

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2024

Party, State leaders pay tribute to people's heroes

By ZHANG YUNBI
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

An overnight autumn rainfall in Beijing added a solemn touch to the grand annual ceremony that was held on Monday at Tian'anmen Square to mark the nation's 11th Martyrs' Day.

The ceremony fell on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, and other Party and State leaders attended the ceremony to present flower baskets to honor the people's heroes.

The top leaders, including Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi and Han Zheng, were joined by representatives from all walks of life at the ceremony.

In the center of the square, a giant flower basket with the words "best wishes for the motherland" represented the Chinese people's great shared hope for the country's future prosperity.

The Monument to the People's Heroes at the square featured two groups of flower beds decorated with 18 wreaths that included flowers such as white chrysanthemums.

In front of the monument, more than 2,400 representatives from all walks of life stood in lines with flowers in their hands.

Among them were veteran soldiers, relatives of martyrs, representatives of the recipients of national medals and national honorary titles, young students and children.

The trumpeters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Military Band played solemnly, reminding people of the turbulent years in history.

The ceremony officially began at 10 am. The military band played the national anthem, and the whole audience sang the anthem in unison.

Then everyone stood in silence, paying tribute to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the cause of liberation of the Chinese people and the development of the People's Republic of China.

Afterward, children holding flowers sang and saluted the Monument to the People's Heroes.

The military band performed another solemn song for the flower presentation, while 18 soldiers steadily carried the flower baskets, walked slowly toward the monument, and placed the baskets at the base of the monument.

Xi, together with other Party and State leaders, stepped up to the foot of the monument, stopped at the flower baskets and then watched with great reverence.



Top: President Xi Jinping walks in tribute around the Monument to the People's Heroes at Tian'anmen Square in Beijing on Monday at an event to mark Martyrs' Day, which is annually observed one day before National Day. YIN BOGU / XINHUA

Above: President Xi and other Party and State leaders attend a ceremony to present flower baskets for people's heroes at Tian'anmen Square in Beijing on Monday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

Xi straightened the ribbons on the baskets before leading other senior officials in a walk around the monument to pay tribute.

Children and representatives from all walks of life also filed up to the monument in an orderly manner and laid flowers to pay homage.

China introduced and marked its first Martyrs' Day in 2014. The event falls on Sept 30 every year ahead of the country's National Day on Oct 1.

Since the first Martyrs' Day, Xi has made a tradition of paying tribute to the people's heroes on that day. Every year on Martyrs' Day, local

governments throughout the country organize public ceremonies to commemorate the martyrs.

At a ceremony awarding the highest State honors on Sunday, Xi called on the whole country to look to the heroes and forge ahead in unity to build a strong nation.

Xi says China will safeguard world peace

President also reaffirms nation's goal of promoting common development

By XU WEI
xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping reaffirmed the nation's foreign policy goal of safeguarding world peace and promoting common development on Monday, saying that Beijing will always advance the common values of humanity and advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world.

Addressing a grand reception to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the president said China will continue to play an active part in the reform and development of global governance, and will endeavor to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

"In advancing Chinese modernization, we must adhere to the path of peaceful development," he told thousands of dignitaries at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

"We will always stand on the right side of history and human progress," he said, adding that China will also vigorously advocate "peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit, and do our best to promote world peace and tranquility and human progress."

The reception, held one day before National Day, brought together dignitaries including Party and State leaders, foreign envoys and recipients of national honors.

In his speech, Xi called the

founding of the People's Republic of China 75 years ago a landmark event that demonstrated that the Chinese people had stood up, ushering in a new epoch in history toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China has been profoundly transformed, and "our nation is marching forward on an irreversible historical course of rejuvenation", he emphasized.

Meanwhile, the president pointed out that the best way to celebrate the nation's birthday is to carry forward the unprecedented cause of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization.

He reiterated the need to uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China, saying that the Party should always be at the core, leading and coordinating all efforts and undertakings.

"We should consistently enforce full and rigorous self-discipline of the Party, and steer China's great social transformation through the Party's self-renewal."

Xi reiterated pledges to deepen reform and opening-up across the board and to promote high-quality development.

See *Goal*, page 3



President Xi Jinping delivers a speech on Monday at a grand reception at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Robust stock gains boost expectation of more moves

By OUYANG SHIJIA
 and ZHOU LANXU

As Chinese bourses record historic daily gains, with the Shanghai Composite Index up more than 8 percent and moving above the 3,300-point level, policymakers in China will likely take bolder moves than expected to bolster the world's second-largest economy in the following months, analysts said on Monday.

More tools are expected to come into play, including further stimulus packages, the issuance of additional central government bonds, and more easing in the housing sector.

Although weaker-than-expected data in recent months suggests that China's GDP growth is likely to have decelerated in the third quarter, analysts believe China is still able to achieve its annual growth target of around 5 percent this year, given recently announced supportive policies and the incremental policies that are soon to be introduced.

Their comments followed another robust rally day on Monday. That came after a strong rebound in the A-share market last week that was propelled by higher market liquidity and the recovery of investors' risk appetite amid the latest support measures.

On Monday, the Shenzhen Component Index spiked 10.67 percent, while the technology-focused ChiNext in Shenzhen surged 15.36 percent. The combined trading value at the Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges hit an all-time high of about 2.6 trillion yuan (\$371 billion).

Thomas Fang, head of China global markets at UBS, said that markets reacted positively and immediately after the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the financial regulatory authorities issued a series of favorable policies last week.

"Driven by the recent strong policy signals, market expectations have been rectified decisively, and

investor confidence restored significantly," Fang said. "The key next steps to watch will be any material improvement of macro data and companies' financials. In addition to the implementation of the announced policies, it will be critical to further introduce follow-through measures and continue to deliver consistent policy signals."

Fang said the stimulus fiscal policies are essential to solidifying confidence and boosting much-needed consumption. "Robust support and protection for private enterprises and entrepreneurs is what the market is hoping for. Policymakers should send firm and consistent signals to the market in the manner that is most receptive to the market."

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Monday that China's official purchasing managers index for the manufacturing sector rose slightly from 49.1 in August to 49.8 in September, just below the 50-point mark that separates contraction from expansion.

Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank, said that September's manufacturing uptick came with a modest recovery in domestic demand and resilience in external demand, as well as with policies taking effect that are aimed at driving equipment upgrades and consumer trade-in deals for consumer goods.

Meanwhile, Zhou noted that China's manufacturing sector is still grappling with pressing challenges from lukewarm demand and the high operational pressures that companies are facing.

Citing China's weaker-than-expected economic indicators in July and August, Betty Wang, lead economist at British think tank Oxford Economics, said that China's growth "has likely weakened on a sequential basis in the third quarter, translating into 4.6 percent year-on-year growth, a notch lower than the 4.7 percent rise in the second quarter."

See *Stocks*, page 3

Friendship Award honors 100 expats' contributions

By CAO DESHENG
caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China conferred the 2024 Chinese Government Friendship Award on Monday on 100 foreign experts working in the country, in recognition of their contributions to China's development.

State Councilor Shen Yiqin presented the Friendship Award to the honorees at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

On behalf of the Chinese government, Shen extended congratulations to the laureates and expressed gratitude to all foreign experts and their families for their support of China's construction,

reform and development.

She said that since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China has led the people in creating the remarkable miracle that has captured worldwide attention.

In the new era, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, China has achieved historic accomplishments and undergone historic transformation, she said, adding that foreign experts have made outstanding contributions to China's modernization drive, which the Chinese people will always remember.

See *Friendship*, page 3

NATION



From left: Immersive technologies have been used in ongoing exhibitions in museums, including one about Sichuan province's Sanxingdui Site held at the Capital Museum East Branch in Beijing; an exhibition about figure paintings across the ages collected by the Palace Museum in the capital; and an oracle-bone exhibition at Yinxu Museum in Anyang, Henan province. PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

CULTURAL JOURNEY

Balancing between the virtual and actual

Museums around China are diving headfirst into harnessing the transformative power of new technology, **Deng Zhangyu** reports.

Equipped with a virtual reality headset and backpack, visitors are able to explore seven sacrificial pits at the Sanxingdui archaeological site up close. They can walk into them, crouch down to examine artifacts buried in the soil, follow archaeologists into the studio to watch the process of restoration, and even hold in their hands important items unearthed at the site, such as the famous gold mask.

In reality, this would be impossible at the site in Guanghan, Sichuan province. The seven sacrificial pits are carefully protected inside large, temperature- and humidity-controlled glass-walled rooms, and visitors can only watch archaeologists work from a distance.

This virtual exploration of the Sanxingdui archaeological site is the latest interactive experience from the Sanxingdui Museum, and marks an innovative step in the museum's digital transformation.

Since the beginning of August, the museum, one of the most popular in China, has been offering a trial version of the VR exploration of its newly excavated sacrificial pits, and since then, the 30-minute virtual experience has been enjoyed by a large number of visitors. Eager participants have had to wait in long lines every day.

Dong Jing, deputy director of the Sanxingdui Museum, says that the virtual exploration, which combines VR with archaeological data, provides users with a real and vivid interactive experience.

When Dong and her team took the program to the 10th Chinese Museums and Relevant Products and Technologies Exposition at the end of August in Hohhot, capital of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, hundreds of visitors lined up to try it out.

The experience was offered in a special hall at the expo, where dozens of key museums gathered to demonstrate innovative high-tech programs offering immersive experiences. It became the most popular exhibition hall during the event.

This year, the theme of the expo focused on the digitalization of museums, and especially on ways to use digital technology to create immersive experiences. It included a forum on the topic of the integration of digital technology and displays. Echoing the theme, the forum was moderated by two digital avatars, one of them being a digital staff member at Beijing's Capital Museum called Jing Hui. Her tasks at the museum include providing personalized artificial intelligence-guided tours to visitors.

In recent years, museums in China have been taking action to embrace digitalization. Using technology such as big data, virtual reality, augmented reality, and AI to enhance the visitor experience is inevitable, according to museum directors and experts at the forum.

"Offering visitors better service and attracting them to museums to gain a better understanding of the artifacts are our goals in employing digital technology," Dong says.

The deputy director adds that the Sanxingdui Museum opened a new branch last year, and set up a special exhibition hall for interactive programs. There, visitors can immerse themselves in the society of the ancient kingdom of Shu state, a prosperous Bronze Age civilization that dominated the upper Yangtze River region more than 3,000 years ago.

Since its opening last July, the new branch has received more than



Clockwise from top: An immersive show at Shanghai Museum's new branch enables people to traverse different seasons depicted in Chinese paintings. The exhibition of the Fair Ladies series at Zhejiang Provincial Museum offers an immersive experience. Visitors enjoy a long-screened digital version of a historical painting at Deji Art Museum in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

5 million visitors. A new digital hall dedicated to a giant bronze tree unearthed at Sanxingdui is planned for next year.

In February, the Shanghai Museum opened a new branch, a two-story complex that is an expansion of its original downtown location. It has a digital hall on the second floor, roughly the size of a basketball court, which is dedicated to an immersive show, titled *Poetic Jiangnan*.

The 18-minute show takes visitors on a journey with a digital avatar of renowned Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) ink painter Dong Qichang, with whom they traverse 15 landscape paintings created by 12 master artists over a span of 1,000 years. All the paintings featured in the digital show are from the collection of the Shanghai Museum.

People can talk to Dong's digital avatar, interact with digital fish swimming on the floor, and watch digital petals falling into rivers. As the seasons change in the paintings, the background music also changes.

The hall opened to the public at the end of June and is so popular that appointments have to be booked two weeks in advance, according to Gong Yuwu, deputy director of the Shanghai Museum information center.

"These kinds of immersive shows will definitely be a future trend. They give people an easy and interesting

“Digital technology is just a tool to help enhance the experience and attract more people to museums.”

Gong Yuwu, deputy director, Shanghai Museum information center

way to appreciate art," Gong says.

After the show, people can view the paintings in the show in the other halls, a process of exploration that helps them understand the stories and culture behind the art.

Gong says that visitors, especially the young and parents with children, are often better versed in the subject, and so expect a more profound experience than simply looking at digital paintings.

"Digital technology is just a tool to help enhance the experience and attract more people to museums. The most advanced technology is not necessarily the best; what matters is what is most suitable for the presentation and experience of the exhibition," Gong says.

Poetic Jiangnan was coproduced by a Shanghai-based media company, Motion Magic. Zhou Mingzhe, a marketing manager of the company, says that the demand from museums to produce immersive shows

has been rapidly increasing over the past two years and the company has already scheduled its collaborations with institutions across the country for next year.

All museums, from major to private, have worked hard to produce immersive experiences in recent years.

The Hunan Museum in Changsha, Hunan province, produced its first digital show *The Art of Life: Multimedia Exhibition of Mawangdui Han Culture* in June to highlight the archaeological discoveries at the Mawangdui Han Tombs, where 1,000 artifacts and a well-preserved female body dating back over 2 millennia were unearthed in 1972. Visitors are able to experience life as lived by their makers 2,000 years ago.

The Deji Art Museum in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, a small, private museum, digitalized *An Era in Jinling*, a historical painting by Feng Ning of the Qing Dynasty (1644-

1911). It depicts vivid street scenes in Nanjing (called Jinling) of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Visitors can interact with the 110-meter digital re-creation by wearing special electrical bracelets, and are able to set off fireworks in the painting, talk to vendors and a fortuneteller, and even play with cats and dogs.

With the implementation of the 144-hour visa-free policy this year, many foreign tourists have come to the museum to experience the digital exhibition, according to the museum's director Ai Lin.

The passion of museums for producing immersive digital shows can largely be attributed to the national drive toward the digital economy, in support of which many policies and guidelines have been issued in the past two years.

Last September, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and five other governmental bodies issued a Three-Year Action Plan for the Innovative Development of the Metaverse Industry (2023-25). The plan sets specific goals for various sectors, including museums, and strongly supports the wide application of metaverse technology, as a result of which, many museums now have digital employees.

In May, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and several other ministries released the Action Plan for the Innovative Development of

Smart Tourism. It outlined specific tasks for museums in terms of offering immersive, personalized experiences.

Li Qun, director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, said at the August expo that museums have made great strides forward in digitalization. He also stressed on many occasions that digital technology should be vigorously promoted to offer better visitor experiences.

Since the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou first began offering *Fair Ladies: Images of Ancient Women* online in 2021, the exhibition has undergone several iterations with the development of digital technology. According to Cai Qin, deputy director of the Zhejiang Provincial Museum and curator of the exhibition, it's the "epitome of a museum's road to digitization in China".

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that people had to stay at home for a long time, and so the Zhejiang Provincial Museum released an online exhibition of images of women in ancient paintings. It contained about 1,000 paintings from 32 museums, both within China and abroad, and permitted people to view the show without needing to leave their homes.

The following year, the exhibition was re-created in real time, and additional museums were brought in to participate. An exhibition hall was set up at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, along with four additional spaces at the Jiangxi Provincial Museum, the Anhui Museum, the Suzhou Museum and the Huzhou Museum. Visitors to any of these five museums were able to view the halls at the other museums on screens placed at each location.

Last August, an immersive version of the exhibition opened at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum. It created an environment that allowed people to travel back in time to listen to women share their stories, and experience the eras in which they lived. The exhibition was divided into four sections, each employing different technology to offer a unique experience. It became popular with young people, and brought many women visitors to the museum.

"From online to offline, integrating physical exhibitions with virtual ones, the immersive shows now offered by many museums are the direction of future museum exhibitions," Cai says.

She believes that viewing art virtually does not offer a true experience, as it fails to convey the exact size, shape and material of the pieces displayed, and so paying a visit to an actual museum remains irreplaceable. However, by incorporating technology into exhibitions, people can have a deeper experience that allows them to break the boundaries of space and time.

"The integration of the physical and the virtual is an effective method for museums to spread their exhibitions' influence and enhance their services, and a single show can continue to improve with the development of technology."

The Fair Ladies series was upgraded this year to include images of modern women from around the world, and also introduced new forms of presentation, such as on-site performances and dramas.

"It seems that a show grows with us and with the upgrading of technology," Cai adds.

Contact the writer at dengzhangyu@chinadaily.com.cn

COVER

Goal: China's development to benefit more people

From page 1

"We will ensure that the future development and progress of our country are in the hands of the Chinese people," Xi said.

He highlighted the need to put the people above everything else in advancing Chinese modernization.

"We should never forget that the people always come first. Everything we do should be for the people, and we should rely on the people in everything we do. We should ensure that all the Chinese people will benefit from our joint cause of promoting reform and development."

The president also highlighted Beijing's unwavering commitment to "one country, two systems", under which the people of Hong Kong and Macao will benefit from our joint cause of promoting reform and development.

"We will resolutely safeguard and promote the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao. With the strong backing of the motherland, our compatriots in Hong Kong and Macao will surely create an even brighter future," he said.

As for the Taiwan question, Xi underscored that people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are members of one and the same family bound by blood, and "blood runs thicker than water".

He pledged steps to deepen cross-strait economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation, bring the hearts of fellow Chinese on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait closer to each other, and resolutely oppose separatist activities for "Taiwan independence".

"Complete reunification is the common aspiration of all Chinese from home and abroad. It is an irresistible trend and a righteous cause reflecting the will of the people. No one can stop the wheel of history."

In addition, the president warned that the road ahead for the cause of Chinese modernization won't be smooth, saying that there could be obstacles and difficulties and even major challenges.

He concluded the speech on an upbeat note, saying that the Chinese nation, with a civilization spanning over 5,000 years, will create greater splendor on its new journey in the new era, and will make greater contributions to the noble cause of the peace and progress of humanity.

The foreign dignitaries at the reception lauded China's contributions to global development over the past decades, especially in tackling common challenges facing humanity.

Nicholas O'Brien, Ireland's ambassador to China, said his country remains committed to deepening its "strong and vibrant relationship with China", and to jointly promoting an open trading system and rules-based global order.

Seeram Ramakrishna, a senior professor of materials engineering at National University of Singapore and a winner of this year's Chinese Government Friendship Award, said that China has emerged as one of the leading countries in responding to challenges such as climate change.

"China has clearly been focusing on building an ecological civilization by putting a lot of resources in the sector," he said. "That is one of the key reasons we believe the continuous modernization of China will present a huge opportunity to the world."



Passengers crowd Nanjing Railway Station in Jiangsu province, on Monday. Trains are expected to make 175 million trips nationwide during the 10-day National Day holiday travel rush. SU YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Rapid growth seen in inbound tourism

By CAO YIN

caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Thanks to intensified international exchanges and optimized policies, China has seen a rapid growth in inbound tourism this year, with the number of foreign visitors in the first nine months expected to reach 95 million — a 55.4 percent year-on-year increase, according to official data released on Monday.

The figure is about 93.4 percent of that seen during the same period in 2019, before the COVID-19 outbreak, according to Vice-Minister of Culture and Tourism Zhang Zheng.

He said that from January to July, 17 million foreign visits to the Chinese mainland were made through various ports nationwide, up about 130 percent over the same period last year.

To provide more convenience for inbound tourists, the ministry has required major scenic spots across the country to diversify payment services so that overseas travelers

can pay fees in a variety of ways, such as by swiping their foreign bank cards, scanning QR codes or using cash. Miao Muyang, head of the ministry's industrial development department, said at a news conference organized by the State Council Information Office.

Miao said China will also continue to optimize its visa-free transit policies to help attract more foreign travelers.

"We'll collaborate with relevant departments to continuously refine visa and customs clearance policies, and prudently expand the scope of visa-free countries," he said.

Meanwhile, with the weeklong National Day holiday kicking off on Tuesday, the ministry said cultural and tourism events will be held nationwide to boost consumption.

October has been designated a "cultural and tourism consumption month", and some 24,000 activities will be held across the country, and consumers will get a total of 500 million yuan (\$71 million) worth of coupons that can be used for tour-

ism and culture consumption, according to Miao.

A large number of plays, dramas, exhibitions and activities involving intangible cultural heritages will be held nationwide.

Shanxi province, for example, plans to organize 100 inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage of noodle-making to jointly make a single noodle, said Chen Binbin, head of the ministry's public services department.

Tourists are also reminded to maintain safety awareness while enjoying the holiday. They should think twice before choosing unreasonably low-cost tourism products, participating in high-risk entertainment events or traveling to undeveloped or insecure areas.

Scenic spots across the country are expected to see a surge in visitors during the holiday. The railway network is forecast to handle 175 million passenger trips during the 10-day National Day holiday travel rush, according to China State Railway Group.

Friendship: China Daily editors among winners

From page 1

Noting that China will comprehensively advance Chinese modernization and attract talent from all over the world, Shen said that the country will further deepen reform and continue to improve the support mechanism for recruiting overseas talent.

China will provide a broad stage and more convenience for foreign experts working and liv-

ing in China, she said.

Shen also expressed the hope that foreign experts will continue to contribute to Chinese modernization and jointly write a new chapter of friendship and cooperation between the Chinese people and people of other countries.

Andrew Graham and Ian Morrison, both senior editors at China Daily, are among the 100 winners of the 2024 Chinese Government Friendship Award. Acting as

experts in the field of international communication, they have made great contributions to making the voices of China better heard in the world.

The Friendship Award is the highest honor to commend foreign experts who have made outstanding contributions to China's modernization drive.

Since its establishment in 1991, nearly 2,000 foreign experts have received the award.

Stocks: Experts call for coordinated fiscal policies

From page 1

Following the latest stimulus package announced by the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, Wang said her team expects that the PBOC will cut the reserve requirement ratio by an additional 50 basis points in the fourth quarter, followed by another 20 basis point rate cut to the seven-day reverse repo rate in the first quarter of next year to lower funding costs in the economy.

"We believe the economy needs a consistent policy stance in the

future and policy coordination from the fiscal side," Wang said. "The housing market remains in weak shape. ... Additional funding and supply-side measures to destock housing inventories are still needed to stabilize the sector."

Chang Haizhong, executive director of corporates at rating agency Fitch IBCA, said further incremental fiscal policies will soon be rolled out to accelerate the economy, including the issuance of additional government bonds or special treasury bonds.

"Given the supportive macroeco-

nom policies that are either already in place or soon to be introduced, we believe it is still possible for China to achieve the annual growth target this year," Chang added. "The key focus should be placed on stabilizing housing sales and prices, providing subsidies to low-income groups, as well as stimulating effective demand and boosting consumption by either increasing subsidy levels or expanding the range of subsidized goods."

Contact the writers at ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

Big cities ease property sector restriction rules

Steps aimed at stabilizing local real estate markets expected to increase confidence

By WANG YING in Shanghai
wang_ying@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing announced late Monday that it would further optimize its local property policies by taking measures such as reducing down payment rates for both first-home and second-home purchases, lowering the purchase threshold for nonlocal buyers and adjusting existing home mortgage rates, according to a notice issued by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

Some other large cities have also rolled out measures to make it easier for residents to buy homes. The move is expected to increase confidence in, and shore up the development of, local real estate sectors, industry experts said on Monday.

"Shanghai and Guangdong province's Guangzhou and Shenzhen all unveiled new policies to further free up the property sector on Sunday night, reflecting their eagerness to solve their most prominent challenges in their real estate markets, which is in line with the top leadership of the Communist Party of China's call for stabilizing the nation's real estate market," said Yan Rong, dean of the Shanghai Real Estate Science Research Institute.

"Out of comprehensive consid-

eration and systematic planning, these policies will help boost market confidence and promote the stable and healthy development of their property markets," Yan said, adding that the policies can serve as examples for other cities.

The Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held a meeting on Thursday, stressing that efforts will be made to stabilize the property market and reverse its downturn; adjust the restrictive policies of housing purchases; lower interest rates on existing mortgage loans; promptly improve land, fiscal, tax and financial policies; and promote the establishment of a new model for real estate development.

Finance regulators recently announced a set of related measures, including adjusting existing mortgage rates and optimizing personal home mortgage rates

and down payments, experts said.

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, asked commercial banks on Sunday to lower mortgage rates for existing home loans to reduce the financial burdens on property owners, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The mortgage rates for first homes, second homes and others will fall by no lower than 30 basis points below the loan prime rate by Oct 31.

Against this backdrop, Shanghai took the lead among China's top-tier cities to announce plans to optimize local property policies, including lowering the threshold for nonlocal buyers, reducing down payments for both first-home and second-home purchases and expanding value-added tax exemptions for home sales to better meet people's living demands.

"The new policies focus more on meeting people's requirements for better lives, tapping into differentiated demand for home living, as well as promoting a balance between working and living in key areas of the city," said Cui Guangan, director of the real estate and urban development center at Shanghai Normal University.

Both Guangzhou and Shenzhen also announced new property market measures on Sunday night.

In Guangzhou, all existing home buying restrictions were scrapped, making it the first first-tier city to lift home purchase requirements. Shenzhen announced plans to lower the minimum down payment for first homes to 15 percent of the purchase price, and for second homes to 20 percent.

The policies are an adequate response to the top leadership's requirements for the nation's largest cities to address people's concerns by easing policies that restrict home purchases, said Li Yujia, chief researcher at the Guangdong Planning Institute's residential policy research center.

"As October is a conventional home transaction season, it is hoped that the policy adjustments will boost market expectations, promote transaction volume and stabilize first-tier cities' home markets," the researcher said.

Holiday celebration



Residents of Urumqi's Shuimogou district take part in an event to celebrate the National Day holiday at Shuita Mountain Park in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Monday. WANG FEI / XINHUA

Health worker awarded for improving lives in county

By WANG XIAOYU

wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Fulfilling her long-standing commitment to improving healthcare in less-developed regions, Lu Shengmei, 80, received the national honorary title of People's Health Worker from President Xi Jinping at a grand ceremony on Sunday.

Spending her whole career in Jiaxian county in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, Lu spearheaded efforts to promote safer childbirth practices and reduce infant mortality, including establishing the first independent pediatric department at the People's

75 years on

Hospital of Jiaxian. The department has cultivated over 50 pediatric physicians and nurses.

When Lu first arrived in the county deep in the mountains in Shaanxi in 1968, she was a 24-year-old graduate from one of the top medical schools in Beijing. Initially, she was frustrated by the desolate landscape and dilapidated facilities.

"A stretch of rugged dirt road led to the county hospital, which was merely two old cave dwellings with peel-

ing walls," she said. "Drinking water had to be carried daily by mules from nearby rivers, and I had a hard time adjusting to local food cooked in pungent mutton fat."

But what truly wrenched her heart at that time, she said, were the backward and dangerous practices of local midwives and the hardships faced by expectant mothers and newborns in Jiaxian.

"I once encountered a woman in labor. She was lying on a sandbag, and her family members had to pull her hair hard to prevent her from going into shock," Lu said. "Another villager was about to cut the umbilical cord with a pair of old, rusty scissors."



Lu Shengmei

Jiaxian for as long as it took to promote modern delivery methods and improve the overall health of local people.

Many questioned her decision to work in the mountainous, barren county. A native of Beijing, Lu said that her family members tried several times to persuade her to return to

the capital. While studying in both Beijing and Xi'an, the provincial capital of Shaanxi, her instructors also offered to help her transfer to larger urban hospitals.

"Having witnessed the dearth of doctors and medicines in Jiaxian and the harm caused by outdated customs among the local people, I believed that I was needed there more than anywhere else," she said.

Lu said she was also deeply touched by the local people's pure, genuine hearts.

"When I suffered from severe anemia, they rushed to donate blood. A mother whose child received my treatment pulled an all-nighter to knit a pair of cloth shoes for me," she said. "Some patients near the end of their lives would call my name and entrust their children to me."

After retirement, she continued to provide free medical consultations as a volunteer and formed a local volunteer association comprising seniors and retirees like her.

"I see myself as a kite, and whenever a patient in need pulls on the string, I instantly fly to their direction," she said.

Thanks to improved transportation networks, an increasing number of rural clinics and the rollout of various medical insurance programs, Lu said the villagers have had easier access to standard medical treatment and have been lifted out of poverty.

"Because of partnerships between rural and urban hospitals, as well as the application of telemedicine, local farmers can also seek medical consultations from top doctors at major hospitals," she added.

WORLD

Tesla boosted by China sales, Shanghai plant

Incentives expected to drive Q3 deliveries as Gigafactory exports its 1 millionth vehicle

By HENG WEILI in New York
hengweili@chinadailyusa.com

China is becoming a crucial market for Tesla, with the American electric-vehicle maker offering incentives to boost sales there and its Shanghai factory recently exporting its millionth vehicle.



China, which accounts for one-third of Tesla's sales, is a major growth driver."

Scott Acheychek, chief operating officer of REX Financial

Tesla, based in Austin, Texas, is expected on Wednesday to report an 8 percent increase in third-quarter deliveries of its electric vehicles in China, according to Wall Street estimates, powered by extended incentives and financing plans.

"China, which accounts for one-third of Tesla's sales, is a major growth driver," said Scott Acheychek, chief operating officer of REX Financial, which offers exchange-traded funds that track Tesla's stock performance.

Deutsche Bank analysts estimated that in the third quarter, Tesla would deliver about 139,000 Model 3 sedans, 296,400 Model Y SUVs, a combined 13,350 of its larger Model S sedans and Model X SUVs and about 13,500 Cybertruck pickups in China. The Model 3 and Model Y are manufactured at Tesla's Gigafactory in Shanghai.

With slowing demand for EVs in the United States and a lack of subsidies in Europe, Tesla delivered about 831,000 vehicles in the first half of 2024. To prevent a drop in deliveries, it needs to hit about 979,000 vehicles in the second half.

Shares of Tesla closed at \$261.63, up \$1.17, in Nasdaq Stock Market trading on Monday.

Sales in China also were boosted by increased government subsidies to encourage consumers to switch their gas-powered vehicles to battery-powered ones.

Responding to rising competition from domestic Chinese automakers such as BYD, Tesla introduced a range of offers in the spring, including insurance deals, discounts on certain paint choices and a zero-interest loan of up to five years.

The incentives helped it boost sales in July and August, according to data from the China Passenger Car Association (CPCA), after two straight quarters of declining deliveries.

Analysts said the trend continued through the quarter; 12 analysts, polled by LSEG, expect the company to deliver 469,828 vehicles, which would be its best third quarter, up from about 435,000 vehicles a year earlier.

Tesla cars also became eligible for government purchases in the country, with its best-selling Model Y included in a list of vehicles government entities can purchase as a service car.

Ken Mahoney, CEO of Mahoney Asset Management, which invests in Tesla, said the boost from China, along with benefits of a recent interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve, could help the automaker match the record 1.8 million vehicles delivered in 2023.

Earlier this year, Tesla CEO Elon Musk said the company was on track for higher deliveries in 2024.

Tesla started deliveries of the Cybertruck late last year, and the EV maker expects to increase production to 250,000 units next year.

That will be crucial to address investor concerns around EV demand as they focus on Tesla's unveiling of a robotaxi on Oct 10—a shift in strategy since the company dropped its affordable car project and one that some see unlocking trillions of dollars in value for Tesla, Reuters reported.

Tesla also is seeing strong output from its Gigafactory in Shanghai, where it exported its 1 millionth vehicle, Tesla Asia said on X on Saturday. "Thanks to all Tesla owners and supporters!", the post said.

Tesla Vice-President Tao Lin posted on Weibo that "the one-millionth exported China-made Tesla car sets sail from Shanghai's Nangang Port," techopedia.com reported.

"While the automotive market in China remains among the most competitive globally, we feel that our cost structure and focus on core functionality that drives value for customers—including autonomy—position us well for the long-term," the company said in its second-quarter earnings report in July.

Musk said earlier this month that the Shanghai plant, which opened in January 2019, is running at "max capacity."

Tesla also is building a Mega Factory in the Shanghai Lin-gang Special Area. The facility is nearly 60 percent completed, according to techopedia.com, which cited a local news report.

"DavidCyberCab", whose profile says he is a computer scientist and Tesla investor, posted about the new factory on X on Saturday: "It broke ground on 23 May 2023. It was 46% done on 20 August 2024. It is now done 60% today, on 28 September 2024. China speed is truly out of this world."

Agencies contributed to this story.



People and rescue workers search for victims after an Israeli airstrike hit two buildings, in a neighborhood east of the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, on Sunday. MOHAMMED ZAATARI / AP

Hamas says leader in Lebanon killed

BEIRUT — Palestinian militant group Hamas said its leader in Lebanon was killed on Monday in a strike on the country's south, as official media reported a strike on a Palestinian refugee camp.

"Fatah Sharif Abu al-Amine, the leader of Hamas ... in Lebanon and member of the movement's leadership abroad" was killed in an airstrike on his "home in the Al-Bass camp in south Lebanon", a Hamas statement said.

It said he was killed with his wife, son and daughter in an "assassination".

The official National News Agency reported an airstrike on Al-Bass near the city of Tyre, saying it was the "first time" the camp had been targeted.

The statement came hours after the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a secular left-wing group, said three of its members were killed in a strike on Beirut's Kola district early on Monday.

It is Israel's first strike on the capital city center since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict last year.

Israel has repeatedly targeted Hamas officials in Lebanon since the Gaza conflict erupted almost a year ago.

Israel has turned its focus from Gaza to Lebanon in recent days, carrying out attacks on Iran's regional allies. Strikes on Hezbollah targets killed the Iran-backed group's leader Hassan Nasrallah on Friday.

On Monday, Sheikh Naim Qassem, Hezbollah's deputy leader said the group will continue to defend Lebanon and to support Gaza despite losing Nasrallah and many commanders.

Israel also vows to "continue to attack powerfully, damage and degrade Hezbollah's military capabilities and infrastructure in Lebanon", the army said in a statement on Telegram.

AFP journalists reported drones flying over the Lebanese capital throughout Sunday.

Israeli attacks have killed hundreds in Lebanon since last Monday, the deadliest day since the country's 1975-1990 civil war.

Lebanon's health ministry reported at least 105 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Sunday, with 359 people wounded.

In the last week, Israeli bombardments have killed more than 700 people, including 14 paramedics over two days, the ministry said.

UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi said "well over 200,000 people are displaced inside Lebanon" and more than 50,000 have fled to neighboring Syria.

Israeli aggression in Lebanon has sparked fears of an all-out war in the Middle East.

Israel said it also carried out strikes in Yemen on Sunday, targeting Iran-backed Houthi positions.

Houthi media reports said those strikes killed four people and wounded 33.

The raids in Yemen came a day after the Houthis said they launched a missile at an Israeli airport, trying to hit it as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was returning from New York.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Maldives hails 'robust' relations with China

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong
vivienxu@chinadailyusa.com

China's ancient history and philosophy have impressed former diplomat from the Maldives Mohamed Rasheed most and connections between China and the Maldives have contributed to rapid growth in tourism, people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Rasheed, founder and chairman of the China-Maldivian Cultural Association, or CMCA, and a former ambassador of the Maldives to China, said the relationship with China and Chinese culture has become an inseparable part of his life.



Mohamed Rasheed

Speaking highly of the bilateral ties, Rasheed said that "long-term friendly exchanges between China and the Maldives are imperative" and that this "should be

a strategic relationship", with Maldives respecting the one-China principle and China's advocacy of multilateralism.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's state visit to China at the beginning of this year was a good step in ties, he added that it is also important to devote more efforts to promoting people-to-people ties.

Rasheed said that what impressed him most about China was its ancient history and philosophy.

"I am really kind of in love with the philosophies of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu and Confucius, and those are my favorite readings at this age," he said. "The philosophies of China have cast a very strong impression on my life. It has taught me a lot to think about how to treat mankind and how to treat success and failure. I also see from them how we can treat all the people as a whole, as one society, one mankind."

Rasheed noted that the Maldives established diplomatic relations with China in October 1972.

In 2009, China financed the largest housing project in the history of the Maldives, and the first commercial project undertaken by the Chinese in the country. Large infrastructure projects in the Maldives have been facilitated by Chinese investments, including the upgrading of Velana International Airport, and the China-Maldives Friendship Bridge.

"They are significant aspects of the cooperation between China and the Maldives," Rasheed said.

The cooperation between the two countries reached new heights particularly after the Maldives joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2014. "Since then, China has become Maldives' largest development partner," he said.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and Rasheed said that visionary leaders of the Communist Party of China have carried forward the great founding spirit during that time.

According to him, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping are fundamental elements for building a shared future for mankind.

"I believe those initiatives cannot be ignored by any community or country if we are to achieve global peace and stability," Rasheed said, adding: "The youth of today should be mentored to internalize the noble values in those initiatives."

Rasheed is currently dedicated to promoting China-Maldives relations through youth exchanges via the CMCA.

Rasheed was the first Maldivian diplomat to graduate from a Chinese university and the first person from the Maldives to study Chinese.

"In 1971 when I was 17 years old, I went to China's Taiwan for my tertiary education," Rasheed said. "I always wanted to learn a language that no other Maldivian has studied", while also pursuing a professional course in rehabilitation medicine.

Rasheed made his first visit to Beijing in 1987 and has visited the Chinese mainland more than 80 times since then. "This year, I have spent more time in China than (in) the Maldives", making seven visits in a year to date, he said, adding: "I cherish every day of my life that I spent in China."



The race is on

A participant rides his cart during the Balineras race, a gravity-powered vehicles race, in Bogota, on Sunday. Crowds attended the freestyle race down a slope in Colombia's capital.

RAUL ARBOLEDO / AFP

Washington urged to stop arming Taiwan

By ZHAO JIA
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

Beijing on Monday urged Washington to immediately cease arming the Taiwan region in all forms and reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity after the United States approved \$567 million in defense support for the island, the latest move to boost its military capabilities.

"The US once again providing weaponry to the Taiwan region seriously violates the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiques, especially the August 17 Communiqué in 1982," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a daily news briefing.

Lin said the move, in essence, is to "support and embolden" the Demo-

cratic Progressive Party authorities in pursuit of "Taiwan independence" and their provocation against the one-China principle.

"Such a move once again proves that the greatest threat to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the greatest disruption to the current situation in the Taiwan Strait are the separatist activities of the 'Taiwan independence' forces and the connivance and support they receive from external forces led by the US," Lin said.

He cautioned that the "Taiwan independence" is a dead end, and the US' persistent backing of this so-called independence through military means will ultimately backfire.

Regardless of the number of arms the US supplies to the Taiwan region, China's resolute opposition to "Taiwan independ-

ence" will remain unwavering, Lin said, urging Washington to faithfully adhere to the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiques.

In another development, Lin said China will implement a visa-free policy for citizens from Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and Slovenia to further facilitate personnel exchanges between China and foreign countries.

According to the spokesman, starting from Oct 15, 2024, to Dec 31, 2025, holders of ordinary passports from the four European countries will be eligible for a visa exemption policy when traveling to China for purposes such as business, tourism, visiting relatives, or transit for up to 15 days. Meanwhile, China urges relevant countries to provide more visa facilitation for Chinese nationals, he added.

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com

readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:

x.com/chinadaily

facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

These materials are distributed by China

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

WASHINGTON
National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20045
Tel: 202-662-7249
Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San
Francisco, CA 94104
Tel: 415-348-8288
Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE
800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98104
Tel: 206-922-2868

HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100
Houston, TX 77077
Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA/TORONTO

471 Yonge Street, 10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 - No. 1431

Trail of destruction



Debris is seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene on Monday in Asheville, North Carolina. At least 133 deaths in six Southeastern states have been attributed to the storm that inflicted damage from Florida's Gulf Coast to the Appalachian Mountains in Virginia. President Joe Biden said he plans to travel to North Carolina on Wednesday. MIKE STEWART / AP

PEOPLE



She brings characters to life with her voice

Dubbing artist Kathryn Lin reflects on the irreplaceable human touch in voice-overs amid AI advancement



Clockwise from top left: A booth of Japanese anime *Chibi Maruko-chan* at the China Licensing Expo in Shanghai on July 18. An exhibition on the 30th anniversary of anime *Chibi Maruko-chan* in Shanghai in 2020. Taiwan dubbing artist Kathryn Lin at work. Lin poses with a poster of *Chibi Maruko-chan*, a character she dubbed for. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHANG YUNBI
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

Do we really need real dubbing artists in the age of generative artificial intelligence?

Indeed, many have harbored doubts about the future and necessity of real dubbing artists, because an increasing number of videos on social networks are works of GenAI, which sound increasingly close to genuine — meaning the voice, devoid of any metallic tinge and digital hoarseness, sounds genuinely human.

Yet for Kathryn Lin, a leading dubbing artist from China's Taiwan island, the profession signifies the shared happiness of generations of audiences on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Suffice it to say the profession has changed her life. "I joined the profession simply because of economic needs, and have had to work very hard," she said in a recent interview with China Daily.

Born in 1975, Lin wanted to become a teacher or a journalist, not a dubbing artist.

"My first public speech was made at a kindergarten graduation ceremony. Maybe I was chosen because I was chubby and looked adorable,"

she said, bursting into laughter.

The following 12 years saw her being frequently chosen by her school to take part in various speech contests and storytelling competitions. The turning point in her life came in her first year of college. Her family faced a major financial crisis, and she had no choice but to drop out of college and take up part-time jobs in shops and restaurants.

"I have younger brothers and sisters, so I had to start working to feed the family," she said. The chance to join the dubbing industry was given by the dubbing artists' union on Taiwan island. In the 1990s, the union members joined a prime-time TV variety show to recruit students for dubbing performances.

"That night I was at home and watched the show on TV by chance," she said. She was rejected by the judges because she was still in college, but she succeeded in getting the chance in the second year.

Since she was a newcomer to the industry, she had to complete her apprenticeship before getting real work. And there was no specific time limit for the apprenticeship. "I needed the job. So I spent almost 24 hours a day in the studio following and learning from the veterans,"

shadow performing and analyzing the performances," she said.

Soothing voice

In the studios, she saw at work the great You Hui Feng, the first Mandarin dubbing artist who lent her voice to the popular Japanese anime *Chibi Maruko-chan*. Chibi Maruko-chan is a curious schoolgirl who lives in a cozy town with her loving family and friends.

"While watching them dub for that anime, I couldn't even think of taking their place years later." It usually takes three to five years of hard work to complete the apprenticeship in the industry and start getting independent dubbing assignments, but Lin achieved that in less than two years.

When Feng got married and moved to Hong Kong, the studio had to find a replacement. "That's how I got the chance to dub for *Chibi Maruko-chan*."

"After working for a few years, I realized that the job was not just about bread and butter," she said, stressing that the popular characters she has dubbed for have given her "a lot of insight into life and intriguing experiences."

Once the head of a company invited Lin to speak on the voice-over

industry, and most of the people in the audience were heads or senior managers of well-known companies. After she finished her speech, the company head walked up to her and said, "Ms Lin, your job is extremely significant." He told her that he was always neck deep in work, so after returning home, he watches *Chibi Maruko-chan*, because it is the best stress-reliever for him.

"When we are no longer on Earth, our voice will keep inspiring people and bring laughter to their lives," she said.

Lin often reads books, but she also likes audiobooks. "Audio content isn't just for kids; it benefits people of all age groups. It has a healing, curative effect, and brings sunshine to people under stress."

She also attends lectures to help juvenile delinquents, and children who have dropped out of school. "They might have been under stress or were really confused before breaking the law, or might have dropped out of school for family reasons," she said.

In her spare time, Lin loves going to the theater. Besides Taipei, Lin has spent a lot of time in Shanghai for work. Talking about the Chinese mainland's animation market, Lin

said mainland productions have a lot of original elements and "materials that I really like". Mainland animations "are a cultural blend of the East and the West, and the style inspires me a lot when dubbing, because they are not completely Western-style stuff".

Working with dubbing artists from the mainland, Lin felt that she clicked with them. "They are also involved in other kinds of acting jobs or have their own hobbies and interests." This gives her more things to talk about with them. "For example, we also discuss about producing short videos together."

Before the turn of the century, foreign films and TV productions dubbed by voice artists on the island became hugely popular on the mainland and influenced a couple of generations.

Lin still gets work offers from mainland producers, "but not as many as before." But her "voice-over for some classic characters are still very popular (on the mainland)," she said.

Facing the future

When it comes to AI dubbing, Lin said she is "actually trying to be less pessimistic about it ... I think it's a

future trend ... and our future depends on how we blend with AI and work with it"

She said that real voice artists still get the lion's share of the work, and AI voice-overs are used more for audiobooks on the island. "Maybe in the future we will have more AI workmates," she said.

Lin, who is also a dubbing director, knows well the differences between AI and real dubbing artists when casting artists. "Real dubbing artists inject their soul and unique individual trait into the performance. AI doesn't have any soul or trait," she said.

As for the future of AI dubbing, Lin said the total replacement of real dubbing artists by AI will take time. "But now is the time to ponder what else can dubbing artists do?"

Lin, who has been associated with the profession for nearly 30 years, believes dubbing artists can transform themselves by, for instance, teaching the art of dubbing to younger people, publishing books, teaching in schools and giving lectures.

Voice artists should plan their career early, she said.

"This industry had been full of uncertainties even before the advent of AI, because we fulfill our tasks case by case," she said.

By ZHANG YUNBI

Sabino Vaca Narvaja, Argentina's former ambassador to China, is now playing different roles in his country's parliament and academic circle. His career has been closely connected with China, a country across the Pacific Ocean, with his family being partly responsible for his lasting interest in the country.

"I enhanced my knowledge (about China) ... focusing mainly on aspects related to the pace of its development and its technological advancement," Vaca Narvaja said, emphasizing that his four years in China "was a great experience", as "they were years of intense and highly motivating work".

During his tenure in China, he visited almost every Chinese province, because he believes that the richness of China, in addition to its thousands of years of history, "lies in the diversity and complexity of its different provinces and regions".

"The size of the provinces is a very interesting element for Latin America since some of them have double or triple the population of countries in our (Latin American) region, and the same is true for their GDP, which increases the need to expand our exchanges with (China) ... in the commercial, scientific, tourism, cultural and sports fields," he said.

His Chinese name, "Niu Wangdao" intrigued almost every Chinese person he met. Vaca means "cow" in

Ex-Argentine ambassador dedicated to improving ties

Spanish, and its Chinese equivalent is *niú*. The cow, for the Chinese people, "is an important animal since it represents constancy and permanence of efforts", he said.

His given name in Mandarin, "Wangdao" sounds special to the Chinese people, as it pays tribute to Chinese translation master Chen Wangdao.

Chen (1891-1977) was an influential figure in the early years of the Communist Party of China, not least because he was the first to translate *The Communist Manifesto* into Mandarin.

Vaca Narvaja narrated a famous anecdote in which Chen confuses ink with tea due to his intense focus on his work.

"That shows the level of his concentration and the love he had for his work," he said.

In Mandarin, *wangdao* literally means "being attentive to the path". By adopting that name, "I wanted to show my respect (to Chen) and (indicate) the aspect I wanted to work on (to boost) bilateral ties," he said.

His new book, *On the Way: Chronicles in China*, published earlier this year, analyzes the latest changes in the international landscape on which China is one of the main players and Latin America its natural strategic partner.



Sabino Vaca Narvaja, Argentina's former ambassador to China (extreme right), and other diplomats from Latin American countries prepare to pick chestnuts during a rural tour in Beijing's Huairou district on Sept 22, 2022. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Passion continues

After returning to Argentina, Vaca Narvaja resumed his political work in Parliament, while pursuing his academic goal with greater passion and intensity at the National University of Lanus, where he is the director of the Sino-Argentine Cooperation Program, and the National University of Jose C. Paz, which invited him to oversee the "first master's degree

program in Chinese Studies", with the focus on China's relations with Latin America.

"This year I am introducing a foundation study that will focus on geopolitical analysis and seek ways to accelerate our national development with an eye on international relations and focus on Asia, particularly on China," he said. For Vaca Narvaja, it is essential to further

deepen academic cooperation between the universities and leading intellectual groups of the two countries, so as to "promote the debate on ideas that allow us to generate joint programs to overcome the challenges of the future".

As a keen observer of China including its economy, Vaca Narvaja has written many articles on hotspot issues such as Chinese-made new energy vehicles. "China is experiencing a problem that has long been a problem for the developed countries in general; (perhaps) it is facing a crisis of aging," he said.

The Chinese authorities have implemented long-term policies to address the problem, he said, adding that the country now aims to become self-sufficient in high-tech, and stabilize its supply chain. In fact, China has been making painstaking efforts to reshape and diversify its global economic ties and increase the number of foreign suppliers to stabilize the supply of raw materials.

"China decided to move toward innovation- and high-tech-driven economic development model, a model that can ensure more balanced and sustainable economic growth, and accords great importance to boosting the country's high added value sector," he said.

Citing the measures taken to boost

domestic demand during the last Spring Festival Golden Week holiday, when a record 9 billion passenger trips were made, he said: "I can say the Chinese economy has promising prospects in the short, medium and long terms."

When asked about his China-related programs in universities, he said "learning is something permanent".

"I am a very curious person, and my experience in China and the possibility of putting my ideas into practice significantly enhanced my knowledge." Vaca Narvaja now enjoys spending time in the classroom in the company of students "because teaching is a dialectic process that receives feedback through dynamic and collective interaction".

"A return to the university environment is always enriching. The university is a place that encourages debates on ideas and analyses of extremely complex times. That is why I believe knowledge is key to strengthening mutual understanding, especially because there is still a lot of ignorance about what China really is."

"Interest in China is growing in the academic field, and more and more students are learning the Chinese language and studying Chinese customs and history," he said, stressing that it is essential to implement policies with a long-term vision, because that is the only way to achieve sustainable development and take advantage of the complementarity of the Argentine and Chinese economies.

READ



Left: Two patrollers record the location of an infrared camera for convenient retrieval. **Middle:** A patroller logs data about the bamboo forests. **Right:** A patroller monitors recordings from an infrared camera installed in the mountains. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Unseen heroes of the bamboo forests: the protectors of China's giant pandas

Young, grassroots patrollers promise a favorable living environment for the vulnerable species



By HUANG ZHILING and PENG CHAO in Chengdu

In the mountains of Daxiangling in Ya'an, Sichuan province, a dedicated group of youths traverses dense bamboo forests, carefully monitoring the flora and fauna. They are often not seen or heard from for weeks at a time.

They are the 27 members of the Yingjing county patrol station of the Giant Panda National Park in Sichuan. With an average age of around 30, all the station's patrollers are college graduates.

"We patrol the rolling mountains where giant pandas reside without electricity or signal. So we can be disconnected," said Fu Mingxia, deputy chief of the station.

Wild pandas survive solely in six mountain ranges within Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. Fu and the other station members patrol Daxiangling, which boasts the Daxiangling Giant Panda Wilderness and Reintroduction Research Base, the world's largest giant panda reintroduction training center.

The team's routine is to collect bamboo leaves and soil samples to check for pests and deterioration. They are looking for signs that the leaves are unsuitable for pandas to eat and that the soil is not ideal for growing bamboo.

They also monitor recordings from the infrared cameras installed in the mountains, gather information about giant pandas and collect panda droppings.

Scientists use the droppings to identify the sex of the pandas, which is how they determine the number of males and females in an area and if a captive male or female panda needs to be released to expand the population, Fu said.

"We look for images of pandas in the cameras to see if they are all right. If they are not, we inform rescue workers," Fu said.

On a typical day, they head for the mountains at 8 am and don't return until night. They keep records of what the cameras capture and any other observations they make about the mountains.



Above: The newly discovered species *Impatiens yingjingensis* (Balsaminaceae) in the mountains of Daxiangling in Ya'an, Sichuan province. **Left:** A team of patrollers monitors the impact on reptiles and other small animals as wild pandas tread the forests. **Right:** Patrollers trek through frigid conditions to investigate the wild panda population. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Spring is the giant panda mating season, and their behavior changes during the winter to survive the harsher weather. During these periods, the patrol sometimes stays in the mountains for weeks without returning home. "We have more to observe," Fu said.

Her dedication has not gone unnoticed. Fu was named the Most Beautiful Patroller in 2019, just two years after starting the job. Every year, the Sichuan provincial forestry and grassland bureau and an environmental public welfare foundation award the title to honor grassroots patrollers who make exceptional contributions to Sichuan's ecological environment.

China's latest panda census — released in 2015 — showed that 22 of the 33 groups of wild pandas found in the census faced the danger of extinction.

By the end of last year, China was home to 728 captive pandas and 1,900 wild pandas, indicating that the captive panda population is now self-sustaining.

Releasing captive pandas is essential for growing the wild panda population, according to Zhang Hemin, chief expert of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan.

Twelve captive pandas have been released into the wild in China since 2003 to enlarge the wild panda population. Ten are still alive, according to Wu Daifu, an expert in reintroducing captive pandas into the wild at the center.

One of the 12 released pandas is in Daxiangling, where Fu and her colleagues patrol.

Taking up the glove

Working in the dense mountain bamboo forests poses challenges and dangers. Sometimes, navigation is impossible. "We need to carve out a path," said Kang Jun, a 23-year-old patroller at the Yingjing county patrol station.

To ensure that patrollers are up to the task, they must pass a physical fitness and survival knowledge test. Kang signed up for the test in March last year when the station enrolled six patrollers. More than 120 others joined him.

During one portion of the test, patrollers are required to finish walking along a designated route within three hours. It took Kang, the native son of a rural area in Yingjing, only 56 minutes to reach the finish line.

He managed to earn the third-highest score among the test-takers, making him the youngest patroller at his station.

"I grew up in the mountains, so I get along with nature," Kang said.

Despite the hardships and dangers associated with being a patroller, Kang considers himself lucky to have the job. He likes being close to nature and taking in the free atmosphere of the forests.

Before each trip to the mountains, Kang makes complete preparations. In addition to a pair of rubber shoes, rain boots, two sets of patrol suits and a first-aid kit, Kang

carries a satellite phone, a telescope and GPS navigation equipment.

According to Kang, carrying a heavy bag with all the equipment is bearable when the weather is fine, but the forests are tricky on rainy days. Patrollers can easily slip and get hurt.

Once, while approaching a river valley surrounded by cliffs, Kang and an older colleague came across several boars. With no way to escape, the duo had to climb trees and hope the beasts didn't stick around.

Not all of Kang's experiences have been so harrowing. He has witnessed a Chinese serow sleeping soundly in front of an infrared camera and a black-necked crane standing quietly to rest.

On one foggy day, Kang heard flapping wings and bird calls overhead. To his pleasant surprise, the fog soon dispersed, revealing a flock of majestic black-necked cranes hovering in the sky.

"I was so excited and kept taking photos," Kang said.

In addition to the wild animals in the mountains, Kang and his colleagues often come across wild vegetables and eggs.

They have the luxury of feasting on fresh wild vegetables, much to the envy of their neighbors back home who eat artificially grown vegetables.

Unexpected discoveries

In addition to carefully monitoring and tracking the conditions of the pandas in the mountains,

the Yingjing county patrol station team occasionally makes exciting discoveries.

Song Xinqiang, a young member of the station who specializes in biodiversity, found a curious species of flowering plant belonging to the genus *Impatiens* (Balsaminaceae) while patrolling Daxiangling with his team three years ago.

Impatiens are common in Sichuan. Many senior Sichuan women have fond childhood memories of mashing the flower petals and painting their nails red with their juice.

This new species was significantly different from the well-known *Impatiens* of the region. The team took photos and sent them to plant taxonomists for identification.

The station's research team collected a massive specimen sample and conducted morphological characteristics research from 2021 to 2022 to identify the species accurately and determine its classification.

They partnered with Sichuan University, China West Normal University and other scientific research units to conduct phylogenetic analysis and electron microscopic observation of the pollen morphology. Finally, they were able to confirm that they had found a brand-new species. They named it *Impatiens yingjingensis* (Balsaminaceae) in honor of where it was found.

On June 6, 2024, Song's discov-

ery was published in PhytoKeys, a peer-reviewed, open-access journal on taxonomy, phylogeny, biogeography and the evolution of plants.

There are many fruits to the patroller's labors in the mountains of Daxiangling. None are more important than their contribution to panda history through conservation efforts.

The giant panda has long been well-known in China, but the West only learned about it in 1869 thanks to a French missionary in Ya'an.

Jean Pierre Armand David (1826-1900) was born in Espelette, France. He started working at the Dengchigou Catholic Church in Baoxing, a mountainous county in Sichuan, in March 1869.

Soon afterward, he was invited to tea at a local hunter's home. That's where he first saw the skin of a giant panda. Suspecting it to be a new animal species, he had the hunter capture a live panda, made a specimen and mailed it to Henri Milne Edwards, a zoologist from the French National Museum of Natural History in Paris. In 1870, Edwards published a paper declaring the panda to be a new species.

The specimen, which is still kept at the national museum, captured the attention of the West. Since then, the unique image of the panda has been associated with Chinese culture.

Thanks to China's protection efforts, the International Union for Conservation of Nature downgraded the giant panda's status from "endangered" to "vulnerable" in 2016.

In 2021, China established the Giant Panda National Park. The conservation area spans 27,000 kilometers and covers parts of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu. Forty-seven percent of Yingjing county resides in the park, providing Fu, Song and Kang with the gift of overseeing the giant panda's enduring legacy.

Contact the writers at huangzhiling@chinadaily.com.cn

IMAGE



Students ride e-bikes to get their graduation photographs clicked on the campus of a university in Qingdao on June 17, 2024.



Indian students catch the attention of primary school students while crossing a road on way to their graduation ceremony in Qingdao on June 11, 2024.



Two Russian students visit Zhanqiao Pier, an iconic scenic area in Qingdao, on Dec 14, 2023.

Dreams of foreign students take root in Qingdao



Three Indian students from Qingdao University pose for a commemorative photo at the popular Daxue Road wall before their graduation on June 11, 2024. PHOTOS BY HE YI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Qingdao, a welcoming coastal city, attracts international students from countries such as Russia, India, and Ukraine, who come to study diverse majors including Chinese, theater and medicine. Immersing themselves in local traditions, they learn martial arts and enjoy Tsingtao Beer.

For many of them, the city becomes a second home, a blend of academic pursuit and cultural discovery. As they walk along the scenic coastlines or explore the bustling old town, these students cultivate friendships that may last a lifetime. Weekend strolls to the beach or leisurely afternoons in local cafes provide a refreshing balance to their rigorous studies, fostering a sense of belonging in this foreign land.

As they approach graduation, aspirations take shape — some dream of pursuing careers in medicine or engineering, while others seek to bridge cultural gaps through language and art. Having forged strong connections and enjoyed personal growth through their cultural exchanges, many choose to stay on in this vibrant city. Every corner of this city is imbued with the dreams and hopes of those who choose to call it home, if only for a little while.



CHINA DAILY A Russian girl studying in Qingdao spends her weekends working as a fashion model on June 17, 2017.



A foreign student pats a local resident's dog while strolling through the old town on Dec 20, 2015.



A Russian student studies Chinese in Qingdao on Dec 14, 2023.

TREND

By QIU QUALIN in Guangzhou and
CHEN YE in Hangzhou

The parents of 20-year-old Li Daheng did not support him when he first decided to become a professional esports player a few years ago.

Their opposition didn't work. "There are many choices," Li mused from an esports club in Chongqing. "Each choice is the best — or at least the one you are most willing to make at the moment."

Li became a member of China's King Pro League Dream Team, which in early August emerged victorious with a decisive 3-0 finals victory in the Honor of Kings Invitational Mid-season at the Esports World Cup in Saudi Arabia.

"I needed to prove myself with good results. And in the end I succeeded," he said of his performance in *Honor of Kings*, a multiplayer mobile battle-arena game that's played online. It was developed by TiMi Studio Group under Tencent Games.

Li uses the game ID "Pang".

Officially launched for public testing in November 2015, the game has attracted more than 200 million users across its domestic and international servers.

Li's parents now come to watch his matches. The excitement is hard to resist.

"I feel that my journey in the esports field will be a long one," Li said. "There are still many goals I have not achieved yet."

Before winning the Esports World Cup title, Li, also known by fans as the "strongest jungler", was named Most Valuable Player in the 2022 KPL Summer Finals and the 2024 KPL Spring Finals.

"In the future, I will continue to pursue better results, win more championships and strive for higher achievements," he said.

Like Li — and partly because of him — a growing number of young people across the country have developed an interest in esports. Some have entered the professional ranks, as esports has emerged as a global digital phenomenon.

Many Chinese cities have introduced supportive policies to cultivate and elevate esports into a thriving industry. Recognition of esports events has risen in recent years, as evidenced by the spectacular showcasing of esports as an official event at the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023, where it drew around 370 million viewers via new media platforms.

According to the China Esports Industry Report for January to June this year, which was released in July in Shanghai, the number of esports users in China was approximately 490 million, a 0.52 percent year-on-year growth.

Youth is a key characteristic of the esports community, with individuals aged 30 and below accounting for 80.2 percent of participants, the report said.

During the same period, esports revenues in China reached above 12 billion yuan (\$1.7 billion) for a growth rate of 4.43 percent year-on-year. That reversed the previous two-year trend of declining revenues, the report said.

The recognition has gone global: Before the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, the International Olympic

Into the esports arena

China's younger generation is setting the pace as *Honor of Kings* and other online battle games take the world by storm



Members of LGD Gaming club enter the arena of King Pro League Summer 2024 in Shanghai on Aug 29. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Committee announced that the first Olympic Esports Games would be held in Saudi Arabia in 2025, indicating that gaming as an official Olympic sport had come of age.

China's booming development of esports in recent years is partly due to low entry barriers and aggressive training and competition systems for young people, according to Pan Fei, general manager of LGD Gaming, a major force in professional esports based in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

"In reality, anyone who has a phone or a computer can connect with games," Pan said. But achieving excellence is quite difficult.

"Fortunately, the esports user base in China is large, which means that we can select from a relatively broad pool of talent," Pan said.

The domestic esports tournament system consists of multiple tiers of competitions — from national championships all the way to fourth-tier and professional leagues.

China has developed professional leagues, such as League of Legends and Peace Elite — for popular games like *Honor of Kings*.

"This tiered professional system is well established in China and provides a stage for many young people to showcase their esports talents," Pan said, adding that the country also features many esports clubs, such as LGD, that place a strong emphasis on youth training.

LGD is a grassroots club without



Xu Xinzhen from LGD Gaming club competes during King Pro League Summer 2024 on Aug 24.

major financial backers or support, Pan said.

"Over the years of operation, we have always placed great importance on our youth training, aiming for sustainability," he said.

Any career has its professional life span or cycle, he said, so it's inevitable that a player's competitive performance will decline. "Therefore, from our perspective, maintaining a club's long-term development is crucially dependent on youth training, which can ensure a relatively long life span for a club."

Clubs like LGD that prioritize youth training and development, provide young players with opportunities to get a lot of playing time and experience — and most importantly, a stage on which to showcase their talent, he said.

"Therefore, I believe that these factors, including a large user base, a healthy training regimen and a strong competition system are crucial in enabling young players to rise prominently," he said.

Based on big data showing that the number of esports users is increasing around the world, Pan said he believed that the interests and hobbies of young people may be shifting more toward esports from traditional sports.

"By tapping into esports, I think we are capturing the preferences of young people," he said, because esports can provide them with a more enriching, quasi-amateur activity and better showcase their

current interests and talent.

Singling out China's winning of several esports gold medals at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year, Pan noted that competitions across the country have helped nurture more young talent in the field.

LGD Gaming has the country's first professional esports arena, which the company developed in collaboration with the Gongshu district of Hangzhou as the home venue for the League of Legends pro-ject.

The 900-seat arena consistently sees more than 95 percent attendance, showcasing the enthusiasm of young people for esports, Pan said. The company has also collaborated with Hangzhou's Yuhang district to establish offline arenas for *Honor of Kings*.

To promote esports across the country, the LGD has also collaborated with counterparts in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, by establishing professional-grade facilities.

"These collaborations and the enthusiasm and engagement of audiences in esports competitions reflect the immense potential and appeal of this field," Pan said. "With the continuous growth of the esports industry, we can expect to see more similar collaborations and initiatives in the future."

Establishing esports arenas where fans can come for offline viewing is crucial for the development of esports, according to Xu Xinzhen, a 21-year-old player in the professional King Pro League for "Honor of Kings".

Xu, of LGD Gaming, developed an interest in esports when he realized he might be slightly better than other players.

"It was a coincidence, really. I decided to give it a try and also had a strong desire to aim for championships," Xu said.

The country's measures to provide a certain level of support have offered young people more choices. "Additionally, organizing more events like grassroots esports tournaments and collegiate leagues is very beneficial, since there are many young gamers, including college students, who might be interested," Xu said.

When entering the esports field, it's crucial not to rush things, because professional esports and casual gaming are different realms," he added.

"Success ultimately depends on one's own hard work and dedication to training. It's essential to focus on doing what needs to be done, be prepared to face outcomes and have the courage to start anew when necessary."

In the future, Xu's goal is to improve his personal gaming skills and competitive performance. "Winning championships should be the ultimate objective for anyone pursuing a career in professional esports," he said.

But he cautioned that while embracing esports is encouraged, it's important for individuals to have a comprehensive understanding of professional esports before making a choice.

"Every industry demands effort, but in esports, success begins with excellence in every practice match and dedicating a lot of time to training," he said. "That is the first step toward success."

Contact the writers at
qiuquanlin@chinadaily.com.cn



The audience cheers for players from LGD Gaming club during King Pro League Summer 2024 on Aug 14 in Hangzhou.



Esports player Yang Wenming competes during King Pro League Summer 2024 on Aug 29.



Players compete during King Pro League Summer 2024, the highest Honor of Kings league tournament, on Aug 17 in Hangzhou.

Guicheng taps youthful energy for digital development

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou

Authorities in Guicheng sub-district of Nanhai in Foshan, Guangdong province, have been holding esports competitions and introducing gaming industry investments in an effort to create a "city of esports" that appeals to young people.

For its latest move, the sub-district launched an esports challenge event at the ancient Ancestral Hall of Family Liang in early August.

The Foshan Village Pro League marked its debut in 2023 as the first

large-scale rural sports cooperation event initiated by local authorities. The event garnered attention from over 30 million online viewers and was recognized by the developer of *Honor of Kings* as an excellent annual esports event.

"We hope that each team will showcase their style and skill, leaving more glorious moments of youth during the competition," said Xie Zhanming, deputy secretary of the Guicheng sub-district Party working committee.

This year's event has attracted

over 100 teams with nearly 1,000 young esports players, according to the organizers. The competition's influence extends across the entire Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, with the average age of the participating players being around 28 years old.

"The event aims to make esports a prominent IP in Guicheng's culture and sports industry," said Xie, who looks forward to more projects, events and talent gathering in Guicheng to boost the development of its esports and digital economy.

This year's Foshan Village PL event also launched an esports-themed study tour route, covering major culture and tourism areas and showcasing Nanhai's multifaceted charm.

Nanhai district introduced rules for promoting the development of the esports industry at the end of 2020 as a guide for event hosting, esports industrial park development, venue construction, esports club operation and talent cultivation in the esports sector.

Against this backdrop, Guicheng

has leveraged the esports plus industry as a breakthrough point to cultivate the city's youthful vitality and build a vibrant and thriving city.

In response to the national strategy to nurture and expand the digital consumption sector, Guicheng will continue to enrich its esports ecosystem by attracting top companies and related investment in the esports field, according to Xie.

So far, over 20 esports enterprises and associations have settled in Guicheng, with the first batch of

esports-themed hotels already beginning operations in the sub-district.

Additionally, Guicheng is accelerating construction on the first full-chain industrial community themed around esports in South China. Part of that project is a 1,000-seat esports stadium.

"We hope that Guicheng's esports industry will grow steadily, moving from local areas to a higher and stronger international platform by attracting more esports projects, events and talent," said Xie.

BIZ LIFE

Long holiday a boon for travel sector

Short-haul outbound trips more popular, with 60% opting for nearby destinations

By ZHU WENQIAN

zhuwenqian@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese consumers are pursuing more personalized and flexible travel options for the weeklong National Day holiday, with significant increases seen in bookings for self-driving tours, independent travel and private group vacations, industry players said.

Both domestic long-haul trips and outbound travel are gaining popularity, and traditional cultural tours and autumn excursions have emerged as top choices, said Tuniu Corp, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency.

Running from Oct 1 to 7, the National Day holiday stands as the last long holiday of the year, leading to a considerable increase in flexible scheduling by consumers. As of Sept 20, bookings of flights and hotels during the holiday both exceeded levels recorded during the same period last year, Tuniu said.

"There was a surge in bookings for National Day holiday tour packages in September. Some people took an extra two-day leave on Sept 29 and 30 and thus combined it for a 10-day break in total," said Qi Chunguang, vice-president of Tuniu.

The travel peak is expected to occur on the first day of the holiday and last until Oct 4, with a gradual decline in the number of travelers from Oct 5 to 7, Qi said.

The holiday is also the best time to enjoy fall foliage. Some of the most popular domestic destinations include Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou province, which stands as the largest waterfall in Asia; Lushan Mountain and Wuyuan in Jiangxi province; Huangshan Mountain in Anhui province; as well as the vibrant Kanas scenic area in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Tuniu said.

For outbound travel, short-haul trips are more popular, with some 60 percent of outbound travelers opting for short-haul destinations, while the growing trend for long-haul outbound trips is significant.

Japan, Thailand, Maldives, Indonesia, Turkey, the France-Italy-Switzerland itinerary, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore and Russia are among the top destinations in terms of booking volumes for the National Day holiday, Tuniu found.

"Emerging destinations such as the Serbia-Montenegro-Bosnia route, the Georgia-Armenia-Azerbaijan route, and the Czech Republic-Hungary-Austria route have also seen a peak in popularity during the National Day holiday, becoming hot choices for many seasoned travelers who are seeking unique experiences," Qi said.

In particular, taking self-driving tours has emerged as one of the most popular modes of travel for Chinese consumers. For the National Day holiday, an increasing number of travelers are opting to take high-speed trains to their destinations, and then participate in local group tours or rent cars for self-driving experiences, Tuniu said.

A man surnamed Luo, a traveler from Suzhou, Jiangsu province, has enjoyed taking self-driving trips, especially from Suzhou to Anji, Zhejiang province, a place surrounded by tea plantations and forests.

"Anji is a place that we have been coming back to for vacations. It's quite convenient to drive there from Suzhou, with beautiful scenery along the way. Parking lots of local hotels are equipped with charging stations for new energy vehicles,



A section of U-shaped road in Golmud, Qinghai province, is popular among self-driving passengers. LI PEIXIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Tourists enjoy a scenic spot in Ganzhou, Jiangxi province. ZHU HAIPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

40 percent

booking volume growth of domestic car rentals during the just-concluded summer vacation

which have been convenient," Luo said.

In the just-concluded summer vacation, booking volumes of domestic car rentals and per capita spending on such rentals jumped 40 percent and 20 percent, respectively, on a yearly basis, said China's largest online travel agency Trip.com Group.

Overseas self-driving tours were also a big hit. Trip.com reported a 160 percent surge in overseas car rental booking volumes this summer.

Tourists who prefer self-driving tours were mainly born in the 1980s and 1990s, and car rental bookings made by tourists born after 2000 expanded by 77 percent over last summer, outperforming all other age groups. Most young drivers came from Beijing; Shanghai; Chengdu in Sichuan province; and Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, said Trip.com.

Notably, more female travelers have embarked on self-driving tours. From beaches with breathtaking views to vast grasslands, women have been traveling further afield.

"Car rental bookings made by females have maintained growth for five consecutive years. This summer, women - especially those born in the 1990s - contributed 41 percent to the total booking volume of car rentals," said Shen Jiani, a senior researcher with Trip.com Group.

"Some popular domestic self-driving routes included the ring roads of Hainan province, western Yunnan province, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Gansu province," Shen said.

China's tourism market has entered a new stage of development in the past few years. The tourism market in smaller cities has embraced huge growth potential and travelers have shown increasingly diversified demand, said the China Tourism Academy in a report on the development of domestic tourism in 2023 and 2024.

For instance, Inner Mongolia has attracted more travelers taking self-driving tours. This summer, the number of such travelers jumped 94 percent year-on-year, ranking tops nationwide. The number of tourists who booked private tours and customized tours online surged 136 percent, said Trip.com.

A large number of visitors come from out of town and from overseas markets. Among foreign visitors, one third came from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia's capital, and 20 percent of the total came from Singapore. Melbourne, Australia also served as one of the region's top sources of foreign visitors, according to Trip.com.

Inner Mongolia's department of culture and tourism said it would beef up efforts on both the supply and demand sides to advance green, low-carbon and sustainable growth of local tourism this autumn, hoping to make the autonomous region the first choice for self-driving tours in the nation, and a top option for camping.

"Ulanqab will continue to welcome more tourists from Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province, and strive to attract more visitors from the Yangtze River Delta region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area," said Hao Wenyue, director of the cultural tourism and sports bureau of Ulanqab, a city in the region.

Inner Mongolia also plans to launch more unique self-driving routes, such as driving routes that will pass by forests, grasslands, ancient sites and deserts, as well as China-Russia-Mongolia cross-border self-driving tours, the local government said.

Travel to Africa a growing wanderlust phenomenon

By ZHU WENQIAN

A rising trend of visiting Africa has emerged as Chinese tourists increasingly set their sights on the continent, especially experienced tourists who travel abroad frequently and younger adventurers with a thirst for more exotic experiences.

Africa, with rich tourism resources, has attracted a substantial number of experienced travelers from China, particularly financially stable middle-aged individuals. Those aged between 35 and 50 comprise more than a third of total Chinese visitors, said Tuniu Corp, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the launch of more direct flights shortened travel times, and encour-

aged visits from a diverse range of tourists, including senior travelers over 60.

In the post-pandemic era, African tourism has gradually resumed, and flight capacities have been on track for recovery. So far, the capacity of direct flights connecting Chinese and African cities rebounded to approximately 40 to 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels, Tuniu said.

China's tourism market has shown strong resilience from November last year to present, with peak travel seasons occurring during the Chinese New Year holiday and summer vacations, and it has boosted the growth of diversified, personalized and high-quality tourism products and services, Tuniu said.

"Chinese travelers have been plac-

ing an increasing focus on factors such as safety, visa processing efficiency and resumption of flight capacities, leading to a surge in demand for personalized and small-group tours in Africa," said Li Peng, director of African tourism business at Tuniu.

"Chinese tourists mainly travel to Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, and seasonal destinations such as Kenya and South Africa have been popular choices. Tanzania and Namibia, with exposures and promotions via some variety shows and social media platforms, have also grabbed public attention," Li said.

Yet compared with European destinations, African destinations show a gap in service capabilities. There are fewer premium hotels, and they carry

expensive price tags. Such hotels have strong service awareness and adopt service management concepts like high-end hotels in Europe and the United States. In comparison, ordinary hotels in Africa simply meet the accommodation demand of tourists, industry experts observed.

The attraction of African tourism still lies in its splendid natural scenery, adventure and simplicity compared to urban settings. The convenience of travel product bookings and infrastructure need to be further improved, and road infrastructure throughout Africa lags relatively behind, Li said.

Taking Egypt as an example, if Chinese tourists would like to book temporary cruise trips, rent cars or book tour guides locally, such servi-

ces still lag behind in terms of convenience, Li added.

This summer, the booking volume of flight tickets from China to Africa jumped 120 percent over last summer, said Qunar, a Beijing-based online travel agency.

Qunar said Egypt, Tanzania, Kenya, Morocco and South Africa have been the most popular African destinations. With favorable entry policies of African countries and more available flights, traveling to Africa has become increasingly convenient, it said.

"Africa boasts rich cultural and natural sceneries. Visiting the ancient and mysterious Egyptian pyramids, animal migrations in Kenya, as well as Chefchaouen in Morocco, known for its blue and white buildings, have been sought

after among Chinese travelers," said Xiao Peng, a Qunar researcher.

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest carrier in Africa, said it has seen rapid growth in travel demand from China to major African cities, and the airline is bullish on its growth potential in China.

Currently, the carrier operates 25 passenger flights weekly connecting Addis Ababa, the capital, with Beijing; Shanghai; Guangzhou, Guangdong province; and Hong Kong.

Ethiopian Airlines said the future growth of demand is expected to mainly come from increasing passenger traffic between China and Africa, as well as strategic partnerships and collaborations, said Aman Wole Gurmu, country director of China for the airline.

TRAVEL

Cultural gems shine at night

Experiences across Beijing highlight the many attractions, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



A guide explains an artwork in an exhibition about the Mogao Grottoes during an evening event at the China Arts and Crafts Museum in Beijing in early August. WANG ZIRU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Tourists enjoy the view on a boat during a night tour of the Guihe River organized by the Badaling Culture and Tourism Group. YUAN YI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Cycling at night is among the many cultural and tourism programs launched by Beijing authorities to let the public better appreciate what the capital has to offer. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Yu Nuo took out a Beijing map and spent a month from June studying the highways and byways and doing fieldwork before coming up with a cycling route that traces the shape of the capital city's Chinese name.

"I wanted it to be symbolic and pique public interest, while making sure all the turns are friendly to cyclists," says Yu, who has been assisting the cycling club Buyiban based in Yizhuang in Beijing's southeastern suburb.

The route runs about 20 kilometers across well-known *hutong* lanes in the city's downtown area, without having to go against traffic or take an overpass.

"It's perfect for observing local life, such as residents playing chess under streetlights and taking walks, while experiencing diverse business activities, commercial streets, urban views and famous scenic spots at night," she says.

Yu's route has been among several picked up and promoted by the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism for night riders in August.

They string together major cultural landmarks, such as the Bell and Drum Towers and Central Axis, as well as immersive cultural experiences, including Peking Opera and tea rituals. Those routes are aimed at better tapping into the city's cultural and tourism resources.

Yu found more than 1,200 people bookmarked her route after she posted it on the lifestyle-focused social media platform Xiaohongshu.

"Many night joggers have also followed it," she says. "The whole city has well-developed cycling lanes, making it ideal for people who mostly have to spend the daytime working in the office to then chill and exercise at night," Yu says.

Night cycling is part of Beijing authorities' efforts to demonstrate the nocturnal charm of the city and enable more people to appreciate a slower pace of life.

In late August, they rolled out a moonlight tours guide that covers more than 250 programs, including exhibitions, light shows and concerts at various sites, ranging from scenic spots, camping sites to museums and galleries.

Since being included in the night tours guide, Shougang Park in western Beijing's Shijingshan district has packed in music and pop culture enthusiasts for its concerts.

"They sang along with the artists onstage and turned the park into a recreational hot spot," says Zhang Chao, who lives in the neighborhood and recently visited the park at night.

Once an industrial steelmaking facility, the park has been turned into a wonderland of multicolored lighting. Many of the old factory buildings in the park have been

transformed into creative art studios, uniquely styled restaurants and bars.

"Under the night sky, the blast furnaces, cooling towers as well as the crisscrossing pipes give both a strong industrial vibe and a surreal atmosphere as they are bathed in flickering lights," Zhang says.

Additionally, employees who used to work for the former steel plant have been invited to walk visitors down the history of the park.

The Shijingshan culture and tourism bureau has worked with the park's administration and planned a series of night activities lasting till the end of October.

Each activity will carry a distinctive theme and invites artists of different genres, according to the park's administration.

Other parts of the capital have also arranged cultural and tourism experiences to spice up the nightlife.

In Tongzhou, an eastern district of Beijing, market fairs, stadiums and libraries are lighting up the night, and boats carrying passengers meander the Grand Canal.

Guo Xiangbing says she has felt her neighborhood come alive since the Yuelianghe (Moon River) fair opened during the Labor Day holiday in May.

The fair on the bank of the canal has attracted more than 300 businesses and remains a tourism hot spot, with the number of daily night visitors peaking at 30,000, according to the fair's organizers.

"The neighborhood has a good environment, with both woodlands and a river, but there were no nearby shopping areas until the fair took place," Guo says.

She often takes her grandson to the fair to enjoy gourmet food and creative cultural items, which have spiced up the social life of her family, Guo adds.

Su Beibei has been running a cold drinks and spicy hotpot business at the Yuelianghe fair for more than three months. She can sell 300 to 500 drinks and 100 to 200 servings of hotpot a night.

"Sometimes, we're sold out before the fair ends and visitors who come late have to wait until the next time," Su says.

She says she will continue her business in the fair, not just because of the heavy foot traffic but the well-organized management.

"They (the management personnel) have strict standards for hygiene, quality and product styles. Once a vendor meets these requirements, the market doesn't interfere with their operations," Su says.

As the fair's popularity grows, more vendors have shown a desire to join in.

"The market started with a focus on families with children, but has since expanded to cater to entire families and young consumer groups, with an increasing variety of businesses," says Quan Ping,

an official in charge of the fair operations.

"Each week, we replace vendors whose quality doesn't meet standards, while organizing themed events to bring fresh experiences to visitors," Quan adds.

To date, the fair's administration has launched an app, through which potential vendors can grab vacant spots on a weekly basis.

All the spots are quickly snapped up once they are released, according to the fair's administration.

"With the growing influence of the Grand Canal, the fair has established a good reputation among more tourists and merchants. We hope to continue making a go of it," Quan says.

In Yanqing, the outer suburban district northwest of Beijing, night tours of the Badaling Great Wall have packed in more than 200,000 visitors since it was launched in May, reported the Badaling Culture and Tourism Group behind the operation.

A "processional viewing" mode has been introduced to immerse visitors in different historical scenes, according to Zhai Yanwei, deputy general manager of the Badaling group.

Tree-shaped lighting systems, interactive non-player characters, daring motorbike stunts and a range of Great Wall-themed cultural and creative souvenirs dot the journey, which has proved a hit among visitors, she says.

The scenic spot has also rolled out an English service and multiple payment methods for inbound travelers, whose visits reached 241,000 as of Sept 12, according to the Badaling Culture and Tourism Group.

To spice up the tourist experience, Yanqing has rolled out night boating on the Guihe River, which starts from the district and runs 18.5 km from east to west.

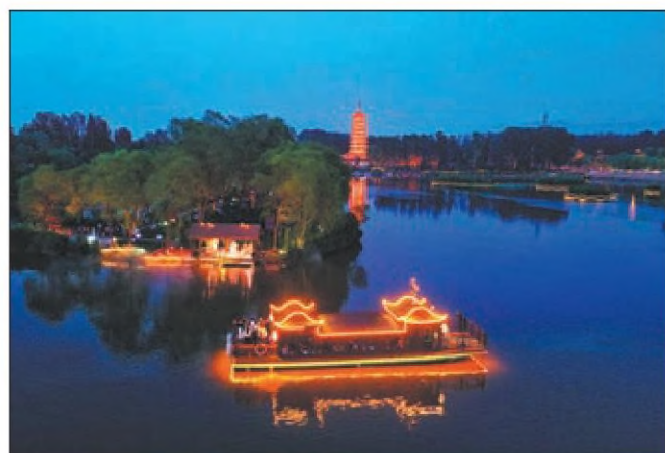
The river has been transformed into a realm of mystery and serenity under the embrace of the night sky, with the gently swaying reeds, heart-shaped islands and an illuminated pagoda dotting the surroundings and casting beautiful reflections.

Several performances take place during the boat trip, highlighting stories about local people and the legendary ruler Shun of more than 4,000 years ago.

Zhai is positive that more visitors will come now that the Beijing culture and tourism authorities have put the district's night tours of the Great Wall and the Guihe River on the map.

"We have received positive feedback from tourists and will certainly expect more of them to come," Zhai says.

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn



A night boating experience on the Guihe River in northwestern Beijing's Yanqing district is a big draw for visitors. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A weekend performance featuring folk music in the evening at Beihai Park. YUAN YI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Residents and tourists pedal boats across Shichahai Lake this summer. LI MUYI / FOR CHINA DAILY

SPORTS



Phakpong Dejaroen of Thailand in action at the Teqball World Series Beijing on Sept 22. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By XING WEN
xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Hungary's Krisztina Acs deftly sent the soccer ball soaring through the air toward her male teammate, Csaba Banyik, who, with lightning reflexes and a sudden burst of energy, raised his leg high above his shoulder to deliver a swift roundhouse kick.

Instead of firing the ball toward a goal, it spun over a clear plastic divider and onto the opposite side of an oddly curved ping-pong table.

This is mixed-doubles teqball — a Hungarian-born fusion of soccer and table tennis that has been around for more than a decade.

It's played on a curved tabletop that measures three meters in length, is 1.7 meters wide, 0.76 meters high, and is bisected by a rigid "net".

Typically, the game is contested in three-set matches, with doubles competitions being more popular than singles. Participants use a slightly underinflated ball and, similar to soccer, are allowed to strike it with any part of their body except their hands.

With its non-contact nature and gender-equitable competitions, it has been gaining popularity around the globe.

Currently, this soccer-based sport boasts over 5,000 athletes in more than 150 countries and regions, with over 2,000 clubs established worldwide.

On Sept 22, the Teqball World Series Beijing, which attracted more than 120 contestants from 16 countries, wrapped up in Beijing's Olympic Forest Park.

The event, co-hosted by the International Federation of Teqball (FITEQ), Beijing Olympic City Development Association (BODA), Beijing Sports Federation and the government of Chaoyang district, was the highest-paying stop in the history of the Teqball World Series, with a total prize purse of \$60,000.

"Among the domestic events I've participated in, this competition featured the highest number of high-level foreign players," said Subiyinuer Abudurehman, a player from Urumqi, capital of China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, who took part in the mixed doubles.

Salman Alibrahim from Kuwait expressed his admiration for the spacious outdoor competition venue.

"I love the vibes here. The weather is great, and there are many spectators," said the 25-year-old.

He transitioned from playing soccer to become a professional teqball player due to the limited popularity of the sport in Kuwait.

"Very few people in Kuwait play teqball. Many are unaware of this sport. I want to focus on promoting it among more people in my country," he added.

Apor Gyorgydeak, 24, the world No 1 "teqer" from Romania, continued to demonstrate his dominance in the game by claiming the men's singles title.

"I'm happy that I managed to extend my undefeated streak, and my plan is to keep it up until the end of the year," he said.

TEQBALL

GIVING THE GAME A LEG-UP

Beijing crowd gets its kicks, as teqball looks to tap Chinese market



Poland's Marek Pokwap in action at the Teqball World Series Beijing on Sept 22. Pokwap was named the tournament's Best Male Athlete.



Hungary's Balazs Katz and Csaba Banyik take on Nikola Mitro and Bogdan Marojevic of Serbia in the men's doubles final on Sept 22.

Gyorgydeak enjoys the recognition brought by the emerging sport and the travel experiences of attending different international tournaments.

The Teqball World Championships, an annual competition organized by FITEQ, is currently the most important event for the world's teqball players.

Its inaugural edition took place in 2017 in Budapest, Hungary, where Adam Blazsovcics, a local, became the first-ever teqball singles world champion.

The seasoned teqer also competed in Beijing. It's not his first time visiting China, as he participated in the Teqball Tour event held in Qingdao, Shandong province, in 2023 and the Xiamen Challenger Cup in Xiamen, Fujian province, in 2020.

Through the years, he notes, the pace of the matches at teqball events hosted in China has accelerated.

"Participants are becoming stronger, with more powerful smashes, and the organization of the game here is also improving," Blazsovcics remarked.

Blazsovcics, who studied to become a PE teacher at the University of Physical Education in Budapest, where he first tried playing teqball, shared his thoughts on the sport.

"I think it is a great opportunity for young people. Teqball is not a contact sport, so you don't have to worry about injuries caused by rough collisions.

"Perseverance is extremely important in this sport. In the beginning, you may often fall, but it is crucial not to give up," he said.

For Chinese teqer Cui Yazhen, teqball demands precise technical skills that require continuous practice. Now a PE teacher at Jimi University in Xiamen, she transitioned to teqball after retiring from professional soccer due to injuries.

"Teqball places high demands on players' flexibility and coordination, with relatively lower requirements for speed and endurance.

"It means that I can continue participating in this soccer-based sport, post-injury," Cui explained.

BODA has been actively promoting the emerging sport in China. On Sept 20, it partnered with FITEQ, Capital University of Physical Education and Sports, and the Beijing Teqball Association to establish the International Teqball Research Center, aiming to improve, develop and promote the sport.

According to Gao Yunchao, deputy director of BODA, Beijing now has nearly 40 teqball promotion bases, with almost 30,000 participants engaging in teqball activities throughout the year.

"The development of teqball in China is crucial, as it will impact the growth of the sport not just in Asia, but globally," said Gabor Borsanyi, president of FITEQ and one of the creators of the hybrid sport.

"FITEQ's goal is to make teqball an Olympic sport, and I believe that the development of teqball in China will accelerate the realization of this objective."



Online
Watch the video
by scanning
the code.

PARALYMPICS

Tan happy to bear the weight of responsibility in new role

By LI YINGXUE
liyinxue@chinadaily.com.cn

Before each lift, Tan Yujiao sits quietly on the weightlifting platform, absorbing the moment, before unleashing a shout that reverberates through the arena. This ritual, she believes, helps her sync with the competition's rhythm, serving as both a release and a rallying cry.

"Every athlete on that stage faces not just their competitors, but also the challenge of surpassing themselves," she reflects.

At 33, Tan remains a formidable force, consistently pushing her own limits. Over 21 years, she has shattered the world record 21 times.

Most recently, at the Paris Paralympics, she lifted 142 kilograms in the women's 67 kg powerlifting final, beating her own personal best and clinching her third consecutive Paralympic title.

"The feeling of surpassing myself is incredible. I truly enjoyed this competition; it felt like a perfect match," Tan said.

She celebrated another achievement in Paris — being elected to the International Paralympic Committee Athletes' Council with 281 votes, making her the first Chinese athlete to assume the role.

"I look forward to representing athletes with disabilities on the International Paralympic Committee platform, and aim to serve as a bridge for effective communication between Chinese Paralympic athletes and the global Paralympic community," she said.

After more than a decade of international competition, Tan has not only consistently delivered out-

standing performances, but also built lasting friendships with athletes from around the world.

With her sights set on the future, she is committed to embracing greater responsibilities and having a meaningful impact on the advancement of sports for athletes with disabilities.

At just seven years of age, Tan faced a life-changing ordeal when she developed osteomyelitis, which resulted in a disability in her right leg. For six years during elementary school, she was unable to participate in physical education classes.

In 2003, at the age of 13, after trying her hand at weightlifting, Tan's talent was evident and she was recommended for athlete selection by the Xiangtan Disabled Persons' Federation in Hunan province. Her coach, Peng Xiangrong, was immediately impressed when he witnessed her lifting weights well beyond what was typical for her age, leading him to invite her to join the team.

Within a month of training, Tan clinched her first championship at the Hunan provincial para games.

With unwavering support from her family, Tan embarked on her journey in competitive sports, expressing that becoming an athlete brought her immense joy and fulfillment.

By 2009, at 19, she had won her first national championship and earned a spot on the national team. That October, she made her international debut, swiftly claiming the title of world champion.

Since then, before every competition, Tan lets out a primal yell.

"It's a cry against my challenging fate, a shout for lifting the weight of my dreams," she explained.



Tan Yujiao of China celebrates clinching gold in the 2024 Paris Paralympics women's 67kg powerlifting on Sept 7. XINHUA

Long-lasting friendship

At the awards ceremony of the Paris Paralympics, Tan took the stage in her prosthetics, bending down for a group photo and kissing the cheeks of silver medalist Fatma Elyan from Egypt and bronze medalist Maria de Fatima Costa de Castro from Brazil. The three athletes embraced warmly, with genuine smiles.

"We had competed together before, so we were quite familiar with one another. This time, we all achieved good results, and the friendly atmosphere really moved me," Tan said.

Following her gold medal win in Paris, Tan received an unexpected

gift: a traditional Egyptian women's outfit from Fatma Omar, a 50-year-old powerlifting icon. Once rivals on the platform, Omar and Tan have since become close friends.

Their friendship began at the 2012 London Paralympics. "Omar has always been my idol. We hit it off immediately, and she had a great impression of me. During the London Games, she gifted me an Egyptian team uniform, and I was thrilled; I felt like she was an older sister," Tan recalled.

In the years that followed, Tan and Omar crossed paths at numerous competitions, greeting each other warmly and deepening their

bond. When Omar moved to Tan's weight class, they became direct competitors.

During the women's 67 kg powerlifting final at the Tokyo Paralympics, Tan secured gold, while Omar claimed silver. After the event, Omar extended her heartfelt congratulations to Tan.

Last year, Omar announced her retirement from powerlifting, but their friendship remains steadfast. At the Paris Paralympics, she attended as an official with the Egyptian delegation. On the night of Tan's victory, the two reunited in the Paralympic Village, engaging in a long, joyful conversation.

"She cares deeply about my training and life, always encouraging me to keep going," Tan shared.

As the Games concluded, Tan prepared some special gifts for Omar: a box of West Lake Longjing tea and a handmade flower. "I hope our friendship blooms forever, just like this flower," Tan said.

Shared commitment

Before the finals at the Paralympics, Tan received an email from the International Paralympic Committee announcing her election to the IPC Athletes' Council.

From Aug 26-Sept 5, athletes at the Paris Paralympics cast their votes for over 20 candidates, representing exceptional athletes from various sports across four continents. Ultimately, in the voting, which involved 1,800 athletes, Tan secured one of top positions in the final tally.

Tan shared that she was nominated by the Chinese Paralympic Committee. During the Games, the IPC

established a voting station in the Paralympic Village, showcasing candidates' photos and names. Each athlete could cast one vote, and candidates had the opportunity to introduce themselves in hopes of securing support.

Tan actively engaged with athletes from different countries and regions between events.

"This process tested my communication skills, and I feel I learned a lot," Tan said. "At first, I was hesitant when talking to foreign athletes, worried about being rejected. But, I quickly realized that reaching out often invites kindness in return, which helped me gain confidence."

Throughout her interactions, she also noticed the expanding influence of Chinese athletes with disabilities on the international stage.

"The phrase 'vote for Chinese athletes' proved effective when speaking with athletes from other countries. They might not know me personally, but they certainly recognize China. Many responded positively, saying, 'no problem', so their votes also reflect support for our country."

At the closing ceremony, Tan stood alongside five other newly elected IPC Athletes' Council members, embodying a shared commitment to advocate for athletes with disabilities.

Reflecting on her new role, Tan feels a profound and unwavering sense of responsibility.

"We need to make our voices heard and increase visibility; this is one of my future goals. If I can leverage my platform to draw attention to athletes with disabilities and promote the growth of disability sports, I see that as a success."



CIIE Celebrates the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China



CIIE: A pivotal platform for high-level opening-up

Seventh edition of major import-themed expo set for November in Shanghai

By MA LINMIAO

malinmiao@chinadaily.com.cn

As lively celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China are taking place nationwide, the China International Import Expo, a global stage for innovation, trade and collaboration, underscores the country's commitment to high-level opening-up and international partnership.

The CIIE, now preparing for its seventh edition in Shanghai this November, has evolved into a landmark event in the global trade calendar. It offers a dynamic platform for developed nations, emerging markets and the world's least-developed countries, or LDCs, to showcase their products, services and innovations, making it one of the most influential trade fairs worldwide.

Global gathering

The CIIE is not China's solo show, but rather a chorus involving countries from around the world, organizers said.

Since its launch in 2018, following the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the expo has played a pivotal role in promoting global collaboration and creating new trade opportunities.

More than 180 countries, regions and international organizations have participated, with 151 of them involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. Eight BRICS nations, including new members Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia, have secured a prominent presence at the expo's Country Exhibition, highlighting the CIIE's significance as a global hub for economic collaboration. Moreover, the expo provides crucial support to LDCs such as Cambodia and Ethiopia, enabling their participation by offering assistance with booth construction, product transportation and accommodation.

The 2024 edition is set to welcome more than 70 countries and international organizations, surpassing last year's participation. First-time participants such as Norway, Slo-



The South Square at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai), where the seventh CIIE will be hosted.

LIU YUAN / CHINA DAILY

vakia, Benin, Burundi and Madagascar will join, as well as the United Nations Children's Fund.

Worldwide stage

Over the past six editions, a range of global companies, be it flagship brands or small and medium-sized enterprises, have embraced China's first-ever international import expo to share their innovations with the world.

"Participating in the CIIE is very rewarding, as it gives us the chance to introduce our latest innovations to Chinese consumers," said Bernd Wagner, CEO of WS Audiology China.

Over the past six years, companies from 173 countries and regions have participated in the CIIE and achieved more than \$420 billion in tentative transactions. Nearly 2,500 products, technologies and services have debuted at past editions of the event.

This year's CIIE is set to impress with a

diverse showcase of global products, reinforcing its dedication to innovation and cross-sector collaboration.

According to the CIIE Bureau, the 2024 edition will feature the world's largest grain merchants and vegetable seed companies, alongside dedicated sections spotlighting French agribusiness and African food products.

Sustainability and cutting-edge technology remain at the forefront. For example, the Automobile Exhibition will highlight 12 Fortune 500 companies, with 90 percent of the vehicles on display being electric or made from recyclable materials.

Meanwhile, the Intelligent Industry and Information Technology Exhibition will introduce a special section for new materials and an enhanced artificial intelligence experience zone, featuring industry giants such as Invista and SK Group.

Attendees can also explore a curated selec-

tion of luxury brands, fast fashion leaders and top beauty companies in the Consumer Goods Exhibition. In the Medical Equipment and Healthcare Products Exhibition, the world's top 10 medical device manufacturers and 11 Fortune 500 pharmaceutical companies will showcase groundbreaking innovations in biotechnology and digital healthcare solutions.

Promoting openness

The seventh Hongqiao International Economic Forum will once again champion the theme of openness, with a focus on "High-Standard Opening-up for Inclusive and Beneficial Globalization". Slated for November in Shanghai, alongside the CIIE, a series of subforums will convene international leaders, top economists and entrepreneurs to tackle global issues and share valuable insights.

The subforums will bring together

esteemed government officials, Nobel Prize laureates and senior executives from leading global industries to address a diverse array of topics, including sustainable industrial development, climate-resilient trade and the 30th anniversary of the World Trade Organization.

Discussions will also address intellectual property protection, AI advancements and renewable energy, alongside the release of the World Openness Report 2024.

Industry experts and member companies will be invited to engage in dialogues at designated booths, enhancing the overall experience and encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing among attendees.

"The Hongqiao Forum is showing increasingly extensive influence worldwide. We regard the forum as a premier platform to enhance global communication and promote sustainable development," said Wang Dawei, economics affairs officer at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

To strengthen connections among global political, business and academic leaders, this year's CIIE & HQF GALA will once again precede the opening ceremony, offering enhanced services such as early information disclosure to keep forum guests well-informed. Media interactions will be introduced to boost visibility and engagement.

Attendees can look forward to the upcoming release of the 2024 Hongqiao Forum guest list, which promises an exciting lineup of distinguished participants.

New chapter

Seventy-five years on, China stands at the threshold of a new chapter, marked by profound economic growth, technological innovation and a renewed commitment to fostering international partnerships.

As the nation expands unilateral market access to LDCs and streamlines visa-free entry policies, foreign enterprises are demonstrating heightened enthusiasm for engaging with the Chinese market.

Following a successful edition in 2023, the seventh CIIE is gearing up for another rewarding event, aimed at connecting global companies and sharing a multitude of market opportunities with the world.

ADVERTORIAL



中国国际进口博览会
CHINA INTERNATIONAL
IMPORT EXPO

CIIE NEW ERA
SHARED FUTURE
新时代 共享未来

虹桥国际经济论坛
HONGQIAO INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC FORUM



Congratulations on the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China





AD