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# CHINA DAILY

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## Xi hails nation's landmark space efforts

President highlights significance of Chang'e missions in lunar exploration

By ZHAO LEI  
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China will continue strengthening cooperation and exchanges with the international space community and sharing its capabilities and findings with other countries, President Xi Jinping said on Monday as he met representatives involved in the historic Chang'e 6 lunar mission.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, said that outer space is a shared domain of humans, and space exploration is a common cause of humanity.

China's lunar exploration program always seeks equal, win-win cooperation and the peaceful use of lunar resources, the president said, adding that it belongs to both the Chinese people and all of humankind.

He said that the Chang'e missions have been creating and offering huge potential and opportunities for international science and technology collaboration, and have also been contributing Chinese wisdom and strength to the global endeavor to explore deep space.

At a meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing with representatives of space officials, mission planners, scientists, engineers and technicians who worked on Chang'e 6, Xi called for the continued strengthening of international space cooperation and exchanges of different forms.

He also emphasized the need for China to share its capabilities and findings with other countries, and work with others to improve the governance of outer space, in order



President Xi Jinping meets Chang'e 6 mission representatives while visiting an exhibition showcasing lunar samples brought back by the Chang'e-6 probe and China's lunar exploration achievements at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

to use achievements in space science and technology to bring more benefits to the human race.

Speaking about Chang'e 6, he said that the 53-day mission brought the first-ever samples back to Earth from the far side of the moon. The lunar adventure has become an iconic accomplishment in China's efforts to make itself a global power in the space industry as well as in the fields of science and technology. It has also become the latest milestone in the country's lunar program, he noted.

Saying that space exploration has no end, Xi encouraged all of those engaged in China's space industry to make the best use of lunar samples for research, and

continue to work hard on deep-space exploration and other major space projects so they can make comprehensive advances in space science, technology and applications to make new contributions to building a space power.

Xi stressed the need to promote the lunar program workers' spirit throughout the whole of society in order to further enhance the Chinese people's confidence and pride in comprehensively promoting the construction of a powerful country and the great cause of national rejuvenation.

After the meeting, Xi and other top leaders visited an exhibition at the Great Hall of the People about the Chang'e 6 samples and the

national lunar missions.

The Chang'e 6 mission, representing the world's first attempt to bring samples from the far side of the moon, was launched by a Long March 5 heavy-lift carrier rocket on May 3 from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province.

After a host of sophisticated steps, the Chang'e 6 lander touched down at the South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the largest-known impact craters in the solar system, on the morning of June 2.

The landing marked the second time a spacecraft ever arrived on the lunar far side. The vast region had never been reached by any spacecraft until January 2019, when

the Chang'e 4 probe landed in the South Pole-Aitken Basin. Chang'e 4 surveyed areas surrounding its landing site, but did not collect or send back lunar samples.

The lander worked for 49 hours on the moon's far side, using a mechanical arm and a drill to collect surface and underground materials.

The mission successfully brought back a total of 1,935.3 grams of lunar samples from the far side.

The samples have unique scientific value and will further expand humans' knowledge about the moon's history and help to gear up the exploration and exploitation of lunar resources, according to the China National Space Administration.

WORLD WATCH  
By Andrew KP Leung

## Why HKETO Certification Act will hurt Washington's own interests

On Feb 17, 2023, a bill was introduced in the United States Congress requiring the President to periodically certify whether to allow the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices to continue operating in the US. A negative certification would result in the HKETOs ceasing operation within 180 days.

The claim was that the 2020 National Security Law for Hong Kong had undermined the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's human rights and "one country, two systems".

With the US presidential election drawing near, the Congress resumed after summer recess on Sept 9 with a "China Week" aimed

at passage of a raft of 28 anti-China legislations. As part of this China-bashing exercise, the HKETO Certification Act was passed on Sept 10.

Before my retirement in 2004, I was director-general of Hong Kong's London ETO, covering the United Kingdom and a dozen other countries in Eastern Europe, as well as Switzerland, Norway and Russia. In the mid-1980s, I was a commercial counselor in the Brussels ETO.

A lot of HKETO's work is devoted to helping foreign businesses and governments understand what is happening in Hong Kong in the context of its relationship with the Chinese mainland. These offices act as a helpful bridge between Hong Kong and the host countries.

So it irks me that the good work of HKETOs has become a sacrificial lamb at the altar of China-bashing.

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## US visas to Chinese students on rise; concerns over unfair treatment stay

By ZHAO YIMENG  
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The United States remains the top destination for Chinese students studying abroad despite concerns among students and parents over visas and public security, said an official with the US embassy in Beijing.

Meanwhile, Chinese students who plan to study in US universities and their parents expressed concerns about the unfair treatment that US border authorities meted out to Chinese students in some cases.

Karen Gustafson, the embassy's minister counselor for consular affairs, told China Daily on Sunday that the embassy issued 105,000 visas to students from China last

year. "We are currently hosting 290,000 Chinese students in the US," she said.

A report released by the US Department of State showed that in the first half of 2023, a total of 44,762 students from the Chinese mainland were granted F-1 visas to study in the US, a year-on-year increase of 44 percent.

As of the end of July, the embassy had issued more than 80,000 student visas to Chinese nationals, Gustafson said, noting the continuing increase in visas issued to Chinese students.

According to the 2023 Open Doors report released in November, Chinese students accounted for approximately 29 percent of the 1.05 million foreign students in the US during the 2022-23 academic

year, down from 33 percent in the previous academic year.

Gustafson said that despite a decreasing trend, Chinese students remain the largest group of foreign students in the US, and are expected to "stay at the top and grow".

"We really wholeheartedly welcome Chinese students to come to the US, and we are always hoping to encourage more students to come," she said, adding that the embassy is making efforts to maximize student numbers and return to the peak before the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Sunday, hundreds of Chinese students and parents participated in an education fair in Beijing, seeking information on the prospects of studying abroad. Around 100 US universities attended the fair, which was organized by Education-

USA, a US State Department network of international student advice centers.

A fair visitor, surnamed Wang, said she hopes to address her concerns over her daughter's further education in the US by seeking advice from the universities and the organizer.

Wang said that her daughter, a student of biological sciences in Wuhan, Hubei province, is preparing to pursue postgraduate studies in the US.

Given recent cases of Chinese students, particularly those majoring in science and engineering at US universities, having their visas refused on arrival, receiving unfair treatment by border enforcement and even facing deportation, Wang said she is worried and hopes to

get more information from the authorities.

In recent years, dozens of Chinese students have reported that they suffered from unwarranted harassment, interrogation and repatriation because of their political or scientific research background.

Many have posted on social media platforms their "terrifying" experiences of being taken by border officials to a "small dark room" at US airports, raising public concerns.

"What I care about most is the safety of my child and whether she can smoothly graduate from a US university," Wang said, adding that she had heard that Chinese students applying for certain subjects face higher risks of visa rejection.

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INSIDE  
China develops a sustainable way to goal  
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## Shattered peace



People walk on a beach in Tyre, southern Lebanon, on Monday, even as smoke billows from the site of an Israeli airstrike nearby. Israeli forces carried out over 120 airstrikes on Monday morning in the region. AZIZ TAHER / REUTERS See story, page 16

## 'AVOCADO TOWN' RIPENS PROSPECTS FOR TOURISM, AGRICULTURAL SUCCESS

Menglian in Yunnan province turns exotic superfruit into local specialty

**Editor's note:** In a series of reports titled "Claims to Fame", China Daily looks at how some regions have earned wealth and recognition through specific products to realize the goal of rural vitalization.

By YANG RAN and ZHENG JINRAN in Menglian, Yunnan

Traveler Jiang Chaochao added remote Menglian county in Yunnan province to her bucket list of destinations this year because of its reputation



as China's "Avocado Town". "For fitness enthusiasts, this is a huge bonus," said Jiang from Hunan province, who exercises regularly and tries to eat healthy food. "I was excited to learn that in China we have a town that can produce lots of avocados," she added.

During her visit in August, Jiang tried avocado coffee and other unusual dishes made with the fruit

"Avocado coffee is smoother than a regular latte, with the fresh avocado aroma blending seamlessly with the coffee's caramel and fruity notes. It's also invigorating," she said.

Wang Longsheng, a 32-year-old from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, also enjoyed the intriguing blend during his stay in Menglian. "I had never heard of, or tasted, avocado coffee before coming here. But after tasting it, I found that the combination is more than the sum of its parts. It retains the distinct flavors of both ingredients while being

refreshingly smooth," he said.

Wang's journey to Menglian in April was driven by the town's dual allure: its renowned coffee and its reputation as "Avocado Town".

Coffee is one of the cornerstones of the local economy, contributing an output value of 1.23 billion yuan (\$170 million) in 2023. The county's coffee plantation area reached 6,636 hectares this year, with 116 market entities involved in the coffee business, according to the latest local government data.

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## PAGE TWO

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Upon his arrival, Wang was delighted by the town's vibrant coffee culture. "The coffee street here is impressive, with shops operating late into the night, which is said to be their peak business time, the opposite of the urban work schedule. Many of the coffee shop owners are also well-versed in coffee culture," he added.

While avocado-related tourism products are in their infancy compared with coffee, Wang sees their great potential. "Avocado dishes in Menglian are versatile and memorable, combining well with a variety of cuisines, including Chinese dishes. Avocado beverages are also plentiful, showcasing the fruit's compatibility with numerous recipes," he said.

The full name of the county in Pu'er, Yunnan province is Menglian Dai, Lahu, and Wa autonomous county. Its avocados are not just a trendy superfood gracing the tables of the middle-income group. Here, they are a beloved local specialty, deeply integrated into the daily lives of the residents.

**Local specialty**

"For us locals, avocados are a common food," said Zha Ke, a 36-year-old farmer from Menglian.

"Even the elderly eat them regularly now, and young women use avocados from their own trees to make face masks. During festivals and family visits, we always serve avocados to our guests. When we visit friends, we bring avocados as gifts."

In Menglian, avocados are enjoyed in a variety of ways beyond the typical avocado milk and yogurt. Favorites include avocado coffee, avocado with wasabi and soy sauce, fried avocado, and avocado chicken stew. Some restaurants even offer avocado feasts, featuring eight dishes with the fruit.

Zha Ke, who is from the Wa ethnic group, likes avocado chicken porridge, a dish that blends traditional Wa cuisine with the creamy fruit.

Avocados, which originated in Mexico and spread to Central and South America, are now primarily produced and exported by Mexico, Peru and Kenya.

The delicious and nutritious fruit has gained global popularity due to its association with a healthy lifestyle. Rich in fats, dietary fiber, protein, and vitamins, yet low in sugar, avocados are versatile and can be enjoyed both as a vegetable and a fruit.

In Menglian, avocados have transitioned from an imported novelty to a local specialty thanks to the region's natural advantages and the collaborative efforts of the local government, enterprises, and farmers.

In 2007, Qi Jiashu, general manager of Pu'er Green Bank Biological Co, began researching suitable locations for avocado cultivation in China. After setting up trial fields in Guangdong, Hainan, and Yunnan provinces, as well as the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, the small town of Menglian emerged as the most promising site.

"Menglian and Uruapan in Michoacan, Mexico, the world's top avocado region, are almost on the same latitude and have very similar climates. Menglian's suitable temperatures, ample rainfall, and unique karst topography matched the avocado's preference for moisture without waterlogging," Qi said.

"Even during dry spells, the Nanlei River flowing through Menglian's Mangxin town ensures the avocados receive natural irrigation. Since 2007, we trialed over 100 avocado varieties from around the world in Menglian, but most did not perform satisfactorily," he recalled.

After eight years of testing, his team selected 12 promising varieties, but mainly Hass, for cultivation in Menglian.

"If developed well, Menglian could become a production center for avocados in Asia," Qi said.

In 2015, large-scale planting began in Menglian. However, promoting the large-scale cultivation of an unfamiliar exotic fruit among local villagers was not easy.

Zha Ke first heard about avocados in 2016. "When officials promoted avocado planting, we were hesitant because we had never heard of avocados and were worried about market demand and income," he recalled. "But after researching online and learning about the high demand for imported avocados, combined with the village's promotion and the '334 collaboration model,' we decided to give it a try."

**Sharing profits**

The 334 collaboration model, developed by the local government and enterprises, is a profit-sharing mechanism where farmers contribute land for a 30 percent share, enterprises provide seedlings and technology for another 30 percent, and State-owned management companies, village cooperatives, and village collectives, hold the remaining 40 percent.

This model ensures that farmers get a share of the profits and guarantees a minimum income of 300 yuan per *mu* (0.06 hectares) of land during the initial three non-harvest years. It also means that the company and the village collective share the risks with the farmers.

Yang Hua, the Party Secretary of Mangxin town, was one of the first to promote avocado cultivation to farmers. "Compared with crops like corn and sugar cane, avocados offer higher economic returns," Yang said. The 334-collaboration model was also a crucial factor in convincing farmers to participate.

Zha Ke, persuaded by this model, decided to lease his 7 *mu* of land to the cooperative for



A farmer inspects avocados hanging off a tree at a plantation in Menglian county, Yunnan province, in November.

LIANG ZHIQIANG / XINHUA

## Avocados: County's fruitful efforts win acclaim



**Clockwise from top left:** Workers sort avocados at a plantation in Menglian in September. AVOCADOS ARE PACKED AT A PLANTATION IN MENGLIAN. A FARMER CHECKS GRAFTED AVOCADO SEEDLINGS IN HER PLOT IN MENGLIAN.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Villagers dressed in Dai ethnic group costumes display harvested avocados at a plantation in Mangxin, Menglian, in November 2022.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

avocado cultivation in 2016, despite never having seen or tasted an avocado. But his bold decision has since brought him and his family substantial income. "Last year, I earned 47,000 yuan in dividends from my land," he said.

In addition to dividends, Zha Ke earns 120 yuan a day working at an avocado orchard. "Overall, avocados have increased my annual income by about 50,000 yuan," he said.

As more villagers witnessed the benefits of avocado cultivation, participation grew.

"In our village group of 146 households, almost every one now grows avocados," said Zha Ke from Mangxin village.

"Even if they don't plant them in their fields, they have avocado trees growing in their yards or around their houses."

**Transforming Menglian**

Seventeen years ago, Qi Jiashu planted the first avocado seed in Menglian. Today, Menglian has transformed into the Avocado Town of China, producing about 80 percent of the country's avocados and replacing 15 percent of imported ones.

According to data from Chinese Customs, in 2023, China imported over 65,626 metric tons of avocados worth around \$151 million from nine countries, including Peru, Chile, Kenya and Mexico. The top three provincial-level regions for avocado imports were Shanghai, Guangdong and Zhejiang.

The avocado industry in Menglian now supports 11,000 households and 35,000 people, more than a quarter of the county's population. Its avocado plantations cover 118,900 *mu*, which yield 19,500 tons of the fruit and generate around 680 million yuan in revenue last year.

Compared with imported avocados, domestic ones have an advantage due to their higher dry matter percentage, Qi said. As the dry matter percentage in an avocado increases, so does its oil content. More oil content results in a richer flavor.

As China's largest domestic avocado production area, Menglian is striving to set the industry benchmark for domestic avocados. "Menglian Avocado" has been successfully registered as a National Geographic Indication Certification Trademark.

"Imported avocados are picked at 50 to 60 percent ripeness to endure the long journey from the Americas to China, which takes about a month," said Qi.

"By the time they reach consumers, they have been collected from trees by 50 days to two months.

In contrast, domestic avocados in Menglian are often picked at 80 to 90 percent ripeness or fully ripe. This results in a higher dry matter content, usually exceeding 25 percent. This tree-ripened quality gives domestic avocados a significant advantage in the market."

**Spreading the love**

Menglian is also innovating on the sales front.

Diverse channels such as e-commerce, supermarkets, and wholesalers are being leveraged to ensure their avocados reach major cities including Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province within 72 hours of being picked.

In 2021, Menglian avocados debuted in 18 Freshippo stores, Alibaba's fresh-food chain. In November 2022, the first avocado "Freshippo village" was inaugurated in Mangxin, making it the only such village in China despite its remote location. The partnership with Freshippo helps Menglian benefit from, and build upon, a nationwide supply chain for ripe domestic avocados.

Menglian's avocado-related tourism is also gaining attention. Last October, the town hosted its first Avocado Festival with 119,300 tourist visits during the weekend National Day holiday, generating income of 106.88 million yuan, according to official data.

Two avocado orchards that integrate agriculture with tourism, leisure, and wellness experiences have been established. Plans are also underway to develop an avocado-themed town in Mangxin. On Oct 2, Menglian will once again host the Avocado Culture Festival.

The booming avocado industry has attracted young people back to Menglian, offering employment opportunities that rival those in urban areas.

Party Secretary Yang said the avocado industry provided over 10,000 job opportunities for the local community last year, particularly during the four- to five-month long harvest season, with daily wages ranging from 100 to 120 yuan.

Currently, 3,000 households in Mangxin cultivate avocados on 30,000 *mu* of land, increasing the average household income by more than 6,000 yuan.

The county aims to plant 100,000 *mu* of avocados, boost cultivation, and produce 100,000 tons of fresh avocados annually, with 40,000 tons for processing. It is working on building an advanced processing park for high-end products like avocado oil and puree, extending the industry chain and adding value.

Apart from economic gains, avocado plantations also bring ecological benefits.

Farmer Zha Ke has noticed environmental improvements that avocado cultivation has also brought.

"We used to grow sugar cane and had to burn the leftover stalks, which made the air really unpleasant, especially in the hot months from April to June. Since switching to avocados, there's been much less burning, and the air quality has improved," he said.

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## TOP NEWS

# Upgrading, trade-in policy yield results

Policy spurs consumption potential, driving sales of automobiles and home appliances

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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China has issued 300 billion yuan (\$42.5 billion) in treasury bonds to support equipment upgrades and trade-in deals for consumer goods, significantly boosting the growth of consumption and economic momentum, said the country's top economic regulator.

The special treasury bonds fund has been fully allocated, and the upgrading and trade-in policy has been implemented in various regions across the country, the National Development and Reform Commission said on Monday.

"The policy has effectively helped release consumption potential in the country, driving sales growth of related products such as automobiles and household appliances," said Zhao Chenxin, deputy head of the commission.

"China is a giant that consumes a large amount of durable consumer goods, with the inventory of household appliances exceeding 3 billion units and cars over 300 million units. Improving the energy efficiency level of those existing products through trade-in deals will also help reduce China's overall energy consumption and carbon emissions," Zhao said.

In August, retail sales of passenger vehicles in China reached 1.91 million units, an increase of 10.8 percent compared with July. Sales of new energy vehicles hit 1.03 million units, a 17 percent increase over July, according to the China Automobile Dealers Association.

The penetration rate of NEVs in China has exceeded 50 percent for two consecutive months, and 2 million high-emission cars are expected to be phased out by the end of the year, the NDRC said.

For consumers who scrap and replace polluting automobiles, subsidies of 20,000 yuan will be provided for the purchase of NEVs and 15,000 yuan for buying fuel-efficient passenger vehicles with displacement of 2.0 liters or below, according to the latest policy.

"With the continuous promotion of the trade-in deals, a large amount of waste materials are expected to be generated in the near future. The NDRC will work with relevant departments to accelerate the building of a waste recycling system, covering various fields," Zhao said.

Fu Yifu, a researcher at the Star Atlas Institute of Finance, said the trade-in deals are expected to boost household consumption while expanding domestic demand, and promote the upgrade of traditional industries and the high-quality growth of the economy.

"A series of such subsidy policies can help lower the consumption threshold for residents and stimulate their willingness to trade in the old products for new ones," Fu said.

He added that this will also help drive the upgrade of the whole industrial chain, from raw materials and parts to after-sale services.

The policy has also helped lift the retail sales of household appliances and audiovisual equipment. In August, sales in those categories edged up 3.4 percent year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

For home appliances, older ones can be exchanged for new and better ones via e-commerce platforms and brick-and-mortar stores, and sales involving trade-in deals have grown rapidly. During Mid-Autumn Festival in mid-September, the home appliance market embraced a consumption peak.

## Moving with the music



Dancers show off their skills at a competition during the World Dance Sport Festival on Sunday in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Chinese dancers claimed all the top three prizes in the competition. AN YUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



## Helping hand

The Chinese naval hospital ship *Peace Ark* leaves the port of Pointe-Noire in the Republic of Congo on Sunday. During the seven-day visit, the medical team provided treatment to a total of 4,450 people, conducting checkups for over 2,300 patients and performing 127 surgeries.

LIU ZHILEI / XINHUA

# Voices rise against reviving China Initiative

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
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There is growing opposition to reviving the controversial China Initiative under a new name, with warnings of harm to Asian American communities, a chilling effect on US research and a waste of national security resources.

The recent passage of an appropriations bill, H.R.1398, by the House of Representatives on Sept 11, has reignited concerns about the now-defunct program. The bill has been sent to the Senate and referred to the judiciary committee.

The China Initiative, launched in November 2018 by the Trump administration to combat economic espionage, was terminated in February 2022 by the Biden administration after the Justice Department acknowledged that the program was racially profiling individuals of Chinese heritage and failing to successfully prosecute cases.

Despite its discontinuation, efforts to revive the initiative have persisted, drawing sharp criticism from various organizations and experts.

The 1990 Institute, a San Francisco-based organization advocating for Asian Americans and constructive US-China relations, has joined the growing list of groups condemning the legislation.

"Similar to the original China Initiative, this bill is likely to exacerbate the already high levels of

discrimination that Asian Americans endure without addressing legitimate national security concerns," said Grace Yu, president and board chair of the 1990 Institute. "Although too often treated as dangerous outsiders, Asian Americans have been a vital and positive part of the fabric of American life for hundreds of years."

Yu said that the original program was terminated after it failed to uncover significant national security risks and it was acknowledged that it was harmful to Asian Americans, with many alleged espionage and national security cases ending in acquittal and dismissal.

Other prominent Asian American organizations, including Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Asian American Scholar Forum, the Committee of 100, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association and Stop AAPI Hate, have strongly condemned the legislation, describing it as rooted in xenophobia.

"Today, we are once again witnessing an alarming rise in anti-Asian political rhetoric and legislation that is threatening the safety and rights of millions of Asians and Asian Americans in the US," said the groups in a joint statement.

They drew parallels between the current situation and past instances of anti-Asian scapegoating in US history, such as the Immigration Act of 1924, the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and

the recent backlash against Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Michael German, a senior fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice's Liberty and National Security Program and a former FBI special agent, said that the China Initiative not only failed to fulfill its stated purpose but also inflicted serious harm on the research community.

"The program quickly devolved into a campaign of racial profiling and fearmongering that targeted US-based scientists and technologists who were not even suspected of spying or intellectual property theft," German wrote in an article titled "The China Initiative failed US research and national security. Don't bring it back".

"The chilling effect it created within the US scientific community continues to threaten American primacy in science and technology." The impact of the China Initiative on the scientific community has been substantial. A study by Stanford University in July examined trends among Chinese scientists in the US and found that the number of Chinese-born scientists leaving the country increased by 75 percent since the initiative began, with most returning to China.

The exodus of talent has made it increasingly difficult for US universities and research institutions to recruit and retain top scientific and technological talent from around the world, said German.

He also pointed out that the sheer number of investigations launched under the China Initiative was a relatively meaningless statistic. He argued that if those thousands of investigations didn't result in indictments and convictions, they were at best a waste of national security resources that should have been directed toward genuine threats, and at worst, evidence of abuse.

The American Council on Education and five other higher education associations also expressed concerns in a letter to House leaders regarding H.R.1398 and other bills that would affect US colleges and universities.

They emphasized the "deep and disturbing" impact the China Initiative had on the research community, leading to few actual convictions and many cases ending in dropped charges, dismissals or acquittals.

The letter also strongly opposed H.R.1516, the "DHS [Department of Homeland Security] restrictions on Confucius Institutes and Chinese Entities of Concern Act", which creates a new category of "Chinese Entities of Concern" so broadly defined that it would likely include most Chinese colleges and universities.

The organizations said that such a broad ban would likely end student-exchange programs between US and Chinese institutions, study-abroad programs for US students in China, and important research and development work on issues of national importance.

# Study: 'What I care about most is the safety of my child'

From page 1

Gustafson called such cases isolated incidents, and said the majority of Chinese students are continuing their studies in the US.

While the US embassy is in charge of issuing visas, entry into the country is handled by the Department of Homeland Security, she said.

"What I can say is the vast majority

of Chinese students going to the US end up studying in the US, and we really welcome them to continue to do so," she added.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said in April that enforcing deportation orders against Chinese students has caused significant harm to the individuals concerned and disrupted cultural and academic exchanges between China and the US.

"Recent cases demonstrate that US law enforcement officers are engaging in deportation for the sake of deportation, exhibiting political, discriminatory and selective enforcement," she said at a news conference.

Zhu Chengze, an assistant researcher of US diplomacy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the excessive scrutiny of Chinese students by US authorities may

seem to affect only a small group, but it is in reality demolishing one of the pillars of the complex interactions between China and the US.

"Normal academic exchanges between two technological powerhouses are disrupted. It is certainly not a positive sign if students and scholars are more concerned about their personal safety than academic matters," Zhu said.

# HK: Act demonstrates self-deception with double standard, expert says

From page 1

To appreciate how the NSL came about, certain sociopolitical dynamics need to be understood.

In October 2021, after a 38-year career in Hong Kong, I was invited to pen Chapter 7 "One Country Two Systems Revisited — A Personal Real-Life Perspective" for a book, *The Rise of China: Fresh Insights and Observations*, published by the UK-based Paddy Ashdown Forum.

I outlined how, when Hong Kong first returned to the motherland in 1997, Beijing bent backward to keep Hong Kong at arm's length. Even what used to be regular football matches between the police forces across the border had to be referred to Beijing for prior approval. As years went by, this "river-water-not-to-mix-with-well-water" mentality proved no longer realistic as goods, trade, investments, peoples, funds and ideas rapidly moved both ways.

I explained how a whole generation of Hong Kong's youths, brought up in a colonial education system biased toward job-related

subjects, gradually lost their sense of nationhood. The inevitable socio-economic integration across the border, including dramatic change in streets of shops switching to gold and jewelry outlets catering to high-spending mainland tourists brought about a sense of "erosion" of what was perceived to be Hong Kong's own "identity".

Later, an ill-fated extradition legislation ignited waves of increasingly violent, petrol-bomb-throwing protesters holding Hong Kong's law and order to ransom, demanding electoral changes contrary to specific provisions in the Basic Law, a constitutional document on Hong Kong's governance. Egged on by foreign powers, some riotous protests blatantly called for "Hong Kong independence", openly challenging Beijing's sovereignty over the city, necessitating the NSL's subsequent enactment.

On Sept 11, the HKSAR government issued a robust rebuke in an official statement, condemning the US Congress for slandering the NSL and smearing Hong

Kong's human rights situation.

It points out that the HKETO Certification Act is a self-deception with double standard, considering that the US has the most stringent national security legislation on the planet. The Act disregards the constitutional obligation and inherent rights of the HKSAR to safeguard national security, smears the fact that human rights and the rule of law are properly protected in accordance with the law by the HKSAR government, and grossly interferes in Hong Kong's affairs.

The statement highlights the legitimate functions of the three HKETOs in Washington, New York and San Francisco. They operate in accordance with local legislation and maintain close liaison with interlocutors in the government, business, think tanks and various sectors, enriching bilateral ties in different areas such as trade, investment, as well as arts and culture. Their smooth operation strengthens bilateral cooperation in various domains that are mutually beneficial to both places, including "win-

win" benefits to some 1,200 US businesses in Hong Kong as well as a trade surplus of some \$271.5 billion in US favor over the past decade.

The Department of Justice of the HKSAR, by virtue of Article 63 of the Basic Law, controls criminal prosecutions free from any interference. Independent prosecutorial decisions for each case are made in a rigorous and objective manner, strictly based on evidence and applicable laws in accordance with the Prosecution Code. Prosecutions would be instituted by the DoJ only if there is sufficient admissible evidence to support a reasonable prospect of conviction, and if it is in the public interest to do so.

As demonstrated in recent NSL trials in Hong Kong, the city's independent judiciary including eminent foreign judges in its Court of Final Appeal, has been rigorously vigilant in ensuring open and proper carriage of justice based on verified facts and established common law principles.

According to a survey conducted by a major foreign chamber of commerce early this year, almost 80 percent of its members interviewed

expressed confidence in Hong Kong's rule of law. Almost 70 percent said that their operations had not been affected by the NSL.

Business communities from different countries have recognized the city's advantages and have been enthusiastic about doing business here, as is evident by their continuous significant direct investments made in Hong Kong after the implementation of the NSL.

Invest Hong Kong, the government's trade and investment organization, has completed 358 projects in the first seven months of this year, representing a 40 percent increase year-on-year. Among them, 32 completed projects were from the US, which was ranked at the third place.

In addition, according to the Report on Annual Survey of Companies in Hong Kong with Parent Companies Located outside Hong Kong, the number of companies stationed in Hong Kong exceeded 9,000 again in 2023. The US was ranked 3rd, with 1,273 companies.

All in all, the cornerstone of Hong Kong's "one country, two

systems" remains intact.

As the three HKETOs are beneficial to the US' best interests, the HKETO Certification Act appears part and parcel of an indulgent national sport of China-bashing in an election year. This happens with a bipartisan consensus that China has become the US' "existential threat".

Regardless, the US' Sinophobia, however unjustified, persists, driven by a black-or-white, win-or-lose Manichean mindset of competition, resulting in indiscriminate China-bashing, including the uncalled-for HKETO Certification Act.

There is no evidence that the NSL has undermined "one country, two systems". HKETOs are clearly beneficial to US interests. The HKETO Certification Act doesn't help the US' competitiveness. Passing the Act makes no sense. If anything, it would merely smack of cutting one's nose to spite one's face.

The author is an international independent China strategist, and was previously the director-general of social welfare and Hong Kong's official chief representative for the UK, Eastern Europe, Russia, Norway and Switzerland. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA

## Clowning around



A clown entertains people at the Qingdao Liyuan Comedy Festival in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Sunday. The 10-day festival, which kicked off on Friday, features a variety of events, including comedy performances, a comedy carnival and music parties that are proving popular with residents and tourists. MENG DA / FOR CHINA DAILY

## County in Chongqing battles drought amid heat

By TAN YINGZI in Chongqing  
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As Chongqing continues to endure scorching heat, Fengjie county in the eastern part of the city is taking measures to prevent wildfires and drought.

Chongqing has been experiencing an unusual heat wave this year, with temperatures in most areas exceeding 40 C. By Sept 16, the number of hot days at Shapingba Station this year had reached 68, a record high, said Tang Hongyu, chief engineer at the Chongqing Climate Center.

The standard for hot days in Chongqing is when the daily maximum temperature reaches or exceeds 35 C.

Fengjie, in the heart of the Three Gorges Reservoir area on the Yangtze River, boasts large forests and beautiful mountains that attract many residents and tourists seeking a hint of coolness on hot days. But the pressure to prevent wildfires is increasing.

The Fengjie county emergency management bureau has mobilized people in towns and villages to enhance fire prevention publicity, using banners, radio broadcasts, text messages and public announcements to warn about potential risks.

It set up special working teams to inspect the forests and fields around the clock and strictly monitor fire sources.

"Every person must scan a QR code to register their information and turn in lighters or matches before entering the forest area," said Xiao Jianhua, the bureau's director. "We also ask them to help us prevent wildfires and safeguard the beautiful scenery."

The bureau has also strengthened consultations with meteorological and forestry departments, and released forest and grassland fire risk warning signals in a timely manner.

No major wildfires have occurred in the county, but the long spell of sunny, hot weather has caused severe droughts in some villages.

In the town of Chang'an Tujia, where the major water source was being rapidly depleted, the local government built a 19.15-kilometer-long emergency pipeline to divert water from a nearby reservoir, ensuring domestic water supply to its 1,226 households and 5,058 residents.

## PATHWAY TO PROGRESS

## High-quality legislation serving modernization

Experts say development needs to be realized in accordance with rule of law

By CAO YIN  
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During efforts to promote the formulation of laws in key, emerging and foreign-related fields, the quality of legislation should be improved by optimizing legislative procedures and approaches, experts said.

They said high-quality legislation plays a vital role in serving high-quality development, adding that Chinese modernization needs to be realized in accordance with the rule of law.

Their comments came after a requirement calling for deepening reforms in legislation was written into a resolution adopted at the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which concluded in Beijing in July.

The resolution on further comprehensively deepening reform to advance Chinese modernization provided guiding principles for various aspects for the next five years and specified seven legislative items — including ones promoting the private sector, financial development and national unity — as major tasks to draw up.

It also clarified that the rule of law provides an important guarantee for Chinese modernization, with significance in improving the quality of legislation.

Shen Chunyao, an official from the Standing Committee of the

National People's Congress, China's top legislature, said that legislation in the fields of national security, technological innovation, public health, biosecurity, the digital economy and artificial intelligence needs to be advanced in addition to completing the legislative tasks in the resolution.

While pointing out that high-quality legislation will help achieve Chinese modernization, he said, "Legislative items or decisions must be formulated, amended, abolished, codified or interpreted in more scientific and democratic approaches."

He stressed the importance of public opinions in lawmaking, calling for the improvement of "grassroots legislation opinion collection stations", an innovative move initiated by the Legislative Affairs Commission of NPC Standing Committee in July 2015.

The stations — some located in communities and some in colleges — have given individuals and departments at the grassroots level and from various sectors an easier channel to share their ideas on legislative issues, enabling them to give their advice directly to national lawmakers.

Forty-five such stations have been set up across the country, and they collected more than 27,880 legislative suggestions from the public from 2015 to April, according to data released by the commission in June.

In addition to disclosing draft

laws in a timely manner to solicit public opinions, Jiang Bixin, deputy head of the China Law Society, said that optimizing legislative procedures is another crucial part of improving the quality of legislation.

"In the process of advancing reforms in different areas, for example, legislative demands and suggestions should be put forward simultaneously," he said. "If the time for making a law is not yet ripe, the NPC Standing Committee should authorize pilot programs to be carried out first."

Xu Anbiao, a member of the NPC Standing Committee, emphasized the importance of diversifying approaches in handling legislative affairs, saying that the quality of legislation should also be further improved through full implementation of the Constitution.

"The pursuit of high-quality legislation has no end, and it is always on the road," he added.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, China has stepped up efforts to promote reform and advance law-based governance simultaneously, and some significant achievements have been made, according to Shen.

He compared reform and the rule of law to two wings of a bird and two wheels of a cart, revealing that of 303 laws currently in effect, 78 were newly enacted after the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, including the Civil Code, a legislative milestone that serves as a fundamental law for regulating civil activities.

## Better roads improving lives of villagers

By LUO WANGSHU in Aba, Sichuan  
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In the rugged mountains of Songde village, located in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture of Sichuan province, nearly 800 residents are living better thanks to the remarkable transformation of its roads.

Nestled in nine valleys along the Du Ke River at an altitude of about 3,150 meters, the Tibetan communities — known for their stunning, natural beauty — have long struggled with poor infrastructure, particularly inadequate roads.

Before 2016, villagers relied on dirt roads for transportation.

"On sunny days, we were covered in dust; on rainy days, we were covered in mud," said village leader Lopin.

Travel was especially perilous between October and May, when the roads are often iced over.

A gravel road was built in 2016,

easing vehicle access for Songde residents. But the real breakthrough came in 2019 with the completion of a 4.2-kilometer paved road connecting the village to National Highway G227, giving villagers better access to the outside world.

Since then, many villagers have sought employment outside Songde, investing in motorcycles, tractors and cars. Now that people are more confident about driving, the road, about 4 meters wide and featuring a designated bike lane, has significantly reduced the travel time to the nearest county center, Zamtang, from an hour in the best circumstances to about 30 minutes.

And now that villagers are venturing out, the village's average annual income has surged from 6,000 yuan (\$830) in 2016 to over 16,000 yuan.

The road has also improved access to essential services.

Rural bus services now operate in Zamtang county, offering affordable rides to residents. And the road has

benefited children, who no longer face long journeys to school, and the elderly, who can fulfill lifelong dreams such as visiting Lhasa, capital of the Xizang autonomous region.

Local tourism is also on the rise, leading villagers to develop homestays. Once new houses are built, some will be converted into guesthouses, with both villagers and the local government investing in renovations.

The road improvements are part of a larger national effort to enhance rural infrastructure. Zamtang's road network spans 1,028 km, with 744 km of rural roads. Nationwide, China has constructed or renovated over 2.5 million km of rural roads since 2014, improving access to 821 townships and 70,600 villages.

Such developments are helping bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, boosting economic opportunities and improving essential services in remote regions, and fostering a more equitable society.

## Residents of Taiwan accused in cyberattacks

By YANG ZEKUN  
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National security authorities are investigating three people with military backgrounds from Taiwan, accusing them of engaging in cyberattacks targeting the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, according to a statement released Monday by the Ministry of State Security.

The ministry said it had uncovered a hacker group, "Anonymous64", that is supported by "Taiwan independence" forces. The group has allegedly carried out numerous cyberattacks aimed at gaining control of mainland websites, outdoor digital screens and internet TV systems to broadcast content that distorts the mainland's political system and policies.

Authorities have identified the suspects as Luo Junming, Hong Liqi and Liao Weilin, all of whom reportedly serve in Taiwan's information communications and electronic force command, the statement said.

The command, established in 2017 and restructured in 2022 under Taiwan's defense ministry, is primarily responsible for electronic, information and cyber warfare. The Ministry of State Security

said it has been conducting cyber infiltration activities targeting key mainland sectors such as defense, aerospace and energy in a bid to steal sensitive data and disrupt mainland operations.

Anonymous64 is said to have launched cyberattacks targeting the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, according to a statement released Monday by the Ministry of State Security. The group has since posted over 70 updates, boasting of its so-called "victories" in cyber warfare, which include targeting outdoor digital displays, vending machines, internet TV systems, and the websites of news outlets, airlines and universities.

However, the ministry noted that many of the "victories" were exaggerated or fabricated, with some attacks aimed at counterfeit or abandoned websites. In some cases, the group is said to have used image-manipulation software to inflate its claims.

The ministry urged the developers and operators of internet systems, along with internet users, to strengthen cybersecurity measures, regularly update their systems, remedy vulnerabilities and enhance monitoring to prevent future cyberattacks.

The investigation is ongoing.

## China-ASEAN expo to promote cooperation

By ZHANG LI in Nanning  
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## 2,000 companies

The upcoming 21st China-ASEAN Expo is expected to advance the building of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 and promote high-quality regional development through a variety of economic and trade activities, the expo's secretariat said at a news conference on Monday in Nanning, capital of Southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

The expo will be held in Nanning from Tuesday to Saturday, with Malaysia to be the country of honor.

Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang will attend and address the opening ceremony of the expo and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in Nanning on Tuesday. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will deliver a video address.

"Trade and economic activities at the event are increasingly emphasizing practicality and highlighting key areas to promote cooperation in the digital economy and green economy," said Zeng Zhong, deputy secretary-general of the China-ASEAN Expo secretariat.

It will also focus on cooperation, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states holding national promotion events. For example, Indonesia is organizing promotional events focusing on environmental protection and investment. Cambodia's national promotion events emphasize commerce, investment and tourism. Vietnam's promotions will highlight trade and economic integration.

Zeng said the expo has been extended from four to five days, with the additional day open to the public. The exhibition layout has been optimized, with the addi-

tion of strategic emerging themes showcasing new, high-quality productive forces, along with new areas for digital technology and cultural exchanges.

More than 2,000 companies will be exhibiting in the main exhibition area of the expo in Guangxi.

More than 800 ASEAN and regional foreign companies are participating, accounting for more than 41 percent of exhibitors.

"There are more than 400 companies from the Fortune Global 500 and China's Top 500, as well as unicorns and specialized, innovative enterprises — representing a 15 percent increase over the previous session," Zeng said.

Chinese exhibitors will showcase drivers of new quality production such as the digital economy, new energy vehicles and green, low-carbon technologies, including applications such as Beidou chips and high-end mechanical equipment.

More than 1,100 Chinese and foreign leaders, ASEAN ambassadors to China, heads of international organizations, entrepreneurs, experts and scholars will be present at the opening ceremony.

"Through such high-level dialogue activities as the opening ceremony, we hope a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future will emerge," Zeng said.

China has been ASEAN's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, and ASEAN became China's top trading partner in 2020. Last year, the value of trade between China and ASEAN members reached \$911.7 billion.

## Jump ahead



Gymnast Zhang Boheng, who won a silver medal in the men's all-around gymnastics at the Paris Olympics, plays jump rope with students at Hunan First Normal University in Changsha, Hunan province, on Monday. YANG HUAIFENG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## CHINA

# Botanist documents beauty of Kenya's plants

Book is first by Chinese researchers cataloging flora outside of China



Wang Qingfeng takes photos of a *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a plant that can survive hundreds of years in arid conditions, in Namibia in 2019. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YAN DONGJIE in Beijing and LIU KUN in Wuhan

Wang Qingfeng's office in Wuhan, Hubei province, is decorated with a host of items and novelties from Africa, and among them is a painting of a baobab tree on a special type of paper from a plant native to the continent.

The botanist has spent nearly 30 years traveling back and forth between Africa and China as he cataloged Africa's diverse plant life.

In September last year, the first volume of *Flora of Kenya* was published, with Wang serving as the chief editor on the Chinese side. It was the first book about the flora of a country other than China organized and compiled by Chinese researchers.

In May, a study systematically explaining the evolutionary history of the baobab tree was published in the journal *Nature*. Wang, who is director of the Wuhan Botanical Garden and director of the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was one of the two authors.

The first seeds of Wang's passion for the continent of Africa began in 1996 when he was sent to the University of N'Djamena in Chad to set up a laboratory.

Adjusting to the relatively harsh conditions compared to his life in Wuhan, Wang endured scorching temperatures, limited water, frequent power outages and the threat of diseases such as malaria and cholera, which were prevalent at that time.

Due to these risks, the botanist never went anywhere without his aromatic oil to ward away mosquitoes and quinine to combat the risks of malaria.

"At that time, there were no other medicines available. Some peo-



ple said quinine had side effects, but having side effects was better than having malaria," Wang recalled.

"Over time, it has become a habit. Even now, you can find aromatic oil in my toiletry bag," he said. "But conditions have improved now. From Nairobi to the Maasai Mara, you can see significant changes in the roads, buildings and the environment."

Life in Africa could be tough, but the diversity of life attracted Wang to explore further. During an investigation in Bongor, Chad, he rented a motorcycle and had three to five locals help him carry specimen folders while he collected plants along the Logone River.

"In China, there is an ancient saying 'seeing more broadens knowledge'. The most important aspect of taxonomy is accumulation, progressing from not knowing to knowing, and within that knowing, discovering what is yet unknown," Wang said.

"It involves both interest and passion, as well as persistence, continuously driving oneself forward."

**Clockwise from above:**

Wang Qingfeng (left), with Mary Gikungu (center), director-general of the National Museums of Kenya, and Geoffrey Mwachala, chief of research at the museum, attend the launch of the first volume of *Flora of Kenya* in Nairobi, Kenya, in September last year.

LI YAHUI / XINHUA  
Wang carries out a research on a baobab tree in Zimbabwe in 2018. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY  
Wang wades through a marsh during an inspection of aquatic plants in Kenya in 2014. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Similar to climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, after enduring the arduous journey step by step, when one finds themselves amid the lush and harmonious flora and fauna at around 4,000 meters above sea level, there is a sense of peace, he said.

"Sitting down quietly and observing, that feeling is truly different because this is what I study."



Beauty and barrenness coexist in Africa, according to Wang. Behind the multitude of species is a lack of corresponding research efforts. Cataloging flora is a complex and significant undertaking and requires the collective efforts of people from various places and researchers from different fields and locations, he said.

*Flora of Kenya's* inclusion of over

7,000 plant species has filled the research gap in botanical resources in Kenya, and it has also had an impact on East Africa and the entire African continent, Wang said.

The idea for *Flora of Kenya* can be traced back to 1999 and Wang's first African student, Robert, who came from Kenya and was the initial link to the country for Wang. Since then, the idea of establishing

Sino-African botanical research cooperation has always been on his mind.

With the impetus of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed in 2013, cooperation between China and Kenya has intensified.

In addition to conducting research in Kenya, the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center of the CAS has established field stations and laboratories in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania, Rwanda and Mauritania.

"Technological cooperation is a sustainable form of cooperation. With platforms as carriers and people as supporters, it can combine economic aid to play a greater role," Wang said.

Behind every plant record can be found a human story. *Polystachya danielana* is the name of an orchid species found in the western highlands of Kenya. It was named in honor of plant taxonomist Daniel Odhiambo Miyawa, who pursued his doctoral degree at the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center.

Wang met him in 2014 and learned that he was an orchid expert at the National Museum of Kenya. Wang invited him to pursue a doctorate at the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center, and the following year, Miyawa arrived in Wuhan.

Unfortunately, in 2017, Miyawa fell seriously ill and passed away shortly thereafter. Therefore, a new species of orchid discovered the following year was named after him as a tribute to the orchid researcher.

To date, as a graduate adviser, Wang has guided over 20 African students.

"Before I retire, *Flora of Kenya* will definitely not be completed, but I believe more people will continue this work. It is a meaningful endeavor," Wang said.

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## African scholars pursue research at Wuhan center

By YAN DONGJIE and LIU KUN

An increasing number of African scholars have pursued their botanical research with the backing of Chinese institutions in recent years.

Bancy Gichovi, a master's student at the Sino-Africa Joint Research Center in Wuhan, Hubei province, is among them.

Her interest in studying in China began in 2015 during her undergraduate years at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, the headquarters of the Sino-African research center in Africa, where she was attracted to the enduring relationship between China and Kenya.

In 2019, she took advantage of the opportunity by applying for a scholarship to delve deeper into plant molecular biology at the research center.

Last November, a study co-authored by Gichovi and six Chinese researchers was published in *Plant Physiology and Biochemistry*. "I'm truly thankful for my supervisor and fellow students at the research center," Gichovi said. "Dealing with molecular aspects can be quite challenging, but whenever I seek their advice, they are always willing to help."

The Sino-Africa Joint Research Center serves as a melting pot of talent, with over 300 students from 14 African countries collaborating on botanical, animal science and microbiological research initiatives.

The academic program at the center involves master's students spending two semesters at the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, while PhD students complete a semester before



Bancy Gichovi

advancing their research pursuits.

Guy Eric Onyalalaina, a PhD candidate at the center, began his academic journey in China through a prestigious CAS scholarship, which covers his tuition fees and living expenses.

His exposure to Chinese botanical research during a project in Madagascar in 2017 and 2018 served as a pivotal moment that sparked his interest in Chinese academia.

"I was initially intimidated, concerned about cultural barriers," Onyalalaina said. "However, within



Guy Eric Onyalalaina

two or three days, we naturally communicated, focusing together on our project."

Onyalalaina soon found himself seamlessly communicating and collaborating with Chinese researchers on shared projects. His dedication and research acumen caught the eye of Hu Guangwan, a researcher at Wuhan Botanical Garden, leading to an agreement for Onyalalaina to join Hu's PhD program.

"I chose my PhD project due to the urgent need to assess the state of natural resources, particularly in the capital city of Madagascar,

where biodiversity is rapidly degrading," Onyalalaina said.

His research on ethnobotany and ethnopharmacology has led him to explore the medicinal properties of plants with anti-inflammatory attributes in Tsiazompaniry, a forest in Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar, reflecting his commitment to addressing pressing environmental challenges.

The cultural exchange experiences, language learning and culinary delights in China have left a lasting impression on both Gichovi and Onyalalaina, leaving them with a deep appreciation for Chinese cuisine and traditions. Onyalalaina's wife and son moved to China in December, with his wife pursuing a scholarship in law, and their 4-year-old boy attending a local kindergarten.

"It's a Chinese kindergarten, and my son gets along well," Onyalalaina said. Despite their research schedules,

Onyalalaina and his family find joy in exploring Wuhan's parks and walking along the banks of the Yangtze River.

"We love everything about China — the culture, the food, the technology," he said.

Discussing his previous impression of China, he said that, influenced by media and stereotypes, he used to think that China was a reclusive country. It turned out to be a place where they can live confidently and comfortably.

"Most importantly, we feel safe here," Gichovi added.

Both scholars expressed their willingness to continue living in China if given suitable opportunities.

"I haven't been back to Beijing since my first semester. I would love to visit again," Onyalalaina said. Apart from the well-known cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen, he also expressed a keen interest in traveling to Yiwu, "because it's the supermarket of the world".

## CHINA

# Technology aids farmers in Zambia

African student takes skills learned at university in Jilin back home

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

Standing beside an experimental field full of rice about to ripen in Changchun, Jilin province, Simushi Liswaniso is looking forward to enjoying the same scene at his hometown in Africa in the future.

Liswaniso, 35, an overseas doctoral student from Zambia, began studying at Jilin Agricultural University in Changchun in 2017. In 2016, as an officer of the department of fisheries and livestock, he attended a training course at the China Aid Zambia Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center located in his country.

"The one-month course was about goat production techniques for small scale farmers," he said. "The course helped me improve my knowledge on goat production and be able to train the local farmers effectively."

Since the establishment of the center in 2009, the university has dispatched over 30 experts and professors to provide training courses on agricultural mechanization, grain and legume seed production, edible mushroom cultivation, vegetable production and pest control.

Over 2,000 local students, including Liswaniso, have attended the training sessions.

"Food security used to be our biggest challenge," he said. "Traditional farming methods alone could not meet Zambia's growing food demand."

"The Chinese technology has updated my previous knowledge and inspired me to pursue further studies in China," he said. So he went to Changchun in 2017.

In the laboratory, he learned how to optimize crop growth using advanced technology, and in the field, he discussed crop improvement methods with agricultural experts.

"There is a huge difference between the agriculture in Zambia and China," he said, adding that the agricultural system in China is well developed and digitalized while it is still traditional in his country.

Learning the technologies is not just about increasing crop yields but also about addressing the increasingly severe challenges of climate change and soil degradation, he said. "The future of agriculture belongs to those who master advanced technologies."

In 2020, Liswaniso graduated and enrolled in a doctoral degree program.

In 2021, at the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, agricultural development and poverty reduction demonstration village construction became one of the "Nine Major Projects".

In 2022, as a project coordinator, Liswaniso participated in the China-Africa Agricultural Development



"The Chinese technology has updated my previous knowledge and inspired me to pursue further studies in China."

Simushi Liswaniso, doctoral student from Zambia at Jilin Agricultural University

opment and Poverty Reduction Demonstration Village project in Zambia led by Jilin Agricultural University.

Currently, in a village of Lusaka province, technologies for cultivating edible mushrooms and vegetables from China are being applied locally.

"The modern machinery and scientific management are helping villagers break away from traditional farming methods, improve food production and create new job opportunities," said Liswaniso. "Life of the villagers is getting better, and I feel immensely proud."

Since 2006, Jilin Agricultural University has hosted 40 foreign aid sessions, training over 900 senior agricultural managers from 74 developing countries, with over 400 participants from Africa.

Students from African countries such as Nigeria and Kenya gather to learn about techniques such as agricultural management and animal disease prevention and control in the university, hoping to take the knowledge back to their homelands.

Last year, the university established an Overseas Technology Academy in Zambia.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Zambia.

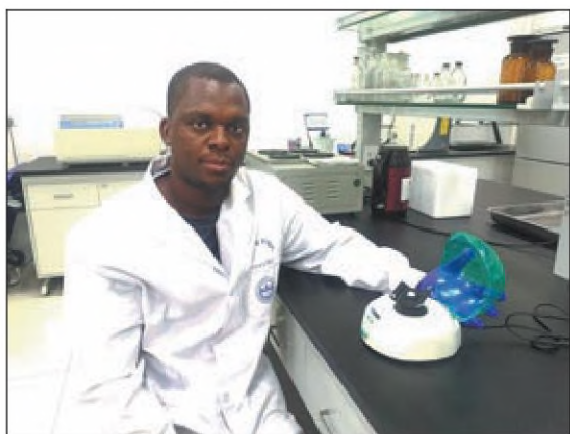
Jilin Agricultural University was selected for the Ministry of Education's China-Africa 100 Universities Cooperation Program, and is about to launch more extensive agricultural technology promotion initiatives in Africa.

"The deepening of agricultural cooperation between the two countries has further strengthened my mission — to spread China's agricultural technologies across the vast lands of Africa," said Liswaniso.

"I hope I can complete my studies in the summer of 2025 and return to my hometown. I will practice all the skills I have learned in China and also train fellow Zambians for the betterment of my country."

Han Junhong contributed to the story.

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Simushi Liswaniso in his laboratory at Jilin Agricultural University in Changchun, Jilin province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Yan Jianlin paints a pot in his house in Lintao county, Gansu province, on Sept 3. FAN PEIKUN / XINHUA

## Potter's wheel spins out ancient culture

LANZHOU — Potters in Lintao county are using traditional techniques to make pots in the ancient Majiayao style, shaping the clay on a spinning wheel, then painting the pots with a brush and finally firing them in a kiln. The process involves dozens of steps, but the end result is pots that are, at first glance, indistinguishable from original pieces made thousands of years ago.

"Majiayao painted pottery witnessed the Chinese culture of 5,000 years ago, and it should be handed down through the generations," said Yan Xiaohu, from Lintao county in Gansu province.

His family has been in the pottery business for four generations. His father, 64-year-old Yan Jianlin, has practiced the craft for 36 years.

Living by the Taohe River, where red clay can easily be found, the old Yan remembers watching his father and grandfather making pots. He picked up the skill at a young age, but the trajectory of his life was altered in the 1990s when he met staff from the cultural center of Lintao.

"They asked me if I could make several painted pottery artworks for the center," he recalled, noting that

this was the first time he had heard about Majiayao culture.

One of the renowned archaeological discoveries in the province, Majiayao culture mainly developed in the upper reaches of the Yellow River and its tributaries, with glamorous painted pottery its most striking feature.

Accepting the challenge, Yan Jianlin set about studying Majiayao culture, visiting the museum and the Majiayao relic site multiple times. He bought books to study the shapes, materials and patterns of the pottery.

"The pots I made previously were rough and durable, but making painted pottery ware is delicate work," he said.

To make pottery in the Majiayao style, he used red soil gathered by the Taohe River, then painted symmetrical patterns with mineral paint.

"The brushes used centuries ago must have been made with animal hair, and they were harder than those we use today," said Yan Jianlin, adding that it is next to impossible to recreate the delicate touch of the ancient people.

In spite of his modesty, the pottery produced by Yan Jianlin and his family has been very popular in recent

years, and they had to work hard to keep up with orders. Each year, they use two to three cubic meters of earth to produce more than 3,000 pieces.

Orders have been coming in from across the country. One recent order from a museum was for 1,000 pieces of painted pottery, which is likely to take the family at least half a year to complete.

In Yan Jianlin's two-story house, five rooms on the ground floor are devoted to the craft, either converted into studios or used to store artwork, which is piled on sofas, tables and windowsills.

Throughout the decades, however, Yan Jianlin and his family have stuck to the traditional technique, using an old foot-powered turntable and firing the pots in a wood-fired brick kiln. Once the kiln has been lit, the artisans must watch it for more than 10 hours.

"In this way, we can ensure the color and texture of the painted pottery is close to that of the ancient pieces," said Yan Xiaohu, the son.

He is even more meticulous than his father, spending twice as much time on average making a single piece, which can attract collectors from thousands of kilometers away.

For the family, making pottery is not just a job, but an indispensable part of their life.

"A day without pottery would make me feel uncomfortable," said Yan Jianlin.

These days, he also visits local schools, teaching intangible cultural heritage. In his spare time, the old man sits in the yard with his wife, working together at the potter's wheel or painting an unfinished pot.

Meanwhile, Yan Xiaohu is busy with innovation, creating pottery tea sets or devising new painted items. "However innovative they become, these pottery pieces still bear the marks of Majiayao culture," he said.

This year is the 100th anniversary of the discovery of Majiayao culture. Swedish archaeologist Johan Gunnar Andersson made the discovery in 1924, finding sophisticated painted pottery in various shapes in Majiayao village, after which the culture was named.

For practitioners like Yan Xiaohu, this is a time to celebrate an artform deeply rooted in the local area. However, he is also insistent that it should not stand still.

"The ancient art should not only be handed down, but revitalized," he said.

XINHUA

## Integrated mango cultivation revitalizes Huaping

KUNMING — In the early autumn, mango trees laden with heavy fruit can be spotted across a mountain in Huaping county, Southwest China's Yunnan province, and their fragrance wafts through the air.

Farmers are busy pruning, packing and loading the fruit onto transport vehicles, which then make their way down the mountain.

"The period from July to October each year is the optimal harvesting time for Huaping mangoes of various varieties. We have received business orders from Shanghai, Zhejiang and Guangdong, and even from Singapore, among others," said Luo Qing, a local mango distributor. "To ensure timely delivery, we have also increased our workforce in recent days."

Located near the middle section of the Jinsha River in northwestern Yunnan, Huaping enjoys a climate characterized by abundant sunlight and plentiful rainfall. These conditions make it an advantageous production area for late-ripening mangoes.

Last year, the mango planting area in Huaping climbed to 30,600 hectares, with a fresh fruit output of 440,000 metric tons. Its agricultural output value amounted to 2.86 billion yuan (\$403 million), and the number of people engaged in its mango industry approached 100,000.

This year, Huaping's mango output is expected to exceed 465,000 tons, with an agricultural output value surpassing 3.05 billion yuan.

Li Chaogang, deputy director of the agriculture and rural affairs bureau of Huaping, said that the



A farmer harvests mangoes in Huaping county, Yunnan province. ZHOU YONGHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

county has established a mango industry development center. It has also strengthened financial support and introduced high-tech mango cultivation methods, ensuring a steady increase in the county's mango production.

"Farmers have applied new tools and technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles and wireless solar monitoring systems, facilitating the mechanization, informatization and intelligent operations of weeding and fertilization in the mango industry, among other processes," Li said.

As the scale and output of its mango industry expand, Huaping has integrated mango cultivation with deep processing, extending its mango industrial chain. Various prod-

ucts made from mangoes — such as mango puree and freeze-dried mango — have become popular among consumers.

"Welcome to my broadcasting room," said Qu Xinling, who livestreamed to promote Huaping mangoes to viewers from a warehouse operated by Lijiang Xinmeier Agriculture Science & Technology Development Company.

According to Qu, the company can sell up to 3 tons of mangoes each day of the picking season through livestreaming.

The company is among the many e-commerce platforms operating in Huaping. In recent years, the county has intensified its e-commerce platform construction efforts and established a livestreaming base to

expand its mango sales channels.

Driven by the development of its mango industry, the county has explored new ways of integrating agriculture with tourism and established a mango plantation, where tourists can enjoy panoramic views of 1,666 hectares of concentrated mango orchards. Visitors can also pick mangoes and enjoy having coffee in the woods on-site.

He Guanchen, an official of Rongjiang town, where the orchard is located, said the plantation receives an average of nearly 600 tourists per day during weekends. Since it opened on Jan 1, about 150,000 tourists from various locations have visited the plantation.

He Zhen, county head of Huaping, said that since the first mango tree was planted in the county in 1965, its mango industry has transformed from a single cultivation sector into a full industrial chain integrating cultivation, processing, sales and tourism.

"Huaping will enhance the added value of its mango industry, injecting strong impetus into rural revitalization," He said.

China is actively promoting the modernization and revitalization of rural industries. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, significant progress has been made in both agricultural product processing and rural tourism.

To date, 1,953 beautiful leisure villages have been established and 139 industrial clusters, each generating over 10 billion yuan in output value, have been developed.

XINHUA



**From left:** The golden roofs at Potala Palace present a new look after a recent major renovation. DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY The Buddhist statues are among the precious cultural assets in Potala Palace. PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY A wall painting in Potala Palace. DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY

# Protection efforts see Potala Palace thrive

Global importance of site's cultural heritage highlighted through renovation and preservation projects

By YUAN SHENGAO

Located on the top of the Red Hill in the northwest of Lhasa, the capital of the Xizang autonomous region, Potala Palace is among the top destinations that tourists around the world aspire to visit, especially since its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list in 1994.

The spectacular palace complex is also one of the treasure troves of Chinese culture, as it represents the highest level of ancient Tibetan architectural art and embodies rich historical connotations.

Potala Palace was first built in the era of Songtsen Gampo some 1,300 years ago. Songtsen Gampo established the Tubo Kingdom by uniting the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the seventh century, and made Lhasa the capital of the kingdom. Tubo is the more ancient name of Tibet, which is today known by Xizang.

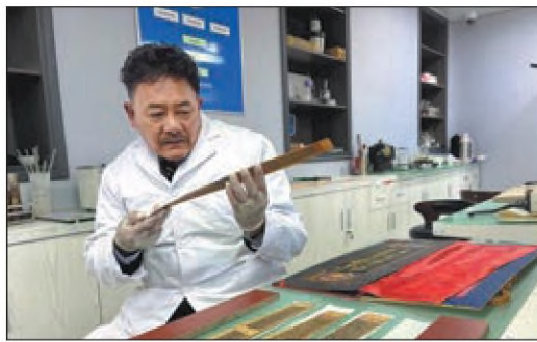
In the process of building a capital city in Lhasa, Songtsen Gampo began construction on Red Hill Palace, the predecessor of Potala Palace. Red Hill Palace was a large palace complex in the very beginning, boasting about 1,000 rooms and halls, according to local historical records.

Red Hill Palace fell into a state of disrepair in the ninth century due to a war that caused the fall of the Tubo Kingdom and a devastating fire caused by a lightning storm.

In 1645, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso — the fifth Dalai Lama — ordered the reconstruction of a palace complex based on the former Red Hill Palace and the project was completed in 1647. The establishment has been called Potala Palace since then.

After many renovations and expansions in the years that followed, the palace complex gradually took on its current appearance, with the White Palace and Red Palace as its main structures.

Potala Palace is situated on the slope of the Red Hill, with its highest part reaching an altitude of more than 3,700 meters. With a total length of about 360 meters and a width of about 140 meters, the palace complex now covers a land area of 360,000 square



**From left:** An expert repairs copies of palm-leaf scriptures at Potala Palace. A worker repairs mini Buddhist statues at the Kamapa Cave of Potala Palace. PHOTOS BY PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

meters and has a combined floor space of 130,000 sq m. The central part is a huge, 13-story structure called the White Palace, while the two wings, both having seven stories, are collectively called the Red Palace.

Potala Palace is a treasure trove of ethnic culture with its collection of many precious historical and cultural relics.

Its precious collections include eight golden pagodas to memorialize the past generations of Dalai Lama, five exquisitely decorated altars, and more than 60,000 ancient documents to record the achievements in culture, art, religion and science created by people of various ethnicities that include Tibetan, Han, Manchu and Mongolian.

It also boasts more than 100,000 historical and cultural relic items that fall in the categories of porcelain, gold ware, silverware, Buddhist statues, murals, *thangka* paintings, garments and ornaments.

It is also of note that Potala Palace is virtually "a museum of wall paintings", which feature the ancient Tibetan characteristics of drawing with smooth lines, highlighting details and presenting a rich variety of topics.

In 1961, Potala Palace was included on the State Council's list of the first batch of national-level units for cultural heritage protection. In 1994, it was inscribed on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Since the peaceful liberation of Xizang in 1951, the central author-

ities of China have attached great importance to the protection of cultural heritage in Potala Palace, investing huge sums of money into the repair, renovation and preservation of cultural relics.

Over the past decades, especially after its inscription on the World Heritage Sites list, Potala Palace has garnered great attention at home and abroad, by attracting tourists and exhibiting its cultural relics to the public.

Many cultural heritage experts and relics protection workers in Xizang have devoted great energy to the preservation of the precious cultural assets at Potala Palace, making it a shining pearl of Chinese culture.

Kunga Tashi, deputy director at the management office of Potala Palace, for instance, is a renowned local cultural researcher and an experienced expert in cultural relics protection.

He is among those who are most familiar with the history, present status and future prospects of Potala Palace.

"Since it was originally built by King Songtsen Gampo of the Tubo Kingdom in the seventh century, the entire construction history spans 13 centuries," Kunga Tashi said.

He said the only remaining buildings from the seventh century are the King Songtsen Gampo Cave and the Holy Avalokitesvara Chapel.

"The architectural structures and cultural relics of different periods reflect the political, economic and cultural exchanges

and integration among various ethnic groups of China," Kunga Tashi said. "Especially during the reconstruction of the Potala Palace by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the 17th century, artisans from Tibetan, Han and other ethnic groups participated in the reconstruction."

Dawa Ngodrub, an official in charge of renovation at the Potala Palace management office, said that one important reason behind the successful preservation of cultural relics in Potala Palace is the strong support from the central and local governments, especially in terms of repair and renovation.

"Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Potala Palace has had several large-scale repairs," Dawa Ngodrub said.

She said the first repairs were made from 1989 to 1994, mainly targeting the prevention of security risks within the palace.

The second phase of repairs took place between 2002 and 2009, with a total investment of more than 200 million yuan (\$28.3 million). The money mainly covered the repair of the palace's body and sleeper walls, restoration of its murals and environmental improvements in its Shol Courtyard, according to Dawa Ngodrub.

In recent years, she added that the palace has received high attention from the nation's relics protection experts. Repairing the seven golden roofs was among the major tasks during the period.

The renovation of the Shol Courtyard's surrounding buildings started in 2018, with a total investment of 31 million yuan.

"We believe the government will continue to play a big role in the preservation of the whole of Potala Palace in the future," Dawa Ngodrub said. "We need to use new technologies to enhance our preservation efforts, making them more rational and effective."

Lhundrub, another official at the Potala Palace management office, also highlighted the use of new technologies and new management models in the operation and protection of Potala Palace.

"We are using a new management model for tourist reception at the Potala Palace that includes systems for ticket reservation and visitor flow control," Lhundrub said.

"Since Potala Palace is a complex of Tibetan civil structures more than 1,300 years old, the carrying capacity of the buildings is limited," Lhundrub said. "To better protect the palace, we have implemented a crowd-diversion practice. Security personnel are tasked to divert crowds to the right places at any time based on monitoring videos and analyzing the detected structural load data."

Potala Palace has a collection of a large number of palm-leaf scriptures, which are some of the most precious documents in Buddhist culture.

Pema Dekyi, an ancient scripture restoration specialist at Potala Palace, explained how these

valuable cultural assets are protected.

"Palm-leaf scriptures are mainly Buddhist sutras written or engraved on patra leaves," Pema Dekyi said. "They are precious ancient literature and are among the cultural relics enjoying the highest level of protection in China."

He added that China currently has the largest number of preserved palm-leaf scriptures in the world, and Potala Palace has some of the most precious copies.

The Potala Palace management office created an experimental restoration team for palm-leaf scriptures in 2019. Its main purpose is to overcome the difficulties arising in repair and restoration, according to Pema Dekyi.

He said that, at present, there is no mature experience or technology in the world to draw upon for palm-leaf scripture restoration. That's why Potala Palace set up this special team, which has been carrying out experiments for nearly five years.

The official showed photos of a copy of palm-leaf scripture before and after restoration, explaining that "after many years of wear and tear, the common issues for the scripture copies are fiber delamination, warping and wrinkles, as well as fractures and contamination".

Pema Dekyi called these problems "leaf diseases", saying that "treating the leaves' diseases needs both a holistic approach and solutions on a case-by-case basis".

"We have to assess the situation of each disease and select the appropriate repair method, with both traditional techniques and modern technologies employed," he said. "While repairing, we are also learning and exploring new methods."

Pema Dekyi added that palm-leaf scripture repair also calls for great concentration and long-term efforts.

He said the repair of the copy of palm-leaf scripture shown in the picture took almost two years. "It's been restored quite well. We want to restore them as they originally were with minimal modification," he said.

Potala Palace in Lhasa, which was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, is one of the treasure troves of Chinese culture.  
E GUOQING / FOR CHINA DAILY



ADVERTORIAL

Traditional arts and crafts are supreme examples of Chinese cultural heritage. China Daily is publishing this series to show how master artisans are using dedication and innovation to inject new life into heritage. In this installment, we explore the long-lasting luster of lacquer.

# Lacquer masters apply historic touch

Art form utilizes nature's resilient sap and evolves with the accumulation of time, patience and artistry, **Lin Qi** reports.

Editor's note:



A lacquer deer on display at the Beijing exhibition *Phoenix Kingdoms*. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY



Cai Shuikuang (1939-2021), a master artisan in Fujian province. MO FENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Li Xiangqun, 63, a sculptor who integrates lacquer art into his work. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Yang Peizhang, 47, an artist and associate professor of Tsinghua University. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Yuwen Renjie, 27, applies the traditional art in her installation work. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Online Watch the video by scanning the code.



Above: A replica of a lacquer drum dating back more than 2,300 years ago is one of the highlights of the exhibition *Phoenix Kingdoms* at the National Museum of China in Beijing. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY  
Below: A lacquer box in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York features the motif of dragons and dates to the mid-18th century. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

At first, it appears to just be a piece of decayed wood. No one would bother giving it a second glimpse. Not unless one is told that this object, standing no more than 6 centimeters with some red stains, is of great historical significance. Belonging to the Neolithic period, it suggests that people living along the Yangtze River between 6 and 7 millennia ago had sourced sap from lacquer trees and used it to facilitate their daily lives.

This wooden piece, later identified as a bowl coated with a thin layer of lacquer, was excavated from the relic site of Hemudu Culture in Yuyao, Zhejiang province, in 1977. The Neolithic culture once thrived along the Yangtze's lower reaches and, according to archaeological findings, has produced jade objects, lacquerware and other relics.

When the people of Hemudu applied lacquer to the bowl, it is believed that they also mixed the varnish with vermilion to beautify the piece, explaining the red stains. The bowl is now part of a collection at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in the provincial capital of Hangzhou.

The chemistry between a man's hands and raw lacquer evolved in this land for millennia. The advances of human intelligence to utilize the juice of nature, manual dexterity and creativity have dramatically changed the appearance of lacquerwork. It is vividly evident if the Hemudu bowl is juxtaposed with another bowl, made by prominent living artists in the field, such as Gan Erke, 69, from Anhui province, who is reputed for his lacquerwork featuring distinctive marbled patterns.

No one could better summarize the evolution of the techniques and artistic styles than Yang Ming, a celebrated lacquerer of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), who wrote in the preface for *Xiushi Lu*, a publication on Chinese lacquerwork written by fellow artisan Huang Cheng in the 16th century, which stated that the techniques and types "have been so well-developed and diverse, one would find it an extravagant feast for the eyes."

**Depth of layers**  
Archaeological work has revealed that people began to use the fluid from lacquer trees as early as 8,000 years ago. "Because of its fine physical and chemical properties, natural lacquer as a coating material played a vital role in ancient times," says Yang Peizhang, 47, a lacquer artist and associate professor at the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University, in Beijing.

“Because of its fine physical and chemical properties, natural lacquer as a coating material played a vital role in ancient times.”

Yang Peizhang, 47,

lacquer artist and associate professor at the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University

He is referring to a lacquer bowl found at a grave site of the Neolithic Kuaahuqiao Culture in Hangzhou, which is over 1,000 years older than the Hemudu bowl, and therefore considered the earliest lacquer object found in the country.

Lacquer sap was one of the early gifts people received from nature. It is milky and grayish when collected, and as it is exposed to the air, it turns a dark brown color. After being purified, the lacquer is ready for use. It protects objects from water, humidity and insect infestation so they are more durable. It can also be mixed with color pigments for decorative purposes.

Layering lacquer onto the surfaces of objects multiple times for better protection requires patience; each layer must dry before the next is added. The process results in a distinguished depth, which is smooth, shiny and mysterious, leaving the object in a state of stability — achieving aesthetic heights that Yang Peizhang describes as "an essential part of the Eastern cultural tradition."

This was grounded on a system of sophisticated workmanship gradually formed in practice by craftsmen throughout several millennia, he says.

At *Phoenix Kingdoms*, an ongoing exhibition at the National Museum of China in Beijing, one will find the splendor of lacquerwork in the late stage of the Bronze Age, proceeding people's initial exploration with the material and craft in the Neolithic period.

From the collections of five museums in Hubei province, a production hub of lacquer trees, a wide variety of objects on show stand as witness to the flourishing of

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Because of its fine physical and chemical properties, natural lacquer as a coating material played a vital role in ancient times.”

Yang Peizhang, 47,

lacquer artist and associate professor at the Academy of Arts and Design, Tsinghua University

several states between the 11th and 3rd centuries BC. "Lacquer, lightweight and accessible, was used in many aspects of life at the time," says Chen Keshuang, the exhibition's curator.

"It was applied, mostly on a wooden core, to make armors, vessels, plucked zithers, wine cups, ornamental objects and drums."

These pieces are testimony to the height of lacquerware that would run through the 3rd century. Striking visual effects were created on an opaque lacquer-coated surface on a wood, metal, cotton or other type of core, such as outlined patterns with other pigments, inlaid fine shells to generate light contrasts, and carved relief patterns — and sometimes gold leaf filling — to exhibit a three-dimensional effect.

Popular decorative motifs included animals, clouds and geometrical shapes.

This was just the beginning of ancient Chinese utilizing lacquer and other materials to make wares that define timeless beauty in their living spaces. By the time lacquerers Yang Ming and Huang worked on *Xiushi Lu*, there had been 14 primary crafts and over 300 varieties of lacquerware.

The book, Huang mentions one such sophisticated technique called *xipi qi*, in which the time-consuming process of coloring, layering and polishing ultimately assumes a dazzling pattern — multiple interlaced colors, predominantly red, yellow and black, sometimes added with other hues to present "a harmonious feeling, and with a closer look, changeable details, a sense of fluidity and splendid luster", as the late scholar Yuan Qianyou once described.

**Diverse styles**

Gan, an esteemed artist committed to carrying on this unique lacquer style into modern times, says there is a debate over how the term *xipi* originated — it could be inspired by a torn leather saddle or the texture of rhinoceros hide — while "it is agreed that lacquerers discovered the color patterns in nature and managed to replicate them on lacquer."

He says the encyclopedic view of Chinese lacquerwork shows varying features from different regions to reflect local history and cultures, as "some developed a neat, majestic style to fulfill royal requests while others addressed the aesthetic preference of intellectuals to be poetic and aloof."

In the mid-17th century, artisans in southern Fujian province developed a new technique to decorate Buddhist statues with lacquer threads, which further evolved into a hometown form of lacquered sculpture. When Cai Shuikuang (1939-2021), a lacquerer in Xiamen, Fujian, inherited this family undertaking in the 1950s, it had become a delicate job that Cai later named *qi xian diao* (lacquer thread sculpture).

The style requires piling and accumulating various diameters of lacquer threads on a lacquer-coated ware to form repeated patterns and complicated motifs of several levels. It can be done on a small porcelain vase or on large temple statues.

Both Gan and Cai have endeavored to keep the craft alive in modern life. Gan has collaborated with luxury brands to integrate lacquerwork with new materials and designs. For example, he applied the *xipi qi* coating to part of a chair made of carbon fiber and a rosewood table to render "both classical and modern feelings".

In the twilight of his life, Cai was devoted to cultivating the younger generation of lacquerers in his family while holding workshops and lectures at schools to popularize the craft. "It is my mission to inherit (the craft). It is my job to pass it on to the next generation, which is far more important than making money," he once said. Yang Peizhang from Tsinghua University says that aesthetics have evolved and will continue to transform, and however artistry is defined, the life of lacquerwork is first grounded on the well-preserved techniques passed down and based on artists developing new techniques to carry the tradition forward.

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Hui-Style Residence, a signature work by Qiao Shiguang (1937-2022), is a prime example of the artist's efforts to modernize traditional lacquer art. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Finished product gets modern luster

By LIN QI

Comparing the lacquer works she made years ago to the ones she's making now, the progress is apparent in Yuwen Renjie's experiment.

The lacquer paintings she created when she was pursuing a bachelor's degree at the College of Art and Design of the Beijing University of Technology show the initial stages of a young artist passionate about lacquer art, who was attempting to understand the characteristic of this hard-to-handle material.

While judging her latest installation series *X*, Yuwen, now studying for her master's degree at Western Carolina University, North Carolina, the United States, shows more ease with lacquer, which, she says, has been her co-worker in creating vanguard art.

She has deviated from the highly decorative painting patterns of lacquer art and ventured into an experimental, conceptual way of expression.

For the *X* works, for example, she coated a dozen fresh apples with cotton strips soaked in lacquer and left them to mature and decay. The works show the lacquered apples in different states of ripeness and dryness, and how the lacquer coating creates changes.

Yuwen employed *jiuzhu* treatment to the traditional lacquer technique — coating the core with one or more layers of lacquer-soaked cotton — while her finished works are pieces of contemporary art, either in appearance or the information conveyed.

"I feel that lacquer is the true creator of this. I've only built a stage for it to do the rest of the job," says the 27-year-old artist.

"My intention is not for people to pay attention to the intricate techniques but the material itself — how it interacts with apples and evolves in time and to think about how time shapes us into who we are."

These works are currently on show at *Material Thinking*, an exhibition at the Karamay Science and Technology Museum in Karamay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

Running until Dec 10, the exhibition is organized by the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, to inspire the creation of art that explores the possibilities of different materials as the center of an artist's work.

For Yuwen and the generation of artists who work with lacquer, the material is no longer something used to render a shen, to decorate or to be used for other applied purposes. Rather, it is something they use to explore the forefront of artistic expression and new aesthetics.

The endeavors to modernize lacquer art date back several decades to the early 1960s, when Qiao Shiguang (1937-2022), then a young teacher at the Central Academy of Arts & Design — now the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University — researched lacquer to see if it could be used in the wall paintings, which he specialized in.

His interest intensified as he studied, and Qiao invested his heart and mind in a lifelong endeavor to usher traditional lacquer art into modern techniques, attuning to people's varied cultural needs. Leaving behind an oeuvre of mesmerizing paintings, he is recognized as "the father of modern lacquer art."

His pieces show the unique beauty and shimmer of lacquer and the artistry that can be achieved on a painting's flat surface, unlike that of three-dimensional objects.

One example is *Water Splashing Festival*, which

he created in 1978, depicting an animated scene of the Dai ethnic group celebrating one of their much-cherished folk events.

Now a collection of the National Art Museum of China, his works employ the *sanyuan* (three distances) method of Chinese landscape painting — the long, middle and close-up views — and his treatment to arrange the dressed-up women apart in the foreground exhibits the influence of court ladies paintings of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

The minimalist style of Chinese painting also inspired Qiao when creating another signature work, *Hui-Style Residence*, in which he focused on the simple beauty of the whitewashed walls and obsidian roofs of the civil dwellings in Anhui province, as well as the tranquil atmosphere. However, he didn't forget the traditional techniques; in painting walls and streets, he embedded eggshells to add dimension.

Qiao once said it took great difficulty, even though he juggled lacquer and painting for over four decades, to find the right spot where the brush strokes are well-matched with the distinctive merits of lacquer.

"Neither side should be comprised in the creative process. I never want to 'disappoint' lacquer, nor dare to 'fail' painting. It is hard," he said.

Decades later, after Wang Ziting began her doctoral studies at the same academy where Qiao studied and taught, she felt that same pressure. Her mentors include Li Xiangqun, 63, an influential sculptor who has also been integrating lacquer into his work.

Not only has Wang inherited the techniques but also inherited the spirit to walk the modern path of lacquer art.

Her works are also exhibited at *Material Thinking*. The series, called *The Woman Beheld*, reflects a diverse exploration of lacquer — paintings, sculptures and installations. The idea behind her work dwells on the situation of a woman in society being watched, gazed upon and talked about.

She describes building the relationship with lacquer as a "happy and painful" process, as she tries to pull lacquer out of its "comfort zone" — as a decorative coating — to discover more expressions.

She says her efforts and those of other lacquer artists deserve to be shown to the public as an updated rendition of lacquer art.

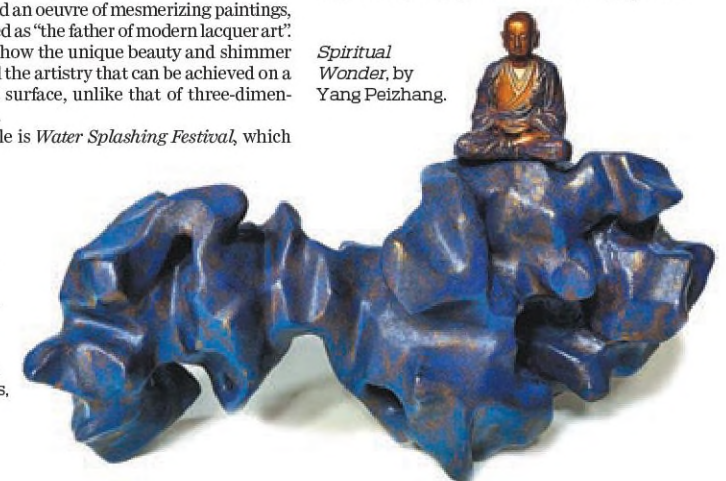
This is the idea behind *The New Crafts*, an exhibition that Wang's academy has held every year since 2015. Its sixth installment is held at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The lacquer section is curated by Yang Peizhang.

"We show how technological progress has benefited artists, motivating them to develop new techniques and present boundless imagination. We also show the works of artists from Japan, South Korea and Europe to introduce novel ways of presenting lacquer," he says.

"Lacquer art should not only be preserved as handicraft but should also be integrated into the context of modern industries. That would allow artists better career prospects and people with more chances to use lacquer items in their daily lives."

From top:

Pioneer by sculptor Li Xiangqun; a *jiuzhu* zither by Yang Peizhang; and a part of *The Woman Beheld* series, by Wang Ziting.



Lacquer art is widely applied in the making of various items, such as ornamental boxes, vases, plates and bowls. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

LIFE

# Classic tale keeps core elements

The Legend of the White Snake returns with its enduring love story, **Chen Nan** reports.



Young performers of the China National Peking Opera Company and students of the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts rehearse the Peking Opera *The Legend of the White Snake*, which will be staged at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing from Oct 1 to 3. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The first class Ye Shaolan had after he was admitted to study at the Experimental School of Chinese Theatre Arts (now the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts) in 1952 was learning the Peking Opera *The Legend of the White Snake*, which was written by famed playwright Tian Han (1898-1968) that year.

"Though more than 70 years have passed, I can still recall the moments when I learned the piece, which is so beautiful and romantic," recalls Ye, 82, at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on Sept 11. "Unlike many other Peking Opera pieces, which mostly tell stories about history, politics, society and daily life, *The Legend of the White Snake* highlights love."

As one of the most famous folk tales from ancient China, *The Legend of the White Snake* is about a love affair between a female snake fairy named Bai Suzhen who transforms into a beautiful woman and a man called Xu Xian. They meet, fall in love and get married. But a monk, who considers Bai evil, jails her in a tower, getting in the way of the couple's happy life.

On Sept 11, the NCPA announced its new production of *The Legend of the White Snake*, which, inviting Ye to be the artistic consultant, will premiere with shows running from Oct 1 to 3.

Peking Opera is a 200-year-old art form that combines singing, dancing, acrobatics and martial arts. The old art form was inscribed in 2010 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Ye has played the role of Xu many times, including his collaboration with Peking Opera actress Zhang Huoding taking the role of Bai in the production of *The Legend of the White Snake* in 2016. His father, Peking Opera master Ye Shenglan (1914-78), also performed the role of Xu in *The Legend of the White Snake* in Paris in 1955.

"*The Legend of the White Snake* marks a significant milestone in the development of Peking Opera. It's one of the most popular pieces among fans and has been performed by generations of artists," Ye Shaolan says.

According to Zhang Yao, vice-president of the NCPA, the new edition of the Peking Opera piece will be based on Tian's script and gather creative team members, including 82-year-old director Yang Xiaoqing and music director Yin Xiaodong. Veteran Peking Opera actresses Li Shengsu and Wang Yan will play the role of Bai and actor Li Hongtu will play the role of Xu.

"Many classic scenes from *The Legend of the White Snake* are particularly famous and emblematic of the production's dramatic and emotional depth, such as the West Lake encounter, which sees Bai and Xu meeting for the first time and the confrontation with Fa Hai, featuring the conflict between Bai and the monk, who opposes the couple's reunion," says Zhang Yao. "These scenes are central to the opera's narrative and are notable for their dramatic presentation, emotional depth, and the use of traditional Peking Opera techniques, including elaborate costumes, symbolic gestures and stylized movements. Those classic scenes will be staged with the support of the latest multimedia technology, offering a visual feast for the audience, especially the young people."

Yin, the president of the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, notes that besides the classic scenes, which highlight the love of the couple, the new production will also depict Bai's desire to become human, primarily due to her deep love for Xu.

"Bai falls in love with Xu and wishes to be with him as an equal. Her longing to become human also reflects a desire to experience the full spectrum of human life, including love, companionship and the



**Top:** Veteran Peking Opera artist Ye Shaolan (center) discusses moves of the Peking Opera piece, *The Legend of the White Snake*, with the creative team members of the new edition of the classic piece, at the NCPA, on Aug 27. **Above:** Director Yang Xiaoqing (left) and Peking Opera actress Chu Fengyi (right), who plays the role of Bai Suzhen, at the rehearsal.

joy of living in the human world," says Yin. "Her transformation is a central element to the story, symbolizing the theme of love transcending boundaries and the personal sacrifices made in the

name of love." For the music, Yin says that he will keep the original music from the 1952 version of *The Legend of the White Snake*, which was produced and performed by the National

Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts. "Tian Han served as the first president of the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts after the school was founded in 1950. After he finished writing the script of *The*

*Legend of the White Snake*, artists of the school, including composer Wang Yaoqing, and director Li Zigui, who was the founder of the directing department of the school, worked together to bring the Peking Opera piece alive onstage," says Yin. "*The Legend of the White Snake* is a very important production for the school, passed down by generations of artists."

"When Tian Han adapted the folk tale into a Peking Opera piece in 1952, his goal was to blend traditional elements with contemporary sensibilities to make the story more accessible and relevant to modern audiences. We are making the same effort to produce this new edition," adds Yin.

Director Yang, who is known for directing productions of traditional Chinese operas, such as Yueju Opera and Kunqu Opera, says that Tian Han's adaptation was part of a broader effort to revitalize traditional Chinese theater forms and make them more engaging for contemporary audiences, reflecting changes in Chinese society and artistic tastes.

Besides star Peking Opera artists, Yang also works with young performers from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts and China National Peking Opera Company in this new version.

"Peking Opera features a highly stylized form of performance with specific vocal techniques, gestures and movements that can be difficult for those unfamiliar with the genre to grasp. It is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture and history, which may be unfamiliar to younger audiences who have not been exposed to these aspects in their education or daily life," says Yang. "Our young Peking Opera performers, who are similar in age to our young audience, inspire us to create."

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## The wonder of you! Four down, three to go, as lure of Great Wall looms large

As soon as I knew I was going to work in Beijing, one of the first things I did was look to see just how close I would be living to any part of the Great Wall of China.



**Nick Ives**  
Second Thoughts

After all, it is one of the most iconic landmarks on the planet, an architectural masterpiece that is testament to China's rich history and culture, an incredible structure that follows the natural contours of the terrain, dating back as far as the 7th century BC and officially stretching more than 21,000 kilometers.

So, it is no surprise the Great Wall was named one of the "New Seven Wonders of the World" when a Swiss man named Bernard Weber, a former filmmaker and aviator, organized a worldwide public poll that attracted more than 100 million votes on what man-made monuments deserved such an accolade.

I say "new", even though the results were announced in 2007, and of course, the final choices caused much controversy from a shortlist of 21, particularly from Egypt, perhaps with some justification given the Pyramids of Giza, which were named in the original 2nd century Seven Wonders of the Ancient World list (and the only

one on the planet still standing), did not make the final cut.

Those that did make it alongside the Great Wall of China were the ancient city of Petra in Jordan, the Inca ruins Machu Picchu in Peru's Andes Mountains, the 30-meter-high Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Chichen Itza, a ruined ancient Maya city in Mexico, the Roman Colosseum amphitheater in the Italian capital and the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum complex in Agra, northern India.

It is not totally surprising such a subjective list would cause such global disagreement. After all, there are hundreds of other sites, monuments or buildings that could stake

a worthy case for inclusion.

However, there can be no argument against the Great Wall of China taking pride in its place on the coveted list, even if it is a myth this snaking defensive wall can be seen from space. It can, though, be viewed from low orbit, according to astronauts, when the Earth's pollution levels are low.

I've now visited the Great Wall four times in as many months (Gubei Water Town, Mutianyu and Badaling) and each location serves up views one can never tire of. But it was on my last trip that made me determined to visit all the "New Seven Wonders of the World?"

I have already experienced the

Red Rose City of Petra, where some of the blockbuster movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* was filmed, the imposing Roman Colosseum, where an estimated half a million people were killed during events (fortunately not during my visit) and Machu Picchu, an incredible place, despite having to be helped back to base by a donkey after a bout of sickness.

I have been fortunate enough to tick off four incredible places. Given the geography of the other three, I may just well make do with trips to the Great Wall for the foreseeable future. Ah well, it could be worse!

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The Great Wall at Mutianyu. NICK IVES / CHINA DAILY

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Washington driving force for restrictions for which US consumers will foot the bill

In a major escalation of the United States' ongoing crackdown on the Chinese new energy vehicle industry, the US Commerce Department is reportedly planning to propose a ban on all Chinese software and hardware being used in any autonomous vehicle on the roads in the US on the pretext of addressing "national security" concerns.

The department plans to propose making the prohibitions on software effective in the 2027 model year and the ban on hardware would take effect in January 2029 or the 2030 model year. The prohibitions in question would include vehicles with certain Bluetooth, satellite and wireless features as well as highly autonomous vehicles that could operate without a driver behind the wheel.

The attack on Chinese automotive components, announced on Monday, comes after the Joe Biden administration had already finalized steep tariff hikes on Chinese imports on Sept 13, which include a 100 percent duty on Chinese-made EVs and 25 percent duties on Chinese EV batteries and key minerals that will take effect in two weeks. This will inevitably cause further damage to bilateral trade and strain the already tense China-US relations.

Thanks to its huge domestic market, cutting-edge technology and massive production capability, China now leads the global EV and EV battery industries, with its companies producing nearly two-thirds of the world's EVs and more than three-quarters of the EV batteries produced worldwide.

Yet rather than trying to leverage its own strengths or seeking win-win cooperation with China in the ongoing green transportation revolution, the US has chosen to take protectionist measures against Chinese EVs in disregard of the principle of fair trade and free market rules.

Worse, it has resorted to mudslinging tactics by spreading lies about unfounded risks associated with Chinese software or hardware in connected vehicles that have onboard network hardware allowing them to share data with devices both inside and outside the vehicle.

"We're looking at a few components and some software, not the whole car, but it would be some of the key driver components of the vehicle that manage the software and manage the data around that car that would have to be made in an allied country," Alan Estevez, US export controls chief, said back in July.

To gain support for the move among US consumers who will be forced to pay the costs of the ban, it is being presented as a personal security measure, with corresponding scaremongering being employed to back that up.

In Estevez's words, "A modern car has a lot of software in it. It's taking lots of pictures. It has a drive system. It's connected to your phone. It knows who you call. It knows where you go. It knows a lot about you."

The presumption is ridiculous. According to that logic, Beijing should be worried about Washington being ready to shut down iPhones, Tesla cars, Microsoft software, and even Boeing airplanes in China to plunge the country into complete chaos. The US' false narrative only serves to deepen the antagonism between the two nations and hinder efforts aimed at stabilizing the global industry and supply chains.

And simply from a technical perspective, the plan to ban Chinese automotive software and hardware could also be hard to carry out, given that the systems of cars on the roads have to "undergo extensive preproduction engineering, testing, and validation processes and, in general, cannot be easily swapped with systems or components from a different supplier", according to a trade group representing major automakers including General Motors, Toyota Motor, Volkswagen, Hyundai and others.

Washington has always said that it seeks competition, not conflict, with China. Yet what it has done by targeting Chinese-made EVs and automotive components belies that claim.

The US auto industry will not thrive if its politicians continue politicizing economic and trade issues by twisting the laws of market economy and fair competition. If Washington is sincere in wanting to set up guardrails for Sino-US relations, it must end its discriminatory suppression of Chinese companies.

## 'Malign influence bill' a straw man fallacy

The US House of Representatives passed the "Countering the PRC Malign Influence Fund Authorization Act of 2023" on Sept 10, which authorizes \$325 million annually for fiscal years 2023 through 2027 to combat what it purports to be the malign global influence of the Communist Party of China.

"The Chinese Communist Party's growing global influence is a direct threat to the sovereignty of nations and the free and open international order we are committed to defending, said Congressman Andy Barr, the proposer of the act, in a glib spiel of the anti-China buzz-speak that masquerades as political acumen in Washington. "This legislation equips us with the tools to counter China's coercive tactics, ensuring that America and our allies can stand strong against authoritarianism while protecting our national security interests."

The act is just one of the dozens of China-related bills the House passed collectively during that China Week. But it is the one that has triggered a strong and immediate backlash from Beijing.

That the US lawmakers could pass the act, which violates the basic norms governing international relations, raises concerns that the positive momentum in the efforts of the two sides to repair bilateral relations might become a flash in the pan.

The funds are supposedly to support initiatives to counter the CPC's "disinformation, promote transparency, reduce corruption, and combat coercive economic practices like those tied to China's Belt and Road Initiative", according to the act.

But Barr's proposing of the act is probably more self-serving as part of what is being targeted as China's influence is its urging of countries to cooperate on climate action and accelerate the green transition.

Barr is the Republican representative for the State of Kentucky, which is home to more than one-fifth of the US' coal mines. With 95 percent of the coal staying in the US and 46 percent being used in-state, coal accounts for 69 percent of Kentucky's electricity portfolio and 32 percent of its total energy consumption, according to the Kentucky Energy Portfolio 2023 released by the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet. It does not require any Holmesian deduction to see the interests that might have motivated him to propose the act.

That he comes from a military family also suggests that he is unlikely to be receptive to China's "influence", since it advocates for building a new type of international relations, one that is not based on the pecking order of military might.

China proposes that national security be common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable, and one country's security should not be built upon the insecurity of others. National security requires clear boundaries, particularly in the economic and political domain, where they must be scientifically defined.

The rhetoric employed by the US lawmakers to justify the bills they propose serves to disguise the impetus behind their moves and the nature of the funding as a lifeline supporting the US' systematic propaganda campaigns against China, a tactic Washington used against the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. The act itself represents a "disinformation" endeavor of the US to smear China's ruling party, trying to sow discord between it and the Chinese people, and China and its partners, a scheme the US side has put into practice since the previous US administration.

Despite the great lengths the US is going to in a bid to tarnish China's image, China is trying its best to build more bridges and pave more roads for people-to-people exchanges, as it firmly believes the key to pursuing the steady, sustained development of China-US relations is cementing public support.

China is committed to ensuring better lives for its people at home, and to making greater contributions to world peace and development. The US should do the same instead of playing its zero-sum games.

Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## Stopping cross-Strait exchanges will not be barrier to reunification

A group of 13 people from Xiamen in Fujian arrived at Kinmen island on Wednesday to explore ways to resume tourist arrivals from the Chinese mainland, something that has been interrupted for five years now.

The trip was in response to the expectations of the people and tourism sector on Taiwan island that cross-Strait tourism exchanges and cooperation would be resumed. It is reported that the first mainland tour group has applied for tourism to Kinmen, and if all goes well, the place can expect 400,000 to 450,000 mainland tourists annually, which will be a big boost to the island's tourism and economic development.

Since coming to power in 2016, the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan has refused to recognize the 1992 Consensus, resulting in a sharp decline in the number of tourists from the mainland, seriously affecting Taiwan's tourism industry. The DPP authorities have tried to increase the number of tourists from Southeast Asian countries, but their spending power is no

match for that of tourists from the mainland.

At the beginning of 2020, under the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DPP authorities adopted a series of restrictive measures, unilaterally banning mainland residents from going to Taiwan while also suspending the island's travel agencies from operating group tours to the mainland. In November last year, the DPP authorities promised to lift the "ban on tour groups" in March this year, only to go back on their word in February, asking travel agencies not to allow tours from June 1. People from all walks of life in Taiwan have criticized the DPP authorities for creating artificial barriers to cross-Strait exchanges in disregard of the interests and welfare of tourists and ordinary people.

Facts show that the DPP authorities, for political motives, have ignored the legitimate rights and interests of the people in Taiwan and its tourism industry, and have constantly engaged in political manipulation, which poses

a real obstacle to the resumption of cross-Strait tourism. Political factors should not become an excuse for the DPP authorities to stop normal tourism and exchanges between people on both sides of the Strait. The DPP authorities in Taiwan should face up to the legitimate rights and interests of the Taiwan people and the interests of its tourism sector, and lift the unreasonable ban on cross-Strait tourism.

Despite the complex and grim situation in the Taiwan Strait, cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation in various fields have continued all these years. This proves that no force can change the desire of compatriots on both sides of the Strait to move closer to each other and stop the development of cross-Strait relations. It remains an irreversible trend to maintain and expand personnel exchanges and cooperation between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, promote the development of cross-Strait relations, and finally advance the process of national reunification.

— WU YUXUE, CHINA DAILY

## Going full throttle to achieve low-carbon goals

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology is hastening equipment updating and technological renovation in 27 key industrial sectors, having set objectives for them till 2027, showing that shifting to the low-carbon mode, accelerating device automation and further enhancing opening-up to the world are key to China's modernization.

The guidelines freshly released by the ministry on Friday show that emission limits will be set in the steel, construction and automobile sectors. Especially, by 2027, over 80 percent of all domestic

steel production capacity will undergo ultralow emissions upgrading.

The clean environment approach is more apparent if seen along with the Ministry of Finance and the National Development and Reform Commission's joint moves to subsidize factories and consumers that trade in their old devices for new ones. It has also set favorable policies for those who buy new energy-saving equipment. Other notable points include the moves to enhance the usage rate of digital R&D tools in large-scale industrial machines to above 90 percent.

With the latest moves, China is ensuring the security of the industry chain, cutting emissions, and encouraging international trade for wider opening-up. The move is worth cherishing considering that equipment and technology upgrading does not come at zero cost. A large number of old equipment will need to be disposed of and their disassembling comes at much labor and financial costs. It also means a considerable number of people have to acquire new skills to operate the new technology.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## House's scattergun approach targets trade facilitator

The US House of Representatives passed the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) Certification Act on Sept 10.

The act denigrates Hong Kong's laws on safeguarding national security and smears Hong Kong's human rights situation, maliciously slanders the legality and legitimate purpose of implementing the Hong Kong National Security Law and the National Security Ordinance, and clamors for the cancellation of the legal rights and even the closure of the HKETOs.

The Hong Kong SAR government has established 14 HKETOs around the world, including three in the United States — in New York, Washington and San Francisco. The HKETOs established in the US maintain close ties with local government departments, business circles, think tanks and people from different sectors with the aim of strengthening exchanges between

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the US.

The act, if adopted as law, will seriously undermine the normal economic and trade relations between Hong Kong and the US.

Hong Kong is one of the US' major trading partners. Over the past 10 years, the US has gained a trade surplus of \$271.5 billion with trading with Hong Kong, exceeding the US' other trading partners. Among the more than 9,000 overseas companies in Hong Kong, there are more than 1,200 US companies.

The unilateral decertification of the HKETOs in the US cannot shake Hong Kong's status as an independent customs area, nor will it affect Hong Kong's linked exchange rate system. The legal basis for Hong Kong's status as a separate customs area originates from the World Trade Organization's agreement. It is a legal status agreed by the Chinese government, confirmed through the Basic Law, established by the multilateral rules of the WTO, and

recognized by other WTO members. It is not granted by US lawmakers.

The linked exchange rate system is a monetary policy decided by Hong Kong on its own initiative, that is, all banks issuing HK dollars must pay US dollars equivalent to the amount of issuance. Hong Kong's huge foreign exchange reserves are the pillar of the linked exchange rate system.

As of the end of last month, Hong Kong's foreign exchange reserves were \$423.4 billion, equivalent to more than five times the currency in circulation in Hong Kong, accounting for about 39 percent of the total supply of HK dollars, ensuring the stable operation of the linked exchange rate system.

In the face of distortion and smears by external hostile forces, what the Hong Kong government needs to do is to unwaveringly maintain and optimize the business environment, and safeguard the legal rights and interests of all businesses in Hong Kong.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

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## COMMENT

Asit K. Biswas and Cecilia Tortajada

## Can water security in Asia be ensured?

The main theme of the 3rd Asia International Water Week, being held in Beijing from Tuesday to Saturday, is enhancing water security in Asia. As the lead organizer of the meeting, the Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research of the Ministry of Water Resources of China, a leading global institute for water-related research, has taken a timely step toward securing water resources in the region.

If one picks a newspaper on any day in any Asian city, there is likely to be at least one report on water-related issues, either on too much or too little water, unreliable availability of water, water quality-related issues, or socioeconomic and political institutions or environmental implications. Global warming has made water management increasingly more complex and a problem very difficult to solve.

Both among water professionals and in the media there are often extensive discussions on national and international water crises. However, all water problems and their solutions are local. There may be a few common aspects but the contexts of and solutions to the water problems differ from one country to another. In large and medium-sized countries, water problems and their solutions often differ from one part of the country to another. It is the context that dictates the correct solutions.

Take China for example. The water problems faced by Beijing and their solutions are likely to be different from those faced by the Inner Mongolia autonomous region for numerous reasons, including the levels and structures of population, urbanization, hydro-climatic conditions, financial and institutional capacities, historical water management practices, and cultural and social backgrounds. Accordingly, solutions that may work very well in one part of China, may not work in other parts of the country.

Some three to four decades ago, water professionals realized that in terms of solutions, one size does not fit all. Even then, many institutions, both national and international, are still proposing universal solutions to water problems, irrespective of the contexts of the problems. Not surprisingly, these universal solutions have been, for the most part, failures.

The water problems of each Asian country, or different parts of one country,

are specific to it, and cannot be generalized into one set of conditions where one universal solution would be applicable. Consider Japan and the Republic of Korea. An important water-related issue for them is their steadily declining populations in recent decades, due to which these two countries are trying to find ways to downsize their water utilities, especially in medium-sized urban centers.

Throughout recorded history, water utilities had to expand progressively as a country's population increased. Business models were developed to provide increasing water supply for an increasing number of users.

In contrast, in Asian countries such as Bangladesh, Brunei, India, Indonesia and Malaysia, the populations are steadily increasing. And in the absence of

proper demand management policies, water requirements for all purposes are going up.

Therefore, the water problems of Japan and the ROK and their solutions have to be very different from those of Bangladesh, India or Indonesia. As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, there cannot be a universal solution to the water problems faced by different Asian countries.

In this context, China's water management policies and practices in the post-2000 period have undergone a remarkable change up to about 2000, China's water management was similar to those of most other developing countries in Asia.

However, developments since 2000 have radically improved China's water management practices. For example, in

the post-2000 period, China's top policy and decision-makers, unlike those of many other developing (and some developed) countries, have consistently focused on addressing water-related issues.

President Xi Jinping has been consistently highlighting the importance of water- and environment-related issues and ways to address them. This interest can be seen in the book, *Water Governance in China – Perspectives of Xi Jinping*, published by the Ministry of Water Resources earlier this year.

An important aspect of President Xi's thinking is that the development policies and solutions should have unique Chinese characteristics. This includes water problems and their solutions. Water management practices must be ideally suited to China's culture, real conditions and development requirements. Among the many new water management practices China has formulated and implemented in recent years are sponge cities, river chiefs, digital twins, revitalization of China's "mother rivers", and improving water quality.

As a direct result of consistent high-level political interest in water, China's management practices have radically improved over the past two decades. Consequently, the country has improved its water management practices from being similar to an average developing country to becoming one of the most innovative and effective in the world.

The 3rd Asia International Water Week provides its participants from other Asian countries with an opportunity to reflect upon why China's water management has significantly improved over the past two decades. Asia's water problems are solvable, provided two important conditions are fulfilled. First, water issues must receive strong and consistent attention from national leaders. Second, each country must develop solutions that reflect its national characteristics. If Asian countries can meet these two conditions, they can address their respective water problems in the next two decades.

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LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Zhou Xin

## Japan should still properly handle radioactive water

On Aug 24, 2023, the Japanese government unilaterally started the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the ocean. On Sept 20, 2024, the Chinese government and the Japanese government reached a bilateral agreement on ocean discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water, which has immediately aroused the widespread attention of the press and the public.

The agreement is the latest achievement of several rounds of diplomatic consultations between China and Japan. A spokesperson of Chinese Foreign Ministry has introduced the contents of the agreement at the first time. How should we regard this agreement?

First, reaching this agreement means neither China has changed its opposition to discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, nor Japan could avoid its historical responsibility.

Since the Japanese government unilaterally made the "unprecedented" decision of discharging nuclear-contaminated water in 2021, the Chinese government has been firmly opposed to the discharge. On Sept 20, the spokesperson for Chinese Foreign Ministry affirmed that as one of the most important stakeholders, China is firmly opposed to this irresponsible move.

Without full consultation with neighboring countries, Japan unilaterally started the discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, spilling the risk of contamination worldwide. No matter how the Japanese government whitewashes its decision, there is no doubt that the discharge is neither appropriate nor legal. China's position of opposing the discharge remains unchanged. Apart from China, Russia, ROK and many Pacific Island countries have expressed their worries or opposition. So China's position represents the voice of justice of the international community. This agreement clarified that

**In the agreement, it is self-evident that the Chinese government firmly safeguards people's health and protects the ecology and environment, and has worked tirelessly for it.**

Japan explicitly commits to fulfilling its obligations under international law, doing its utmost to avoid leaving negative impact on human health and the environment, and conducting continuous evaluations of the impact on the marine environment and marine ecosystem. This is a serious commitment to China and the international community that Japan must obey.

Second, China will participate substantively in a long-term international monitoring arrangement within the International Atomic Energy Agency framework covering key stages in the discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water and carry out independent sampling and monitoring as well as inter-laboratory comparisons (ILCs). This arrangement is hard to come by.

Because of the call of China and other stakeholders, the issue of discharging Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water has received great attention from the international community. The International Atomic Energy Agency has set up a resident office in Fukushima and monitors the water in the Fukushima nuclear power plant and the surrounding area, which is unprecedented in the history of IAEA. The issue was included in the project of priority and urgency by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation from 2025 to 2029. The agreement has clarified that China and all other stakeholders can participate substantively in the long-

term international monitoring arrangement and that these participating countries can carry out independent sampling and monitoring as well as ILCs. Chinese experts will participate in the monitoring of the facilities and key stages in the discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water, which could strengthen the external supervision of the discharge, ensuring that comprehensive, real and credible data can be obtained, so that China could prevent Japan from discharging the waste water that does not meet the regulation requirements and standards into the ocean. Also, China and Japan will continue the constructive science-based dialogue so as to properly address concerns over the discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean.

It is not easy to implement these arrangements, especially when the United States and Western countries helped Japan "whitewash" the nuclear contaminated water despite their usual commitment to environmental protection, and some countries took a U-turn and began ignoring the domestic boiling anger. China has demonstrated the responsibility of a major country, continuously urged Japan to handle the issue in a responsible manner, actively promoted the establishment of long-term international monitoring arrangements and independent sampling monitoring, so as to safeguard the global marine environment and public health for a maritime community of a shared future.

Third, the Chinese government will continue to handle marine ecological environment and food safety risks in a responsible attitude.

Ecological environment protection and food safety are two major concerns of people's livelihood. The Chinese government has always put the people first and embraces the scientific spirit. In order to prevent food safety risks caused by nuclear-contaminated water from damaging people's health, the Chinese

government has done a lot of hard and meticulous work, including taking emergency and precautionary measures on importing Japanese aquatic food, strengthening marine environmental monitoring, checking aquatic products in the market, and monitoring the radioactivity of aquatic products from the open sea and China's neighboring countries. According to a report of the Chinese Ministry of Ecology and Environment, since 2021, there has been no abnormality of radioactivity in the sea areas under the jurisdiction of China.

In this agreement, a series of prerequisites for gradually resuming imports of Japanese aquatic products that meet the regulation requirements and standards have been mentioned.

From keywords including "long-term international monitoring", "independent sampling", "after China participates substantively", "scientific evidence", "begin adjustment", "gradually resume" and "meet the regulation requirements and standards", we can see that the Chinese government attaches great importance to food safety. Policy adjustments need to be made with full scientific evidence and after consultations made by the diplomatic and scientific teams. With scientific testing and strict supervision of the Chinese government, aquatic products that are sold in the Chinese market will all be safe in radioactivity, no matter where they are imported from.

In the agreement, it is self-evident that the Chinese government firmly safeguards people's health and protects the ecology and environment, and has worked tirelessly for it. We insist on opposing Japan's discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean. And at the same time, we also need to treat this issue rationally, calmly and scientifically.

The author is an observer on international affairs. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

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## Fuyuan reflects development potential of China's counties

The nearly 1,700 county administrations in China see to it that crops are planted and harvested on time, and the more than 500 million rural residents have proper houses to live in, while making efforts to realize sustainable development locally.

The 1,700 counties differ in size, population and development level, with some being as large as Belarus, and the most populous boasting a population of 2.5 million. On the other hand, the smallest county covers just 56 square kilometers and the least populated has fewer than 2,000 residents.

Although the counties are put under the supervision of a nearby big city — be it a municipality, provincial capital or a city with a much stronger economy — in the hope that the "big brother" would support the counties' development, the counties are independent economic bodies which have to cook their own meals with whatever ingredients are available.

"We are lucky to have fertile farmlands and rich fisheries," said Li Dongsheng, executive vice-mayor of Fuyuan county in Heilongjiang province. China's easternmost county bordering Russia across two rivers, Fuyuan was designated as a county-level city in 2016. Nearly 400 counties in China have been designated as county-level cities either because their non-agriculture sector comprises a big proportion of the local economy or because they are politically, culturally or geographically important to the country. Fuyuan, with a land port, apparently belongs to the latter category.

**The unique phenomenon of one inland island being governed by two countries has turned the island into a hot tourist destination.**

Covering an area of 6,242 sq km — almost three times the size of Luxembourg — Fuyuan's black soil and good irrigation system make it ideal for growing corn, beans and rice. The high-quality aquatic products from the Heilongjiang and Wusulijiang rivers are the icing on the cake. Thanks to the rich natural resources and local people's diligence, Fuyuan's nearly 100,000 residents largely lead a comfortable life. Last year, on average, each Fuyuan resident had a bank deposit of more than 130,000 yuan, according to Li Dongsheng.

While the farmers and fishermen of Fuyuan are busy buying cars, building new houses or going on tours, Li and his colleagues are discussing the county's development prospects. Since agriculture makes up 74.7 percent of Fuyuan's GDP, the county government cannot increase its revenue much because raising profits by a big margin or at a rapid pace in the agriculture sector is not possible.

Still, the local government has been promoting mechanization and smart agriculture to boost agricultural development, and a State-owned enterprise has promised to invest 500 million yuan (\$70.90 million) to build a smart agriculture park on the banks of the Wusulijiang River, which would create new jobs and could become a model for Fuyuan's agricultural development in the future.

With two rivers flowing through it, the county boasts of a number of wetland parks with fascinating views, which along with the fact that Fuyuan is China's easternmost county, has attracted thousands of visitors to the area, who want to be the first to see sunrise in the country. Last year, 1.67 million tourists visited Fuyuan, according to Li. Li and his colleagues see this as an encouraging sign to turn the county into a hot tourism destination, especially into a summer resort — the average highest and lowest temperatures in Fuyuan in August are 24.7 and 18.4 degrees Celsius.

While efforts are being made to attract more investors and turn tourism into a pillar industry, the Fuyuan county government has made it its priority to promote cooperation between China and Russia in Heixiazidao (Black Bear Island). Sandwiched between Heilongjiang and Wusulijiang rivers, the 335-sq-km island was divided into two parts in 2008, with China and Russia exercising jurisdiction over one part each.

The unique phenomenon of one inland island being governed by two countries has turned the island into a hot tourist destination. To make it convenient for tourists, Russia and China have built a bridge each connecting the mainland with the island. Some recent reports suggest China and Russia may jointly develop the island as an attractive tourist destination.

A friendly border and a busy inland port will greatly benefit Fuyuan, by attracting more domestic and international investments and talents, thus ensuring the county's sustainable development.

# GLOBAL VIEWS



MAXUEJING / CHINA DAILY

SHAHBAZ KHAN

## A shared commitment

The UNESCO-China partnership is not only for global heritage preservation but also a catalyst for fostering a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable world

In a world characterized by swift urban expansion, environmental crises and socio-economic shifts, the safeguarding of our cultural and natural heritage is more than just a preservation effort — it is an affirmation of our shared historical narrative and a promise to future generations. The strategic collaboration between the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and China has emerged as a shining example of global dedication to the protection of these precious legacies. This partnership has not only reinforced the defense of heritage sites but also resulted in greater recognition of the importance of cultural diversity and sustainable development on the world stage.

China's strategy for heritage conservation aligns closely with UNESCO's strategic goals, highlighting the significance of embedding heritage conservation efforts within the larger canvas of national development. This alignment is crucial as it ensures that while heritage sites are being preserved, they also act as stimulants for local economic growth and the next level of social progress.

A key component of the UNESCO-China alliance is the emphasis on capacity building. With the support and guidance of UNESCO, China has significantly enhanced its capabilities in managing and conserving its heritage sites. This involves a comprehensive range of activities, from educational training programs and technical assistance to the sharing of best practices in the field of heritage management.

The UNESCO-China partnership serves as a bridge for cultural exchanges and intercultural dialogues, nurturing an atmosphere of mutual comprehension and respect. Initiatives such as the Silk Road project, which connects heritage sites spanning several countries, exemplify this commitment. These exchanges are vital not only for the conservation of cultural heritage but also for promoting intercultural

harmony and understanding. China's pioneering use of technology in the preservation of its heritage, including advanced digital mapping, artificial intelligence and monitoring techniques, has been acknowledged and supported by UNESCO. These technological innovations play a critical role in protecting heritage sites from a variety of threats, including the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and natural disasters.

China's dedication to preserving its vast array of cultural and natural heritage is evident in its 59 UNESCO World Heritage sites. The 2024 inscription of the Beijing Central Axis is a significant milestone that underscores this commitment. Initiatives such as the "Conservation and Management of World Heritage Sites in China" have led to substantial benefits for local communities, improving their livelihoods and equipping heritage professionals with essential skills.

China's transition from a recipient of conservation support to a provider of expertise and resources is noteworthy. It actively shares its knowledge and resources with other countries, particularly in Africa and along the historic Silk Road. Furthermore, efforts to enhance youth education on World Heritage protection have been highly effective, inspiring a new generation to value and safeguard their cultural heritage.

Looking ahead, the UNESCO-China partnership will prioritize sustainable tourism practices that enhance local economies while safeguarding heritage sites, develop strategies to protect these sites from climate change impacts, focus on digital technologies for their preservation and presentation, and leverage China's leadership to advocate for stronger global commitments to heritage conservation.

The UNESCO-China partnership is a paragon of international collaboration in the realm of heritage preservation. It has not only led to significant achievements in protecting China's rich cultural and natural heritage but has also made a substantial global impact by promoting sustainable development, cultural exchanges, and

innovation in heritage management. As this partnership continues to evolve, it holds the potential to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the preservation of our shared global heritage.

Heritage is not just a legacy from the past but also a gift to future generations. The inscriptions at World Heritage sites serve as a reminder to us of the shared responsibility to preserve these sites, a commitment demonstrated by the recent inscription of the Beijing Central Axis and other natural heritage sites in China. These sites, from the Himalayas to the Badain Jaran Desert, are vital for protecting endangered species and maintaining ecological balance. By integrating the protection of World Heritage sites into its national development strategies, China recognizes their importance as a cornerstone of a cultural and ecological civilization.

As a global leader, China plays a role in heritage conservation that can inspire and influence other countries, particularly within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, where cultural exchanges and heritage protection are essential components. The Global Civilization Initiative is seen as a valuable contribution to the global dialogue on cultural diversity and international cooperation.

In conclusion, the UNESCO-China partnership is not only for global heritage preservation but also a catalyst for fostering a more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world. As we confront global challenges, this partnership stands as a reminder of our shared past and our collective responsibility to build a shared future.

The author is the Director of the UNESCO Office in Beijing and UNESCO Representative to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea. 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.

ZHU FENG AND LING BANGHAO

## A sustainable way to goal

China's new quality productive forces are strategic responses to changes in the international environment where the US is adopting various strategies to contain it

Strategic competition between the United States and China in technologies and industries is becoming increasingly fierce, particularly in areas of technological advancement and global market dominance. Both countries are making significant investments, especially in the fields of semiconductors, 5G technology, new energy and artificial intelligence.

From a macro perspective, the US has employed multiple tactics, including investment controls, export restrictions, regulatory mechanisms, and legislation, to curb China's technological progress in three key areas: AI governance, the chip race, and data

regulations. Under the guise of national sovereignty and security, the US is aggressively obstructing China's technological development. Aiming to maintain its technological hegemony and market dominance, the US has adopted various strategies to contain China. In response, China has been striving to alter the competitive landscape through sustained investment and rapid growth. Under the influence of globalization, this complex relationship that spans the economic, political and security dimensions, is expected to persist in the long term, with profound implications for global technological innovation and industrial development.

In this context, the development of China's new quality productive forces is not only an internal necessity for domestic growth but also a strategic response to changes in the international environment. Faced with increasing external risks, such as the "technology war" and "decoupling" from Western countries, or some core technologies being restricted with profound adjustments of the global industry and supply chains, China must accelerate the development of indigenous technologies to reduce its reliance on foreign high-tech products and technologies.

Thus, new quality productive forces integrate innovative technological elements to drive industrial upgrading and optimize economic structures, which offer China robust support in safeguarding its interests in the global technological competition and enhance its international influence. As a core driving force in the process of Chinese modernization, new quality productive forces

are led by innovation, pushing industries and the economy toward higher efficiency, more environment-friendly and more intelligent development. It emphasizes the reallocation and optimization of resources for technological innovation and high-quality development, aiming not only for maximum economic benefit but also for societal and environmental sustainability.

Building the strategic pathway for developing China's new quality productive forces is foundational to this effort.

First, promoting deep integration between the digital and real economies. New quality productive forces, based on the concept that science and technology are the primary productive forces, focus on key, cutting-edge, innovative and modern engineering technologies. Through breakthroughs in critical and disruptive innovations — such as big data, AI, quantum computing, and eco-friendly technologies — these forces can harness new momentum for the Chinese path to modernization via independent and controllable core technologies. Disruptive technologies and front-line innovations are vital sources of new quality productive forces, fostering new industries, models and dynamics. The deep integration of the digital and real economies is particularly crucial. Such integration not only promotes higher efficiency and sustainability in China's economic development, but also creates new growth points and development opportunities within the global economy.

Specifically, it can be achieved through two key approaches: The first is offering incentives such as research funding, tax relief and innovation subsidies to support the development and application of critical digital technologies. Then, it is necessary to establish industry-universities-research-application platforms to facilitate the smooth and efficient transformation of scientific and technological achievements into actual productivity.

Second, advance high-level opening-up. The cultivation and development of new quality productive forces are essential for advancing Chinese modernization. Especially in the digital economy era, global technological innovation and industrial transformation are increasingly dynamic. High-level, comprehensive opening-up is both a necessary path for China to integrate itself into the international markets and enhance competitiveness and a strategic choice for achieving high-quality development. While enabling growth, the Chinese path to modernization also bears the shared responsibility of shaping the global industrial

division of labor and trade rules through the substantial implications of new quality productive forces.

High-level opening-up, crucial to developing new quality productive forces, not only involves innovative development of various elements that make up these forces but also requires adaptive adjustments in institutional reform, system evolution and the restructuring of production relations. Legal protections must be strengthened to ensure successful opening-up in this process, including enhancing intellectual property protection, improving the legal framework for foreign investment, and establishing and refining dispute resolution mechanisms for foreign enterprises.

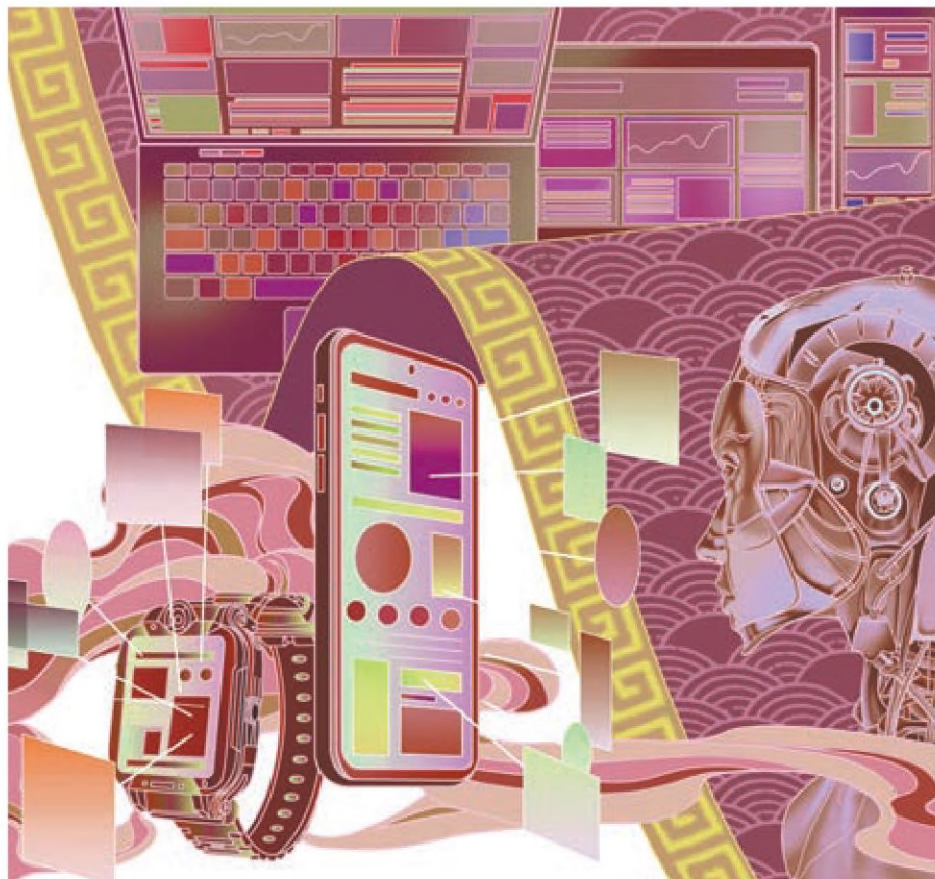
Third, intensify talent development efforts. The development of new quality productive forces requires systematic, long-term support from a pool of innovative talents. China must adopt more inclusive and outward talent policies to attract high-end global tech talents and teams for work and exchange within the country.

We should strengthen basic and vocational education, which is the foundation of talent development. China's education system should continue to undergo reforms, with a greater emphasis on fostering innovative thinking and practical skills through project-based, inquiry-driven and problem-solving teaching methods.

And new mechanisms need to be created to deeply integrate higher education with industries. While China boasts world-class universities and research institutions, sometimes there is a disconnect between academic research and industry needs. Bridging this gap requires deeper development of university-enterprise cooperation models.

Last but not least, international cooperation and exchanges should be enhanced by strengthening partnerships with leading global universities and research institutions. Shared use of research facilities and data resources, and the accelerated international flow of technological innovations and knowledge will help elevate China's presence and influence in the global technology innovation ecosystem.

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JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

# BUSINESS

## Ethnic silver jewelry in Chongqing gains popularity

By ZHUANG QIANGE and PANG BO

In Pengshui Miao and Tujia autonomous county under Chongqing municipality, 46-year-old Tuo Junhe has been dedicating himself to bringing traditionally made silver jewelry to the market.

Tuo, born into a local Miao silversmith family, started a silver jewelry workshop in 2011, using ancestral techniques to create Miao-styled jewelry and household items.

Now the sole inheritor of Chongqing's intangible cultural heritage project of "Miao Silver Jewelry Forging Techniques", Tuo still carefully executes every step in crafting silver products.

Pengshui is the only autonomous county in Chongqing predominantly inhabited by the Miao ethnic group, where the tradition of wearing silver jewelry has long been retained.

"It can be said that Miao silver jewelry is a totem of worship for the Miao people," Tuo explained, adding that Miao silver jewelry comes in many forms, adorning the body from head to toe, including headwear, chest and neck pieces, hand ornaments, clothing adornments and footwear.

However, creating a set of exquisite Miao silver jewelry involves more than 30 complex techniques and over 100 procedures, including smelting, casting, forging, chiseling, hollowing, welding and braiding, he said.

As a purely handcrafted process, making silver jewelry requires significant time and effort, as well as patience and attention to detail, and even a small piece takes extensive time to create, which is why few are cut out for the work, Tuo added.

In recent years, Pengshui has leveraged its beautiful natural environment and rich historical and cultural resources to explore the potential of ethnic, ecological

and cultural assets, making Miao silver jewelry one of its most creative products and loved by many, Tuo said.

These products, like other Miao ethnic items including embroidery, sweet potato noodles, Taiji water and Fire Ji fruit, are achieving both cultural preservation and economic benefits, he said.

At Chiyou Jiuli Town Scenic Spot, Wang Guangrong sells and rents Miao costumes in her store.

"Our most popular items are Miao silver jewelry, which is also a highlight for travelers looking to take photos," Wang said.

Every day, many tourists visit the store to buy or rent Miao clothing, often selecting intricately designed Miao silver jewelry to accompany their outfits.

On Aug 26, Wang Aiwei visited the scenic area and immersed herself in the diversity and unique charm of Miao culture, saying, "The silver jewelry is not only crisp and pleasant, but also very beautiful — it's a must-have for photos."

Walking through the scenic area, Miao silver jewelry is everywhere, especially in specialty shops, where silver hats, silver wine sets, silver horns, silver hairpins, silver bracelets, silver tea sets, silver cutlery, silver clothing ornaments and silver chest ornaments are all popular with customers.

"Each piece of handcrafted silver jewelry is unique, forged by silversmiths with great care, which is why they are so beloved," Tuo said.

As one of the 100 key counties for comprehensive rocky desertification control in China's karst areas, Pengshui started to restore forest and grass vegetation since 2011 on its karst areas covering 3,437 square kilometers, making the county more and more beautiful, and leading to booming ecotourism.

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Employees work at a solar panel production facility in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, in August. SHI BUFA / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Impact of US tariffs on solar firms seen limited

Move less effective in curbing China's role in the global solar supply chain, says expert

By ZHENG XIN zhenngxin@chinadaily.com.cn

The United States' latest move to raise tariffs on upstream polysilicon and wafers from China is expected to have only a limited impact on China's solar power sector, said analysts and companies.

Chinese firms have been diversifying their supply chains across the globe, allowing them to mitigate the effects of such trade barriers, they say.

The Office of the US Trade Representative announced earlier that it has finalized tariff hikes on selected Chinese products following a four-year review aimed at "strengthening protections for strategic industries", despite opposition from multiple domestic sectors.

Further control over tariffs on photovoltaic imports could increase the cost of solar projects in the US, potentially affecting its solar energy expansion efforts, yet with only a limited impact on China's solar sector, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

The tariffs will create challenges but are unlikely to result in any significant structural change in China's photovoltaic dominance, as Chinese solar companies are capable of navigating this latest challenge with minimal disruptions to their global operations, Lin said.

"US reliance on imported solar products from Southeast Asia, where many Chinese firms have production facilities, means that the US solar market will still indirectly depend on Chinese upstream production, making the tariffs less effective in curbing

China's role in the global solar supply chain. On the other hand, while US tariffs might increase production costs for some Chinese exporters, the growing internal and international demand will help stabilize revenues," Lin said.

Li Xiande, chairman of JinkoSolar, said Chinese solar companies have been competitive in research and development, especially in upstream manufacturing and grid infrastructure, as well as commercialization and scaling up.

In response to global challenges in recent years such as trade barriers and protectionism, JinkoSolar has made strategic moves including diversifying markets, customizing production and exporting technology and expertise to ensure its global leading position, he said.

For example, the company has been increasing its local presence by establishing subsidiaries across key markets such as Egypt, Kenya, Namibia, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa,

all of which the company — the world's largest solar panel producer by shipments — believes "has ambitious and decisive energy transition goals and relatively stable political and financial environments, making them prime targets for growth".

It has also been stepping up efforts to increase partnerships with influential local customers, stakeholders, local trade associations and government lobbyists, said Li.

Due to various trade policies, direct exports of Chinese PV products to the US are almost zero. Tariffs on exports from Southeast Asia to the US are expected to increase, and the final tariffs will be revealed in September or October, he said.

Despite the current trade barriers, Li said he still believes accelerated mass adoption and strong demand from diversified markets represent great opportunities for JinkoSolar.

Solar wafers and polysilicon made in China have seen record-low prices this quarter, according to Rystad Data. The proposed 50 percent tariff would raise prices, but not significantly, given the current low price levels, it said.

"The 50 percent tariff on solar cells from China reads like a symbolic measure," said Nicholas Lua, a solar supply chain analyst at global consultancy Rystad Energy.

In 2023, the value of US solar cell imports from China averaged \$1.75 million per quarter. That's sixty times less than the value of US solar cell imports from Southeast Asia for the same year, which averaged \$116 million per quarter last year. The cell tariff will not substantially impact trade flows between both countries, he said.

The China Photovoltaic Industry Association said the US has not ranked among the top 10 export markets for Chinese PV products in recent years.

Due to the lack of a complete PV supply chain and sufficient production capacity in the US, the country relies heavily on imports for its solar products. Currently, most solar products in the US are imported from Southeast Asia, with about 80 percent of the country's total PV module imports coming from the region, it said.

## SHACMAN's heavy trucks building bridges across the world

By YUAN SHENGGAO

At the just concluded IAA Transportation, visitors expressed interest in products of Shaanxi Heavy Duty Automobile Import and Export Co and inquired about their availability for purchase as the automaker showcased a variety of flagship models. Also known as SHACMAN, the automaker aimed to highlight China's advanced technology and innovative accomplishments in the commercial vehicle sector on the global stage.

As the most influential international event in the commercial vehicle sector, this year's IAA Transportation, held from Sept 17 to 22 in Hannover, Germany, attracted automakers from more than 40 countries and regions.

SHACMAN's exhibits included the X6000 tractor, L4 intelligent and energy-efficient tractor, a liquefied natural gas-powered tractor, a hydrogen fuel cell tractor and the urban logistics L6000 model. These rely on energy sources such as hydrogen fuel, diesel, natural gas and pure electricity. The models also feature Level 4 autonomous driving functions and high output capabilities, demonstrating SHACMAN's strength.

SHACMAN also shined at the China Day event of the exhibition on Sept 18 with General Manager Zhou Xiangqiang sharing insights of industry trends.

In recent years, SHACMAN has made efforts to expand its overseas footprint with products sold in more than 140 countries and regions. Cumulative exports have surpassed 340,000 units, ranking among the best nationwide in terms of export volume and value.

In 2023, SHACMAN achieved its best yearly exports with 56,000 vehicles shipped overseas, a 64 percent increase from 2022. They accounted for more than 20 percent of China's heavy-duty truck exports, with one in every five trucks coming from SHACMAN.

From January to August of this year, SHACMAN received 39,000 overseas orders, with an increase of 7 percent year-on-year. It registered 13 billion yuan (\$1.85 billion) in export revenue, a 15 percent increase from 2023.



Clockwise from top: Shaanxi Automobile Holding Group showcases its models at the 2024 IAA Transportation held in Hannover, Germany, from Sept 17 to 22. Robots assemble tires for the electric heavy trucks of SAHG. Some 100 units of the X5000 trucks are loaded for export in Tianjin. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The company's global venture began in 1988, with 13 units of an off-road model exported. Through persistent efforts to explore new markets, expand its distribution channels and enhance local partnerships, the company's annual overseas sales had increased to 10,000 units two decades later.

Innovation-driven development is central to SHACMAN. The company has two major research and development institutions — a technology center and the automobile engineering research institute —

which have accumulated a total of 3,672 authorized patents.

According to Feng Zhou, director of the product analysis center at SHACMAN engineering research institute, the automaker leads in clean energy, new energy and smart connected commercial vehicles. It boasts 485 patents and key project involvement, for example, developing China's first Level 4 intelligent heavy-duty truck and fuel cell vehicle.

Feng said: "In 2023, we advanced 48 key technological breakthroughs,

commercializing core technologies such as automated manual transmission control, autonomous driving, steer-by-wire and hydrogen fuel cell vehicle matching, which have strengthened the group's core competitiveness."

SHACMAN has ramped up the release of high-end products. The flagship X6000 garnered sales of 2,500 units in the first eight months of this year. This product has been delivered to 14 countries and regions including Russia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Peru,

Mexico and Colombia. The sales proportion of high-end products — such as the X3000, X5000 and X6000 — has risen from 7 percent in 2019 to 60 percent currently, highlighting their market presence.

"In recent years, we have actively partnered with more international partners and recruited top export channels in key markets such as Africa and Southeast Asia, enhancing our global marketing network," said Hua Xin, deputy general manager of SHACMAN. By now, the company has established 40 overseas offices,

with more than 190 dealerships, 400 overseas service outlets and 240 parts and components shops, covering regions such as Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America. Meanwhile, it has started localized production in 17 countries including Mexico, South Africa and Morocco, helping to boost those countries' infrastructure and create jobs there.

Among the more than 140 overseas destinations of SHACMAN, 132 are countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. The automaker has been involved in infrastructure projects by providing 28,000 heavy-duty trucks to countries such as Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

With reliable product quality and professional after-sales service, SHACMAN has been exploring niche market demands, improving its channel layout and has secured bids for the railway project in Simandou, Guinea, and the highway project in Malawi this year.

Hua said the company has expedited product upgrades to cater to the diverse demands of various countries, rather than simply selling what they had.

SHACMAN's X3000 all-wheel-drive desert tractor, designed for the Middle East, has received widespread acclaim since its introduction for addressing the region's distinctive climate challenges.

The company's star product, a side-loader port tractor, has been used in ports in Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Türkiye, South Africa, Singapore and the United Kingdom. Their self-developed electric version is also gaining popularity in Europe, including the UK and the Netherlands.

In Indonesia, where foreign brands dominated the heavy-duty truck market for years, SHACMAN faces challenges due to limited local awareness. During customer visits, SHACMAN's team helped a local company with a stalled fleet by coordinating repairs, impressing the customers with their assistance.

The Indonesian company later purchased 50 dump trucks for mining transport with SHACMAN providing full-service support, including two dedicated after-sales personnel tracking the vehicles' usage.

## BUSINESS

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## Product replacement efforts bearing fruit

Measure helping boost consumption, rejuvenate economy, realize green goals

By ZHONG NAN  
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With China providing financial incentives to encourage consumers to trade in their old home appliances for new ones, both foreign and domestic manufacturers said this initiative will drive consumers to buy more energy-efficient products, while boosting the country's economic growth.

The Chinese government introduced a policy measure in late August to promote the trade-in of old appliances and electronics. Consumers can receive subsidies for eight categories of high-energy-efficiency appliances, including refrig-

erators, washing machines, televisions, air conditioners and computers. These subsidies will cover 15 percent of the final sale price of the new products.

Each individual consumer can receive a subsidy for one item in one category and the subsidy for each item cannot exceed 2,000 yuan (\$283.36), said the Ministry of Commerce.

The move, focusing on stimulating market vitality, will promote product upgrades through government subsidies, said Wang Zhenfei, senior vice-president of BSH Home Appliances (China) Co Ltd, a country branch of Germany's BSH Home Appliances Group.

"At the same time, it will encourage manufacturers to continuously introduce innovative products, providing the market and consumers with eco-friendly smart home appliances, co-creating refreshed home environments with consumers and driving green innovation in the home appliance sector," said Wang.

Eager to seize more market share, the German company's two major brands — Bosch and Siemens — offer a wide range of home appliance product selections in China this year, providing consumers with more choices for upgrading.

The National Bureau of Statistics said retail sales of goods in China reached 3.44 trillion yuan in August, up 1.9 percent year-on-year.

The effectiveness of the trade-in program for consumer goods con-

tinued to be clear last month. Retail sales of home appliances shifted from decline to growth, rising 3.4 percent year-on-year.

"We strongly encourage our corporate members to understand and explore these new policies to benefit from them. We also recognize that competition is fairly intense in China," said Jens Eskelund, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China.

Therefore, foreign firms need to invest, stay at the forefront of technology and bring the best products to China. In some cases, they should even develop products locally for the Chinese market, said Eskelund.

Sharing similar views, Hanneke Faber, CEO of Logitech International SA, a Swiss manufacturer of computer peripherals and software, said that

with supportive policies aimed at boosting consumption and the growing trend of computer peripherals that combine both software and hardware, China has emerged as an innovative and rapidly expanding market.

"We will enhance our position in the area of supplying keyboards and webcams within the country," she said.

Supported by more than 2,400 workers at its factory in Suzhou, East China's Jiangsu province, Logitech also ships products manufactured at this plant worldwide.

As part of China's efforts to boost domestic demand and support economic growth, Xu Xingfeng, director of the market operation and consumption promotion department at the Ministry of Commerce, said the consumer goods trade-in program

will not only boost spending in the home appliances sector and contribute to overall economic growth, but also encourage manufacturers to produce and market more advanced and eco-friendly products.

This certainly will drive innovation and enhance the competitiveness of Chinese manufacturers in both domestic and foreign markets in the next step, said Xu.

Bai Lin, vice-president of Chinese home appliance manufacturer Midea Group, noted that trade-in programs for consumer goods are more than just product replacements.

Such programs stimulate consumer demand, thus energizing domestic consumption and reinforcing economic recovery. For businesses and industries, this presents a significant growth opportunity, Bai said.

## Mortgage cuts needed to restore confidence

By ZHOU LANXU  
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It is increasingly necessary for China to reduce interest rates on existing mortgages as soon as possible to revive consumer confidence, stabilize housing market expectations and meet the annual economic growth target, analysts said.

"The public is eagerly looking forward to existing home loan rate reductions, necessitating prompt policy responses," said Yang Haiping, a researcher at the Central University of Finance and Economics' Institute of Securities and Futures.

Lowering the rates can ease the financial burden on homebuyers and stimulate consumer spending, tapping into the policy space provided by the US Federal Reserve's interest rate cut, Yang said, adding that a reduction of existing home loan rates may take place in October.

Following the Fed's rate cut of 50 basis points on Wednesday, the loan prime rate, China's market-based benchmark of lending rates, remained unchanged on Friday, leading to market speculation that policy space may exist for lowering current mortgage rates.

With the widening gap between rates for new and existing mortgages having triggered early repayments of home loans, calls for lowering existing mortgage rates have gained traction since August. Soochow Securities estimates



Potential homebuyers look at a property model in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. WEI LIANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

that the gap between rates for new and existing mortgages is approximately 82 basis points. The balance of personal housing loans was 37.79 trillion yuan (\$5.36 trillion) by the end of June, a decrease of 400 billion yuan from a quarter earlier, said the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

The early repayments are seen by economists as restricting consumers' spending power, taking away quality assets from commercial banks and destabilizing housing market expectations.

"We estimate that the existing mortgage rates may be cut by about

60 basis points on average, meaning that the average interest rate for existing home loans will decline from about 4.27 percent to around 3.67 percent," said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International.

Wang said that the PBOC may implement the cut using the same method as late last year, when lenders were encouraged to replace existing first-home mortgages with new ones at lower rates.

Allowing homebuyers to refinance with a different bank is unlikely, which could give rise to disorderly competition among

lenders, Wang said, adding that banks may gradually reduce deposit rates to offset the impact of lower mortgage rates on their bottom lines.

Yang said the PBOC may also need to take measures such as reducing the reserve requirement ratio and providing targeted low-cost funding to commercial banks to help them maintain a reasonable profitability level.

The PBOC said earlier this month that it will introduce additional policy measures to reduce financing costs for enterprises and households.

## Technology pushing low-altitude aircraft

By HUANG ZHILING and  
PENG CHAO in Chengdu

China's innovative breakthroughs in low-altitude aircraft are driving the country's urban air mobility sector to undergo development at such an unprecedented pace that it may one day lead to profoundly reshaping people's means of travel and experiences in areas such as sightseeing, logistics and emergency rescue, industry insiders said.

They made the remarks at the three-day 2024 China (Chengdu) International Low-altitude Economic Partnership Conference and the 2024 Chengdu International Low-altitude Equipment and Services Expo, held in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, last week.

"China lags behind developed countries in traditional general aviation, but the development of electric aircraft has given the country an opportunity to overtake its competitors in the low-altitude economy," said Guo Liang, CEO and chief scientist of Aerofugia, a subsidiary of Chinese automaker Geely Technology Group.

Guo said China's world-leading new energy electric vehicle industry has provided solid industrial support for the development of electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, or eVTOL, as 80 percent of its supply chain overlaps with that of electric cars.

Guo said his company aims to obtain an airworthiness certificate for its self-developed AE200, a five to six-seat manned tiltrotor eVTOL aircraft, by the end of next year or early in 2026, and deliver the first batch of aircraft to clients for trial commercial operations in the first half of 2026.

He believes eVTOLs are more likely to be used for business travel in the early stages as they can significantly reduce travel time, and after the industry matures, the cost will be significantly reduced to a range that is affordable for ordinary people.

"The cost of taking an air taxi may be two to three times that of ground transportation, but the travel efficiency can be up to five times," he said.

He mentioned that due to the shortage of emergency helicopters in China, people's first response to sudden illness or injury is to call for an ambulance. In the future, eVTOLs are expected to play a crucial role in this area. And eVTOLs can also provide fast connections between scenic spots in areas with complex terrain, thereby changing people's travel habits and improving their tourism experiences, he added.

Xu Huawei, public relations director of Sichuan Tengden Sci-Tech Innovation Co Ltd, said the application of unmanned aerial vehicles in artificial weather modification is booming as extreme weather conditions have become more frequent in recent years.

The company has signed cooperation agreements with several provinces and autonomous regions to conduct experimental flights and normalized operations for weather modification, he said.

The emerging large-scale unmanned and smart cargo aircraft will also further improve China's logistics efficiency and reduce costs, he said.

Ren Bin, chairman of Chengdu-based industrial UAV manufacturer JOUAV, said UAVs, equipped with all kinds of sensors, will empower comprehensive management in various fields such as transportation, forest inspection and urban management.

"Low-altitude digital economy, rather than low-altitude transport and logistics, will probably be the main business form and growth point of low-altitude economy in the next five to 10 years," he said.

Cheng Chengqi, a Peking University professor and a member of China's air traffic management advisory committee, proposed to build a low-altitude three-dimensional traffic signal system to empower low-altitude traffic management and safe navigation.

"Similar to how we use car navigation systems, once the start and end points are set, this system can plan feasible flight routes for low-altitude aircraft," he said.

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## Briefly

## 700+ projects signed at manufacturing event

As the four-day 2024 World Manufacturing Convention came to a close on Monday in Hefei, capital of Anhui, global partners vowed to invest some 350 billion yuan (\$49.5 billion) into the province. Showcasing the best of global manufacturing know-how and cutting-edge technologies, at least 700 cooperative projects were signed during the event, empowering the province's manufacturing capabilities. Since its inception in 2018, over 3,600 manufacturing projects have been signed during the past six editions of the annual event, with actual investment surpassing 1.5 trillion yuan.

## Renminbi strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi strengthened 113 pips to 7.0531 against the US dollar on Monday, 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 from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## Green tech innovation essential

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
and LIU ZHIHUA  
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China is playing an increasingly important role in promoting the world's green, high-tech, and sustainable development, as the global economy grapples with mounting challenges including climate change and geopolitical tensions, according to experts participating in the 12th Beijing Humboldt Forum.

They said countries should work together to strengthen cooperation and multilateralism to deal with challenges and uncertainties jointly, in a bid to foster a more balanced and sustainable growth for the world's future.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Michael Spence highlighted that the global economy is facing unprecedented challenges from climate change, rising geopolitical tensions as well as headwinds from declining productivity growth and aging issues.

"China has made enormous progress in electric vehicles, solar battery technology and so on," Spence said during the meeting on Saturday via a video link. "These need to spread around the world and be made available everywhere ... So if we use these tools wisely, we have a reasonable chance of not



Zhao Zhongxiu speaks at the forum. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

only overcoming the current headwinds to growth and development in many parts of the world but also putting the global economy on a different trajectory."

Citing a recent report by Beijing-based University of International Business and Economics, the university's President Zhao Zhongxiu called on Global South countries to participate in the global value chain and promote green and low-carbon development, adding that China's experiences are helpful for those countries in dealing with the challenges ahead.

"China has been a member of the World Trade Organization for over 20 years, which offers valuable insights, particularly in cooperation with Global South countries," Zhao said. "From China's perspective, the key takeaway is to leverage multilateral and bilateral trade agreements to promote economic development."

When it comes to green and low-carbon development, he said that presents an opportunity for Global South countries to catch up, particularly in the area of energy transition.

"The key is strengthening policy coordination and multilateral cooperation," Zhao said. "It is essential to encourage green technological innovation and application, as well as to advance technology transfer and cooperation, rather than imposing technological blockades."

Jin Xu, chairman of the China Association of International Trade, noted that the current global political and economic landscape faces many uncertainties, saying a decoupling of Western countries and China would lead to significant losses for both sides and erode global confidence in future economic development.

Highlighting China's notable growth in the new three sectors of electrical vehicles, lithium batteries and solar cells, he called on countries to jointly strengthen cooperation and multilateralism to foster a green and sustainable future.

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## Safer power source



Staff from State Grid Hangzhou Power Supply Co install primary and secondary integrated circuit breakers at low-voltage distributed photovoltaic grid connection points in their service area over the weekend. The breakers provide a safer and more flexible distributed power source for the new power system.

SHAN ZHIFEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

## WORLD

# Chinese, Japanese FM's discuss fatal attack on pupil

By MINLU ZHANG  
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Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in New York on Monday and addressed the recent fatal attack on a Japanese schoolboy in Shenzhen.



China will investigate and handle the individual case of the attack on Japanese students in Shenzhen in accordance with the law ...

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi

"China will investigate and handle the individual case of the attack on Japanese students in Shenzhen in accordance with the law, and will, as always, protect the safety of all foreign citizens in China in accordance with the law. Japan should view this calmly and rationally and avoid politicizing or escalating the issue," said Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

"We hope that China will properly handle the attack on Japanese students in Shenzhen and ensure the safety of Japanese people in China," said Kamikawa, who requested the meeting.

She said that an important foundation of relations between the two countries lies in exchanges between the people.

The diplomats were in New York for the UN Summit of the Future and the 79th United Nations General Assembly, which opens on Tuesday.

The death of the 10-year-old Japanese boy stabbed on his way to school in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen has caused widespread grief and outrage in both countries.

Police have detained a 44-year-old male suspect who was apprehended at the scene of the attack. Shenzhen police said that the investigation into the case is still ongoing, and said initial findings showed it was an "isolated incident".

The two foreign ministers also exchanged ideas on the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the ocean.

Kamikawa said that in the face of rising risks and challenges internationally, Japan and China should maintain communication and dialogue in all fields and at all levels. That includes negotiating to solve the problem of nuclear-contaminated water

and jointly safeguarding regional peace and development.

Wang emphasized that "China's opposition to Japan's discharge of contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea is justified."

On Friday, China and Japan reached an agreement on the ocean discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water. The agreement includes the establishment of a long-term international monitoring arrangement within the International Atomic Energy Agency framework.

It also ensures that China and all other stakeholders can participate in the arrangement and can carry out independent sampling and monitoring as well as interlaboratory comparisons. Wang said Japan "should follow through on its commitments and avoid creating unnecessary issues".

The bilateral agreement does not mean China will resume imports of Japanese aquatic products immediately, and it has no connection to the individual case in Shenzhen, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Friday.

Wang also met Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu on Monday in New York and expressed China's willingness to continuously promote bilateral relations to new levels.

Muizzu visited China in January, when he and President Xi Jinping announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, and the two countries will work together to build a community with a shared future, Wang said.

"Despite many uncertainties in the international and regional situation, China and the Maldives have always understood, trusted and supported each other, and the development of bilateral ties have remained steady and healthy," Wang said.

"China is willing to work with the Maldivian government and people to implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and promote the China-Maldives relations to new levels," said Wang.

"China's development will enhance the force for peace in the world and augment the strength of developing countries and will hence bring new opportunities for developing countries like the Maldives," Wang said.

Muizzu said he was honored to be the first foreign head of state invited by Xi to China this year. Muizzu said his "historic state visit" to China in January was "a total success that injected vigor into the development of Maldives-China relations".

Muizzu said that the Maldives "firmly adheres to the one-China policy and supports a series of prominent international cooperation initiatives proposed by the Chinese president".

## A call for a better future



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, special representative of President Xi Jinping, delivers a speech, "Bearing in mind our common future and jointly building a better tomorrow", at the United Nations Summit of the Future in New York on Monday. XINHUA

# Sri Lanka's priority to be economic recovery

New leader will also focus on reducing poverty, improving lives, expert says

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong  
vivienxu@chinadailyusa.com

The top priorities of Sri Lanka's new president will be to boost economic recovery, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for citizens, an expert says, as the weekend's national election came two years after the country declared bankruptcy.

The Election Commission confirmed on Sunday that the left-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake, 55, was the winner of Saturday's presidential election.

"The millions of eyes filled with hope and expectation push us forward, and together, we stand ready to rewrite Sri Lanka's history," Dissanayake wrote on X after the release of the results.

"This dream can only be realized with a fresh start. The unity of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and all Sri Lankans is the bedrock of this new beginning. The New Renaissance we seek will rise from this shared strength and vision."

Dissanayake was sworn in to office on Monday and vowed to restore public faith in politics, but said he had no magic solution to the hardships suffered following an economic crisis.

"I am not a conjurer, I am not a magician, I am a common citizen," he said after taking his oath.

"I have strengths and limitations, things I know and things I don't ... my responsibility is to be part of a collective effort to end this crisis."

In a special address, outgoing President Ranil Wickremesinghe said the people had made their decision and it must be respected.

Reflecting on his tenure, he said he followed the right path and guarded people from starvation and suffering amid the economic crisis.

"I hope that the new president will also follow the right path and

put an end to the remaining issues that the people are facing," he added.

On Monday, Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena submitted his resignation, saying that with the election of Dissanayake as the ninth executive president of Sri Lanka, he is stepping down in accordance with the country's constitution.

Gunawardena sent his congratulations to Dissanayake on Sunday night.

Leaders from South Asia also extended their congratulations to the new president.

In their messages, Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed hopes for further strengthened bilateral relations under Dissanayake's leadership, Radio Pakistan reported.

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu said on X: "As close neighbors, I am eager to work with you to further strengthen the historic friendship between the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Wishing you immense success in your new role."

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he looks forward to working closely with Dissanayake to further enhance the multifaceted cooperation between their countries, the Press Trust of India reported.

A total of 38 candidates contested in Saturday's presidential election, which concluded peacefully the same day. More than 17 million registered voters, out of Sri Lanka's 22 million population, cast their ballots at more than 13,000 polling stations to choose a leader for the next five years.

Dissanayake's victory came more than two years after former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned in July 2022 amid a severe economic crisis that sparked protests across the country.

This crisis, brought about by a confluence of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical conflicts, resulted in shortages of essential goods such as fuel and food.

Following Rajapaksa's resignation, Wickremesinghe was appointed president during a parliamentary election. His term is set to expire on Nov 17. According to the Election Commission, the law mandates that a presidential election be held no less than one month and no more than two months before this date.

Sri Lanka's economy has recently started to recover, with the World Bank projecting a moderate growth of 2.2 percent this year in its biannual update in April. Inflation has decreased significantly, and tourism — one of the country's top sources of foreign revenue — has also rebounded, with more than 1.3 million foreign tourists visiting by mid-August, the Tourism Development Authority said.

Despite the positive outlook, the World Bank update said the country still faces challenges, including elevated poverty levels, income inequality and labor market issues. Poverty rates have continued to rise for the fourth consecutive year, with an estimated 25.9 percent of Sri Lankans living below the poverty line last year, it said.

Lawrence Loh, director of the Centre for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore's Business School, told China Daily that the new president's "utmost priority" should be sustained economic recovery, especially in light of the serious economic policy mismanagement of recent years.

Sound economic governance must be at the heart of the country's new leadership, he said.

"Sri Lanka is part of Asia, and it will be through this region that the country can achieve its next phase of renewal and growth."

Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.

# Quad meet slammed as attempt to curb China

By WANG QINGYUN  
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Beijing has slammed Washington for "patching up small and exclusive circles" and urged it to let go of the "obsession with containing China", shortly after the United States hosted a Quad summit.

Leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the US — the four members of Quad — gathered for the summit in the US state of Delaware on Saturday and issued a joint statement.

The grouping is a tool for the US to encircle China and maintain US hegemony, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Monday.

It is positioned as a primary leadership mechanism for the US "Indo-Pacific strategy", which "attempts to build consensus on containing China by hyping up 'China threat'", Lin said at a regular news conference.

"The US kept saying that the summit did not target China, but China was the first topic of the summit," he said. "China is high on the summit's agenda."

China has always believed that cooperation between countries should not target any third party, let alone harm their interests, Lin said.

## Harming trust

Small and exclusive circles patched up in the Asia-Pacific will not last, as they will harm mutual trust and cooperation between regional countries and run counter to the general aspiration for peace, development, cooperation and prosperity, he added.

Lin urged the US to stop using regional countries as its tools. "The US should deliver on its statement of not seeking to strengthen alliances against China, instead of pursuing its own selfish interests at the expense of other countries' strategic security interests and the well-being of people of the Asia-Pacific."

In response to the "serious concern" voiced by Quad leaders about the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea, Lin said the situation has remained stable in general.

Some countries outside the regions have been trying in different ways to intervene in maritime issues around China and escalate the regional situation, but no intervention will shake China's determination to safeguard its territory, sovereignty and maritime interests and to protect regional peace and stability, Lin said.

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## Hope amid gloom



Residents of the Cemetery View informal settlement near Pretoria, South Africa, begin rebuilding on Sunday, after a devastating fire reduced more than 800 shacks to ashes, leaving thousands homeless. IHSAN HAFEEJEE VIA GETTY IMAGES

# Lebanon says 274 dead in Israeli strikes

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT — Israel unleashed its most widespread wave of airstrikes against hundreds of Hezbollah targets on Monday, killing at least 274 people by Lebanese tallies, and warned citizens to evacuate areas where it said the armed group was storing weapons.

The latest attacks came amid some of the heaviest cross-border exchanges of fire in almost a year of conflict, as Israel shifts its focus to its northern border, where Hezbollah has been firing rockets into Israel in support of Hamas, which is fighting Israel's military assault in Gaza.

"We are deepening our attacks in Lebanon; the actions will continue until we achieve our goal to return the northern residents safely to their homes," Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said in a video published by his office on Monday.

"These are days in which the Israeli public will have to show composure"

He was speaking after the Israeli military targeted Hezbollah in Lebanon's south, eastern Bekaa Valley and northern region near Syria.

Lebanese Health Minister Firass Abiad told reporters that the toll stood at "274 dead including 21 children and 39 women — that's who we know about until now".

Israeli army spokesman Avichay Adraee said on X that so far, more than 300 Hezbollah targets have been struck after earlier warning that airstrikes on houses in Lebanon, in which "Hezbollah hid weapons", were imminent.

In response, Hezbollah said on Monday it had launched rockets at Israeli military posts.

The airstrikes have intensified pressure on Hezbollah, which last week suffered an attack its Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah called "unprecedented in the history" of the group, after thousands of

paggers and walkie-talkies used by its members exploded.

The operation was widely blamed on Israel, which has not confirmed or denied responsibility.

On Monday, residents of southern Lebanon received calls from a Lebanese number ordering them to immediately distance themselves 1,000 meters from any post used by Hezbollah, a Reuters reporter in the south, who received the call, said.

Evacuation calls have been received on phones as far as the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

Lebanon's Information Minister Ziad Makary said his ministry had received a call ordering the evacuation of the building, but said the ministry would do no such thing. "This is a psychological war," Makary told Reuters.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA