday.

"The Fed's rate cut cycle may trigger a global wave of interest rate cuts by central banks, leading to a decline in the US dollar index, an appreciation of the renminbi and global capital flowing back to emerging markets," said Yang Delong, chief economist at First Seafont Fund.

"Expectations of renminbi recovery may attract foreign capital inflows

The Fed's rate cut cycle may trigger a global wave of interest rate cuts by central banks, leading to a decline in the US dollar index and an appreciation of the renminbi."

Yang Delong, chief economist at First Seafont Fund

into renminbi-denominated assets, driving up their valuation level," Yang said, adding that the Fed rate cut will benefit the A-share market, particularly if China launches more monetary easing moves that will bolster economic recovery and brighten investor sentiment.

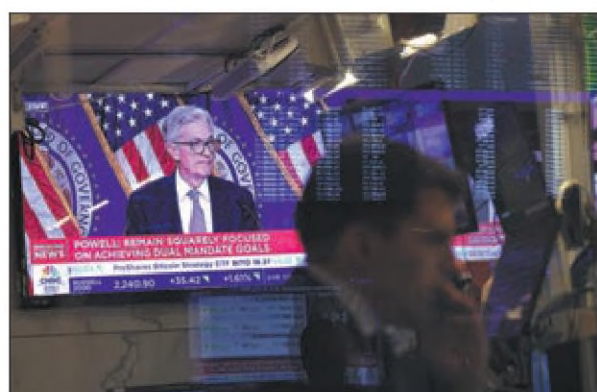
Jin Xiangdong, director of the National Development and Reform Commission's Office of Policy Studies, said on Thursday that the country will intensify macroeconomic adjustments and introduce incremental policy measures when necessary.

Li Chao, chief economist at Zhesang Securities, said that China's monetary policy has more room to maneuver as pressures for stabilizing the renminbi exchange rate are easing, and a cut in the reserve requirement ratio — the proportion of deposits that banks must keep as reserves — may be on the horizon to maintain ample liquidity and reduce financing costs.

Freddy Wong, head of Asia-Pacific at Invesco Fixed Income, a global investment management company, said China's government bond market may also see global capital flowing in as the renminbi may strengthen against the greenback by 3 to 5 percent, making Chinese bonds more attractive to dollar-denominated investors.

As of August, overseas institutions' holdings in China's interbank bond market had risen for 12 consecutive months, an increase in foreign holdings of as much as 1.34 trillion yuan (\$189.7 billion), according to the Shanghai head office of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

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A screen at the New York Stock Exchange plays a news conference addressed by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Wednesday following the Fed's rate cut announcement. ANDREW KELLY / REUTERS



### New round of blasts

Above: A crowd gathers as smoke billows out of a mobile phone shop on Wednesday after a walkie-talkie set exploded inside in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon. The incident occurred a day after hundreds of pagers exploded simultaneously across the country, killing 12 and injuring thousands. At least 20 people were killed and more than 450 were wounded in the second wave of device explosions. HASSAN HANKIR / REUTERS

Right: A video grab shows an exploded walkie-talkie in Baalbek, east Lebanon, on Wednesday. AP

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## Culture seen as key to common progress, forum told

By DENG ZHANGYU dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

As the world faces crises and turmoil, it is crucial to enhance mutual learning among cultures, protect the diversity of civilizations, implement the Global Civilization Initiative, and promote peaceful development through cultural exchanges, officials and experts from around the world said on Thursday at the opening of the Beijing Cultural Forum.

The forum, with the theme of "Enhance Cultural Exchanges for Common Progress," attracted more than 800 domestic and international guests from various fields to discuss topics such as cultural exchanges, cultural heritage and inheritance, cultural trends and cultural empowerment.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the forum, Li Shulei, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, said it is important to treasure cultural heritage and nurture the roots of Chinese culture.

Emphasizing that Chinese-style modernization harmonizes material civilization and spiritual civilization, Li advocated cultural prosperity to enrich the life of the Chinese people.

To enhance mutual understanding among civilizations, Li encouraged the strengthening of exchanges and cooperation in culture, academic research, tourism, youth engagement and sister cities.

Inrina Bokova, former director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, said the role of culture in building a more sustainable world is now widely recognized and reflected in international agendas, particularly the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bokova said she was impressed by China's development of the cultural sector, which accounts for 4.46 percent of the nation's GDP. She pointed out that culture not only fosters social inclusion, community awareness and a sense of belonging, but is also crucial for sustainable development and growth. China

has set a good example, she said.

"I believe that China has a profound understanding of culture and has a responsibility to share it with the world. That's why the forum is held," she added.

Former Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama said that he agreed with the Global Civilization Initiative, proposed by President Xi Jinping last year, which advocates mutual respect, mutual learning among different cultures and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

"I believe this is very important for humanity both now and in the future. We must advocate mutual respect and understanding among nations," Hatoyama said. "Only by adhering to this principle can East Asia and the world achieve lasting peace."

Former French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said in a video speech delivered to the forum that culture should bring new momentum to cooperation, especially when the world is filled with threats and challenges.

"Our world should choose collaboration over tensions," he said.

Gabor Csaba, deputy state secretary for cultural diplomacy at Hungary's Ministry of Culture and Innovation, said that promoting cultural exchanges and dialogues between civilizations to enhance mutual understanding is of unprecedented importance. The lack of understanding between the Euro-Atlantic region and China continues to generate mistrust, which occasionally has negative impacts on relationships, Csaba added.

Only cultural cooperation based on mutual respect and understanding can lay the foundation for common harmonious development and prosperity, he said, adding that there needs to be deeper cultural dialogue and cooperation between Europe and China.

The forum will last until Saturday, with a series of parallel forums, workshops on various topics, an industrial investors conference and cultural activities held in Beijing at various venues for public participation.

## Nation set to become global partner for peace, amity

WORLD WATCH By Faisal Zahid Malik

A number of recent and past developments bear testimony to the fact that China is leaving deeper imprints at regional and global levels because of its soft diplomacy focused on consolidating economic cooperation, fostering peace and advocating resolution of conflicts through peaceful means.

This interesting transformation has its roots in historical wrongs committed deliberately and consistently by some influential powers that have left huge gaps of understanding between them and different countries of the world, even their former allies, many of which are increasingly looking

toward Beijing for political, economic and military cooperation. Beijing hosted the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation from Sept 4 to 6, unveiling new projects for Africa's sustainable development.

Since July 23, the diplomatic community in most countries have welcomed an announcement from Beijing about the signing of a China-brokered national unity agreement among Palestinian factions aimed at maintaining Palestinian control over Gaza once the conflict in the enclave concludes. The agreement, signed by long-term rivals Hamas and Fatah, as well as 12 other Palestinian groups, lays the groundwork for an interim national reconciliation government to rule Gaza.

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## COUNTY IN JIANGXI TURNS IDLE RURAL ASSETS INTO PROFITABLE PASTURES

Huichang draws on collectives' innovations, modernization push to drive vitalization

By SUN SHANGWU and ZHAO RUTAN in Huichang, Jiangxi

Rao Yuxiao never expected that returning to the countryside would increase his income several fold.

In 2012, after graduating from college, Rao left Huichang county in Jiangxi province and moved to Fujian province. He quickly found a job as a planner for an advertising company in Xiamen.

"I worked from nine to six every workday. At that time, the term

In-depth

'996' (9 am to 9 pm, six days a week) didn't exist yet, but the work pressure was still significant," said the 34-year-old.

The turning point came in 2015. That year, Rao married and returned to his hometown of Huichang "for a stable and cozy life".

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Newstand prices: US \$1, Canada C\$1, UK £1, EU €1, Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling, Asia Pacific: Thailand 120, Philippines 120, Myanmar 2000 Kyat, Japan 210 Yen, Dubai 10 Dirham, Pakistan 300 Rupee

## PAGE TWO

An aerial view of Qixin village fields (left) and Zikeng village houses (right) in Huichang county, Jiangxi province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



# Prosperity: Marching from fields to fortune



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By then, rural areas had started providing subsidies for young people returning to their hometowns to farm.

Nowadays, there are more diverse policies supporting young people who are returning to the countryside, he said. For example, the county strongly supports large-scale farming, and provides agricultural technology guidance and end-to-end agrarian services, including drone spraying and harvesting, all of which can be done on a single mobile platform.

Previously, Rao made around 150,000 yuan (\$21,100) a year working in Fujian. "Now, I can earn hundreds of thousands more. This is beyond what I had imagined," he said.

The policies are part of the rural reform initiatives implemented in Huichang in 2022, a year after nearly 100 million rural poor in China had been lifted out of abject poverty.

At the end of February 2021, President Xi Jinping announced China had secured a "complete victory" in its fight against poverty. All 832 counties designated by the government as poverty-stricken in 2013 have shaken off their poverty labels. China has achieved the poverty reduction goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule.

Many of China's rural areas have also become models for poverty alleviation in developing countries, but success also brings greater responsibilities.

As a result, the focus of China's rural work has shifted to comprehensively promoting rural vitalization.

In 2021, at the Central Rural Work Conference, Xi emphasized that after achieving victory in poverty alleviation, the focus should shift to comprehensively advancing rural vitalization, marking a historic shift in the focus of rural development. Importantly, it is crucial to maintain the achievements of poverty alleviation and effectively connect them with rural vitalization to ensure continued prosperity in rural areas, he added.

## Practical solutions

This brought together hundreds of local governments to address a practical problem: What could villages do to achieve this?

Pan Jincheng, the secretary of the Communist Party of China Huichang county committee, formed a team to research rural vitalization.

After several months of research and visits to rural households, they identified that a number of assets, such as farmland and factories in many villages, were lying idle.

"China's efforts to alleviate poverty have successfully eliminated absolute poverty and addressed the deficiencies in infrastructure and public services in villages, resulting in the accumulation of substantial assets for the village collectives. Unfortunately, many of these assets had not been fully utilized, and even been neglected," Pan said.

During the poverty alleviation period, local governments and social organizations invested significantly in projects such as greenhouses, affordable housing, photovoltaic facilities, and farmland water conservancy facilities.

These assets had accumulated over the years of poverty alleviation achievements and could also form

the material foundation for the comprehensive vitalization of rural areas, Pan said.

"Therefore, we decided to revitalize these assets, find a good operational model, and support rural vitalization," he said.

The first objective was to put the idle lands into use by village cooperatives. The cooperatives began by signing custody and transfer agreements with rural households that held idle land.

The land was then leased as consolidated plots to prominent businesses and large farming households, which collectively organized planting. Landowners can earn a share of the profits under the agreements.

Rao is one such large household. Apart from cultivating rice on the leased farmland, he also engages in rice breeding. He stays busy tending to his crops throughout the year.

Currently, village cooperatives and farmers in the county have signed custody agreements for over 60,000 *mu* (4,000 hectares).

To effectively manage village assets, Huichang formed the Zhenxing Agricultural Industry Group. The company is driven by county-wide coordination, leadership from State-owned enterprises, and a "five-party operational system" to promote rural vitalization.

"The five-party operational system mainly involves cooperating and coordinating five aspects. The Zhenxing group is one of the parties, with subsidiary companies set up in each town, where village cooperatives participate as shareholders. Subsequently, leading enterprises can be brought in, and farmers receive dividends by investing resources such as land or getting jobs from local companies," Pan said.

"This not only enriches rural areas but also unites them, enhancing their resilience in the market. Most importantly, it enables large-scale agricultural production and coordinated farming-related services," he added.

## Collectives in action

Qixin village in Mazhou town, Huichang, is one good example.

Many of its residents had moved to other cities, which had left over 85 percent of the town's farmland uncultivated, said Ou Ling, the deputy town chief.

Over the past two years, the town encouraged farmers to entrust their land to the village collective economic cooperatives.

The town also established a seedling production center and a comprehensive mechanized agricultural



Workers pick tea leaves at a mountain plantation in Huichang on March 30. LIU ZHAOCHUN / CHINA DAILY



Villagers participate in a sports event featuring fun activities in Huichang on Oct 14. LIU ZHAOCHUN / CHINA DAILY

service center to maximize production efficiency of the land.

The seedling production workshop integrates sowing operations, post-sowing management, and farming-related services. Up to 1,000 *mu* of seedlings can be sowed per day.

Meanwhile, the mechanized agricultural service center reduces production costs through implementing large-scale operations.

"In 2021, the cost of plowing per *mu* was 160 yuan. Now, it's only 110 yuan. Machine planting costs were 100 yuan per *mu* last year, but now they are down to 80 yuan. Harvesting costs have also decreased by nearly 20 yuan per *mu*. According to our calculations, through comprehensive mechanized agricultural services, we can save 90 yuan per *mu* from planting to harvesting compared with last year," Ou said.

"Our town's total area of early, middle, and late rice cultivation is over 30,000 *mu*. As a result, the agri-

cultural costs in our town have been reduced by over 2 million yuan," he added.

Farmers are able to conveniently place orders through an intelligent platform to access centralized seedling cultivation, seed planting, land management, and centralized procurement of pesticides and fertilizers.

"Just like urban residents can order a taxi using their smartphones, we also have 'Didi farm machinery,'" he said.

Liu Jianqing from Xiabao village said, "My sons and daughters are all working outside, and every year during the busy farming season, I used to spend money hiring assistance on the platform. Now, my fields are all managed properly, and my son can order land cultivation services on the platform, even while working in another province."

Since the introduction of the online service, Liu said he had

assumed the role of a "hands-off manager".

Pan said that due to the long-term migration of rural populations to urban areas to work in industrial jobs, there is a labor shortage in rural areas.

"Additionally, rural aging is a serious social issue, with most workers being middle-aged or older, especially those aged 50 and above. Moreover, the efficiency of agricultural production remains low, creating a growing need for agricultural services (in rural areas)," Pan said.

"So we need a modern, centralized system and to utilize scattered farmland to improve agricultural mechanization services, like we have done in Huichang. This will allow even the elderly to use smartphones to order agricultural services while increasing farmers' incomes," he added.

## Modern methods

The 19th National Congress of the CPC proposed the construction of modern agricultural industrial systems, production systems, and operation systems, as well as the improvement of agricultural support systems.

The aim is to develop various forms of moderate-scale operations, cultivate new agricultural operators, improve agricultural social service systems, and achieve organic integration between small-scale farmers and modern agricultural development.

"Essentially, we are trying to connect small-scale farmers with modern production (methods) as much as possible. We aim to build a modern agricultural industrial, product, and operations systems," Pan said.

Wang Xiulin, former chairman of the Zhenxing Group, said their farming-related projects in Mazhou town are operated and developed by a subsidiary of the company.

"Village collective economic cooperatives manage land leasing, while other leading enterprises in the town can join to absorb employment and organize production, boosting farmers' income. Farmers can receive dividends and benefits by leasing their land while providing labor and remuneration for the town's enterprises," he said.

"This is the concrete manifestation of the five-party operational system," he added.

In addition to traditional agriculture, Huichang has also utilized its ecological and cultural advantages, as well as its location, to promote the integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism.

This transformation aims to con-

vert green mountains and clear waters into "mountains of gold and silver", and effectively utilize ecological advantages as developmental strengths.

For instance, in Zikeng village, Bai'e township, a company was established to take advantage of its proximity to Hejun Education Town and Hejun Vocational College.

The company is turning idle farmhouses into homestays, providing labor services for Hejun town, and offering eco-friendly agricultural products, which have all helped increase collective annual income from 300,000 yuan to 1.2 million yuan.

Meanwhile, Dongtou town is leveraging the unique cultural and ecological advantages of the She ethnic group to develop rural tourism and holiday resorts.

The development includes study tours, team-building activities, She-themed homestays, ethnic cuisine, performance experiences, and agricultural products. Dongtou is expected to achieve annual tourism income of over 5 million yuan.

Apart from agriculture, the industrial sector has also seen significant development under the new system in Huichang.

## Expansion underway

In 2017, Xijiang town established a poverty alleviation workshop with six standard factories. By 2022, the workshop was managed by a subsidiary of the Zhenxing Group.

The industrial base now hosts 14 pollution-free and labor-intensive enterprises, including garment and footwear manufacturers, employing approximately 2,000 people.

Yang Meitao, in her late 30s, works at a shoe factory in the workshop. She hails from Qiangong, a nearby village, and her husband works outside the province. She started working at the factory in May 2023.

"Working here is quite good. First, it's close to my home, making it convenient for me to care for elderly relatives and my children. Second, it provides a stable income for us women without jobs. I can earn over 5,000 yuan a month, which I'm very satisfied with," Yang said.

Zhong Fangfang, a manager at the shoe factory, said that the factory mainly produces shoes for sportswear brand Tebu.

"The factory employs over 300 workers, mostly villagers from the surrounding areas of Xijiang town, with over 90 percent of the employees being women."

Zhong said that the average wage in the factory is above 3,500 yuan, and can reach 10,000 yuan.

Zeng Xianghua, the director of the People's Armed Forces Department in Xijiang town, said that the current operational model provides employment opportunities, especially for "invisible" unemployed people who need to care for the elderly and their children.

Expansion of the industrial base is underway, which will allow for the accommodation of nearly 40 small and medium-sized enterprises and create work opportunities for 5,000 people.

Last year, Huichang registered and operated the "Huichang Duhaohao" brand, working with local companies to promote the commercialization of Huichang products, such as navel oranges, pomelos, rice noodles, and dried tofu.

So far, the county has developed 180 products across 10 categories.



Left: Students from a local vocational school learn about robot programming at the intelligent manufacturing training center in Huichang, in February last year. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY Right: Pan Jincheng (left), the secretary of the CPC Huichang county committee, learns about the development of under-forest economy in the county's Zhongcun village on July 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



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## TOP NEWS

## Best and the latest

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (center) listens to an official as he tours the 12th edition of the Africa Aerospace and Defence expo on Wednesday in Pretoria. The AAD features cutting-edge innovations in aviation, aerospace, and defense.

PHILL MAGAKOE / AFP



## TEA TIME

## Ye Chun: Pioneer in exploring overseas financial markets

**Editor's note:** Globalization has opened up a world of opportunities for both Chinese and foreign companies. China Daily will bring out a series of stories sharing the global companies' visions and strategies during a teatime chat with top executives.

By RENA LI in Los Angeles  
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Ye Chun exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit of merchants in Zhejiang province, hailing as he does from the historic port city of Ningbo, a cradle of commerce and trade.

With more than two decades of experience in foreign exchange management and a deep understanding of global markets, the 56-year-old Ye, who heads the Los Angeles branch of China International Trust Investment Corp, has navigated the complexities of China's evolving financial landscape.

From his early days at the State Administration of Foreign Exchange to his current business leadership role in the United States, Ye's journey has been one of transformation and resilience.

After graduating from Renmin University of China in 1996 with a master's degree in economics, Ye began his career at the SAFE, where he worked in the capital account management department until 2001, specializing in foreign debt management.

The transformative period from the 1990s to the early 2000s brought about significant changes in China's foreign exchange-management regulations and policies.

"I was actively involved in this transformation, and the experience laid a solid foundation for my subsequent career in international foreign exchange," Ye told China Daily.

In 2001, Ye transitioned from SAFE to CITIC Bank and took responsibility for foreign exchange management and trade financing.

"At that time, China was in the midst of joining the WTO and undergoing significant reforms to open up to the global market. I

was fortunate to transition from being a policymaker to becoming a hands-on practitioner in the field," Ye said.

Founded in 1987, CITIC Bank was one of the earliest emerging commercial banks established during China's reform and opening-up period. It became the first commercial bank in China to participate in both domestic and international financial markets. As early as the 1980s, CITIC Bank expanded its presence by establishing branches in New York and Los Angeles to assist Chinese enterprises engaged in cross-border trade.

In 2012, Ye transitioned again from CITIC Bank's Hong Kong head office to its US branch in Los Angeles. Having navigated three distinct markets — the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and the United States — Ye gathered a deep understanding of each business environment.

"Each market has a very different regulatory system and market structure," he noted.

One of the major challenges faced by CITIC's Los Angeles branch then was its small scale and limited risk resilience. Expanding the branch's size and revenue became his focus.

Adding to the challenge were US regulations regarding foreign banks. Branches that entered the US market after 1992 were not granted Federal Deposit Insurance Corp membership, which provides deposit insurance for amounts up to \$250,000.

Without the insurance mechanism, foreign banks were unable to offer private banking services, prompting them to seek and expand into alternative customer segments.

"Banks naturally follow their customers," Ye asserted.

As China's reform and development advanced, more Chinese State-owned and private enterprises began investing in international markets. Between 1979 and



Ye Chun

2000, large Chinese State-owned enterprises were authorized to invest primarily in the US market.

After 2000, a growing number of private enterprises and small to medium-sized businesses also began investing in the US. With the internationalization of the renminbi post-2010, a wider array of companies entered the US market, which boosted Chinese-funded commercial banks in the US.

Local American banks often had limited experience dealing with Chinese enterprises, making it difficult for them to assess creditworthiness and provide the necessary services. Consequently, new Chinese enterprises faced challenges in opening accounts, making remittances and obtaining loans.

"Chinese-funded banks became a crucial source of investment and financing for these enterprises as they expanded their operations overseas," Ye said.

He mentioned Synear Foods, a Chinese frozen-food company that in 2013 purchased a production line in Los Angeles to produce dumplings for the North American market. When Synear sought a loan from local US banks, they faced challenges due to a lack of credit history, making it difficult to secure a mortgage.

As CITIC Bank had been working with Synear for more than a decade in China, it was able to swiftly provide a \$30 million loan to facilitate the purchase and registration of the production line in Los Angeles.

After establishing its US subsidiary in 2015, the company began production and used the base to supply American and European markets.

"Banking is a people's business, influenced by regional, ethnic and cultural differences. This is why, as a foreign bank, we still have room to survive and develop in the US. Similarly, due to the demands of Sino-US trade exchanges, foreign

banks have ample opportunities to operate and grow in China," Ye said.

Over the past decade, CITIC Bank's Los Angeles branch has assisted nearly 30 Chinese-funded or Chinese-owned enterprises, providing loans in excess of \$300 million across industries, including food, hospitality, real estate and more.

"Banks follow their customers, and multinational banks naturally follow multinational companies as they expand globally. Many of these Chinese enterprises have ventured abroad with globalization, and as a result, Chinese-funded banks must also globalize and establish an international presence," Ye said.

Different markets have varying regulatory requirements, so international expansion must be strategic. It is crucial to ensure survival and growth quickly while minimizing risks, particularly policy-related risks, according to Ye.

"The most important thing is that we must first comply fully with the policies and regulations of the host country," Ye said. "We emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting different cultural backgrounds."

By mainly supporting Chinese enterprises in their global expansion, the bank helps them comply with US laws and regulations while providing tailored financial products.

"To achieve this, our team must possess cross-border market thinking and the ability to design innovative financial solutions," explained Ye.

As president of the China General Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles, Ye also plays a major role in facilitating communication between the chamber and its member companies. Amid the current climate of US-China relations, however, members of CGCC in the US are facing significant challenges, Ye said.

"The business environment in the US has shifted dramatically since 2018, when the US-China trade war was initiated by the Donald Trump administration. The impact of the pandemic, increasing tariffs and rising import and export costs have further exacerbated these challenges," Ye said.

The organization maintains strong relationships with the Los Angeles city government and the California state government. In May, CGCC members actively participated in the China-California Forum in Los Angeles.

## Cooperation on EVs termed key for China, EU

Doubts raised over fairness, compliance and legitimacy of investigations into subsidies

By WANG KEJU  
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China has vowed to continue negotiations until the very last moment in response to the European Union's anti-subsidy probe into battery electric vehicles produced in China, Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao said on Wednesday.

The future success of the automotive industry in both China and Europe hinges on cooperation between the two economic powerhouses, Wang said at a roundtable in Brussels at which some 30 executives from the Chinese and European EV sectors met to discuss the EU's anti-subsidy case.

The legitimacy, compliance and fairness of the EU's investigation into Chinese EV subsidies have faced widespread doubt, Wang said.

Wang was scheduled to meet with European Commission Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis on Thursday to discuss the escalating trade tensions over EVs and to seek a compromise that could avert the duties.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is poised to propose imposing final tariffs of up to 35.3 percent on battery EVs manufactured in China, on top of the standard 10 percent import duty levied on car imports.

A vote by the 27 EU member states on the proposed final duties is scheduled for Sept 25. The duties, if approved, could be implemented by the end of October. However, the timeline could be altered if a qualified majority of 15 EU member states, representing 65 percent of the EU population, were to vote against the proposed levies.

German Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck said on Tuesday during a meeting with Wang in Berlin that Germany has come out in strong support of free trade and against tariff hikes proposed by Brussels on EVs made in China. Habeck expressed enthusiasm for Chinese investment in Europe's automotive sector.

Germany, the most populous country in the EU, is home to 84.4 million residents, constituting

about 19 percent of the total EU population, according to data from the European Commission.

Habeck said that the comprehensive solution proposed by the Chinese industry is an "important step forward" that lays the groundwork for productive negotiations. He called for the EU to take a more constructive approach as well.

Germany will do everything in its power to help the EU and China find a mutually acceptable resolution, as escalating this into a full-blown trade conflict would serve no one's interests, Habeck added.

European companies represented at the meeting in Brussels on Wednesday emphasized that they are not afraid of competition and do not require tariff protection. They also voiced opposition to trade protectionism and support for free trade, open markets and fair competition.

In recent days, some other EU countries, including Spain, have also voiced their opposition to the tariffs, which were initially viewed as a near certainty.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said earlier this month during a visit to China that the EU should reconsider proposed import tariffs on EVs made in China, and he urged Brussels and Beijing to find a compromise that would avoid a trade war.

Tu Xinquan, dean of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that Spain, which accounts for about 11 percent of the EU's total population, is poised to play an outsized role in the vote on the proposed tariffs.

The shift in sentiment among these key member states suggests the policy may have a more uncertain path forward, Tu said.

In the past four decades, Europe has reaped immense benefits from its investment and trade cooperation with China, Tu added, saying that European policymakers should resist resorting to a trade war, which would harm the interests of European consumers and businesses.

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## Partnership: Nation shows commitment by engaging in dialogue

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Those who are describing the accord among Palestinian groups as scoring points against the United States are gravely mistaken, rather their remarks are indicative of the perennial bias against China. They should remember that China successfully brokered a peace deal between two traditional rivals in the Middle East, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran, in March 2023. Similar analyses were offered then portraying doubts about the ultimate success of the accord but both Riyadh and Teheran are moving firmly on different aspects of implementation and as a result, the two capitals are moving closer to each other.

From both regional and global perspectives, China is increasingly

viewed as a stabilizing force for peace, including its proposals and negotiating efforts to end the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

China's eminence in the sphere of diplomacy and international relations is not without a genuine reason as its leadership, especially President Xi Jinping, is a strong advocate of shared prosperity, which, in turn, requires regional and global peace and stability, as is demonstrated by the China-proposed Global Security Initiative. As against some countries' policies of regime change, crippling economic and military sanctions and aggression against sovereign countries on flimsy grounds, China has launched practical and viable initiatives to foster cooperation and enhance interdependence, which offer a firm guarantee for peace and security.

Contrary to the venomous propaganda of the vested interests who describe China's development financing as part of a debt trap strategy in Africa and Asia, the fact remains that Chinese financial and economic assistance is helping nations to address some chronic challenges like poor infrastructure, lack of industrialization, dormant agriculture and inability to exploit natural resources. The Chinese government and banks also favorably consider requests for rollover of debts, providing relief in repayments to economically hard-pressed countries.

China relies heavily on economic statecraft to build partnerships in different parts of the world. This also explains why the historic Belt and Road Initiative proposed by President Xi, launched in 2013 as the

New Silk Road today, has partners in over 150 countries, accounting for two-thirds of the world population and 40 percent of global GDP. Xi's vision and programs have been creating vast networks of highways, railways, energy pipelines and streamlined border crossings in different regions of the globe that facilitate the movement of people and goods and serve as symbols of peace and interdependence.

As China has no political or military agenda in pursuing the initiative, it has been widely welcomed in almost all corners of the globe. The huge success of the economically motivated project also explains why rival initiatives launched by some groups of countries could not gain the required level of popularity and are being viewed as tools of colonization.

China's measured response to all sorts of provocations, its focus on economic statecraft, commitment to peace and security and respect for sovereignty of other countries are factors, among other things, that effectively counter all maneuvers aimed at "containing China" and instead today Beijing has its footprints in all parts of the world.

Unfortunately, some Western blocs try to portray China as a troublemaker. But China, under the dynamic leadership of President Xi, has always established its credentials as a peacemaker and champion of growth and prosperity.

Apart from its contribution to promoting reconciliations from the Middle East to Eastern Europe, China has demonstrated its commitment to peace and amity by exercising utmost restraint in the

face of extreme levels of provocations on the cooked-up charges of violation of human rights, as well as disputes over island and maritime claims in the South China Sea, the Taiwan question, and issues related to Hong Kong, Xizang and Xinjiang.

It can be said without fear of contradiction that China is fast emerging as a partner of choice for many countries of the world. Keeping in view its mature economic policies, steadfast pursuit of the philosophy of shared prosperity, focus on research and development, and readiness to share experience and technology, the day is not far off when China would effectively lead the world to more balanced, peaceful and sustainable global governance.

The author is Chairman & CEO of Pakistan Observer. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA

## Tidal tourism

The surging tide crashes against the riverbank, allowing tourists to witness the majestic spectacle of the Qiantang River tidal bore in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on Thursday. Strong winds brought by Typhoon Pulasan, the 14th typhoon of the year, pushed more seawater into Hangzhou Bay, enhancing the spectacle.

LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



## 'People's Scientist' title conferred on Wang Xiaomo

By ZHAO LEI  
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China's most renowned radar researcher and the father of the country's early-warning aircraft, Wang Xiaomo, also a recipient of the nation's top science and technology award, has been given the honorary title of "People's Scientist" posthumously.



Wang Xiaomo

The move was part of an order that was signed last week by President Xi Jinping to confer top-level medals and honorary titles on preeminent individuals for their tremendous contribution to the motherland.

Born in Shanghai in November 1938, Wang graduated from Beijing Institute of Technology's radio engineering department in 1961 with a bachelor's degree in radar technology, and then joined the

Nanjing Research Institute of Electronics Technology in Jiangsu province, now part of China Electronics Technology Group Corp, to start his career as a military radar designer.

In 1969, Wang and hundreds of his colleagues at the Nanjing institute were sent to a remote underdeveloped city named Duyun in Guizhou province, to help establish the East China Research Institute of Electronic Engineering, which was later relocated to Hefei in Anhui province, and is now a China Electronics Technology Corp subsidiary.

In 1972, he was named head designer of China's first three-dimensional radar and spent nearly 13 years with his team on its research and development.

The radar system, named Type 383, extensively improved the nation's air-defense capability and won Wang his first National Science and Technology Advancement Award in 1985, the same year he was named director of the East China Research Institute of Elec-



tronic Engineering.

In 1992, he was appointed head of the military products bureau under the then-China Electronics Industry Corp, the predecessor of CETC.

A year later, Wang became executive vice-president of the China Academy of Electronics and Information Technology.

He was elected a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering in 1995 and won his second National Science and Technology Advancement Award the same year, for his role in the design of an advanced low-altitude surveillance radar.

From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, Wang was tasked with leading the research and development of China's first domestic early-warning aircraft system, later known as the KJ-2000.

Under his leadership, research-

ers and engineers overcame many difficulties and developed world-class technologies previously dominated by a handful of Western powers.

Wang once recalled that during the years when he led the KJ-2000 project: "I was always convinced that we, the Chinese researchers, could definitely make it. I was sure that we would build an early-warning aircraft on our own."

In October 2009, the KJ-2000 made its debut show at a National Day parade.

In 2010, Wang received his third National Science and Technology Advancement Award for his work on the KJ-2000 project.

In addition to the KJ-2000, Wang was also known for his role as the chief designer of the ZDK03, China's first export version of an advanced early-warning aircraft.

In 2013, Wang was given the State Scientific and Technological Award, the highest honor for Chinese science and technology workers.

He died in March last year at a hospital in Beijing, aged 84.

## Diseases linked to climate change to be monitored

By WANG XIAOYU  
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China plans to improve early warning systems for climate-sensitive diseases and strengthen the medical system's resilience and emergency response ability to extreme climate events as part of efforts to tackle climate change, which an action plan released on Tuesday dubbed the most complicated public health problem.

By next year, China will strengthen construction of a monitoring system for diseases that are sensitive to climate change and develop methods for assessing climate change's effects on health, according to the document, which was jointly released by the National Disease Control and Prevention Administration and 12 other government departments.

It added that a first round of evaluations of health risks linked to climate change and the vulnerability and adaptive capacity of society to climate change should also be completed next year. A list of scientific research tasks aimed at addressing emerging challenges will be drawn up.

The administration said that extreme weather events such as heat waves, flooding, freezing tem-

peratures and cold waves as well as typhoons have become increasingly common and severe in recent years, posing challenges to survival and human health.

"Enhancing health adaptation and risk prevention capabilities against climate change is a top priority," it said in a statement explaining the document.

The action plan proposes a number of key tasks in achieving its goals, including formulating a basic catalog of climate-sensitive diseases and building an early warning system.

"Authorities should issue disease outbreak alerts and health advisories for vector-borne infectious diseases such as plague, dengue fever, malaria, Japanese encephalitis and other emerging infectious diseases, as well as climate-related cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, mental disorders, allergic diseases and other chronic illnesses," it said. "Forecasts of extreme weather events should also be strengthened."

The document also highlighted boosting emergency measures against flooding, mudslides and other extreme events, including upgrading equipment inventories, drawing up emergency plans and carrying out drills.

Hospitals will be guided to improve preparedness and resili-

ence, especially increasing their capability to maintain treatment capacity during extreme weather events.

According to a blue book released by China Meteorological Administration in July, last year was the warmest year on record globally, and China also experienced a historic high in average temperatures.

From 1961 to 2023, the annual average surface temperature in China increased by 0.3 C every 10 years and the annual average precipitation increased by 5.2 millimeters every decade.

Wang Lin, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said the number of cardiovascular disease patients tends to climb following torrential rain.

The increase in cases is associated with fear of natural disasters as well as interrupted transportation that hampers prompt transfer of patients to hospital, he said during an academic conference in Anshun, Guizhou province, late last month.

The authorities should provide weather-related risk alerts and health protection guidelines under special circumstances, he said.

To mitigate the effects of climate

change, Wang suggested disease control and meteorology authorities jointly release alerts for health hazards during extreme weather events, and also guide the public to learn protection measures and improve their health literacy.

Ren Minghui, a professor at Peking University's School of Public Health and a former assistant director-general at the World Health Organization, said that intergovernmental and multidisciplinary collaboration is particularly important in coping with climate-related health hazards.

During a speech delivered to a sub-forum of the China International Fair for Trade in Services earlier this month, he said that mitigation and adaptation measures are equally important. Mitigation involves adjusting economic systems and natural ecosystems to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while adaptation means enhancing risk identification and management to lower the negative impact of climate problems.

Ren added that a lack of funds, human resources and research are major challenges confronting most countries. He suggested China step up international collaboration and increase research funding and policymaking.

## NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

## Cool weather fuels city's ambitions

Decades of afforestation help turn Guyuan into an agricultural hub

By HU DONGMEI in Yinchuan and PENG CHAO

While much of China endures summer heat waves, Guyuan, a city in the Ningxia Hui autonomous region with an average temperature of just 18 C, has big plans for potatoes and cool-season vegetables.

"Guyuan was once considered one of the least habitable places due to its barren land, frequent sandstorms, lack of vegetation and water scarcity," said Hua Zhimin, Party chief of the city. "Significant changes have occurred thanks to decades of afforestation and soil and water conservation efforts."

Hua said Guyuan is known for its high-quality beef, potatoes and cool-season vegetables, with over one million head of beef cattle and 54,000 hectares of potatoes under cultivation. The city's cool-season vegetable planting area spans 31,000 hectares.



Hua Zhimin

"A key to rural revitalization and sustained income growth is developing specialty agricultural industries and creating more jobs," Hua said.

Guyuan's agricultural development plan aims to have two industries with output values exceeding 10 billion yuan (\$1.41 billion) — beef cattle and potatoes — and two additional industries valued at over 5 billion yuan — cool-season vegetables and traditional Chinese medicinal materials — by 2027.

Hua said the city has taken a holistic approach to conservation, targeting mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and sandy areas. These efforts have transformed Guyuan into a model of coexistence between humankind and nature.

Guyuan has planted trees on more than 40,000 hectares of land a year over the past two years, while also controlling soil erosion across an average of 300 square kilometers a year, Hua said. Forest coverage has increased to 16.1 percent from just 1.4 percent in the 1970s, when the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program began.

Significant changes have occurred thanks to decades of afforestation and soil and water conservation efforts."

Hua Zhimin, Party chief of Guyuan in Ningxia

Grassland vegetation coverage now stands at 86.7 percent, while the soil conservation rate has reached 80.5 percent.

Building on its ecological resources, Guyuan is developing the Liupan Mountain National Park and pursuing recognition as a national forest city. The city is also promoting ecological industries such as forest beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, chicken farming and forest therapy tourism, helping to convert ecological gains into economic benefits.

Last year, Guyuan planted 14 million mushrooms, raised 1.02 million chickens, kept 100,000 bee colonies, and cultivated 36,600 hectares of medicinal herbs and other forest-based plants, generating over 2 billion yuan in economic output, according to a government report.

Positioning itself as a city with ecological, cultural and tourism characteristics, Guyuan is integrating agriculture, culture and tourism to become a modern, beautiful city with a flourishing countryside and prosperous industries, Hua said.

Since overcoming poverty in 2020, the city has focused on strengthening industries, encouraging entrepreneurship and improving employment opportunities. Last year, the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents increased to 36,222 yuan and 15,439 yuan, respectively — 2.1 and 3.3 times higher than in 2012. The per capita net income for those lifted out of poverty rose to 14,929 yuan, up 16.5 percent year-on-year.

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## Feast for the eyes



Visitors enjoy photographs displayed at the 2024 Pingyao International Photography Festival in Pingyao ancient city in Shanxi province on Thursday. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

## Paired aid brings development to Xizang, Xinjiang

By YANG ZEKUN  
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Assistance from ethnic affairs departments across the country to the Xizang and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions has yielded significant results in economic and social development, as well as in promoting ethnic unity and progress, the National Ethnic Affairs Commission said on Thursday.

Notable achievements have also been made in talent cultivation and

youth exchange programs, according to the commission, which shared the information during a national video conference hosted in Beijing on ethnic affairs departments' paired assistance to Xizang and Xinjiang.

The commission said it has coordinated efforts across ethnic affairs departments to provide assistance to Xizang and Xinjiang. Those efforts have guided both the assisting and receiving parties in addressing the pressing issues faced by various eth-

nic groups in the two regions, fostering exchanges, communication and integration among all ethnic groups.

It urged ethnic affairs departments to adopt long-term strategies and take foundational measures to continually enhance the overall benefits of targeted assistance to Xizang and Xinjiang, stressing the need to intensify efforts to promote interethnic communication and integration.

Improving people's livelihoods should be the primary focus and

objective of the assistance efforts, aiming to address public concerns and expectations while working toward greater equalization of basic public services, it said.

According to Xizang's regional ethnic affairs commission, ethnic affairs departments across the nation have prioritized improving livelihoods, promoting industrial development and enhancing infrastructure. They have offered substantial assistance in areas such as economic development, personnel

training, talent cultivation and technical support, providing strong backing for high-quality development in the region.

The assisting provinces and municipalities and their ethnic affairs departments have allocated special funds to promote the economic and social development of various areas in Xizang.

In terms of the assistance to Xinjiang, the autonomous region has signed collaboration agreements with several assisting provincial and municipal ethnic affairs departments, supporting and encouraging labor migration to other provinces for employment

and business opportunities.

Both Xizang and Xinjiang have actively organized various youth exchange programs with their paired assistance provinces and municipalities, allowing students from the two regions to connect and form friendships with their counterparts in assisting provinces through both online and offline activities.

Assisting provinces and municipalities have also helped train professionals in sectors such as healthcare and education, fostering deeper relationships among ethnic groups through mutual learning and exchange.

## POLICY REVIEW

## Steps taken to ensure food security

Nation continues push to decrease reliance on grain imports by developing new crop varieties

By LI LEI in Beijing,  
WU YONG in Shenyang  
and ZHU XINGXIN in Taiyuan

Boasting over half of the country's soybean production, Northeast China's soybeans are renowned for their exceptional quality, thanks to a significant day-night temperature difference that provides a unique advantage in cultivation.

In the heart of the soybean belt lies Liaoning province and the Soybean Research Institute of Shenyang Agricultural University.

Focused on tackling critical bottlenecks in China's soybean production, the institute in recent years has bred 23 new soybean varieties, including two approved for commercial production by national authorities.

Collaborating actively with renowned research bodies such as the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Liaoning Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the institute has curated over 3,000 soybean germplasm resources from home and abroad. These resources are crucial to developing better-performing varieties.

Shennong 12, a nationally approved high-yielding and high-oil variety developed by the institute, has shattered yield records, surpassing 4.5 metric tons per hectare in trials in Liaoning.

"Its exceptional adaptability to high-density planting has transformed planting practices in the region, with densities soaring from 150,000 to 450,000 plants per hectare," the institute said in a statement provided to China Daily.

Authorities have long leaned on imported soybeans to make animal feed and cooking oil while focusing on achieving self-sufficiency in staple crops such as rice and wheat.

However, vulnerabilities in the global supply chain, among other factors, have prompted the Chinese government to ramp up domestic soybean production through the deployment of higher-yield varieties and expanding planting areas.

China imported 160 million tons of grain last year, with soybean accounting for 99.4 million tons, official data showed.

The country will reduce its soybean imports to 78.6 million tons by 2033, according to the China Agricultural Outlook 2024-33 report, which was compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs' market early warning expert committee, and released in April.

**Production plan**

The National Development and Reform Commission, China's top economic planner, unveiled a plan in the first half of the year, aiming to boost the country's annual food production by over 50 million tons by 2030, focusing on corn and soybean.

Co-drafted by the NDRC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the plan made clear the resolve to discourage nonagricultural use of farmland and maintain food-growing areas at around 116.7 million hectares by 2030, similar to current levels.

The plan targets grain productivity surpassing 6.3 tons per hectare by 2030, up from 5.8 tons last year.

It also emphasizes priorities such as enhancing rice and wheat quality through optimized variety structures, increasing corn productivity and expanding soybean cultivation areas.

Despite producing over 650 million tons of grain annually and being largely self-sufficient in staple crops like rice and wheat, China heavily relies on soybean imports from Brazil and the United States.

Corn and soybeans are essential raw materials for animal feed production.

In recent years, authorities have launched a campaign to boost productivity in 200 corn-growing counties and 100 soybean-growing counties.

This initiative includes promoting high-density planting varieties and enhancing crop management practices to reduce food loss to diseases and pests.

A mix of crop rotation and intercropping methods has been employed to expand soybean cultivation.



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

**Boosting yields**

As part of the plan, the NDRC will designate 720 counties across the nation as "key zones" for advancing the target over the next six years.

They are expected to see the ramping up of efforts to build irrigation facilities and high-standard farmland suitable for large mechanical farming and more resilient to climate change, which some experts believe could also drive investment and help the economy recover from the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initiatives will also be launched to bolster the quality and supply of crop seeds, especially those of better-performing food varieties.

One example is a 15-hectare experimental wheat field located in the Jinzhong National Agriculture High-tech Industries Demonstration Zone in Shanxi province. The field has been planted with Jinzuo 84, a pioneering organic dryland variety of wheat.

Last year, Jinzuo 84 yielded an impressive 12 tons per hectare, surpassing the control group of ordinary varieties, which yielded around 5.25 tons per hectare.

Jinzuo 84 wheat is the outcome of over a decade of breeding efforts by Shanxi Agricultural University. This innovative variety seamlessly combines the exceptional cold resistance of northern wheat varieties with the high productivity of coastal varieties.

Yun Weihua, deputy director of the demonstration zone's management committee, said the variety's ability to yield 12 tons per hectare while using 40 percent less water not only has huge potential to benefit China's food security, but also places with relative food insecurity such as Africa.

"I am confident that these outstanding varieties can be effectively promoted on an international scale," Yun said.

Another example of successfully boosting yields can be found in

Dezhou, Shandong province.

Dezhou, situated in the northwestern part of Shandong within the renowned "Golden Wheat Belt", boasts flat terrain, fertile soil and favorable climate conditions.

The city produces about 1 percent of the national annual output of wheat and one-sixth of Shandong's. As a significant grain-producing hub, Dezhou has been steadfast in its efforts to stabilize total production and enhance productivity.

In 2021, the city embarked on an initiative aiming to achieve a target yield of over 1,500 kilograms per mu (one hectare is 15 mu) within a five-year timeframe.

As of last year, most of its grain fields had reached the target.

"Seeds are the chips of agriculture and key for Shandong to achieve the 1,500-kilogram-per-mu target," said Liu Junsheng, chairman of Shandong Liangxing Seed Industry Co., whose development of high-yield, premium-quality wheat and corn varieties, along with innovative high-yield technologies, has significantly contributed to Dezhou's success.

Among these varieties, Liangxing 77 stands out as Shandong's premier wheat variety, renowned for its suitability for mechanical harvesting.

**Reducing imports**

The plan to increase annual food production by over 50 million tons by 2030 is part of the national move to build the country into an agricultural powerhouse through efforts such as preserving growing areas, promoting mechanical farming and popularizing higher-yield varieties.

Official figures show that China's annual grain yield has remained above 650 million tons for the past nine years. The per capita food stockpile was 493 kilograms last year, well above the international food security threshold of 400 kg.

On multiple occasions, officials have reassured the public that China's food supply is stable and

secure, while stressing the need to further raise productivity and output in the face of growing demand for animal proteins and pointing out the vulnerabilities in global supply chains.

An unnamed official told Xinhua News Agency recently that overall national food security is guaranteed.

However, the official said: "The tight balance between grain supply and demand will exist for a long time. In the coming period, the existing gap between production and demand may further expand (if nothing is done)."

To make sure the output target is reached on time, the plan says food production and farmland preservation are politically important tasks for local officials and calls for multichannel funding for related work, the official said, adding that it also proposes measures to incentivize planting, streamline agricultural loans and improve food storage and transportation infrastructure.

Officials said at a news conference last month that the summer grain and early rice have been harvested, and the overall growth of autumn grain is normal. The supply of farm produce is sufficient, providing the foundation and confidence for this year's Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival — which falls on Sept 22, the Autumnal Equinox.

Established in 2018 as the first national holiday dedicated to farmers, this year's event will showcase the country's accomplishments in agricultural and rural development.

China's grain yield will grow at an annual pace of 1.1 percent over the coming decade as hunger rises worldwide, enabling the world's largest food importer to buy significantly less from overseas, according to China Agricultural Outlook 2024-33.

The country's annual crop output is projected to reach 704 million tons this year, up from 695 million

tons last year, and is expected to top 766 million tons by 2033 thanks to stable growing areas and increased productivity, it said.

The report said that by 2033, each hectare of farmland in China would be able to produce an average of 6.43 tons of food, compared with the current level of around 5.83 tons, allowing the country to meet 91.5 percent of its food needs.

China's crop imports would decrease to 110 million tons in 2033, it said.

The rosy estimates in the report come as China promotes "new quality productive forces" — elements and reforms that can drive strategic emerging industries and boost productivity.

Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences Party chief Yang Zhenhai said that, as part of that drive, the academy will focus on basic research and "key core technological breakthroughs" in areas such as gene editing, synthetic biology, digital intelligence and green technology.

"Developing new quality productive forces is the latest deployment made by the central authorities to promote high-quality development overall," he said.

Sheikh Ahaduzzaman, a China representative at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization, said that the world is falling behind in efforts to meet the UN's goal of ending world hunger by 2030, and China has been a stabilizer for the global food market.

UN data showed that by 2022, around 735 million people — or 9.2 percent of the world's population — lived with chronic hunger, which the UN said was a "staggering rise" from the pre-pandemic level in 2019.

Another 2.4 billion people faced moderate to severe food insecurity, meaning they lacked sufficient nourishment, up 391 million from 2019, the UN said.

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## Policy Digest

**Demographics survey to sample 1% of population**

The State Council has decided to sample one percent of China's total population to gauge the latest developments in the country's population.

The sample survey will start on Nov 1 next year, and is expected to cover about 14 million people, the General Office of the State Council said in a statement.

The National Bureau of Statistics will work with other departments to set up a coordinating unit, which will be responsible for organizing and carrying out the sample survey, the office said.

It has asked all departments taking part in the survey to follow their duty, fully collaborate and share information with one another.

The regulations on China's national censuses require the country to conduct a census every 10 years and a sample survey of one percent of the population between two censuses.

China has conducted four such sample surveys since 1987, a National Bureau of Statistics official said.

The sample survey in 2025 will have great significance in terms of improving the population development strategy for the new era, coping with population aging and promoting the high-quality development of the country's population, the official said.

**Premature deaths from major chronic diseases drop**

Premature mortality from major chronic diseases declined to 15 percent last year from 18.5 percent in 2015, a senior official at the National Health Commission said.

The commission has promoted a chronic disease health management system covering the whole population, the whole life cycle and the whole process, said Yu Xuejun, deputy head of the commission at a news conference.

The commission has included the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes in the Healthy China Initiative, and promoted the implementation of the country's medium-and-long-term plan on chronic disease prevention and treatment, Yu said.

More than 97 percent of counties and districts have participated in a national campaign promoting a healthy lifestyle, according to Yu.

**Plan to open up services in certification, accreditation**

China has unveiled an action plan to promote the reform and opening-up of its certification and accreditation industries, the country's top market regulator said Friday.

The action plan, implemented on Aug 28, defines the goals, tasks and measures to achieve high-standard opening-up of certification and accreditation from 2024 to 2030, Pu Chun, deputy head of the State Administration for Market Regulation, told a news conference.

The plan encourages companies to improve new technologies and the credibility and quality of products to win market trust, increase demand and enhance competitiveness.

China has established a comprehensive framework for international cooperation and mutual recognition, and has participated deeply in international conformity assessment activities, said Pu.

As of the end of June, China had joined 21 international certification and accreditation organizations, and signed 15 multilateral mutual recognition agreements and 128 bilateral cooperation arrangements for mutual recognition, official data shows.

**Railway passenger trips up by 14.5% from Jan to Aug**

China's railway network has set a record by facilitating nearly 3 billion passenger trips from January to August, an increase of 14.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

The surge marks the highest number of passenger trips recorded for this timeframe in history, reflecting the robust recovery of rail travel in the country, said national railway operator China State Railway Group on Thursday.

To accommodate passengers' needs, the railway system has strengthened its capacity. An average of 10,730 passenger trains are now operating daily, representing a 10.5 percent increase from last year. The railway department has conducted dynamic analyses of travel patterns, allowing for timely adjustments to train services in popular regions. Additionally, the introduction of special tourist trains aims to bolster tourism and accommodate senior travelers.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA

# CHINA

## AGING WITH ENJOYMENT

Smart technology is bringing smiles to the faces of the elderly residents as well as caregivers at nursing homes

By ZHU HONGBO in Shenzhen, Guangdong and CHEN LIANG

The running of nursing homes is being made easier with the rapid development of technology, despite there remaining many challenges faced in elderly care.

On a sunny afternoon in June, the fifth floor of Shenzhen Elderly Care Nursing Home was filled with laughter as two robots, named "Wukong" and "Xiaobao," danced to cheerful music, delighting the residents. "Every Friday afternoon, we have a one-hour robot experience activity, which always attracts many seniors to participate," said social worker Hong Xianghui. The two robots have become new "companions" for the elderly.

There are even more intimate "companions" that have brought warmth to the elderly residents in the nursing home in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

Ninety-year-old Grandma Lin has dementia. "Her emotions were not very stable. Sometimes she would unlock her wheelchair, posing a risk of falling, and she would also randomly pick up and throw things on tables in the common area," said her caregiver Xu Chunyan.

In 2022, when Lin was gifted a doll, her attention was immediately captivated. "She treated the doll as her own baby, never leaving its side. When the weather turned cold, she would even tuck the doll in with a blanket," Xu said. The doll gradually stabilized Lin's emotions, prompting her to initiate conversations with others and return to a normal daily routine.

In terms of cognitive care, the nursing home also launched the "Old Friends" cognitive health training camp in April. The activity combines games, gardening, assignments, aromatherapy and multi-sensory therapies to improve the cognitive functions of the elderly and enhance their quality of life. "This approach has the advantages of being economical, convenient, safe and easy to implement," Hong said.

As of August, there were more than 300 elderly residents living in the nursing home, with a significant proportion being disabled or having dementia.

Uncle Peng, 82, who had been bedridden since a cerebral hemorrhage in May last year, moved into the nursing home at the beginning of this year. Caregiver Zhu Meiyu attempted to use a "portable intelligent bathing machine" to assist Uncle Peng with bathing, allowing him to bathe in bed, solving issues related to difficult movements and repositioning in bed.

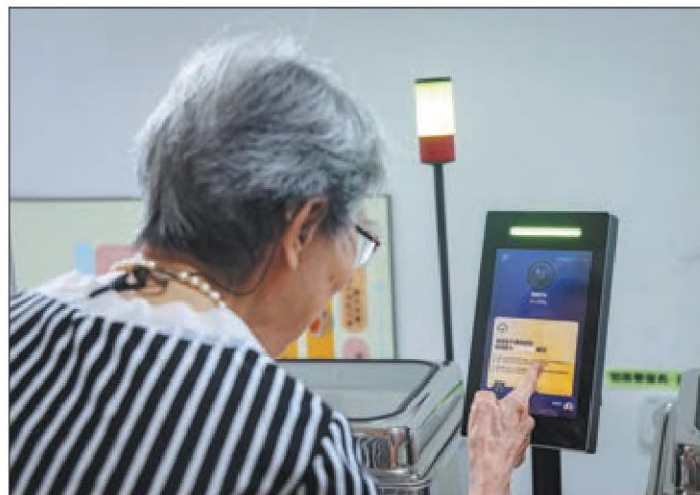
In the rehabilitation center, Grandma Chen uses an interactive rehabilitation training system to strengthen her upper body muscles.

"This game-like exercise is never boring," said rehabilitation therapist Hao Huiyan. With the rapid development of technology, the nursing home is making great effort to help its elderly residents journey from "aging" to "enjoying aging", Hao said.

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Senior residents of the Shenzhen Elderly Care Nursing Home attend a robot experience activity on a Friday afternoon. PHOTOS BY ZHU HONGBO / NANFANG DAILY



From left: A resident tries to order food on a tablet at the canteen of the nursing home in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. Grandma Chen, 87, and her husband, 89, play basketball in the nursing home.



Clockwise from left: Grandma Su, 84, plays on a claw machine in the playroom. Residents use the interactive rehabilitation training system to exercise. A resident looks at the nursing home's intelligent monitoring system. Grandma Li, 90, watches a robot dancing on the table.



# GLOBAL LENS



An aerial view of sandbanks on the Madeira River, in front of the city of Humaita, Amazonas state, northern Brazil, on Sept 4. MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP



Children push a cart on a sandbank of the Madeira River in the Paraizinho community on Sept 7. MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP



An aerial view of people carrying drinking water along a sandbank of the Madeira River in the Paraizinho community, in Humaita, Amazonas state, northern Brazil, on Sept 7. MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP



Farmer Reis Santos Vieira, 69, talks next to a canoe on the dry bed of the Madeira River on Sept 7. MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP



People carry buckets of drinking water along a sandbank of the Madeira River in the Paraizinho community on Sept 7. MICHAEL DANTAS / AFP

Only the youngest and strongest villagers now brave the crossing of a vast, blistering stretch of sand where, in normal times, the waters of the mighty Madeira River flow in the Brazilian Amazon.

Residents of the village of Paraizinho — or “Little Paradise” — usually cross the river by canoe to reach the larger city of Humaita, a vital link to buy food and water, access healthcare and send their children to school.

In drier times, this typically involves a short walk along a beach that appears as water levels drop.

But as Brazil grapples with its worst drought in 70 years, the waters have continued to shrink, leaving a stretch of almost a kilometer of sand baking under temperatures of about 40 C.

“Every year it is worse. Last year more than half (of the river) dried up. This year it has dried up almost to the other side,” Reis Santos Vieira, a 69-year-old farmer, told AFP.

“And it is expected to get worse,” he said.

The Madeira River, a major tributary of the Amazon River that stretches for 3,300 km over Brazil and Bolivia, reached its lowest level this month since monitoring began in 1967, according to the Brazilian geological service.

### ‘Difficult time’

Experts link Brazil’s historic drought to climate change. The parched conditions have fueled wildfires in the Amazon and elsewhere in the country that have clouded major cities in smoke pollution.

For much of the day, the dry riverbed becomes an inferno underfoot.

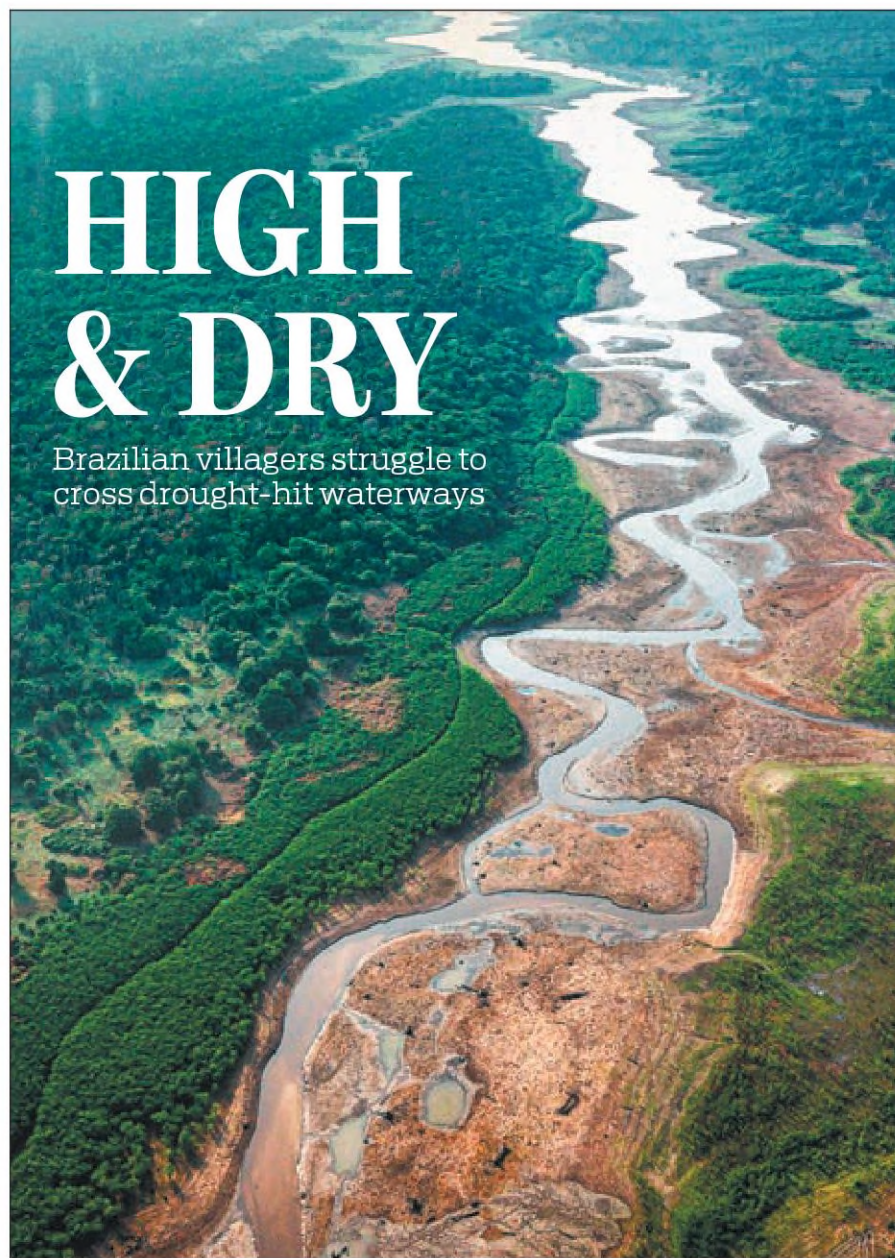
The roughly 100 residents of Paraizinho “are tackling that beach on foot to transport the food and water we need here. It’s a very difficult time”, local resident Sandra Gomes Vieira said.

Last year, which also saw drought conditions, one of her daughters burned her foot crossing the riverbed. She has refused to go to school since the sand appeared this year.

“My sister is undergoing treatment for cancer and can’t go to the city. Health personnel go to her house. I’m not very healthy either, but I still

## HIGH & DRY

Brazilian villagers struggle to cross drought-hit waterways



An aerial view shows low water levels at the Jaquiri River in Manaquiri of Amazonas state, northern Brazil, on Sept 10. BRAZILIAN PRESIDENCY VIA AFP

manage to get there,” Gomes said.

Five community volunteers recently carried containers of drinking water barefoot from Humaita to Paraizinho that used to be easily transported on canoes across the river.

“Here, we only have the help of these people,” said Francisca de Chaga da Silva, one of the water recipients.

Community leader Joao Ferreira explained that the water goes to “the most vulnerable families, who have patients with high blood pressure and diabetes”.

Faced with the water shortage, residents treat river water with chlorine to bathe and wash dishes or clothes.

### ‘More smoke’

The prolonged drought is also impacting economic activities in Paraizinho, mainly fishing and the sale of agricultural products.

“The beach has grown a lot,” Ferreira said. Before, drought would last “only two or three months” but “now we are going for four, five months”.

Communities along the banks of the Madeira River — an important route for the trade of soybeans, fish and fuel — are struggling. Some areas which also rely on Humaita have it worse than Paraizinho, residents of the village said, as they are even farther away. Intense fires elsewhere in the Amazon have also brought a haze of smoke to the village and surrounding area.

The authorities have blamed human activity for most of the country’s recent fires, which are often linked to clearing land for agriculture.

The weather “is hotter this year. There is also more smoke”, local resident Gomes said.

One of her daughters “has been feeling chest pains from the smoke. Before, she didn’t suffer from this problem”.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva announced measures to tackle the effects of the drought in the Amazon during a visit to the city of Manaus on Sept 10, including dredging the Amazon and Solimoes rivers to maintain navigability, ensure supply flow and mitigate drought effects.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Motorists drive down roads covered with smoke from a fire affecting Brazil’s Brasilia National Park on Sept 16. EVARISTO SA / AFP



Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (front) looks at the Jaquiri River during a visit to Manaquiri in northern Brazil on Sept 10. AFP



An aerial view of smoke billowing from a forest fire affecting Brasilia National Park in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, on Sept 16. EVARISTO SA / AFP

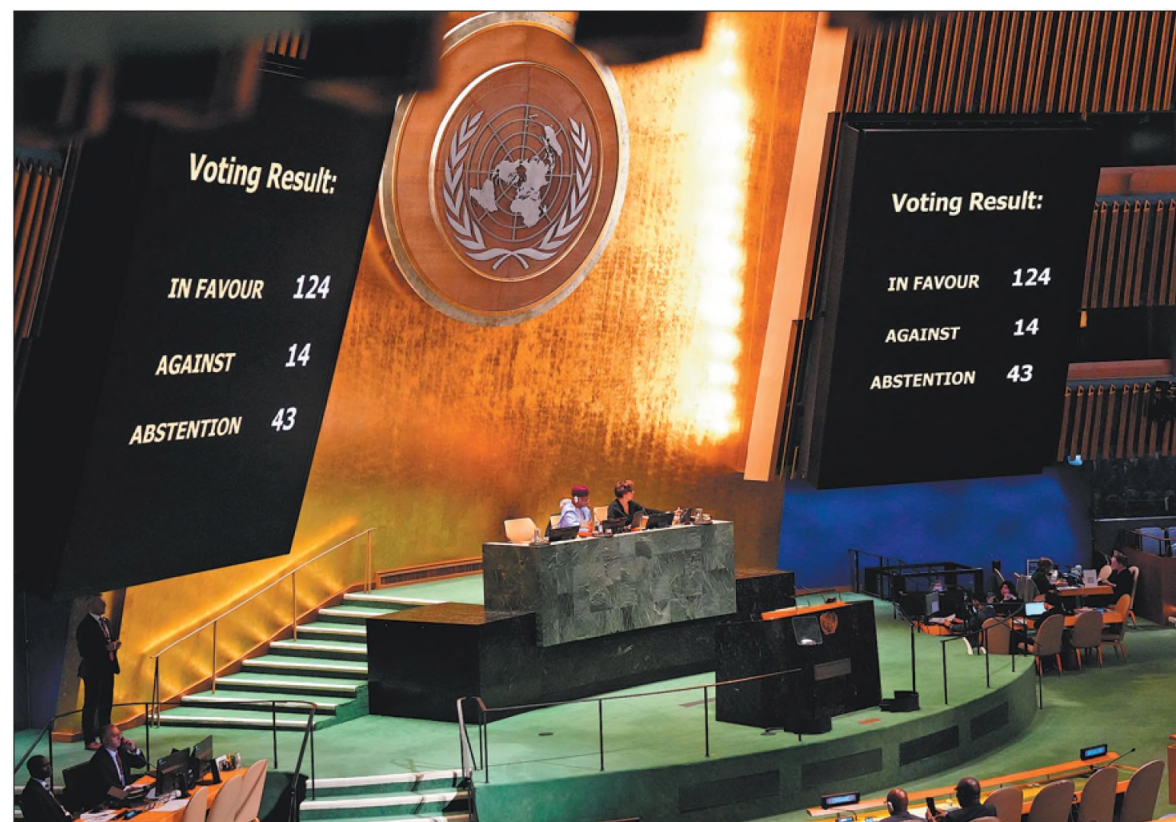


Residents near Brazil’s Brasilia National Park fill buckets with water to contain a forest fire on Sept 15. EVARISTO SA / AFP



A man stands in front of a fire in a sugarcane plantation near the Dumont urban area in Brazil on Aug 24. JOEL SILVA / REUTERS

## WORLD US



The final result of a vote on the legal consequences of Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories is shown at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Wednesday. BRYAN SMITH / AFP

## Israel criticized over attacks

UN envoy calls for halt to 'violating' sovereignty of Lebanon

By MINLU ZHANG  
at the United Nations  
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China's envoy to the United Nations on Thursday urged Israel to stop "violating Lebanon's sovereignty" and avoid actions that "could lead to another catastrophe".

"China urges Israel to abandon its obsession with the use of force, dispel the myth of complete military victory, immediately halt military operations in Gaza, stop actions that violate Lebanon's sovereignty and security, and cease risky moves that could drag the region into another catastrophe," said Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

He told a UN Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, that the situation between Lebanon and Israel is "on the verge of erupting, putting peace and stability in the Middle East at serious risk".



China urges Israel to abandon its obsession with the use of force (and) dispel the myth of complete military victory ...

Geng Shuang, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations

Israeli warplanes on Thursday carried out approximately 60 airstrikes targeting Hezbollah positions in southern and eastern Lebanon in one of the most intense bombardments within a year of intensified conflict, according to Lebanese officials.

Israeli fighter jets appeared while Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was delivering a speech, vowing that "retribution will come" to Israel for two consecutive days of deadly explosions of pagars and communication devices across Lebanon that Hezbollah claimed were carried out by Israel. The explosions resulted in at least

37 fatalities and 2,931 injuries. Israel has not directly claimed responsibility for the operation.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "deeply alarmed" by reports that a large number of communication devices exploded in Lebanon and Syria over the past two days, said Stephane Dujarric, the spokesman, in a statement.

The UN General Assembly, by an overwhelming margin, on Wednesday passed a nonbinding resolution demanding an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory within the next 12 months.

The resolution calls for Israel to end its "illegal occupation". It urges all parties to stop supplying weapons that support Israel's occupation. The resolution reaffirms the need to uphold the rule of international law, said Geng.

The resolution "reflects the broad consensus of the international community in pushing for a resolution to the Palestinian issue, as well as the firm determination to uphold justice and achieve peace in the Middle East", said Geng, adding that the Security Council should heed the calls of the international community and respond effectively to its concerns.

"Unfortunately, due to the negative

stance of certain countries, the Security Council has been unable to take strong action to resolve the Palestinian issue, particularly in stopping the Gaza conflict that has lasted nearly a year," he said.

Geng noted that more than three months ago, the US pushed for the adoption of Resolution 2735 by the Security Council and said Israel had agreed to a cease-fire. "However, the situation on the ground tells a different story. Over the past three months, we have seen Israel's increasingly intensified military actions, increasing negotiation conditions and escalating provocations," said Geng.

"It is urgent to achieve a permanent cease-fire and alleviate the humanitarian disaster, but the United States has repeatedly asked for more time and patience for diplomatic efforts. However, the civilians in Gaza are paying for more time and patience with their lives and suffering," he said.

He said China supports the Security Council in "utilizing all available tools to promote the implementation of relevant resolutions and to take timely actions aimed at ending the conflict, alleviating the humanitarian crisis, and advancing peace in the Middle East as soon as possible".

## Experts laud China's human rights efforts

By RENALI in Rio de Janeiro  
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As global discussions on human rights are mostly shaped by Western narratives, experts are increasingly drawing attention to the approaches of countries such as China.

Evandro Menezes de Carvalho, a law professor at the Federal Fluminense University in Brazil, said China and some other countries prioritize economic development and poverty eradication as pivotal to their human rights agendas.

"Without societal stability and economic growth, individual freedoms cannot be truly developed," Carvalho told China Daily at the First China-Latin America and Caribbean States Roundtable on Human Rights in Rio de Janeiro on Sept 10.

While Western nations often emphasize individual freedoms, essential rights related to peace and development are frequently overlooked, he said, adding that peace is essential for both societal stability and individual freedom.

"When we talk about peace, it's not just the absence of war but also the absence of fear. For instance, criminality and violence in cities can undermine peace just as effectively as war does," Carvalho said.

He added that the West often focuses on individual freedoms without adequately addressing economic and social stability, while China underscores economic and cultural development as core elements of human rights.

Basic survival needs, such as food and security, must be met before individuals can fully exercise their rights and thrive, he said. In his view, a society with strong education, healthcare and low crime rates creates the conditions necessary for people to demand and achieve greater rights.

He praised China's success in eliminating poverty. In February 2021, the country announced that it had eradicated absolute poverty among its 1.4 billion citizens.

Carvalho also criticized what he perceives as the hypocrisy of Western powers advocating for human rights while engaging in military conflicts.

"Certainly, every country, including China, the US and those in Latin America, has significant strides to make in advancing human rights. However, let me be clear — a country that promotes war is in no position to speak credibly about human rights," he said.

The professor called for a global dialogue on human rights, noting that the roundtable discussions between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries have revitalized the conversation.

There is a growing understanding

that each country has its own unique human rights agenda, which must be respected, he said, stressing the importance of promoting multilateralism and fostering international dialogue.

"For Latin America, our primary focus is on reducing crime and inequality. We are deeply concerned about social divisions and are firmly opposed to foreign intervention."

In regard to the 10th anniversary of the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum, Carvalho described it as a "milestone" in efforts to collaborate on shifting the Western-dominated discourse on human rights, emphasizing the need to consider each country's unique situation.

Fernando Estenssoro, an academic at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Santiago de Chile, said human rights have long been used as a tool of control, dominated by the United States and its allies.

"They use human rights as an excuse to attack countries they deem enemies," he said.

Despite being established on principles of respect, freedom, justice and equality for all, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations, has been heavily politicized and used geopolitically, Estenssoro said.

Its 30 articles are often manipulated by certain states to justify violations of the very principles they are intended to uphold, he said. "We must expose how these rights have been, and continue to be, systematically violated by the Global North and its closest allies, who conceal their power-driven interests under the guise of defending human rights."

Jorge Eduardo Malena, director of the Asian Affairs Committee at the Argentine Council for International Relations, said China's efforts to enhance the international human rights system serve as a potential solution for global human rights governance.

"China's influence and commitment to global human rights have grown, especially following its evolving role in the international system after the Cold War," Malena said.

Despite existing power imbalances favoring Western countries, China has been an advocate for a multipolar world and the democratization of international relations, he said.

"China has ratified numerous international human rights treaties and made significant contributions to the global economy, becoming a major trading partner and infrastructure builder."

"The current historical stage of international power transition needs China to take action to protect human rights and offer a positive contribution to the community," Malena said.

## Corky Lee's brother recalls the famous photographer's activism

By BELINDA ROBINSON  
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Through his camera lens, Corky Lee provided a window on the struggles and triumphs of Asian Americans for more than five decades.

But three years after the death of the preeminent Chinese American photojournalist, who died in January 2021 at age 73 of COVID-19 complications, he is sorely missed by his community, friends and family.

John Lee, Corky's younger brother, who lives in Southern California, reminisced fondly on all that his sibling achieved while remaining "humble" and "generous".

"Despite the accolades [Corky] received in the later years of his life and posthumously, his popularity and leadership grew from a unique combination of humility and generosity," John told China Daily. "One writer astutely observed [that he] helped generations of Asian Americans see themselves."

As the administrator and executor of Corky's estate, John, a lawyer and retired public defender, takes comfort in advancing his brother's legacy so that new generations can appreciate his incredible body of work.

In the new posthumous book, *Corky Lee's Asian America: 50 Years of Photographic Justice*, more than 200 photos reflect the art and life story of the man dubbed the "undisputed, unofficial Asian American photographer laureate".

Born on Sept 5, 1947, in Hollis,

Queens, New York, to mother Jung Ping Hung and father Lee Yin Chuck, Corky had three brothers, John, James and Richard, and an older sister, Fee. Their parents immigrated to the US from Taishan, in South China's Guangdong province.

Corky's given name at birth was "Lee Young Kok", which foretold his destiny, as it means "praiseworthy of the nation" in Chinese. His US birth certificate recorded his name as "Lee Young Quoork", because his father used the name Quoork when he arrived in the US in 1925, saying he was born in China to a person with US citizenship, as a way to avoid the restrictions of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

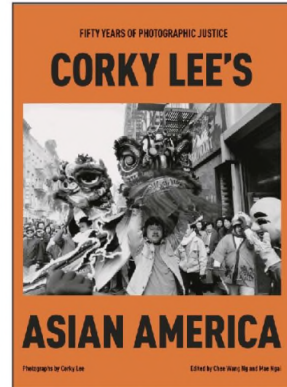
By 1960, the family and grandmother settled in Jamaica, Queens, New York, where they ran a laundry business and lived above it. All the boys were expected to pitch in and help. Their mother was a seamstress.

John recalled that while growing up, Corky's responsibilities were "much the same as those of other Chinese American baby boomers with immigrant parents".

Corky came of age during the civil rights era in the 1960s when all minorities — African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders — fought for equal rights.

The family would often sit around the dinner table and discuss current events.

"It was a time of social and political ferment outside the family laundry. Our father, despite his lack of formal education, was a very astute observer and had a lifelong intellectual



Corky Lee's *Asian America: Fifty Years of Photographic Justice* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2024) is a "collection of over 200 breathtaking photos celebrating the history and cultural impact of the Asian American social justice movement, from a beloved photographer who sought to change the world, one photograph at a time".

curiosity, which he successfully passed on to Corky," John said.

The soon-to-be photographer attended a New York City public school. He got his nickname Corky from a "white kid" in the neighborhood while a student. He later attended Queens College, where he majored in history.

As he emerged from college, Corky



Corky Lee

was inspired by leaders like John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr, which ignited his own activism.

Lee Yin Chuck was a World War II military veteran. The family feared the boys would be drafted to fight in the Vietnam War. Corky later applied for reclassification as a conscientious objector to the war.

In 1969, Corky was accepted as a VISTA volunteer for a two-year period to serve poor communities of the Lower East Side of Manhattan through the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, a social service agency with an office in Chinatown.

While working as a housing advocate, he saw the social and political injustices that the Chinese immigrant community faced and quickly realized he wanted to document them. He couldn't afford a camera at first, so he borrowed one.

"Prior to Corky's choice of photography as his tool for social change, there was minimal coverage of Asian communities in the US," John Lee said. "They were the product of white Americans looking at their neighbors of Asian descent as curiosities, exotic at best, dangerous at worst and all too often acted upon their ignorance to tragic consequences."

John believes that mainstream America looked at his community from the outside. Corky was uniquely positioned to show that "we were not the 'eternal foreigner' but Americans in every sense of such title".

From the 1970s on, Corky covered the protests, celebrations, activism and struggles of Asian Americans.

"Every time I take my camera out of my bag, it is like drawing a sword to combat indifference, injustice and discrimination and trying to get rid of stereotypes," the photojournalist once said.

His work didn't just focus on the Chinese community, but also on the Korean, Southeast Asian, Japanese and Filipino communities.

One of his proudest projects was a reenactment through photos of the 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. The reenactment took place on the 145th anniversary of the railroad's completion, with 250 Asian Americans participating, including direct descendants of the railroad workers, at Promontory Point, Golden Spike National Historical Park, Utah.

Corky was motivated by the fact that Chinese laborers were excluded from the celebratory photos when the railroad was completed. So, he gathered their descendants for the photos as a thank you.

While Corky was in college and John was still finishing high school, they shared an apartment together.

For John, one of his fondest memories of that time was the evenings when they would arrive home from their respective part-time jobs and

go down to the public parking lot near their apartment and throw a Frisbee. "Eventually our respective modes of activism took us down divergent paths and those sessions ended," John said. "We would still from time to time fondly reminisce about those simpler times."

Corky worked tirelessly for the betterment of his community. He created a Chinese-language ballot that increased voting in New York City. It later led to more Asian American candidates being elected in local, state and federal offices.

He lobbied for congressional gold medals for more than 25,000 Chinese American World War II military veterans. Corky's father was posthumously awarded one in 2021, and the award was accepted by his surviving son.

Toward the end of his life, Corky was documenting how the Guardian Angels — a crime-fighting group — was trying to stop the tide of anti-Asian hate crimes that had flared up in New York City and nationwide during the pandemic. But he contracted COVID-19 and later died.

Looking over his brother's storied body of work, John said that "Corky created a history that truly, accurately and compassionately depicted us as we were, as active a component of America as any other immigrant group that came to these shores".

"He staked the claim for Americans of Asian descent their rights to full participation and recognition in their adopted land, in growing numbers the land of their birth."

## BUSINESS

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# E-commerce enterprises punching above weight

Such businesses numbered 78,811 at end-June, up 20.81% from end-2023

By LIU YUKUN  
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The ongoing cross-border e-commerce surge in China is unlocking fresh growth opportunities for foreign trade, experts and executives said recently.

They said there was a notable uptick in Customs-registered cross-border e-commerce enterprises from Chinese companies and a rise in funding, underscoring a dynamic landscape that is reshaping the global trade scenario.

A report released at the recently concluded E-Commerce Convention at the China International Fair for Trade in Services revealed that as of June, the number of Customs-registered cross-border e-commerce enterprises in China had reached 78,811, marking a 20.81 percent increase from the end of 2023.

The Ministry of Commerce said China's cross-border e-commerce trade volume has grown more than tenfold in the past five years. In the first half of 2024, China's cross-border e-commerce imports and exports totaled 1.22 trillion yuan (\$172.7 billion), a 10.5 percent year-on-year increase, surpassing the overall growth rate of China's foreign trade by 4.4 percentage points during the same period.

Fu Longcheng, deputy head of China General Chamber of Commerce, said: "As an integral part of China's foreign trade, cross-border e-commerce has become a key driver of high-quality economic development."

"Through cross-border e-commerce platforms, a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises are vigorously expanding into global markets, gradually emerging as a new force in digital trade and injecting new vitality into global economic cooperation," Fu said.

Zeng Qiao, founder and chief executive officer of Morketing, a media service platform, said that both the Chinese and global cross-border e-commerce markets have continued to grow steadily.

Regarding strategies for cultivating overseas markets, Li Yan, CEO of Niu Technologies, an electric bike maker, emphasized the importance of localizing operations based on preferences of local customers.

This includes changing product appearance to cater to local customers, optimizing business operating models and adapting brand promotion to local styles.

Li said the integration of online and offline channels is crucial in overseas markets. Aside from online exposure, traffic generation, businesses' capabilities to handle massive online orders and timely deliveries also play a key role in attracting and retaining consumers.

In 2022, Niu Technologies' products entered the Amazon platform, focusing on markets in Germany, Italy and France. Currently, their products are distributed through 54 dealers to 52 countries and regions.

Yang Ou, vice-president of Happy Lamb, a hotspot chain, said that for Chinese catering businesses wishing to expand overseas, selecting the right market is the first step, followed by actively integrating into the local market during brand operations.

Yang said during the process of adapting business operations to the local environment and culture, leveraging local social media influencers, celebrities and media platforms for promotion is crucial to bridge the gap with local consumers. Happy Lamb has established over 100 chain hotspot restaurants in more than 90 cities across 10 countries and regions.

Huang Yong, vice-president of Yatsen Holding Ltd, a beauty product group that manages the Perfect Diary, said: "In the past two years, the penetration rate of Chinese beauty and personal care brands in overseas markets has been steadily increasing. The overseas expansion of Chinese brands is driven by a combination of technological innovation and brand strength."



A C919 aircraft receives water salute at Lhasa Gonggar International Airport, Xizang autonomous region, on Thursday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## C919 begins high-altitude test flights in Lhasa

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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China's domestically developed single-aisle aircraft, the C919, landed at Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region for the first time on Thursday, as the model verifies its adaptability to ultra high-altitude airports and routes.

The C919 jet, operated by its developer Commercial Aircraft Corp of China, or COMAC, departed from Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport (CTU) on Thursday morning and arrived at Lhasa Gonggar International Airport (LXA) after about two hours of flight.

Located in the Yarlung Zangbo River valley at an altitude of 3,569 meters, the Lhasa airport is surrounded by mountains. The meteorological environment is complex and poses a number of aeronautical challenges for aircraft and crew.

As such, the C919 plane will carry out research and development test flights of key systems for high-altitude operations, including environmental-control system, avionics and power units, as the company prepares the plane to meet the operational needs of ultra high-altitude routes and the R&D of the plateau variant in the future, COMAC said.

So far, the C919, comparable with the narrow-body Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 series, has netted more than 1,000 orders from home and abroad.

Earlier this year, Tibet Airlines, a regional carrier based in Lhasa, signed a deal with COMAC for 40 C919 aircraft of the plateau variant which is designed to meet the complex transportation requirements of high-altitude regions by shortening the fuselage and featuring high-altitude modifications.

"China has the world's largest demand for high-altitude aircraft

operations," said Lin Zhijie, a civil aviation industry analyst. "The plateau variant of the C919 is of great significance for meeting the travel demand of passengers in high-altitude regions of China."

Meanwhile, China's first home developed regional passenger jet, the ARJ21, is close to finishing its month-long ultra high-altitude demonstration flights around the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau that will fully assess the adaptability of the model for ultra high-altitude airports and routes. The C919 and the ARJ21 gathered in Lhasa on Thursday.

Since Aug 21, the ARJ21 aircraft started its demonstration flights around the plateau, using Chengdu, Sichuan province; Xining, Qinghai province; and Lhasa as operational bases. So far, the ARJ21 plane has completed flight tests on 25 routes for a combined total of 62 flight hours, covering 11 ultra high-altitude airports in China.

In particular, the jet has flown to the world's highest civil airport four times, and fully verified its adaptability to ultra high-altitude operations. Located 4,411 meters above sea level, Daocheng Yading Airport (DCY) in Sichuan province is not only the highest civil airport in China, but also the world.

Airports located at an altitude of 2,438 meters or above are regarded as ultra high-altitude airports, and China has 25 such airports, accounting for more than half of such airports globally with a runway length of over 2,000 meters each, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

High-altitude regions face conditions such as sparse oxygen supply, complex terrain and ever-changing weather conditions. The requirements for aircraft performance, crew qualifications and operational support capabilities are extremely high, the CAAC said.

## New electric-bike standards to upgrade sector

By CHENG YU  
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Chinese authorities proposed on Thursday stricter technical standards for electric bicycles, with the top designed speed of e-bikes capped at 25 kilometers per hour, to enhance safety and better regulate the country's rapidly growing e-bike sector.

The new standards, proposed by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and several other ministries, are part of China's broader efforts to improve product safety and streamline

industry standards in the e-bike sector. The new standards were open for public opinion from Thursday.

One of the key updates is the enhancement of fire-retardant functions of e-bikes. The revised standards called for stricter flame resistance requirements for non-metallic materials used in electric bicycles, while also limiting the use of plastic components.

The new standards also proposed that e-bikes must add features like real-time communication and Beidou satellite positioning so as to

boost e-bike's safety through dynamic monitoring.

In addition, to curb illegal modifications, the standards also specify that controllers, batteries and chargers must be "interoperable", making it technically harder to tamper with them.

The MIIT data showed that China is a major global producer and consumer of e-bikes, with over 350 million units in use, and e-bikes have become a fundamental mode of short-distance transportation in daily life.

The new standards also raised the

weight limit for e-bikes equipped with lead-acid batteries, from 55 kilograms to 63 kg. Additionally, the requirement for bikes to include pedals as a backup has been removed.

Zhou Chao, president of product technology of Chinese e-bike firm Yadea, said: "The new standards clearly define production capacity, inspection, testing and quality controls for electric bicycles. This can help drive companies to improve their technology and equipment, thereby enhancing the overall safety and quality of the e-bike industry."

## Fengjie develops into a major eyewear manufacturing hub

By TAN YINGZI  
and DENG RUI in Chongqing

Fengjie, a small county in the eastern part of Chongqing, has in recent years emerged as the largest eyewear manufacturing hub in western China, thanks to its good location, rich human resources and relatively cheap production costs.

"The county is constructing a modern, high-end eyewear industry and creating an industry cluster worth 10 billion yuan (\$1.41 billion)," said Zhang Guo, Party secretary of Fengjie county. "For every 20 pairs of glasses manufactured across China, one pair is made in Fengjie."

In Fengjie Ecological Industrial Park, there are 59 eyewear companies producing 143 million pairs of glasses, 220 million pairs of lenses and 37 million sets of eye health products annually that are being sold to over 30 countries and regions every year. The total output value reached 2.3 billion yuan last year, according to local authorities.

Boasting a strategic location, man-

ufacturing strength and low production costs, Chongqing has attracted many companies to shift their factories from coastal provinces.

Fengjie, located in the heart of the Three Gorges Reservoir area on the Yangtze River, was once heavily reliant on coal mining. However, with the closure of the coal mines due to environmental concerns a few years ago, the local government decided to focus on the labor-intensive eyewear industry which was quite well developed in coastal areas, such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian provinces.

China is a major eyewear manufacturing and export powerhouse, as well as one of the world's largest consumer markets of such products. The 2024 report by US research firm Frost & Sullivan shows that in recent years, with the improvement of people's living standards and the increasing demand for vision correction, China's demand for various types of eyewear products has been growing steadily.

Since 2015, the local government has allocated over 333 hec-

tares of land for the development of the eyewear industry and invested 3 billion yuan to build eyewear factories and supporting facilities, said Li Bo, director of Fengjie Ecological Industrial Park, where the local eyewear industry is primarily located.

Statistics show that construction costs in the area are notably lower than in coastal regions, with reduced land costs, factory rental prices and resource expenses.

In addition, Fengjie county has 400,000 general workers and over 100,000 skilled eyewear workers from nearby regions within a two-hour drive, so labor costs are 25 percent lower than those on the east coast, Li added.

With an enhanced business environment, the county started to attract manufacturers from Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces. In 2015, the first eyewear manufacturing enterprise — Chongqing Ya Mei Ou Optical Co — settled in the park.

"We immediately decided to invest in Fengjie after a business visit and our sound development



An employee makes eyeglasses at a factory in Fengjie Ecological Industrial Park, Chongqing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

here over the years has proved that we had made the right decision," said Feng Yuanshou, general manager of Chongqing Ya Mei Ou.

Due to its establishment of a comprehensive eyewear industry chain encompassing R&D, produc-

tion and sales, Fengjie now does OEM production for multiple top brands like Calvin Klein, BOSS and Puma.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

### Briefly

#### Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 113 pips to 7.0983 against the US dollar on Thursday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent against dollar from the central parity rate each trading day.

#### Banks report forex settlement deficit

China's commercial banks saw a net forex settlement deficit of 8.7 billion yuan (\$1.23 billion) in August, official data showed. In yuan terms, forex purchases by banks reached nearly 1.36 trillion yuan, while sales stood at about 1.37 trillion yuan, data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange showed. China's cross-border capital flow has become more stable, with domestic foreign exchange supply and demand generally balanced.

## BUSINESSFOCUS

## China helps Africa on its modernization journey

Shared future thrives on strength of more win-win collaboration

**BELJING** — As an African proverb goes, "a friend is someone you share the path with". In the shared pursuit of modernization of the Global South, China and Africa have stood together as companions over the years.

Themed "Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a High-Level China-Africa Community with a Shared Future", the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which attracted over 50 African leaders, highlighted the common pursuit of China and African countries in realizing modernization.

### Monument of friendship

The China-Africa community with a shared future is deeply rooted in the traditional friendship between the two sides.

During the 1970s, a pivotal period for the economic development of Tanzania and Zambia, some 50,000 Chinese workers and engineers came to help construct the Tanzania-Zambia Railway.

In the past five decades, 70 Chinese engineers, technicians, and workers lost their lives in railway construction, technical cooperation, and other projects in Tanzania. To honor their contributions, a monument has been erected at the Gongo la Mboto cemetery in Tanzania.

The 1,860-kilometer railway serves as a reminder of the long-standing relationship between China and Africa. As time passes, the China-Africa friendship remains robust and grows stronger no matter how the world changes.

Issa Fatimoh Abiola, Nigeria's first female train engineer, has worked with China Railway Construction Corp for 16 years. Reflecting on Chinese President Xi Jinping's keynote speech on modernization at the opening ceremony of the 2024 FOCAC Summit, she recalled CRCC's significant contributions to Nigeria's modernization.

"The CRCC has been deeply involved in Nigeria for 43 years, contributing tremendously to the country's transportation and infrastructure modernization," Abiola said.

"Since joining the company in 2008, I have witnessed the successful implementation of numerous landmark projects, including the Lekki Free Trade Zone, Abuja-Kaduna Railway, Lagos-Ibadan Railway, Abuja Light Rail, Lagos Blue Line, as well as 'small and beautiful' livelihood projects that directly benefit people's livelihoods."

Victorah Mukiri, a legal adviser



A train for Mombasa waits at a station of the China-built Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2023. HAN XU / XINHUA

for China Railway No 10 Engineering Group Co Ltd, has worked with the company for 17 years. Touched by Xi's remarks to "jointly advance modernization that is open and win-win," Mukiri noted how her company expanded from a few projects to multiple regional ventures in Kenya, ranging from highways to municipal, housing, and mining construction. The company has trained batches of technicians, created thousands of jobs, and significantly improved Kenya's infrastructure.

As President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo said at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the FOCAC, "China remains an all-time friend." He added that Africa and China are drawing closer through shared history, values and solidarity, and their joint modernization efforts reflect a mutual commitment to prosperity and peace.

### Two-way efforts

"We have together built roads, railways, schools, hospitals, industrial parks, and special economic zones. These projects have changed the lives and destiny of many people," Xi said at a welcome banquet held at the Great Hall of the People for summit attendees, noting that the China-Africa community with a shared future thrives on the

strength of win-win cooperation.

This cooperation is driven by development projects with Chinese companies playing an increasing role in bolstering Africa's industrialization.

One notable example is the Sapphire Float Glass Factory in Tanzania's coastal region, which serves both the local market and exports to six other African countries. With a designed production capacity of approximately 700 metric tons per day, the factory has created 1,012 direct jobs for the local populace and 3,857 indirect jobs since its inauguration in September 2023. Once fully operational, it is expected to provide 1,650 direct and 6,000 indirect jobs.

"China's imprints are evident and vivid in infrastructure improvement, rapid industrialization and all progress in small and medium-sized enterprises in our countries," Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan said at the opening ceremony on Sept 5.

"Our presence here today reflects the solidarity and commitment to building a shared future of progress and prosperity," she said, calling on African countries to work with China toward fruitful socioeconomic innovations and development.

In Botswana, Chinese firms are playing a key role in the country's green energy transition. In August,



Yonas Akele (right) and Jiang Jiang, head of the Luban Workshop in Addis Ababa, work together at a vocational training institute in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February. LI YAHUI / XINHUA

Botswana Power Corporation signed a power purchase agreement with Sinotswana Green Energy, a consortium of Chinese and Botswana companies, to officially launch the nation's first 100-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant.

The project, expected to begin operations by the end of 2025, has been hailed a "key milestone" in the country's energy transition.

Driven by the Plan for China Supporting Africa's Agricultural Modernization, China-Africa

agricultural cooperation has also flourished, yielding notable results in technical assistance and training for agricultural experts, the transfer of advanced technologies, the establishment of agricultural parks, and the promotion of farming projects for *Juncao* (mushroom grass) and hybrid rice. This cooperation has advanced Africa's agricultural modernization.

"Agricultural modernization ensures high-level productivity. It reduces the risk of disease and low-

ers the cost of production. That's the way African countries should go," said Nabwera Daraja Nabii, a member of the National Assembly of Kenya.

China has shared its expertise in *Juncao* technology and hybrid rice cultivation, training over 14,000 people and introducing these techniques to many countries, benefiting millions of farmers. Dozens of countries across the globe have engaged in research and demonstration planting of hybrid rice, with nearly 8 million hectares planted abroad annually.

Over the past decade, China has established 24 agricultural technology demonstration centers in Africa and introduced more than 300 advanced agricultural technologies, increasing local crop yields by an average of 30 to 60 percent and benefiting over 1 million farmers across the continent.

"We hope that China can work very closely with us so that we can feed the world," said Thomas Tayebwa, Ugandan deputy speaker of the parliament. "Africa can be the food basket for the rest of the world."

Talent development is also vital for both China and Africa as they work to improve their economies and livelihoods, making educational collaboration a cornerstone of China-Africa relations.

China has established 17 Luban Workshops in 15 African countries, providing training to help young African youths secure jobs in Chinese-invested enterprises. Over 220,000 Africans have been trained by China, with tailored programs to meet the specific needs of each country.

Under the Plan for China-Africa Cooperation on Talent Development, China aims to train 500 principals and vocational teachers, as well as 10,000 technical personnel with both Chinese language and vocational skills for Africa every year. This talent cooperation is expanding into sectors like digital industries and healthcare, enabling more African youth to pursue their dreams.

"Vocational and technical education is very important in the 21st century. What you can do depends on the training that you have, and the training that you have depends on the kind of institutions you attend," said Professor Kabiru Bala, vice-chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University of Nigeria.

"Africa is a young continent because we have a large percentage of young people. Our task now is to see that these young people are empowered in terms of skills and competence that can move our developments," said Professor Olusola B. Oyewole, secretary-general of the Association of African Universities of Ghana.

XINHUA

## Sci-tech program mirrors deepened Sino-African agricultural cooperation

**BELJING** — Francina Lerato Kuwali, a 35-year-old student from Malawi at China Agricultural University, returned recently with the exciting news that she and her classmates had helped local farmers in her country achieve a maize yield of 9,000 kilograms per hectare, nearly three times the local average.

Over the past year, they have applied the agricultural techniques learned at CAU to assist 30 farmers in Malawi with maize cultivation, as part of the cultivation plan under the cooperative postgraduate education program called "China-Africa Science and Technology Backyard".

Launched in 2019, the program is being implemented by CAU in both China and Africa. It aims to foster high-quality agricultural talent in African countries through agricultural practice and technical exchanges, leveraging China's experience to support Africa's agricultural development.

Supported by institutions such as the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the program draws master's students in agriculture from Africa, including exceptional faculty and students from partner institutions, young professionals from government, and technical managers from the agricultural industry.

Agriculture is the backbone of

Malawi's economy.

At the same time, the biggest challenge lies in low yields and unaffordable machinery or fertilizers, said Kuwali, who works as an agricultural extension worker and who came to CAU in 2022 in the belief that she might learn from China's excellent experience in the area.

Given the similarities between African and Chinese agricultural production, such as the dominance of smallholder farmers and relatively low productivity levels, the program aims to explore and develop a new talent cultivation model for China-Africa agricultural cooperation, said Jiao Xiaoqiang, head of the program and an associate professor at CAU's college of resources and environmental sciences.

"Our main goal is to create a model that can be shared in Africa, helping local farmers acquire, understand and apply technology, and to explore a new path for the green transformation of African agriculture and food security," he said.

Notably, the program has proved pragmatic and effective, following a tailored training plan. Students spend the first year in China learning theory and practical skills, the second year applying Chinese agricultural techniques in Africa, and the third year back in China completing their research and thesis.

Since its establishment, the sci-

tech backyard program has recruited 91 practice-oriented agricultural talents focused on green agricultural development across 12 African countries. So far, 36 of them have completed their studies, and many graduates have returned to Africa to conduct research on the front lines of agricultural production in their home countries.

CAU, in collaboration with domestic partners, has established seven sci-tech backyards in countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi.

The deepening Sino-African agricultural cooperation has not only enhanced crop production, but also helped achieve several broader goals in Africa, including advancing agricultural technology, improving nutrition and health, and contributing to poverty-reduction efforts.

In 2021, CAU, in collaboration with the local government of the Morogoro Region in Tanzania, started an agricultural project called "Small Beans, Big Nutrition".

By introducing the maize-soybean intercropping technique and methods for making soy products to local villagers, the project aims to supplement the local diet to improve the nutrition levels of women and children in the region.

Maize is a staple food in Tanzania, but it lacks essential nutrients needed for human growth, such as proteins, vitamins, tryptophan, and

lysine. Data show that in 2023, 30 percent of Tanzanian children under five suffered from stunted growth.

Soybeans are high in protein and rich in vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds, making them a suitable choice for nutritional supplements for the local population.

Therefore, soy milk — a new addition to the local diet — is gaining popularity among villagers in Morogoro, especially after project members demonstrated how to make it using soy milk makers purchased locally.

"Soy milk is nice, especially for children to improve their health, and the project should reach as many people as possible," said Rozalia Grayson Rwegasira, an official from the Morogoro regional commissioner's office.

Smallholder farmers in Africa are eager for technological advancements and environmentally friendly solutions from Chinese agricultural research institutions to enhance their resilience against natural disasters caused by global climate change, according to Prasanna Boddupalli, director of the global maize program under International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center.

From the perspective of Tamani Nkhono Mvula, a Malawian agriculture expert, one of the biggest gaps



Francina Lerato Kuwali (first left), an international student from Malawi at China Agricultural University, and her classmates pose for a group photo with a farmer at an experimental field in Quzhou county, Hebei province, in May. XINHUA

in African agricultural development is the issue of agricultural research and development, while the increase in productivity largely comes from investment in science and technology.

The deepening agricultural cooperation in local communities, exemplified by the sci-tech backyards, has not only boosted those technologies that are tailor-made for various challenges, including plant diseases, insect pests and climate damage, but also helped cultivate the capabilities of African residents regard-

ing sci-tech innovation.

"In recent years, we have trained a group of high-quality professionals who understand agriculture, love rural areas and care about farmers in Africa. Through them, advanced Chinese agricultural technology has been implemented in Africa, enhancing the spontaneous development capacity of local farmers, and helping them increase food production and incomes," said Jiao, head of the backyard program.

XINHUA

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## US' knee-jerk reaction to what it deems a challenge to its hegemony biggest threat

Saying one thing and doing another has been a hallmark of the Joe Biden administration. Not least on the Taiwan question.

Despite the Biden administration reiterating its stance that it does not support "Taiwan independence", the latest arms sale to Taiwan represents the 16th time it has sold weapons to the island's secessionist-minded Democratic Progressive Party authorities since it took office on Jan 20, 2021.

According to a statement issued by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency on Tuesday, the US State Department has approved the request of the "Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States" to buy return, repair and reshipment spare parts for military aircraft and related equipment, as well as technical and logistics support services in a deal worth an estimated \$228 million.

The return, repair and reshipment spare parts will be transferred from government stocks.

The deal, which seriously violates the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, especially the Aug 17 Communiqué of 1982, once again sends a message of support to the separatist forces on the island.

As such, Beijing was fully justified in announcing on Wednesday sanctions against nine US companies involved in arms sales to Taiwan — Sierra Nevada Corporation, Stick Rudder Enterprises, Cubic Corporation, S3 Aerospace, TCOM Ltd Partnership, TextOre, Planate Management Group, ACTI Federal and Exovera.

Beijing also announced on the same day that it will stop implementing the goodwill policy of exempting import tariffs on 34 agricultural products originating in Taiwan starting from Sept 25. The agricultural products include fresh fruits, vegetables and aquatic products, according to a statement issued by the Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council.

It is the US' connivance with and support for the separatist forces on the island that are the biggest threat to cross-strait peace and stability and cause the greatest disruption to the real status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

This was evidenced by naval ships and warplanes of the US and some of its allies transiting through the Taiwan Strait on Friday in a show of force almost at the same time as the US delegation attending the Xiangshan security forum in Beijing was vowing that the US seeks to strengthen exchanges with China to avoid misjudgment.

The US justifies its actions by claiming that the challenges to the US posed by China exceed those of the Cold War.

"Frankly, the Cold War pales in comparison to the multifaceted challenges that China presents," US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told a House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday.

But as shown elsewhere, the challenges that threaten regional peace and stability come from the US, not China. This was reinforced by Campbell calling for Washington to maintain a bipartisan focus on China and to speed up US naval shipbuilding and the capacity of the US' defense manufacturing base.

"This is a naval time," Campbell said, saying that increasing the speed with which US naval ships are designed and built is "the most important thing" that the US needs to do over the course of the next 10 years.

He also said that a summit of the Quad countries — Australia, India, Japan and the US — that Biden will host on Saturday would include "big announcements", with US "Indo-Pacific" Commander Admiral Samuel Paparo tasked with helping "fuse together" a military approach in the region.

All that being said, if the US side is hell-bent on viewing China as a threat to its hegemony and turning what could otherwise be win-win cooperative relations into a zero-sum game, it will only be a matter of time before their competition veers into a cold, or even hot, war.

Underestimating Beijing's resolve to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity is a guaranteed way to set the two countries on a collision course.

## Israel should comply with its legal obligations

The newly adopted United Nations General Assembly resolution, demanding an end to Israel's "unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months, embodies the latest attempt of the international community to put an end to the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict and to pry open the Gordian knot of the Palestinian issue.

The nonbinding resolution also demands that Israel comply with all its legal obligations under international law, including the advisory opinions issued by the International Court of Justice.

As Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, said on Tuesday ahead of the vote, "Ending the occupation is not an option, but a legal obligation for Israel".

He pointed out that the ICJ, in its advisory opinion issued on July 19, unequivocally concluded that Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territories is a violation of international law, and that Israel is under an obligation to immediately bring to an end its unlawful presence in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The overwhelming vote on Wednesday in favor of the Palestinian-drafted resolution — 124 votes in favor, with 43 countries abstaining, and 14 others voting against the motion — indicates the majority of countries support the just cause of the Palestinians.

That the US voted against the resolution along with Israel comes as no surprise. By vetoing UN resolutions and providing military assistance for Israel, the US has added to the gravity of the situation, dimmed the prospects for a resolution of the conflict and exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's onslaught against the Palestinians in Gaza is nearing its first anniversary with the Palestinian death toll surpassing 40,000, and attacks on the West Bank escalating. In his remarks, Fu also called on Israel to stop weaponizing hunger and politicizing humanitarian issues, as more than 2 million people are living in an "open-air prison" without adequate access to water, electricity, food, medication and fuel.

China is calling for continued efforts to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe, bring an end to the fighting, and implement the two-state solution that is the only redress for the historical injustice done to the Palestinian people and the only firm foundation for sustainable peace in the region.

The Israeli campaign, purportedly to eliminate Hamas, has also profoundly changed the security fabric in the Middle East with Israel now targeting opponents in all directions across the region.

Since Tuesday, Lebanon has been rocked with back-to-back attacks targeting communication devices used by Hezbollah. On Wednesday, walkie-talkies and solar equipment exploded in Beirut and other parts of Lebanon, killing at least 20 people and wounding more than 450. The day before, exploding pagars killed at least 12 people and wounded some 2,800.

Although Israel has not claimed responsibility for these unprecedented attacks, it is widely believed that the country's Mossad intelligence agency and its Ministry of Defense were behind them, and Israel was sending Hezbollah the message that it can strike against it wherever and whenever it wants.

To bring an end to the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza and prevent the spillover effects of the conflict gaining further momentum, Israel must comply with relevant UNGA and UN Security Council resolutions, while major players in the region must exercise restraint, and Washington must stop being Tel Aviv's accomplice in its lawbreaking, and complicit in its inhuman acts.

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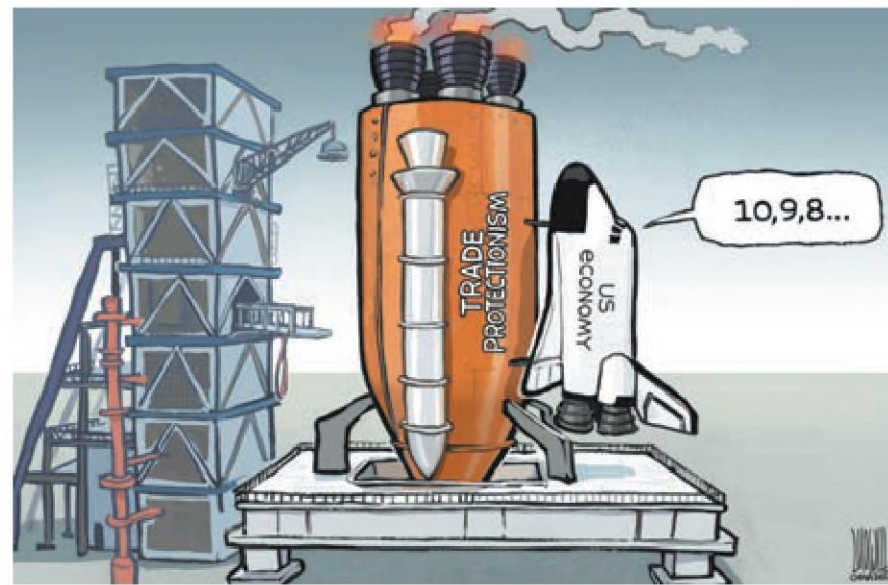
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Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## Fed obliged to consider spillovers when adjusting monetary policy

In its latest Federal Open Market Committee meeting that concluded on Wednesday, the US Federal Reserve Board cut interest rates by 50 basis points, the first rate cut since March 2020.

The Fed raises or cuts rates to control prices, promote employment and regulate the economy. In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the US economy, the Fed cut rates by 1 percentage point in March 2020. To counter high inflation arising as a result of the United States disrupting global supply chains and fueling geopolitical tensions, the Fed embarked on a cycle of aggressive interest rate hikes in March 2022, and has kept its policy rate at 5.25-5.5 percent since July 2023.

As recent data show that inflation in the US has fallen below 3 percent, close to the 2 percent target the Fed

had set, expectations of a Fed rate cut had been growing. The slowed economic growth and the rise of the unemployment rate to 4.2 percent from 3.4 percent in early 2023 could be other reasons for the latest rate cut.

Any monetary policy change in the world's largest economy affects not only the US economy, but also has a profound impact on the world economy, and the latest rate cut is expected to have important ripple effects on international markets, trade, capital flows, and the global financial system.

The rate cut and the expectation of further rate cuts mean the end of the era of a strong US dollar. As far as China is concerned, the impact of the expected Fed rate cuts remains to be seen. However, it will to some extent alleviate the pressure on China's monetary policy and give it more space to

cut its interest rates, helping bolster China's slowed economy. However, while helping lower the prices of imports, a weaker dollar will also raise China's export costs. At a time when exports remain important for its economy as China's domestic demand is still low, this is bound to weaken the competitiveness of China's exports and may add to its supply excess. China should flexibly use its policy or other tools to cope with any possible impacts, to achieve economic stability and sustainable development.

Any responsible major country, when adjusting domestic economic and monetary policies, should consider not only its own interests, but also the impact on other countries. We hope the US will keep the broader picture in mind while making monetary policy adjustments.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

## Enter laser medium for better communication

The country's first 500-millimeter aperture laser communication ground system independently developed by the Aerospace Information Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was put into use in the Pamir Plateau on Sunday.

This is expected to take the country's satellite communication capability to a new level, which in turn will boost the entire astronautical industry.

Thanks to their high frequency and low wavelength, microwaves can pass through the ionosphere without being reflected and lost, making them an efficient data transmission

medium between orbiting satellites and the ground station.

However, it sets a limit on the bandwidth, which means only a few gigabytes per second can be transmitted from satellite to ground station and this can hardly be enhanced.

That's where laser communication comes in. Lasers can travel in a straight line for long distances without significant decay, making lasers an excellent medium for communication involving satellites. China successfully conducted the world's first bidirectional laser communication experiment between a high-orbit sat-

ellite and the ground in 2018, achieving a communication rate of 5 gigabytes across 40 kilometers from satellite to ground.

Just two years later, SpaceX was able to transmit hundreds of gigabytes through laser communication between satellites.

The first 500-mm aperture laser communication ground system is a sign that China has taken a lead in the sector. Its use heralds better satellite-based communication. The astronautical sector will also see progress with better communication tools.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## Development opportunities and dividends shared

The 2024 version of the negative list for foreign investment access, which will come into force from Nov 1, lifts the restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector.

Jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce, the negative list reduces the number of restrictions from 31 to 29, with zero restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector. This marks an important step in building a higher-level open economy.

The central departments have been strengthening their coordination to further implement the system of pre-establishment national treatment plus the negative list system. Since China issued and implemented its first negative list for foreign investment access in 2013, the list has been revised and slimmed down several times.

According to World Bank data, China's manufacturing value added has surpassed that of the United States for the first time since 2010, ranking first in the world, accounting for 30.2 percent of the world total in 2022. That makes China an important driving force for global industrial economic growth.

The abolition of restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector fully demonstrates the country's willingness to expand international cooperation and its clear attitude to support economic globalization.

When it first implemented the reform and opening-up policy about 40 years ago, China attracted many foreign-funded enterprises with its low labor and land costs. Today, the country has developed unique institutional advantages as a socialist market economy.

China also boasts advantages in

both the supply and demand sides, as a superlarge market with a complete supporting industrial system. Its strengths in talents and skilled workers are also obvious thanks to the continuous enhancement of the quality of its labor force.

That it took Tesla less than a year to build its Gigafactory from scratch and realize mass production in Shanghai is a good example showing China's comprehensive advantages as a global manufacturing and logistic hub.

The elimination of restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector will further enhance the confidence of foreign-funded enterprises in the Chinese market. At the same time, the move will also open up broader fields in the world's second-largest economy for global investors to invest in, and share China's development opportunities and dividends.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

## COMMENT

Fan Peng

## NPC system significant for China

On Sept 14, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at a conference celebrating the 70th anniversary of the people's congress system. He noted that over the past 70 years, the system of people's congresses has demonstrated its political strength, providing an important institutional guarantee for achieving rapid economic development and long-term social stability. The people's congress system is a crucial component of China's political structure, a key element of the country's political system and an important institutional part of whole-process people's democracy. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, especially since the launch of reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, the people's congress system has helped the Communist Party of China to lead the people in performing an economic miracle and realizing long-term social stability. It has also helped the country establish true democracy.

The people's congress system, which suits China's national conditions, promotes socialism with Chinese characteristics and ensures the people run the country, while propelling the country toward realizing national rejuvenation.

The system has helped the leadership to explore ways to develop a sound democratic system that suits China's real conditions, and better understand democratic concepts and forms that the West claims monopoly over. As such, the system has great significance in global political history.

The people's congress system is rooted in Chinese history and culture. It was established under the Party's leadership because it suited China's national reali-

**The people's congress system enriches democratic politics and promotes the progress of human civilization. A country's democratic system should suit its realities and, therefore, countries should avoid blindly copying foreign democracy models.**

ties. After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, the Party, in order to establish a new political system which would meet the country's real needs and allow the people to express their wishes, learned from the Soviet Union's congress system and localized it based on China's realities to establish the people's congress system with Chinese characteristics.

The Chinese people, for the first time, elected more than 1,200 deputies to the people's congresses in 1953. And the first National People's Congress was convened in 1954, marking the formal establishment of the people's congress system in China. In the same year, the NPC adopted and enacted China's Constitution, establishing the people's congress system as the country's basic political system and declared that all powers in the country belong to the people.

The national people's congress system is the result of the country's social transformations over the past century and the inevitable choice of the Chinese people to decide their destiny.

The people's congress system upholds the principle that all powers belong to the people and the people are masters of the country. Under the Party's leadership, China has been advancing the people's congress system despite regional differences. The system has thus become a major pillar of China's democratic system.

The form of democracy, that is, whole-process people's democracy, China practices is inclusive in nature. It helps people to exercise their lawful right to elect deputies to the people's congresses through democratic polls. The people's congress system also guarantees the people the rights to information and expression, and allows them to participate in and oversee political work. It also ensures that people's voices are heard and taken into consideration before making any policy decision.

The people's congress system shows the advantages of Chinese-style governance, which benefits national development, and helps maintain stability and unity. Under the Party's leadership, departments and organizations enjoying State power uphold the principle of democratic centralism, ensuring the people exercise State power through people's congresses.

Democratic centralism is both democratic and centralized; it is centralized on the basis of democracy and democratic in centralization. It gives full expression to democracy because it vests in the people's congresses at various levels full powers and, at the same time, ensures centralized administration with governments at various levels managing the affairs entrusted to them by the people's congresses at the corresponding level.

The advantages of democratic central-

ism are reflected in the efficiency and unity of the NPC's legislation, policy implementation and administrative efficiency, with the latter strengthening national governance, facilitating rapid economic growth and ensuring social justice. The people's congress system has helped the authorities better manage political relationships that influence the country's future. The system also helps mobilize all positive factors, while unifying all domestic forces to promote development, better safeguard national security and maintain political stability.

The people's congress system enriches democratic politics and promotes the progress of human civilization. A country's democratic system should suit its realities and, therefore, countries should avoid blindly copying foreign democracy models. In this regard, China's people's congress system breaks through the stereotypes of Western democracy, putting forward a democratic concept that is different from the Western parliamentary system. Under the people's congress system, democracy is not only about elections, it is also about consultations, decision-making, management and oversight.

The system ensures not only democracy in legislation and decision-making, but also efficient policy implementation. No wonder China's efficient political mechanism has become a reference for other countries eager to expedite their democratic development and economic growth, and solve their complex socioeconomic and political problems.

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Kang Bing

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## Subsidizing tours can be designed to offer more returns

Statistics from the National Immigration Administration show that as many as 17.25 million foreign tourists entered China in the first seven months of this year, up 129.9 percent compared with the same period last year. Impressive as the number is, foreign tourists will soon find themselves overshadowed by domestic tourists who are flocking to some of the hot destinations.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism had earlier disclosed that in the first half of this year, Chinese people made 2.72 billion domestic trips, up 14.3 percent year-on-year. Domestic tours usually refer to people traveling using different transport means and heading to other regions for non-business reasons. Going by the ministry's statistics, on average, each Chinese person made nearly two domestic trips in the first six months of this year. Total expenditure incurred on tourism, during the period, was 2.73 trillion yuan (\$384.63 billion), making tourism an important contributor to national efforts at boosting domestic consumption.

Throughout history, China has never been short of brave and curious people. Nearly 2,500 years ago, Confucius toured many states to promote his philosophy as well as to explore new landscapes. Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC) came all the way from the west to visit Taishan Mountain and Qinhuangdao beach in the east. The works of great poets like Li Bai and Du Fu would have been devoid of all their color had they not toured different parts of the country 1,300 years ago for a better understanding of society and a deeper appreciation of the beautiful sceneries.

**In the early stages, people mostly joined tour groups for convenience as well as affordability.**

On their tours they were usually accompanied, or escorted, by a number of guards, students or servants, making such tours a luxury for most people at the time. China did not introduce modern tourism policies until the early 1980s when foreign tourists were encouraged to visit the country. As a result, more foreign tourists began flocking to the Palace Museum (Forbidden City) and the Badaling section of the Great Wall than the Chinese people, because most of them unable to afford such tours at that time.

By the 1990s, more and more Chinese people began to flock to tourist destinations. Since then, the number has been rising, enabling China to become the world's biggest domestic tourism market and probably the biggest source country for outbound tourism.

In the early stages, people mostly joined tour groups for convenience as well as affordability. Then they chose to do it on their own, for relaxation and freedom. Now many people prefer driving to faraway destinations for greater mobility.

Though the country has more than 13,000 tourist destinations ranked between 1A and 5A, the huge number of domestic tourists means that most of them, especially the 300 top-ranked 5A sites, are crowded most of the time. Therefore, most Chinese people know that they should avoid traveling during the two Golden Week holidays, in May and in October, when most tourist sites are crammed with people, who make use of the week-long vacation to visit tourist sites.

Another period that most people know better to avoid travelling is the summer vacation in July and August when students overwhelm tourist sites. Air and railway tickets are difficult to get during these days, and accommodation is much more expensive, and long waits are inevitable.

Students of all ages have good reasons to tour the country. Those entering primary school, junior high school, senior high school, and/or university are regarded as family heroes and their parents and grandparents often reward them with a tour they had likely promised them if they performed well in the entrance exams. Sometimes some students persuade their parents to take them on a tour because their Chinese or English teacher has tasked them with writing a travel story as homework.

When our students — there are a total of 291 million students in China — are heading to tourist destinations, very often accompanied by their parents, it is only logical for us to go on vacation. To boost domestic consumption, the central and local governments have been offering subsidies to those looking to buy motor vehicles, machinery, and other industrial products. I think the authorities should put in more efforts to subsidize tourism because, as is amply clear now, people are more willing to loosen their purse strings when it comes to tours.

Harald Brüning

## China and Africa jointly advance modernization

Considering that China and Africa account for about one-third of the global population, without their "modernization, there will be no global modernization", President Xi Jinping said in his keynote address at the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing this month. Nobody in their right mind would disagree with President Xi, who also stressed that "the friendship between China and Africa transcends time and space, surmounts mountains and oceans, and passes down through generations".

Sino-African relations date back to the days when Chinese admiral Zheng He sailed his fleet between China and the eastern coast of Africa, including present-day Kenya and Tanzania, from 1405 to 1433. But unlike the West's maritime expansion between the late 15th century and 17th century, China did not conquer or occupy or colonize any country in Africa. The West's colonization culminated in the mid-19th century in Europe's nefarious "Rape of Africa", also known as the "Scramble for Africa", driven by the "Second Industrial Revolution", after which only Liberia (founded by former African slaves from the United States) and Ethiopia, evaded colonial occupation (although Ethiopia, then still known as Abyssinia, was invaded by fascist Italy in the 1930s).

Following the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, and because of China's principled support for the African people's struggle to gain independence from European colonial powers, relations between New China and Africa gradually strengthened.

One of the historic highlights of China's determination to support African nations' independence and development was the 1,860-kilometer Uhuru Railway ("uhuru" means "freedom" in Swahili) between Tanzania and Zambia (hence, it is also known as TAZARA Railway), a turnkey project financed by China and involving scores of Chinese engineers and workers between 1970 and 1975, much to the derision of the West that badmouthed it as a "bamboo railway". The railway remains an enduring symbol of cooperation and solidarity between China and Africa — and elsewhere in the Global South.

President Xi also said in his speech at the Great Hall of the People that the founding of the FOCAC in 2000 was a milestone in the history of China-Africa



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relations, stressing that "thanks to nearly 70 years of tireless efforts from both sides, the China-Africa relationship is now at its best in history". He also proposed that bilateral ties between China and African countries be elevated to the level of strategic relations, "and that the overall characterization of China-Africa relations be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future for the new era".

Considering that the 2.8 billion people of China and Africa account for more than one third of the global population, Xi pledged that China will work with Africa over the next three years to take 10 partnership actions for moderniza-

tion in order to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South's modernization drive.

Having read intensively about the development of Sino-African relations since my university days back in the 1970s, I am convinced that there are philosophical similarities between China and Africa that facilitate mutual understanding between the two sides. China's Confucian concept of *ren*, that is, the importance of relationships, benevolence, kind-heartedness and humanity, and Africa's concept of *ubuntu*, that is, the importance of relationships, compassion and individuals' well-being depending on the well-being of others are strikingly similar in their approach toward humanity, and what it is supposed to be all about.

Both concepts emphasize the central value of community, interconnected-

ness, social responsibility, moral integrity, and empathy. I find ubuntu's idea that "I am because we are" particularly in line with my own worldview. I regard both concepts as unifying factors in the China-Africa relationship.

Also, the growing impact of "wokeism" on Western politics will further alienate the West from the Global South — including China and Africa.

The FOCAC Summit in Beijing also had a Macao connection, considering that six of the participating countries — Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe and Cape Verde — are members of the 10-member Macao-based Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries (Forum Macao). Africa's six countries with Portuguese as their official language have a combined population of 76 million, with 37 million and 34 million of them being in Angola and Mozambique, respectively. The six countries account for about one quarter of the 290 million inhabitants of the world's nine Portuguese-speaking countries.

While China is Africa's top trading partner, Angola is one of China's main business partners in Africa. I believe that Forum Macao should play a more prominent role in fostering economic, commercial and even cultural relations between China and Africa's six Portuguese-speaking countries, by, among other things, organizing more two-way business-promotion visits and holding more training courses in the Macao Special Administrative Region or other places.

While Macao is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, it is also a multicultural society open to foreigners (like myself), and I believe that our public and private universities are able to offer the right education environment for African students to study and even pursue their academic careers in the SAR.

Macao — including the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone — should also try to attract more scholars, investors, business people and creative talents from Africa's Portuguese-speaking countries to work here. That would benefit both Africa and China, and further elevate Macao's status as a platform for consolidating relations between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

*The author is director of Macao Post Daily. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## GLOBAL VIEWS



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

ERIK SOLHEIM

## Chinese catfish

Rather than engaging in a race to the bottom, there needs to be a race to the top to develop the clean technology the world desperately needs

In June, I had the opportunity to visit Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region with my daughter. It was like stepping into a vision of the future — endless stretches of desert now home to the world's largest single photovoltaic project. It has a breathtaking 3.5 gigawatts of installed capacity. That's enough to power many medium-sized developing nations for a year. But the journey didn't end there.



We also visited Goldwind, the global giant in wind energy, which produces four times Norway's total hydroelectric output. Seeing their large blades, each 120 meters long, which sweep across an area as vast as seven football fields with every rotation, was nothing short of inspiring.

Goldwind tells a powerful story: China is now the indispensable nation in the global fight against climate change. With an astounding \$890 billion invested in renewable energy in 2023 alone, China is leading the green revolution. China provided two-thirds of all new solar energy globally last year.

However, there has been a buzz in Western media lately about China's so-called overcapacity in green products such as solar panels. This concern seems to stem from strategic anxieties, with growing unease about China's leadership in green energy. The complaint is counter-intuitive. Isn't "overcapacity" in green products what world leaders have called for over the past decade? Wouldn't it be good if more countries followed China's lead and produced cheap high-quality electric cars and batteries, solar panels and wind turbines?

Erecting tariffs and creating barriers will stifle innovation and inflate costs. Such policies will make it more difficult for Western companies to access cutting-edge technology and maintain their competitive advantage. This approach will drive up the cost of green technology. It will push the dream of

building a clean global energy system further out of reach.

In the end, it is Western companies, workers and innovators — particularly those in the United States — that will bear the brunt of these misguided policies. The 2018 tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration on Chinese solar panels are a vivid reminder of this, having led to an estimated loss of \$19 billion in new private investment, 62,000 jobs, and the delay of 10.5 gigawatts of solar capacity that could have powered 1.8 million homes. The policies slowed down the US progress on the path toward solar and made China even more dominant.

Embracing collaboration and competition is the most viable strategy for the West to close the gap with the world's leading supplier of clean technology. Rather than engaging in a race to the bottom, we should race to the top, striving for excellence in innovation and sustainable practices. By adopting this approach, Western nations can leverage China's advancements while simultaneously driving their own industries to innovate and compete on the global stage. The effectiveness of this strategy hinges on a deep understanding of how China achieved its leadership position in renewable technology. The West should apply that knowledge to bolster domestic industries through strategic trade and investment partnerships.

To be very direct, Europe and the US should roll out a red carpet for Goldwind and Envision, for CATL and BYD, for Tongwei, Jinko and Longi. More Chinese green investments in the West will help create more hard-sought-for jobs, help share the most advanced technology and create green competition in Western markets.

China's green industrial policies have been instrumental in the rapid ascent of its renewable energy sector. The government has acted as a steward, nurturing innovation through a variety of research programs and project funding. These green policies reflect China's focus on developing home-grown technology to strengthen its indus-

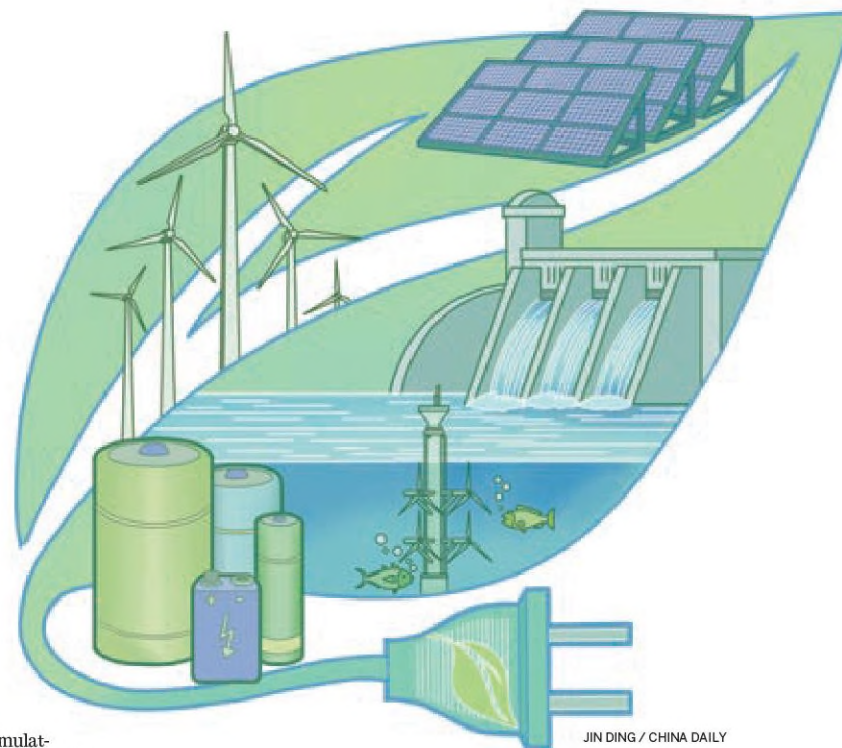
trial base. Meanwhile, the entry of foreign giants such as Tesla into the Chinese market serves to act like a catfish in the pond. They stir up competition and drive domestic companies to innovate and sharpen their competitive edge.

China is not unique in implementing such policies. The US 2022 Inflation Reduction Act also offers substantial financial incentives, including up to 30 percent tax credits, to support domestic clean energy firms. Given these complexities, nations have a mutual benefit in formulating industrial policies where market failures occur. It's particularly important to address early-stage funding for innovation and the trial of new technologies. This ultimately helps unite the world back toward our ambitious climate goals.

Many innovative opportunities stand to gain from increased collaboration with China. Despite the fragile geopolitical climate, countries should revitalize the World Trade Organization as the forum to solve trade disputes.

Another vital issue that often surfaces is how important it is to take a people-centered, not a technology-centered, approach. When I was in the Norwegian government a decade ago, we approached wind energy as a purely technological and financial challenge. We failed. Very soon local people started asking "what is in it for us?" Wind turbines may be good for the planet they said, maybe even for the nation, but not for us; my community has gained nothing. The policies boomeranged.

Huge solar plants like the one I saw near Urumqi are wonderful and impressive. They are like the ocean, you see solar panels to the horizon. But unless local communities are invited into the room when



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decisions are made and unless economic windfalls from renewables are left with local communities, they will struggle to get accepted. China, India and the Western countries and others should compare notes on our experiences with dialogues with local people and the structure of compensation to communities affected.

A people-centered approach will also encompass what I observed in Inner Mongolia autonomous region — the coexistence of solar panels and agriculture. Farmers were raising chickens and growing tomatoes under the solar panels. They get double incomes, from agriculture as well as from renewables. This is a win-win proposition for the local people.

Safeguarding the interests of local communities and biodiversity, while fulfilling social responsibilities, will be a crucial next step for Chinese companies. Partnering with reputable international organizations to explore ecological compensation through biodiversity offsets and credits is another highly strategic approach.

It's also time to look a step further. Investing in recycling of solar panels and

wind blades now is both timely and essential. I am glad to see China putting recycling on the agenda. We should also not allow the renewable revolution serve as an excuse for uncontrolled mining in the deep seas. It's true that China currently dominates nearly all value chains for minerals needed for the renewable revolution. But deep sea mining will be slow and costly and may do irreversible damage to fragile marine ecosystems. That's why so many nations as well as huge global companies call for a ban. According to a recent study, by embracing innovation through renewable and recycling techniques, we could reduce the mineral demand by as much as 30 percent between 2022 and 2050. A more balanced and sustainable green future is within our grasp.

*The author is vice-president of the Green Belt and Road Coalition and former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme. 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.*

LIN BOQIANG

## Power snap

To keep energy transition on track, an action plan is needed to respond to the fast growth in electricity demand driven by the development of AI

The low-carbon transition of the power industry has a bearing on the realization of China's "dual carbon" goals and the high-quality development of the Chinese economy. Some new developments in the green transition of the power industry are noteworthy.



First, the demand for energy and electricity is growing rapidly. Since 2020, the demand for electricity has been growing faster than GDP growth. In 2023, China's total electricity consumption grew by 6.7 percent, and the primary energy consumption increased by 5.7 percent, compared with a 5.2 percent GDP expansion, a phenomenon that only occurred once during the past more than four decades — in 2002-05, when heavy industries and infrastructure were developing quickly.

Second, clean energy is taking up a larger share of energy consumption. In 2013, coal accounted for 67 percent of China's primary energy consumption. The figure dropped to 55.3 percent in 2023. Over the same period, the shares of oil, hydro and nuclear power have changed little. The greening of the energy mix has been driven mainly by increased use of wind and solar power as well as natural gas.

Third, power supply is under the dual pressure of rising electricity demand and the low-carbon transition of the power industry. As the Chinese economy has entered a period of slower growth, policies to curb energy consumption are difficult to implement. At the same time, as the growth in clean energy production is unable to meet the rising demand for electricity, the gap will be filled by fossil fuel energy.

Fourth, the rapid development of solar

and wind electricity has added volatility to the power grid, putting additional pressure on the power supply. Therefore, coal-fired power has to play a stabilizing role for the power supply. Despite China's remarkable growth in installed wind and solar power capacity, fossil fuels remained the largest contributor to the country's energy supply in 2023.

Fifth, artificial intelligence's demand for electricity is growing. It is estimated that the demand of AI technologies for electricity will see exponential growth within five years, which will impact the low-carbon transition of the power industry. Take China for example. Before 2030, solar and wind power, which account for around 20 percent of the total electricity supply, will not be able to meet the growing demand for electricity. The rapid development of AI will have an impact on the realization of China's "dual carbon" goals. Therefore, it is imperative to reassess the time frame for phasing out fossil fuel energy by taking into account the electricity demand from AI.

So, how should China respond to the new developments in the low-carbon transition of the power industry?

First, it is crucial to properly comprehend the nature of the rapid growth of energy demand in recent years, which means the decision-makers must determine whether it is a short-term phenomenon or a long-term trend, and identify the fundamental reason for the rapid growth, so that they can accordingly design development plans for the power industry and carbon neutral action plans.

Second, China should accelerate the development of renewable energy by rolling out supportive policies to funnel more funds into the renewable energy sector and continuing to curb fossil fuel energy while increasing its investment in clean energy to spur technological innovation in clean



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

**Efforts should be made to promote the smart use of power in industrial, commercial and residential scenarios to save energy and reduce the strain on the power grid brought by AI. It is imperative to scale up investment in technological innovation, improve the energy efficiency of digital infrastructure and encourage algorithm optimization to reduce the carbon footprint of AI.**

energy, so as to make green electricity more competitive in the market by lowering production costs.

Third, multi-pronged policies should be taken to absorb green electricity. On the one hand, absorbing electricity generated by new energy poses a challenge to the grid system, so developing storage technology and upgrading the grid system are crucial to absorbing green electricity and ensuring a stable supply of power. High-quality development of the power storage industry could be achieved through expanding profit margins, building a standard system and encouraging innovation.

Meanwhile, efforts should be made to promote the upgrading and smart transformation of the grid system and to enable the flexible interaction of load and storage between the electricity source and the grid to increase the capacity of the grid system to absorb green electricity.

On the other hand, the country needs to deepen the institutional reform of the power industry to let the price play the role of the market to fully reflect the value of green power.

Fourth, the role of coal as the most important energy source in the short term, given China's energy resource endowment and the need to ensure stable power supply, will change gradually. To achieve the "dual carbon" goals, it is imperative to advance the clean and efficient use of coal, develop the carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) industry, and explore the "coal power+CCUS" model.

China has the world's largest and most advanced coal-fired power industry. Under the "coal power+CCUS" model, the newer coal-fired power generation units could still be used, which is economically viable, and the carbon footprint could be reduced while ensuring stable power supply and absorbing green electricity into the grid. Due to the high cost of the CCUS at present, there is still a long way to go to achieve the scale efficiency of the "coal power+CCUS" model. So, it is necessary to speed up the development of the CCUS industry.

Fifth, as AI is a major driving force of the new round of technological and industrial revolution, and an important part of new quality productive forces, finding low-carbon solutions for the energy needs of AI is crucial to developing new quality productive forces and to achieving the "dual carbon" goals. China should accelerate the transition to new energy, promote the green development of data centers, and explore the integrated development of green electricity and the AI industry.

Efforts should be made to promote the smart use of power in industrial, commercial and residential scenarios to save energy and reduce the strain on the power grid brought by AI. It is imperative to scale up investment in technological innovation, improve the energy efficiency of digital infrastructure and encourage algorithm optimization to reduce the carbon footprint of AI. Meanwhile, demand-side efficiency should be increased to offset the growing energy needs of AI.

*The author is director of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## LIFE



From left: Travelers snorkel in Fiji. Visitors enjoy getting wet during the Songkran water-splashing festival in Thailand. Locals perform the kava ceremony, a traditional cultural ritual in Fiji that involves the preparation and drinking of the beverage kava made from a local plant.

**Y**u Huiqing has had a busy summer taking groups of Chinese students on trips to Europe. More than 200 middle school students from Beijing recently took one of her trips to Germany and Austria that concluded in early August.

During the two-week journey, they saw the Alps, took in the beauty of the Rhine River, the rustic charm of Hallstatt in Austria, and learned the history of castles like Heidelberg and Neuschwanstein in Germany.

"We also arranged for them to participate in a lively and engaging nature class in the Black Forest," says Yu, a cultural tour manager with the Beijing-based travel agency, Utour.

The tour was designed to take the children out of their usual learning environment and help them develop a deeper, more integrated understanding of the world through the music, painting, architecture, and history of the two countries, Yu adds.

When the itinerary was released in July, it was quickly booked up. Parents who want to broaden their children's view and improve their foreign language skills were among the forces driving the popularity of the tour, which was one of many outbound cultural trips offered by the travel agency this summer.

"We organized more than 20 group-learning trips during the summer, including those to the United States and the United Kingdom, and they were all well-received by the market," says Li Mengran, marketing manager with Utour.

The trips are part of China's rising outbound tourism market.

"Judging by the current bookings (as of early September) for National Holiday trips abroad, the number of travelers has increased by 55 percent year-on-year," Li says.

Visa-easing policies, the recovery of international flights and cheaper costs have driven a strong rebound in the summer international travel market.

Countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, which have introduced mutual visa exemptions with China, form a visa-free "golden route", making them the top choices for outbound travelers over the summer, according to industry players.

Bookings for the three countries increased by nearly 50 percent over the same period last year, while the average price has decreased by nearly 10 percent, according to a recent summer travel market report released by the Shanghai-based online travel agency, Trip.com Group.

According to the report, overall outbound bookings on its platform increased by over 40 percent year-on-year, with other countries such as South Korea, Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia also at the top of Chinese travelers' lists.

Beijing-based travel agency Qunar also reported that international flight bookings this summer exceeded those of the same period in 2019, with prices for international flights and hotels both lower than last summer.

Long-haul family trips to Europe have seen a quick recovery, while cheaper airfares and hotel prices have made Southeast Asia the most popular outbound destination, with a significant increase in the number of outbound travelers from smaller, third- and fourth-tier Chinese cities, according to Qunar.

The Paris 2024 Olympics held in France also fueled outbound travel. According to Tongcheng Travel, an online travel agency based in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, hotel bookings in the Paris region increased by more than 300 percent year-on-year, and flight bookings from major Chinese cities to Paris rose by over 80 percent.

In search of a bigger slice of China's outbound tourism

## Destination of growth for outbound tourism

After a challenging period, travelers again head for foreign climes, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



The colorful floating markets where vendors sell goods and food directly from boats in Thailand. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

market, many destinations have rolled out special arrangements to woo travelers.

In early September, the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Association of Thai Travel Agents took 60 tour companies to a road show in Beijing to promote the country's offerings.

The show focused on new products and services from Thai travel agencies, scenic spots and transport providers, to boost travel from China.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand has rolled out special travel experiences, especially in less-visited areas, to stimulate interest.

"We want everyone to enjoy more of the hidden charm of Thailand," says Chuwit Sirivajjakul, executive director of East Asia region of Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Generally speaking, people are more familiar with Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Koh Samui, but Thailand also has many other places worth visiting, such as Krabi, Rayong and Trat, he says.

"In these cities, you can experience authentic traditional Thai culture and lifestyles. We've prepared activities to enhance the experience," he adds.

With 60 percent of Chinese tourists expressing a love for Thai cuisine, gourmet food recommendations have been included alongside cultural learning experiences.

"You can learn Muay Thai (Thai boxing), Thai massage, and even how to bathe elephants," Sirivajjakul says.

With the two countries celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year, the Tourism Authority of Thailand is preparing a series of events to mark the occasion.

To get the ball rolling, Thailand launched the China-Thailand Friendship Mid-Autumn Festival on Tuesday and Nihao Month, which will run through October this year.

Between Jan 1 and Aug 17, more than 4.53 million Chinese tourists visited Thailand, solidifying China's position as the country's largest source of tourism, according to Thai authorities. This trend is supported by multiple factors, such as the bilateral visa-free policy and the stable demand for travel, and should help achieve the country's goal of receiving 7.3 million Chinese travelers this year.

Fiji also plans to deepen partnerships with Chinese travel agents, and develop tailored travel packages for Chinese visitors, especially after the Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka's visit to China in August.

"We will organize road shows in major cities in November to promote Fiji's tourism offerings," says Brent Hill, CEO of Tourism Fiji, adding that the country's tourism authority will also work with Fiji Airways to enhance connectivity with China.

In recent years, the island nation has seen a steady increase in Chinese visitors.

In 2019, more than 49,000 Chinese travelers visited, and arrivals have recovered by 58 percent in 2023 compared with 2019. "We have continued to see the accelerated recovery so far this year compared to 2023," Hill adds.

Fiji has developed the China Ready Program to support local partners by offering tool kits and training sessions to enhance their understanding of the Chinese market, including mobile payment options like WeChat Pay at tourist facilities, he says.

"China is a rapidly growing market and a crucial source for Fiji's tourism. It is diverse, and so are the preferences of its travelers. Understanding their needs is key, and in Fiji, we look forward to continuing to welcome Chinese guests to our island," Hill says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

## Exhibition gathers prestigious drama troupes for global exchanges

By CHEN NAN  
chenan@chinadaily.com.cn

Since its inception in 2011, the Capital Theatre Boutique Performance Invitation Exhibition has gathered prestigious domestic and international drama troupes in Beijing, enriching the city's theatrical landscape and providing a high-quality platform for global exchanges.

On Sept 5, the Beijing People's Art Theatre, the annual event's organizer, announced the upcoming edition, which will be renamed and upgraded as the Beijing People's Art Theatre International Drama Invitation Exhibition.

The event, from Oct 11 to Nov 10, will bring together nine acclaimed international and domestic drama troupes, including several performances making their Beijing debut, announced Feng Yuanzheng, actor, director and president of the Beijing People's Art Theatre.

"The Beijing People's Art Theatre has launched its four venues, which

will make this international event more diverse and offer a richer theatrical experience to the audience," says Feng, adding that this year's edition will be themed *Jing*, meaning "realm" or "dimension", which is designed to embody the concept of "freeing people's minds".

Founded in 1952, the Beijing People's Art Theatre, located a 20-minute walk from the bustling Wangfujing pedestrian shopping street, is considered the flagship of Chinese drama. It is known as home to many established Chinese actors and actresses. The institution's latest performance venue, the Beijing International Theatre Center, opened its doors in 2021. It is located next to the Capital Theatre, home of the Beijing People's Art Theatre, established in 1954. Housing two auditoriums, the Beijing International Theatre Center will be one of the four venues presenting the Beijing People's Art Theatre International Drama Invitation Exhibition at one of its bigger venues, the Cao Yu Theatre, which is named after the



*The Dream of the Red Chamber* by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center will be staged during the Beijing People's Art Theatre International Drama Invitation Exhibition. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

renowned playwright and first president of the Beijing People's Art Theatre.

Notably, Georgia's Tbilisi Vaso Abashidze New Theater will stage

Chekhov's *The Seagull*. At the same time, the National Drama Theatre of Russia (Alexandrinsky Theatre) will perform *Zero Liturgy*, which is based on one of the most popular

works by Fyodor Dostoyevsky — *The Gambler*.

The Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center's production *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, based on the Chinese classic of the same name, will also be staged in Beijing during the event. During the six-hour production, audiences will be introduced to the encyclopedic scene by Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) writer Cao Xueqin, chronicling the downfall of the wealthy and influential Jia family during social and political upheaval.

Audiences will also enjoy the Chinese stage adaptation of Goethe's epic *Faust*, presented by the established Lithuanian theater director Rimas Tuminas who worked with Chinese artists, including actor Wang Yanhui playing the role of Faust and actor Yin Fang playing the role of Mephistopheles, the demon.

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France and the China-France Year of Culture and

Tourism, the Comedie-Francaise and the La Colline National Theatre will perform the classic French plays *The Impostures of Scapin* by Moliere and *Littoral* (The Seaside) by Wajdi Mouawad, highlighting the rich traditions and contemporary innovations of French theater.

The event will also include an international drama seminar bringing together drama experts and practitioners from countries such as France, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland and Italy, to discuss various topics including international exchanges, drama education, festival operations and the relationship between theater and urban development.

Exhibitions will be held to extend the theatrical experience beyond performances, allowing audiences to engage with dynamic art forms and explore the history of the Comedie-Francaise, one of France's oldest national theaters. Interactive installations and ambient setups will also be featured, enhancing the visitor experience.

## LIFESHANGHAI

## Night classes are fit for purpose

Presence of foreign trainers teaching Brazilian jujitsu and tai chi is also a big draw, Wang Xin reports.

With the days getting shorter and dusk setting in early, many people make a beeline for indoor activities with evening art courses topping the list. Helping them keep in shape is 26-year-old Brazilian Ana Paula Zanolete, a black belt coach in Brazilian jujitsu, or BJJ.

Moving to Shanghai this January, Zanolete is teaching a BJJ night course in the city's Jing'an District Culture Center, which is one of the 1,072 night art courses that the city is offering to the public in the fall semester. She is also one of the first foreign teachers to give such culture lessons at night schools.

Shanghai's night courses have been trendy among those in the 18 to 55 age bracket who usually have day jobs. The public night school program initiated by the Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism has been in operation for almost 10 years, aiming at extending culture and arts education to a wider range of learners.

Participants take 12 lessons given by professional tutors for about 500 yuan (\$70), far below the market price. The fall semester enrolled nearly 25,000 students and have begun at 400 teaching locations across the city since this month.

Co-teaching with another BJJ veteran coach from Turkmenistan, Zanolete's course is one of the most popular offerings this semester. All 25 spots in the class were sold out within six seconds when its online registration opened in August.

"Shanghai is a big and beautiful city with a cosmopolitan culture, and it has a big community of BJJ and martial arts. I love BJJ and training people and teaching new students. For me, it is a great opportunity and really interesting thing to do," says Zanolete.

Apart from the night course, Zanolete also serves as a BJJ coach at a training institution in the city.

Her teaching usually begins with warm-up routines, and then moves on to a blend of technique instructions and practice.

She explains that she does not put a lot of pressure on beginners. Instead, she is pleased to see the trainees with smiles and tries to make them feel comfortable.

Most of all, she likes to bust the fear and myths associated with



BJJ and martial arts through her lessons.

"Some people may be a little bit scared about BJJ and think that martial arts is difficult, and I want to change this. I want them to shed the

fear of learning martial arts, and would like to see more Chinese girls and boys take up BJJ," says Zanolete.

Fang Xuhao, a 26-year-old lawyer, was lucky enough to get a place in the class. In addition to his interest

in the sport, the foreign teachers are another motivation for him to take the plunge.

"The presence of foreign teachers gives me an international feel, encourages cultural exchange and

helps improve my spoken English. And the warm-up session benefits me the most. As an office worker, those movements can relieve some tension in the lower back muscles and then strengthen them. The class

is well worth the money," says Fang. As the teacher, Zanolete is also enjoying her role and benefiting no less than her trainees: "I now know a lot of people, made new friends, getting to know the culture of other countries and improving my English as well."

Like Zanolete, Shahar Levy, a 46-year-old Israeli guide who has been living in Shanghai for almost two decades, is another foreign teacher of the Shanghai night course, teaching tai chi at the Shanghai Mass Art Center.

Captivated by tai chi in his 20s, Levy came to Shanghai in 2005 to study the martial art form at Shanghai University of Sport, and never left.

"I feel tai chi is not only a kind of *wushu* (Chinese martial arts), but more a sport integrating culture and life philosophy. It features slow movements, which allows us to feel ourselves and offer us a comprehensive experience ... People can work out and exercise their brains at the same time (by practicing tai chi), which continuously makes an impact on our daily lives," says Levy.

Levy used to teach tai chi for years at a school in Israel, and this is the first time he is imparting a bilingual tai chi lesson to trainees in China. He notes that unlike overseas trainees, the Chinese are familiar with many professional words and theories in this field, making the lesson easier, more efficient and smooth.

"Hopefully, we can be friends, and I can learn from them as well, about their ideas, about different cultures and more. I hope each trainee in the class can have the opportunity to express themselves with tai chi," says Levy.

Zheng Pengcheng, a 24-year-old account manager in the class, is a big fan of tai chi. He signed up for a tai chi calligraphy lesson in the spring semester of Shanghai night courses.

"Tai chi can help us build the body and stay fit. The teachers are professional; and the lesson is of great value. We exercise, practice English and learn different movements and promote cultural understandings. It is very interesting," says Zheng.

As another big fan of traditional Chinese culture, Levy enjoys his time with the trainees and his life in Shanghai too.

"For foreigners in China, Shanghai is a convenient city. As an international metropolis, Shanghai can offer you both traditional Chinese and Western cultures. This city is vibrant, dynamic and smooth. Things just flow here, and it is always changing — in a smooth way."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

Clockwise from above: Trainees practice tai chi at Shanghai Mass Art Center on Sept 9. Shahar Levy poses for a photo. Ana Paula Zanolete coaches Brazilian jujitsu. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Online See more by scanning the code.

## Tree and stone culture gives a minimal impression of art

By ZHANG KUN  
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A Chinese-style garden complete with pavilions, a pond, ornamental rocks and bonsai, is now open on the roof of Shanghai Museum East.

The roof garden opened simultaneously with the exhibition *The Resonance of Wood and Stone*, featuring scholar's rocks and Shanghai-style *penjing* (miniature potted landscapes) on Sept 6, which also marked the launch of the new Jiangnan Gallery.

Located on the fourth floor, the gallery is dedicated to the exhibition of the craftsmanship, aesthetics and lifestyle in the lower range of the Yangtze River Delta, known in Chinese as Jiangnan, which has remained an important center for the Chinese civilization for thousands of years.

For several millennia, Chinese literati admired the natural landscapes as the embodiment of their spiritual ideals. The appreciation of ornamental rocks was born from such spiritual pursuit. People picked rocks for their aesthetic values, often favoring those that look like the mountains and cliffs. They would have matching wood stands, shelves or pots made for each rock, and placed them on the desk, curio rack in their studios or in the garden.

As visitors step into the atrium of the gallery, they will find a series of scholar's rocks on exhibition on one side, and on the other side a set of



Left: A *penjing* named *Observation without Action*.

Right: A *penjing* exhibition on the Roof Garden in Shanghai Museum East. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



classical Chinese furniture with stationery, arranged to look like an ancient Chinese scholar's study. A long table stands in the middle with a *penjing* installation on the top, consisting of rocks, orchids and moss, emulating the natural mountainous landscape.

"Collecting and appreciating rocks is a long tradition in China," Yang Zhigang, former director of Shanghai Museum, wrote in his preface to the exhibition *Elegant*

*Friends for a Lofty Studio: Scholar's Rocks Presented by Ms Hu Kemin*, in 2020. "Scholar's rocks, or *gongshi* in Chinese, displayed as part of the accouterments in a learned man's study, have found favor with generations of the literati."

According to Shi Yuan, head of the handicraft department of Shanghai Museum, since Hu's donation of her collection of scholar's rocks in 2018 and the 2020 exhibition at Shanghai Museum, the museum has developed

into an important platform for collection, research and showcasing of traditional Chinese ornamental rocks.

"Thanks to the completion of the new roof garden at Shanghai Museum East, we now have a great venue for more exhibitions and events in this field," he says at the opening.

As visitors walk past one rare rock after another, they soon find themselves stepping outdoors to the roof garden, where larger rocks are on exhibition alongside the *pen-*

*jing* presented by Shanghai Botanic Garden.

*Penjing* is a traditional Chinese art and craft featuring the design of miniature trees in pots, also known as bonsai. In Shanghai and nearby regions, the practice of cultivating *penjing* has gone on for more than 400 years, developing into the youngest Shanghai-style school, among the five leading ones of Chinese *penjing*, according to Yan Wei, director of Shanghai

## If you go

*The Resonance of Wood and Stone: Jiangnan Scholar's Rocks and Shanghai-style Penjing*  
10 am-6 pm, Sept 6-Nov 11, closed on Tuesday (except for national holidays).  
Roof Garden (5F) & the Atrium of the Jiangnan Gallery (4F), Shanghai Museum East, 1952 Century Avenue, Shanghai. Reservation is required.

Botanic Garden, which is co-host of the exhibition.

The Shanghai-style *penjing* is characterized by its free forms, lively and smooth lines inspired by natural landscapes and Chinese ink painting.

More than 140 species of plants are widely used in Shanghai-style *penjing* design, such as a wide range of trees of the pine and cypress families, Chinese elm, and Chinese little leaf boxwood.

Many of these plants have a long life span. "Very often our colleagues are working with *penjing* designed by former generation botanists," according to Wang Juan, head of the *penjing* administration center at Shanghai Botanic Garden. "When a *penjing* reaches its designed form, it can live on like that for decades, sometimes even more than a century, if taken good care of."

## LIFE

The *Lisbon Maru* resurfaces on screenDocumentary about wartime atrocity seeks to remind world of an overlooked event, **Chen Ye** reports.

Fang Li, a 70-year-old director with 42 years of experience in exploration and marine surveying, and 24 years in the film industry, is both director and producer of *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru*. During the documentary's recent national roadshow, Fang shared the emotional and historical significance of his latest project with China Daily. The interview took place online as he was traveling between theaters and universities in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Fang refers to the tour as "the film returning home," as the story of the *Lisbon Maru* took place in Zhejiang.

In 2014, during a visit to Dongji Island in Zhoushan with his friend and director Han Han for the filming of *The Continent*, Fang first heard the story of the *Lisbon Maru* from local boatmen.

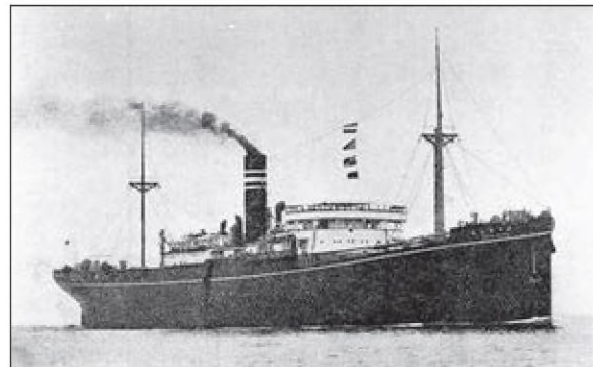
Late in September 1942, the Japanese military used the ship to transport more than 1,800 British prisoners of war from Hong Kong to Japan. In the waters off Dongji Island, it was torpedoed by a US submarine. Over the course of the next 25 hours, as the ship began to sink, the Japanese sealed the POWs in three holds, nailing the doors shut with wooden planks and canvas. In a heroic act of survival, the POWs managed to break free. Seeing the sinking ship, more than 200 fishermen from Zhoushan risked their lives to save 384 POWs, sheltering some from Japanese search efforts, in a spirit of selflessness and bravery.

Fang was shocked. "How had we in China never heard of the *Lisbon Maru*? We know of the *Titanic*, the *Tuiping*, and even the sinking of the *Awa Maru*, but no one here ever mentioned the *Lisbon Maru*. And for more than 70 years, no one had found its wreck," he says.

This mystery piqued Fang's curiosity, leading him to begin the search for the ship in 2016. After a fruitless 10-day effort, his team eventually located a large wreck. In 2017, using sonar technology and robots, they confirmed that its physical properties, contour, and structure matched those of the *Lisbon Maru*. Fang was elated.

During the journey, Fang learned of 94-year-old Lin Agen, the sole surviving fisherman to have participated in the rescue, and of a 98-year-old British soldier, Dennis Morley, who survived the ordeal. "It felt like a race against time. We had to document their stories before it was too late," Fang says.

Initially, Fang envisioned a traditional documentary with interviews and historical footage, but the power of the story and the emotional toll it took on the team pushed him to press for theatrical release. By 2018, he and his crew were traveling to the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and other locations to interview survivors and historians, including Tony Banham, the first scholar to research the tragedy.



**Clockwise from top:** Director and producer Fang Li speaks to the audience at the premiere of his documentary, *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru*, on Dongji Island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, on Aug 23; Fang shares details of his research with descendants of survivors of the tragedy; Fang (right) during an interview with Lin Agen (center), a fisherman who participated in the rescue; the director talks with a descendant of one of the POWs involved in the tragedy; and an image of the *Lisbon Maru*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By April 2018, the team had conducted multiple interviews and the emotional weight of the stories was overwhelming. "Every day, we found ourselves in tears. These were stories that moved us to our core," Fang says.

The scale of the tragedy — 1,816 British POWs — led Fang to launch

a search for more survivors and their families. He placed ads in British newspapers like *The Sunday Times*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Guardian*. "People thought I was crazy — 'Who even reads newspapers anymore?' they said. But I knew that the elderly, like myself, still do," Fang says. The campaign

was a success, leading to BBC Radio 4 inviting him on a show, which in turn connected him with 380 POW families.

And during a show of BBC World News, the host asked Fang, "What made a group of Chinese people come all the way to the UK and launch a massive advertising cam-

campaign? What happened?"

Fang's reply was: "It's very simple. Did you know that 77 years ago, a major event took place right on our doorstep? Your soldiers, the same age as my son, were brutally attacked and massacred by the Japanese army, and over 1,800 of them went through a

terrifying ordeal in Zhoushan. It was the kindhearted fishermen of China, our ancestors, who risked their lives under heavy gunfire to save them. Only then did the Japanese cease fire. In total, the fishermen of Dongji Island saved 384 Allied POWs. So why did a small group of Chinese people come here to do this? The reason is very simple: It happened in China, and the Chinese were the rescuers and eyewitnesses."

The team was surprised to discover that one of the rescued soldiers, William Beningfield, was still alive and living in Canada.

Fang had initially estimated the film would cost a few million yuan, but the scope of the project expanded, and by 2021, his funds ran dry. He sold his homes in Beijing and Chengdu and now rents an apartment. "I'm out of money, but it's OK as long as I'm still alive. And this film — it's something I have to make. It's my mission to remind the world of the story of the *Lisbon Maru*," Fang says.

Over the course of seven years, he and his crew traveled to the UK, the US, Japan, Canada, and China, gathering documents and interviewing the families of over 380 survivors. On Aug 23, *The Sinking of the Lisbon Maru* premiered on Dongji Island, where the tragedy occurred. Fang wrote on his WeChat moments: "We finally showed the documentary on Dongji Island, the very place where our ancestors performed their heroic acts 82 years ago. I also received the honorary title of 'Dongji Island Citizen' — a privilege I treasure deeply."

The film had a theatrical release on Sept 6, and quickly earned a rating of 9.3 on Douban, ranking first among theatrical releases this year. Viewers described it as "touching," "a reminder not to forget history," and "a tribute to the goodness of the Chinese people."

"The Chinese fishermen didn't understand English, so there was no verbal communication. They only knew that they needed to save people. This, I believe, reflected a fundamental kindness and beauty in human nature. That was the most touching part for me," said viewer Chang Shuoyu, according to CCTV News.

Sadly, many of the film's central narrators — Lin, Morley, and Beningfield — have passed away since 2019. Reflecting on the project, Fang says, "The window to capture these firsthand accounts was between 2018 and 2019. I was lucky to have seized that moment. Had I not acted, I would have been a criminal in the eyes of history."

For the director, the project has become a responsibility, a way to honor the lives lost and the brave actions of the Chinese fishermen who risked everything to save strangers.

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## Geographical indication booms on Chinese market

An exhibition hall filled with booths displaying pomelos, pears, mushrooms, its air fragrant with the enticing aromas of black tea, mooncakes and spicy rice noodles, could easily be mistaken for a food expo. In fact, it was part of a conference on intellectual rights.

The products on display at the 13th China Intellectual Property Annual Conference last week in Beijing, all have one thing in common: a geographical indication or GI.

A GI is a form of IP that signifies a product's origin as well as the traits or reputation associated with that location, and serves as a mark of quality that sets it apart from competitors. Notable examples of GI include Champagne and Kweichow Moutai.

In the exhibition area, domestic GI products from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Guangdong and Shaanxi provinces drew large crowds of visitors, photographers and vloggers.

According to the latest data released by China's IP authority, the country had approved 2,523 GI products and registered 7,385 GI trademarks as of the end of August.



**Left:** Buyers taste ice wine from Jilin province, a product with a geographical indication, at a GI expo in Luzhou city, Sichuan province.

**Right:** A visitor examines an oil-paper umbrella, a GI product, at the event. PHOTOS BY LIU KUN / XINHUA



GI products have not only become top choices for consumers, but also driven the growth of regional economies and industries.

Zhushui fungus, a highly nutritious specialty of Zhushui county in Shaanxi province, attracted many buyers at the conference. The staff at the exhibition booth

said that the local government has set up a modern industrial park and has worked with research teams to promote the fungus. Zhushui fungus has also secured EU trademark registration, marking its entry into the international market.

Hu Wenhui, deputy commission-

er of the China National Intellectual Property Administration, said that the direct annual output value of GIs has increased consistently since 2020. Last year, it surpassed 961 billion yuan (\$139.1 billion).

Apart from boosting the economy, GI plays an important role in protecting regional culture.

Suzhou embroidery from Zhenhu subdistrict in Jiangsu province is not only a GI product but also an item of intangible cultural heritage that has been made for around 2,000 years. It has regained popularity through IP licensing and collaborations with modern products like watches,

headsets and even video games.

At a breakout session on integrating GI cultural communication and modern value, Zhang Xue, an inheritor of Suzhou embroidery, said that his team has applied for 42 patents and more than 1,000 copyrights.

Global GI specialties like Thai fish sauce also received significant attention at the conference. China has emphasized the importance of international GI cooperation.

In all, 110 Chinese GIs have been ensured protection globally, while 142 products from France, Britain, the United States, Mexico, the European Union and other countries and regions have received GI protection in China.

Guo Wen, a senior official of the CNIPA, said at the conference that China will continue to enhance GI protection efforts by establishing demonstration zones and enforcing stricter laws and added that the country looks forward to working with the global community to bring greater benefits to the people.

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