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# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024

## Pandas' fleet



Two FedEx trucks wait to transport a pair of 3-year-old giant pandas, Bao Li and Qing Bao, after they arrived on a FedEx Boeing 777 plane from China at Dulles International Airport in Virginia on Tuesday. The pandas are now at the National Zoo in Washington DC.  
KENT NISHIMURA / GETTY IMAGES VIA AP See story, page 3

## Space science plan leading to 2050 unveiled

Habitability of celestial bodies in the solar system and of exoplanets to be explored

By JIANG CHENGLONG  
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China unveiled on Tuesday its first-ever medium- and long-term plan for space science development, looking to establish itself as a "global space science power" by 2050.

The plan, which was jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the China National Space Administration and the China Manned Space Agency at a news conference held by the State Council Information Office, aims to achieve "landmark original results with significant international impact".

It outlines the development goals of China's space science, including 17 priority areas under five key scientific themes. The themes include the extreme universe, the sun-Earth panoramic view, habitable planets, and biological and physical sciences in space, said Ding Chibiao, vice-president of the CAS.

China will explore the habitability of celestial bodies in the solar system and of exoplanets, as well as conduct missions to search for extraterrestrial life, Ding said, adding that the priority areas also include sustainable development, the origin and evolution of solar system, and characterization of planetary atmospheres.

The key scientific questions to be addressed include the habitability and signs of extraterrestrial life on Mars, icy moons and ice giants, and exoplanets.

The plan outlined a three-phase road map leading to 2050.

By 2027, China intends to continuously secure world-class achievements in disciplines where it has a strong foundation and advantages, such as high-energy time-domain astronomy, the origin and evolution of the moon and Mars, and microgravity physics.

Additionally, it will consider implementing a series of space science missions in cutting-edge areas, including dark matter and extreme universe studies, gravitational waves, exoplanets, and solar

activity. In these fields, five to eight missions will be proposed and initiated, with two to three major projects expected to deliver landmark results.

Between 2028 and 2035, China will deploy a range of space science missions, envisioning about 15 projects in frontier areas such as the early universe, nearby habitable exoplanets, early solar system exploration and the search for extraterrestrial life.

During this phase, China will also continue operating the Tiangong space station, undertake feasibility studies for crewed lunar exploration and the establishment of an international lunar research station, and conduct approximately 15 space science satellite missions.

Between 2036 and 2050, China aims to achieve international leadership in critical fields, establishing itself as a "global space science power".

During the period, the country aspires to make "revolutionary breakthroughs in basic research" in areas such as the origin and evolution of the universe, the nature of space-time, the origins of the solar system and life, and crewed deep-space exploration, thereby "expanding the boundaries of human knowledge and advancing human civilization".

Meanwhile, China also plans to guide the global development of space science, proposing over 30 missions and positioning itself with core competitiveness and strong leadership in the next wave of the scientific and technological revolution.

### Lunar missions

At the news conference, Yang Xiaoyu, director of the Department of System Engineering at the China National Space Administration, revealed more details about China's specific plans for future lunar exploration.

The Change 7 robotic probe will investigate the environment and resources on the lunar south pole,

See Space, page 3

## WORLD WATCH

By Richard Cullen

## How the US is escalating impact of global warming

Imagine the United States as a manufacturing powerhouse today, producing around 65 percent of the world's new energy vehicles, 80 percent of solar panels, 80 percent of battery cells and over 60 percent of global wind turbines. Next, envision China, Russia and India, as well as other malcontents, imposing massive tariffs of up to 100 percent on all imports of NEVs, solar panels, battery cells and wind turbines from the US.

The US plus its Group of Seven and "Five Eyes" allies would lift off into collective and outraged orbit — aided by their equally furious mainstream media outlets. And they would be entirely right to do so, given the startling evidence of the impact of long-term and harmful climate change on everyone.

It is not hard to picture some headlines: "China, Russia, India and other easily led followers declare war on Planet Earth" or "We have a solution to global warming but China and others want to wreck it", and so on.

According to the latest Western public data, there already is a single country currently responsible for those NEV, solar panel, battery and wind turbine outputs.

See Climate, page 3

## AI BOOM USHERS IN MAJOR CHANGES IN JOB MARKET

Skills upgrade required by some workers to meet new demands, experts say

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

While the boom in artificial intelligence is ushering in new job opportunities, experts are cautioning it will also bring short-term pain and change for some skilled workers and professionals.

At the end of last month, the government released a guideline that aims to promote high-quality and



sufficient employment. It requested that authorities at all levels "actively respond to the impact of the rapidly developing emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, on employment".

Ni Ying, China country head of the multinational human resour-

ces company The Adecco Group (TAG), said he was excited to learn about the guideline. "It is the first time that the central government has associated AI with the job market," Ni said. "This will help companies of our kind to expand our vision, reminding us to explore new opportunities while addressing challenges brought by the rapidly evolving technologies."

See AI, page 2

## China calls for political settlement of Peninsula issue

China has taken note of the current situation on the Korean Peninsula and urged relevant parties to work actively for a political settlement of the issue, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Tuesday.

"As a close neighbor of the Korean Peninsula, China is closely monitoring the developments of the situation on the peninsula and the relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea," Mao said at a regular news briefing in Beijing.

The ROK's joint chiefs of staff said its military fired shots within southern limits of the inter-Korean border as it bolstered its readiness and surveillance posture, as the ROK issued a statement saying that the DPRK blew up parts of inter-Korean roads in the north.

The statement said the DPRK military carried out detonations around noon, purportedly with the objective to block roads on the DPRK side of the western Gyeongui and the eastern Donghae lines, north of the military demarcation line.

On Oct. 9, the general staff of the Korean People's Army said the DPRK would completely cut off



A TV report about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea blowing up parts of inter-Korean roads on its side plays on a screen at a railway station in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on Tuesday. In a symbolic display of anger, DPRK on Tuesday blew up the northern sections of unused road and rail routes that once linked it with ROK. AHN YOUNG-JOON / AP

road and railway links to the ROK and fortify relevant areas on its side with strong defense structures.

Mao, the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, said that tensions on the peninsula do not serve the common interests of parties concerned and the top priority is to avoid further escalation of the situation.

"China's position of being committed to safeguarding peace and stability on the peninsula and promoting a political settlement has not changed," she said.

After Tuesday's demolitions, a video released by the ROK military showed an explosion and a plume of smoke rising above an area of road where the

DPRK had put up a black barrier.

The cross-border roads and railways are remnants of rapprochement that included a 2018 summit.

Tensions mounted after the DPRK last week accused the ROK of sending drones over its capital Pyongyang. It said the drones scattered a "huge number" of anti-DPRK leaflets, and warned that Seoul would "pay a dear price" for this.

The DPRK has "secured clear evidence" showing that the ROK military is the "main culprit" of the hostile provocation of violating the DPRK's sovereignty by intruding into the sky over its capital, said Kim Yo-jong, vice-department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

The ROK government has declined to say whether its military or civilians had flown the alleged drones.

The government of the ROK's Gyeonggi Province, bordering the DPRK, said on Tuesday that a special police force would be brought in to crack down on the practice of flying anti-DPRK leaflets from some border areas.

AGENCIES—CHINA DAILY

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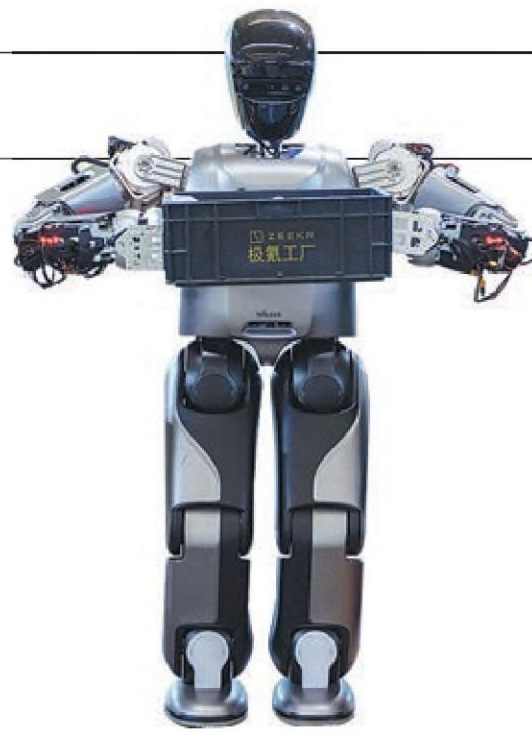
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# PAGE TWO



A staff member demonstrates the AI Whiteboard Enhancement System at the Beijing Education Equipment Exhibition in the capital on April 9. DU JIANPO / FOR CHINA DAILY



Primary school students learn about the application of AI in study at the iFlytek's Artificial Intelligence Experience Center in Hefei, Anhui province, on Aug 4. CHEN SANHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## AI: Advances in technology push workers, employers to change mindset

From page 1

The Chinese job market has good prospects for candidates already armed with AI know-how.

According to the Chinese recruitment portal Zhaopin, employment vacancies for experts specializing in language processing related to large language models (LLMs) increased by 111 percent year-on-year in the first six months of this year.

The number of job openings for people with robot algorithm and deep-learning skills were up 76 percent and 61 percent respectively during the same period.

The leapfrog in development that AI technology has made over the past two years is undoubtedly the reason for the surging demand for such talent, experts from Zhaopin said.

The overall demand for AI talent has been on the rise in China. Market consultancy McKinsey & Company estimates that China will need 6 million professionals with proficient AI knowledge by 2030, which is six times the number in 2022. However, the talent gap may be as high as 4 million by that time.

But AI, like all the other technologies, is a double-edged sword. While some candidates are highly sought after thanks to their AI knowledge, others may find the emerging technology a threat to their job security.

Finance, audit, tax, translation, and banking positions will be the most affected by AI, said Guo Sheng, CEO of Zhaopin.

### Hiring affected

The adoption of LLM has already affected hiring in customer services and operations in China, which was down 2 percentage points in the first half of this year compared with the same period in 2022, said Hu Jiayin, assistant professor from the National School of Development at Peking University. LLM's impact on sales and business development was greater still, cutting job opportunities by 5 percentage points in the first half of the year.

Even professionals specializing in software and hardware development are not immune. Hiring for these skilled professionals was down by 1 percentage point in the first half of the year due to the spread of AI, said Hu.

The AI boom's impact on the job market is different from other advances in technology, said Peta Latimer, president of international human resources service provider Mercer in Asia.

While blue-collar workers were the most vulnerable during the previous technology revolutions, white-collar workers and professionals will be affected the most by AI, the first time in history this has happened.

Ni from TAG predicts about 20 percent of the current head count in offices can be replaced by machines or other automated solutions. While it is quite easy to determine the jobs that are replaceable, it is still unclear what new employment opportunities can be created for these office personnel in the near term, he said.

But one thing is certain, more people will be working in the service industry when technology proliferates further, said Ni.

Japan may serve as a good reference. While it is one of the most automated countries in the world, the unemployment rate has remained low for years. The large and highly diverse service sector in Japan has provided plenty of job opportunities, Ni added.

Japan deployed about 397 robots per 10,000 employees in 2022, making it the fourth-largest automated country in the world, following South Korea, Singapore, and Germany, according to the Interna-



Left: Students program robots to perform kung fu during an AI class at a primary school in Liuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Sept 4. LI HANCHI / FOR CHINA DAILY Right: A woman plays the Fruit Ninja game using an AI rehabilitation training system with the guidance of a caregiver at a nursing home in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on June 3. ZHU HONGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY



tional Federation of Robotics.

Japan's unemployment rate was 2.6 percent in 2022, down 0.2 percentage points from a year earlier, according to its Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

China has rapidly caught up in automation in recent years. It was fifth in the IFR rankings, using 392 robots per 10,000 employees in 2022. IFR experts defined China as having "high robot density", especially given that the nation still has a large manufacturing industry workforce.

But, it should also be noted that China's urban employment rate was 5.6 percent in 2022.

The large service sector in Japan may be one reason for the disparity. Tertiary industry's contribution to Japan's GDP was around 75 percent in 2022, while China's was 53.3 percent the same year. Though the service industry's contribution to China's GDP rose to 54.6 percent last year, there is still room for growth, Ni said.

### Human touch

The September guideline to promote high-quality employment implied there are fresh employment opportunities in China, especially in the "silver economy", he said.

New sectors in the healthcare industry should be explored, according to the guideline. Healthcare should be more deeply integrated with elderly care services, tourism, recreation, and food, to nurture new employment opportunities, it said.

"As China faces an increasingly aging society, there will be rising demand for services to be provided to the elderly group. New jobs such as bath assist-

ants have already been churned out. We can foresee that demand for one-on-one care provided for the elderly will rise in China. This may lead to other job opportunities, like conducting background checks for these service providers or related training," said Ni.

He cited food delivery and express courier services as other good examples of potential growth areas. A decade ago they were at a nascent stage in China, but today the size of these service providers is huge.

"There should be more education in the Chinese job market, telling people that service industries are not inferior to office work," he said. However, experts say it is still too early to predict the impact of emerging technologies on the employment landscape.

Business leaders around the world believe the biggest skills gap currently lies in creativity and innovation, according to a report released by TAG in April. However, the huge rise in AI technology does not mean that these skills will become obsolete.

About 57 percent of 2,000 C-suite executives polled by TAG think the "human touch" is more influential than AI in the workplace, and say human attributes are highly valued. Interestingly, human attributes are especially valued by leaders in the tech sector, according to the report.

Tim Wannenmacher, co-head of Global Markets for UBS Asia Pacific, identified finance as one of the sectors with the largest cost-saving opportunities through the adoption of AI. Half of all jobs in this sector are likely to be automated or augmented with AI, he said.

UBS started to use AI about 10 years ago, and it now has more than 100 live AI models to support decision-making and process automation.

However, Wannenmacher does not expect AI will widely replace financial professionals in the near term. Supporting human staff by

enhancing productivity will be the main function of AI, which has received great attention over the past two years, he said.

Huang Yiping, dean of Peking University's National School of Development, is skeptical about the extent AI can help improve productivity.

He said the current market craze for AI coincides with the logic behind the Solow computer paradox, also known as productivity paradox. American economist Robert Solow determined that productivity has not proportionally improved amid the proliferation of computers. As more investment is made in information technology, worker productivity may even go down instead of up, according to the paradox.

### Productivity questions

The World Bank has reached an even more surprising conclusion.

Despite rapid advances in technology, productivity growth across emerging markets has been declining over the past two decades, Anna Bjerde, the World Bank's managing director of operations, said at the Bund Summit in Shanghai last month.

Since the global financial crisis of 2007-2009, the decline in labor productivity growth has been broad-based, affecting 70 percent of economies and over 80 percent of the global extreme poor. This decline has reached all regions of the developing world, including East Asia, according to World Bank data.

"Everybody is talking about AI. But we have not really seen the hard evidence showing the increases in productivity, profit, or companies' earnings," Huang said.

It will take "a little bit longer" to see the results of advances in technology demonstrated in productivity numbers, he said. While some of the gains are not yet reflected in traditional economic measurements, technological innovation also creates structural issues and leads to some job losses, he added.

Ni said a similar process will take place in China, as the country undergoes industrial restructuring.

"We have noticed a recent dip in the Chinese job market. But it will only be temporary. Technology advancements require an upgrade in knowledge, skills, and even the mindset of the current labor force. This will cause some fluctuations in the job market," he said, adding this has been the pattern of every industrial upgrade.

"Industries are upgrading as China calls for the development of new quality productive forces. Job candidates' reskilling and upskilling are still underway, resulting in a mismatch of talent demand and supply. But, we can still see that China is on a trajectory in which technology will play a bigger role in economic growth," he said.

Mark Wang, president and CEO of HSBC China, said in the past banks favored job candidates with trade and finance backgrounds. However, those with science and technology backgrounds are being increasingly sought by banks.

"We now like to hire candidates with backgrounds beyond the banking industry. Banks can train them, and they will later grasp the knowledge and skills of various industries. This will be the trend in the job market in the future," said Wang.

Lifelong learning will be especially important at a time of rapid technological innovation, despite employees' academic background, said Huo Yingli, Party secretary of the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

"While business development and technology development used to be separate, these two are now merged. In other words, employees need to develop skills in both aspects if they aspire to personal growth or more opportunities on their career path," she said.



A visitor experiences VR games at a metaverse industrial park in Kunshan, Jiangsu province. LI GA / XINHUA

## TOP NEWS

## All things tech



People visit the 44th edition of GITEX Global, a technology and startup exhibition, on its opening day on Monday in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The annual event, which will run through Friday, features 6,500 exhibitors, 1,800 startups and 1,200 investors from over 180 countries. It presents the latest breakthrough innovations in artificial intelligence, IoT technologies and cloud infrastructure.

WALEED ZEIN / ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Debt swap plan to boost economy

Large-scale program will improve business expectations, foster economic stabilization

By ZHOU LANXU and OUYANG SHIJIA

China is likely to approve a debt swap program worth trillions of yuan as the beginning of a broader plan to decisively forestall any downward economic spiral, economists and policy advisers said.

The debt resolution program — set to be the biggest of its kind in recent years — reflects policymakers' priority not only to stimulate short-term growth but also to proactively tackle major structural challenges, opening the door to further substantive policy support, they said.

The policy focus for the coming quarters should include further addressing local governments' delayed payments to businesses, acquiring idle housing and helping struggling real estate developers overcome difficulties, they said.

The economists and advisers added that by alleviating debt pressures facing local governments, the debt swap plan will improve corporate performance, reinvigorate business expectations and serve as an important stepping stone to economic stabilization.

Noting that this approach is as essential as direct demand stimulus, Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said, "Resolving the debt issue is a critical step in stopping a key deflationary downward spiral."

Xing added that the debt swap program would go beyond merely reducing interest payments. "It can improve the liquidity and balance sheets of local businesses (as local governments honor payables), but more fundamentally, restore stability in the regulatory environment and thus business expectations."

He estimated that the debt swap program will be no less than 6 trillion yuan (\$843 billion) over multiple years, with the central government taking over some local debt burdens, and added that this year may see a 2 trillion yuan supplementary fiscal package for local debt resolution and bank recapitalization.

Finance Minister Lan Fo'an said on Saturday the Finance Ministry plans to increase the debt limit by a large scale at once and replace the hidden debt of local governments,

without disclosing the specific size of the plan.

The market is waiting for the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, to convene in late October or early November to approve the specifics of the plan.

Sheng Zhongming, a research fellow at the CF40 Institute, which is affiliated with the China Finance 40 Forum think tank, said that a debt swap would convert high-cost and structurally complex implicit debt into more sustainable low-cost and standardized government bonds, reflecting a policy orientation of securing this year's growth target while tackling persistent structural problems.

China must confront the key structural issues of local debt risks, outstanding government payments to businesses, real estate concerns and the recapitalization needs of banks, Sheng said, which will require at least 10 trillion yuan in additional public funds over several years in order to be effectively addressed.

Wang Yiming, vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, suggested leveraging central government funding to address local governments' overdue payments to busi-

nesses that accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To further address the real estate downturn, a feasible solution could be establishing a special fund, financed by fiscal funds, to acquire housing stock and convert it into government-subsidized rental housing for new urban residents, said Wang, who also serves as a monetary policy committee member of the nation's central bank.

The finance minister indicated on Saturday the scope for more fiscal support by saying that "other policy instruments are being studied," and that there is "relatively large room" for the central government to raise debt and increase the deficit.

Li Daokui, director of Tsinghua University's Academic Center for Chinese Economic Practice and Thinking, said it is imperative to address the situation in which local governments face extremely tight cash flows while banks are flush with liquidity.

Li suggested that local debt at least equivalent to 20 percent of the country's GDP, or around 30 trillion yuan, should be replaced with longer-term treasury bonds.

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## Giant pandas make grand entry in DC, to debut in January

By HENG WEILI in New York  
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The two newly arrived giant pandas at the National Zoo in Washington DC will have plenty of time to overcome any jet lag, as they won't make their public debut until the new year.

Bao Li and Qing Bao, both 3 years old, were flown Monday from the Dujiangyan base of the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda and were taken to Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport.

They made a refueling stop in Alaska — and some 19 hours later — landed at Dulles International Airport in suburban Virginia. They then were loaded into special FedEx trucks and got to the zoo on Tuesday before noon.

The pandas' FedEx plane — a Boeing 777F cargo jet dubbed the "Panda Express" — and the trucks that transported them were both adorned with panda images.

"Two 'treasures' arrived at the Zoo today! Join us in welcoming giant pandas Bao Li and Qing Bao, who entered Zoo grounds shortly after 11:30 am today and are settling into their new homes at the David M. Rubenstein Family Giant Panda Habitat," the zoo posted Tuesday on X.

The social media post included a video that showed the pandas' dramatic arrival, variously surveying their new surroundings, chomping on bamboo, testing the waters in a stone wading pool, and letting out an understandable yawn.

"Our team has worked tirelessly to prepare for the pandas' arrival, and we're thrilled to welcome Bao Li and Qing Bao to Washington DC, the only place you can see giant pandas for free in the nation," said Brandie Smith, the National Zoo director who traveled to China to take part in farewell ceremonies for the bears there. "As a result of our collective efforts, today we joyfully celebrate a new chapter of our 52-year-long giant panda breeding and conservation program."

"I am appreciative of our Chinese colleagues for our collaborative conservation and research efforts, to FedEx for providing them with safe transportation and to our donors and members whose philanthropic contributions makes our giant panda conservation program possible," said Smith.

The zoo, which is part of the Smithsonian Institution, was closed Tuesday to focus on the arrival of the bears, who will be quarantined from the public for at least 30 days.

A zoo statement scheduled their public debut and the reopening of the renovated panda house for Jan 24, 2025.

During a news conference on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said that experts will be sent to the US to conduct on-site inspections and evaluations and offer guidance.

"In accordance with the

requirements and technical standards of international cooperation for giant panda conservation, China and the US will spare no effort to ensure the health and safety of giant pandas residing in the US," she said.

US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns posted on X: "The pandas 大熊猫 - Bao Li 宝力和 Qing Bao 青宝 - are back in Washington DC. Congratulations to the @National Zoo. Pandas have been a fixture in our nation's capital since President Nixon went to China 52 years ago."

Bao Li, a male whose name means "treasure" and "energy" in Chinese, was born in August 2021. He shares a special bond with the zoo, as he is the son of Bao Bao and the grandson of Tian Tian and Mei Xiang — all former residents of the National Zoo.

Qing Bao, a female, whose name means "green" and "treasure" in Chinese, was born in September 2021.

In Washington, traffic stopped Tuesday along Connecticut Avenue as the panda motorcade arrived at the zoo, The New York Times reported.

"You know, when Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and Xiao Qi Ji left, I felt like I was losing my best friends in a way," a teary Kirsten Svane, who was sporting panda ears, told The Times.

"You just really get to know their personality, what they like, what they don't like, their habits, like everything," she said. "I'm excited to be able to, you know, form that relationship again."

In an article published on the Reader's Digest website on Tuesday, veteran travel writer Anne Fritz recounted her memories of seeing pandas in Washington.

"When I was a kid growing up in the Washington DC area, it was always a big treat to visit the National Zoo pandas, Ling-Ling and Hsing-Hsing, on school field trips or with my parents," Fritz wrote.

She said that in 2018, "it was my turn to introduce my two kids to Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, the giant pandas that China loaned to the United States shortly after the passing of the original pair." "We all watched as the black-and-white cuddly bears, along with their cub, Bei-Bei, munched on bamboo — with the same delight I remember experiencing as a child."

The new pandas arrived in Washington as part of a new 10-year agreement with China. The previous deal expired last year, leading to some concern among American panda-lovers over whether new bears would arrive.

It is the second time this year that China has sent giant pandas to the United States. Yun Chuan and Xin Bao landed in California on June 27, and made their public debut at the San Diego Zoo on Aug 9.

Yan Dongjie in Beijing, Zhao Huanxin in New York, and agencies contributed to this story.

## Space: New mineral detected in sample

From page 1

while the Chang'e 8 robotic probe will carry out technological verification of in-situ resource utilization, he said, noting the two missions will form the basis of the proposed international lunar research station.

Yang also shared the progress in research related to lunar samples brought back to Earth. In December 2020, Chang'e 5 brought back 1,731 grams of lunar soil, which he said is the "youngest moon sample" ever obtained.

Research has found that volcanic activity on the moon occurred as recently as 120 million years ago, and it has been discovered that the moon's cooling rate is much slower than previously thought, Yang said.

Scientists have identified a new mineral in the lunar samples and named it "Chang'e Stone", which is the sixth mineral ever discovered on the moon by mankind, he added.

## Climate: Conflicted Western response to global warming fundamentally irrational

From page 1

But it is China. And the wild-eyed embrace of massive, often crippling tariffs, in response, is being led by Washington, with other US "pilot fish", including Canada and the EU, scrambling to do likewise.

They argue that they must protect local manufacturers. Primary concern is that and at what grave cost to the world's profound common interest in finding real-time and practical ways to curb the generation of greenhouse gases arising from massive and entrenched fossil-fuel consumption.

Meanwhile, one looks in vain for any sort of high-volume, primary condemnation of this tariff-attack on serious, affordable, ready-to-use and climate-friendly remedies by the mainstream Western media. Fevered trepidations about the so-called China Threat theory appear to have simply pushed aside concerns in these media outlets, this time round, about addressing the intense risks posed by climate change, the dangers of which they are normally so vocal about.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the

US notes that China is now the single largest national emitter of greenhouse gases. This is a product of its unprecedented economic growth over the past 40-plus years. However, China's per-capita emission of such gases, according to the NOAA, was only about half that of the US in 2021. And it is China that is now leading the world, by a long measure, in manufacturing remarkable and multilayered climate change responses. China deeply understands how serious the problem is, and is doing more than anyone else to innovate and develop varied and mass-market solutions to apply in China and globally.

Moreover, the NOAA stresses how the US has, over time, released more heat-trapping gases than either China or India and that the US "bears more responsibility for the amount of warming that has occurred so far and will persist for millennia". Which makes this willful rush to build huge tariff walls to shut out the most cost-effective and manufactured solutions we can find today an unthinkable bad policy approach.

This conflicted Western response over climate change, led by the US,

is fundamentally irrational, as Singaporean scholar Kishore Mahbubani argued during a recent presentation in Hong Kong. It is even more so given that, as he points out, the Western world, and especially the US over the past century, has persuaded the world, to its great benefit, about the central importance of applying rational thinking to macro-level human problem solving. Despite still being home to so many world-class, otherwise highly rational academic institutions, US elites, in particular, seem to be gripped by increasing spasms of self-damaging irrationality.

Over the past decade-plus, there has hardly been a geopolitical challenge that the US has encountered which it has not brazenly sought to politicize to its own advantage. Washington's politicizing of pivotal global warming, problem-solving initiatives, though, is exceptionally obtuse. It is terrible for consumers and bad for the planet. And it confirms that the US is a rusted-on buddy of global warming.

The author is an adjunct professor at the law faculty of The University of Hong Kong.

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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.

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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. 1437

## CHINA

## Tech sectors draw most overseas grads

Many employers are willing to offer returnees better benefits, report says

By ZHAO YIMENG

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For overseas graduates who returned to China last year to find jobs, the computer, internet and telecommunications industries were among the most popular, while the energy, environmental and chemical fields surged to become the third-largest employment choices, according to a new report.

Jointly released by overseas consultancy EIC Education and recruitment portal 51Job on Sunday, the 2024 employment competitiveness survey report for overseas returnees aims to serve as an employment reference for students studying abroad.

Data from this year's campus recruitment survey showed that computer, internet, telecommunications and electronics indus-

tries remain the top choices of overseas returnees, followed by accounting, finance, banking and insurance.

Ban Fengzhao, campus recruitment director of 51Job, said the energy, environmental and chemical sectors surged last year, becoming the third-largest employment market for returnees, overtaking the manufacturing industry.

While first-tier cities remained top destinations for job seekers, there has been a decline in preferences for Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, Ban said.

Emerging major cities such as Chengdu in Sichuan province, Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, Nanjing in Jiangsu province and Wuhan in Hubei province have become significantly more popular for people looking for work, he added.

Guo Bei, chief operating officer of EIC Education, said half the employers in China are willing to offer overseas returnees better benefits than domestic graduates, including higher salaries and promotion opportunities.

Overseas graduates with master's degrees were highly prized by private enterprises, while government and research institutions showed a high demand for returnees with doctorates, Guo said.

For Chinese companies evaluating potential employees' backgrounds, the QS World University Rankings are highly valued, she added.

Vision Zha, who earned a master's degree in media and advertising from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom, said she quickly received an offer from an internet startup in 2018 thanks to the advantage of being an overseas graduate from a prestigious communications university.

"Over the six years at the workplace, my strong English proficien-

cy became an undeniable advantage," Zha said.

She added that her education background allowed her to secure a role in managing the company's overseas social media accounts, and she has been rewarded with promotions and salary raises.

According to the survey, research and development positions and management trainee roles were the most common jobs sought by the overseas graduates last year.

When seeking employment, returnees prioritized salary, career development opportunities and benefits. Workload and commute time were also given more consideration, it said.

Fan Yuanyuan graduated from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, a global Top 50 institute, with a master's in finance and returned to China in August last year. She submitted over 100 resumes and attended about 15 interviews before finally receiving offers from three companies.

The six internships Fan complet-

ed during her undergraduate and graduate studies were key to her job search success, she said.

"Most of the skills required for a professional task, including interpersonal connections and business techniques, are unrelated to what is taught in the classroom," Fan said, adding that giving up the student mindset is essential while job hunting.

More than 80 percent of returnees had internship experience before entering the job market, with over 60 percent having completed two or more internships, the report said.

Furthermore, returnees with STEM degrees earned significantly higher annual incomes within the first three years of graduation compared to those with business or humanities degrees.

Job stability was also high, with over 60 percent of the group remaining in their positions for one to three years, and nearly 30 percent staying for more than three years, the report added.

## Lake sheep successfully bred at high altitude

By PALDEN NYIMA  
and DAQIONG in Lhasa

In a groundbreaking achievement, Zhejiang A&F University has announced the successful breeding of *huyang*, or lake sheep, at an altitude of 4,600 meters in Nagchu, Xizang autonomous region.

It's the first time that this type of sheep has completed a full breeding cycle at such a high altitude. As of now, the initial batch of 14 lambs from seven ewes has been delivered, Nagchu's agriculture and rural bureau said on Tuesday.

The sheep — 10 males and 10 females — were transported from Zhejiang province to Nagchu in July last year over the course of four days. Before the journey, extensive collaborative research was conducted on the animals' adaptability in high-altitude environments by institutions in both Zhejiang and Xizang.

Yang Jinyong, deputy head of the agriculture and rural bureau of Nagchu, said that the successful birth of the *huyang* lambs after the mating, pregnancy and birthing processes at such a high altitude holds significant implications for future research on animal adaptability and reproduction in high-altitude regions.

Introducing the sheep to Xizang came with an array of challenges, including the long journey and the significant change in temperature. To help the *huyang* get acclimated, they were carefully transported in air-conditioned vehicles as they left Zhejiang's blistering heat behind.

"Unlike local sheep with longer growth cycles and limited lambing rates, lake sheep have shown the ability to birth more than two lambs (at a time), offering the potential to increase lambing rates for local communities," Yang said. "Following the pure breeding of lake sheep in Nagchu, crossbreeding took place, resulting in seven ewes giving birth to 14 lambs. Hybridization with local sheep is expected to lead to further lambing at the end of October or early November."

In Nagchu, *huyang* are being raised alongside local sheep in pens to facilitate their adaptation to the high-altitude environment. The observation of their lambing rates will determine the potential for large-scale promotion of the breed in the future. This project aims to increase sheep production and ensure environmental protection while boosting the incomes for local residents, Yang added.

La Zhenxing, director of agricultural and animal husbandry (grassland) at the Science and Technology Research and Promotion Center in Nagchu, said the twinning rate of breeding *huyang* ewes reached as high as 80 percent, and the survival rate of the lambs was 87.5 percent, demonstrating the outstanding adaptability of the lake sheep in the plateau environment.

Wang Chong, a professor at the Zhejiang A&F University who is in charge of technical support in the lake sheep breeding process in the high-altitude region, said that due to the sheep's advantages — including their high lambing rates, good maternal instincts and suitability for industrialized farming, as well as the fact that crossbreeding lake sheep with other breeds can increase the lambing rates of those breeds — the introduction of *huyang* holds significant importance to Nagchu.

"Moreover, the number of introduced individuals is limited, and the successful pure breeding in Nagchu this time indicates that in the future, direct breeding of lake sheep in high-altitude regions will be possible," said Wang, adding that this success is crucial for both expanding and promoting the lake sheep population and improving local breeds.

Lake sheep, primarily found in regions around Taihu Lake in Huzhou, Zhejiang, as well as in Shanghai and Jiangsu province, are known for their barn feeding habits and high reproductive rates, making them a valuable addition to livestock breeding efforts nationwide, with successful introductions in around 30 provinces and regions in China.

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## Shanghai clinic helps kids with low spatial, mathematics abilities

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai  
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The Shanghai Children's Medical Center has recently opened a special clinic for children who are having difficulties with spatial abilities and mathematics — possibly the first of its kind on the Chinese mainland.

Three of the six children who attended last week were found to have significant learning difficulties, according to doctors at the clinic, which is jointly operated by the center's mental health team and the School of Psychology at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and will be available once a week.

The clinic aims to develop holistic intervention strategies for each child.

Doctors said that the clinic is opened to youths with learning difficulties involving geometry, algebra and spatial vectors, especially graphics, spatial relationships, tables and abstract symbols.

Spatial cognitive ability plays a crucial role in a student's ability to solve math problems, especially geometric ones, the doctors said. The deficiency in spatial perception and imagination can adversely affect a student's performance in subjects such as algebra, physics and chemistry.

Neuroimaging studies also showed that students who find it difficult to learn geometry have less activity in the parietal lobe region of their brain related to spatial reasoning, the doctors added.

Ma Xiquan, a doctor specializing in mental health at the center's department of developmental-behavioral pediatrics, said that the children who were diagnosed and treated last week were between the ages of 10 and 14, and there was an equal number of boys and girls.

The doctors spent about half an hour talking with them and their parents about their learning difficulties, and each child was asked to

answer questions and complete tests, which took one to two hours.

"The assessment covers psychological, intellectual, attention, spatial and math abilities," Ma said. "Based on the results, we will determine whether to give a diagnosis or a referral to another clinic."

He gave an example of a boy who showed difficulty when doctors asked him to describe what an apple looks like, and to mark where Chongqing and Shanghai are located on a map. Based on the child's responses, Ma said he might have aphantasia, a disorder that blocks individuals from having visual imagination, keeping them from picturing things in their minds.

"What's seen is that he has a poor score in math, but the problem will actually cause him to deal with other inconveniences in life," Ma said.

Visual spatial training as well as physical activity and spatial training may help such children, he said.

"For example, parents can give the children a 2D or 3D graphic, and let them rotate it and think about how it will look like after rotations at different angles. Jigsaw puzzles can also help them understand shapes, spatial relationships and structures," he said.

Obstacle courses or orienteering can also help improve spatial awareness and cognitive skills, doctors said, and improvements are usually seen in at least three to six months.

Lu Huanghua, a primary school mathematics teacher in Shanghai for 15 years, said that he and many colleagues expressed support when learning about such medical intervention methods designed to assist students in math learning.

"Some children have a good learning attitude and high interest in learning, but they don't perform well in math. It will be beneficial for such students if we can tackle the problem from the root through medical means and work out necessary adjustments," Lu said.

## For a better world



Students from Puxin Primary School visit a sea rice research center in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Tuesday. The event was organized a day before World Food Day to help students understand the importance of valuing food. WANG HAIBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Drone delivery



Tea farmers from Dongmuwu village in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, operate a drone to airlift fertilizer to the tea fields located on hilltops on Monday. Early autumn is the season for pruning and fertilizing Longjing tea trees. Local farmers have begun using drones to deliver fertilizer, eliminating the need for manual labor. With this method, over 3,000 kilograms of fertilizer can be transported in a single day, significantly increasing efficiency while saving time and effort. LIN YUNLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Breakthrough in quest for Earth 2.0

By YAN DONGJIE

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Chinese astronomers have made significant progress in the search for Earth-like planets, recently identifying five ultra-short-period planets using an AI-based system. These planets, with diameters smaller than Earth and orbital periods shorter than a day, were discovered using data from NASA's Kepler space telescope.

The Kepler telescope, launched in 2009 to discover Earth-like planets orbiting sun-like stars, collected data on 170,000 stars before concluding its mission in 2017. From this dataset, astronomers worldwide have identified 145 ultra-short-period planets, including 21 with radii smaller than Earth.

"The telescope detected planets by monitoring the dimming of starlight as planets passed in front of stars. By analyzing this data,

astronomers can determine planetary sizes and orbital periods," said Ge Jian, a professor at the Shanghai Astronomical Observatory of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Ge noted the challenge of finding Earth-like planets, which have longer orbital periods around stars, making them harder to detect. In contrast, ultra-short-period planets, which orbit their stars more frequently, are easier to observe.

"Improving our observational and analytical capabilities will increase our chances of finding more short-period planets and, potentially, an Earth 2.0," Ge said.

Among the five newly identified planets, four are the closest to their solar-like host stars ever detected, with sizes comparable to Mars. The discovery was published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Ge's team developed an AI algorithm that significantly enhances

search efficiency, making the process 15 times faster and increasing detection accuracy by 7 percent compared to traditional methods.

"This breakthrough represents a major advancement in applying AI to astronomical data analysis and brings us closer to discovering Earth 2.0," Ge said.

Chinese astronomers, alongside their international counterparts, continue their search for an Earth-like planet. Ge emphasized the need for improved data collection through the deployment of more telescopes and satellites, combined with more sophisticated analytical methods.

Ge's team plans to observe 2 million stars as part of the upcoming Earth 2.0 space mission, which is expected to make the chances of finding Earth-like planets 13 times more likely compared to Kepler's mission. The incorporation of AI algorithms marks another significant step in this ongoing quest.

# Xizang shines as cultural melting pot

Autonomous region thriving as harmonious existence between residents boosts overall development

By YUAN SHENGGAO

More than 1,300 years ago, Princess Wencheng of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) left the capital city of Chang'an — today's Xi'an city in Shaanxi province, and arrived in Lhasa, the capital city of the Tubo Kingdom, for a marriage with King Songtsen Gampo.

Tubo is the ancient name of Xizang, which is also known as Tibet.

The historic marriage marked the beginning of friendly exchanges between the powers of Tang and Tubo, placing Xizang on a track to be integrated with the rest of China and gradually making it an inseparable part of the nation.

Princess Wencheng brought advanced farming techniques and new crop seeds to Xizang, greatly promoting local economic development. The route that she traveled from Chang'an to Lhasa, which is known as the Ancient Tang-Tubo Route, has since become a major passageway for trade, travel and cultural exchanges between Xizang and the rest of China.

Over the 13 centuries since, Princess Wencheng has become a symbol of national unity and has been memorized and respected by the people of Xizang.

In today's Lhasa, *Princess Wencheng* is the classic Tibetan Opera work favored by locals and tourists, which is performed by the Tibetan Opera Troupe on a regular basis. In November 2020, when the troupe celebrated its 60th anniversary, it cooperated with the China National Peking Opera Company to present an innovative version of *Princess Wencheng*, in the styles of both Peking Opera and Tibetan Opera.

## Lasting tradition

In Lhasa, the second hometown of Princess Wencheng, the tradition of cultural integration and the unity between peoples of different ethnicities are a practice lasting to this date.

A Han-Tibetan couple, Chen Jianmin and Migmar Yangkyi, now live in Lhasa's Rabсал community.

Whenever Migmar Yangkyi sees her husband cutting meat in the kitchen as she returns home from work, she knows that he is going to cook her favorite dish of beef noodles.

When the noodles are done, Chen presents the first bowl to Migmar Yangkyi's mother Tabsang as a gesture of respect. The next two bowls are for the couple's two children. Finally, Chen serves the last two bowls to his wife and himself.

"When we got married, he told me that he will cook for me for the rest of his life and he has kept the promise," Migmar Yangkyi said.

Chen is a Han from Henan province, and his wife Migmar Yangkyi is a local Tibetan in Lhasa. They met and got married in 2004 in Lhasa.

Back then Chen operated a grocery store and Migmar Yangkyi always came to the shop to buy items. That is how they met and where their story began.

Chen said Migmar Yangkyi is open-minded, which made communication easier and helped them overcome cultural differences over the years.

"I had a hard time at first. But I was quick to learn and adapt, so I enjoy life here in Lhasa," Chen said, adding that "it's important to learn the local culture when living in a Xizang city".

The Tibetan-Han couple regard responsibility, care, love and respect of each other's culture as the most crucial part of a family with different ethnic backgrounds.



Artists from the Tibetan Opera Troupe and China National Peking Opera Company perform *Princess Wencheng* in Lhasa in 2020 in both traditional Tibetan Opera and Peking Opera styles. DAQIONG / CHINA DAILY

They celebrate both Tibetan festivals such as the Tibetan Losar New Year and the Shoton, and Han festivals including Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival.

Migmar Yangkyi always sends gifts and makes phone calls to her husband's parents in Henan during the Han festivals.

Migmar Yangkyi said kindness is the best quality she found in him.

"He treats the neighbors with respect and care at all times," she said. "And he always loves to help elderly people."

## Near the Happy River

Near the Lhasa River — or Kyichu — in the southern part of the city live a Mongolian-Tibetan couple.

"As the name of Kyichu — which means "Happy River" — suggests, our life is a happy one," said Tsering Nyima, the husband.

Tsering Nyima is from the Mongolian ethnic group, and Kalzang Yangdron, his wife, is a Tibetan. They have been living in Lhasa for more than two decades, with love, happiness and harmony.

Tsering Nyima was from Ar Horchqin Banner in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, and Kalzang Yangdron is a native of Doilungdechen district in Lhasa.

Their love story dates back to 1997, when they met in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, as performers in ethnic cultural shows in the China Folk Culture Village.

After working together for two years in Shenzhen, they returned to Lhasa in 1999. They got married and then worked in different fields to create a better future, including farming, singing in different song and dance troupes, and operating restaurants and guesthouses.

The couple said communication was a problem sometimes in the early days after their marriage. As they were not familiar with each other's language, they had to communicate with poor Putonghua, or Mandarin.

"Now we can communicate smoothly using Putonghua, but we can use Tibetan and Mongolian sometimes while talking," said Kalzang Yangdron.

With a landscape and customs



A multiethnic family in Chamdo enjoys afternoon tea at a park. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"The (Best Family of the Year) award means a lot to us. I feel it's important to have harmonious and peaceful relations among multiple ethnic groups in the country."

Tsering Nyima, a member of a multiethnic family in Lhasa

different from his hometown, Lhasa seemed strange to Tsering Nyima when he first arrived. But he learned fast how to fit in to this new place, and now Lhasa is home for him.

As a hobby, the couple regularly go for picnics in the summer with their daughter and friends. Every time, their friends expect a Mongolian song from Tsering Nyima, which is his special treat.

In 2017, the family was awarded "the Best Family of the Year" by the city government of Lhasa.

"The award means a lot to us. I feel it's important to have harmonious and peaceful relations among multiple ethnic groups in the country," Tsering Nyima said.

## Tea-Horse Road

Like the Ancient Tang-Tubo Route, the Ancient Tea-Horse Road is another major trade route linking Xizang and the other parts of Southwest China like Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, with a history of more than 2,000 years.

The village of Shodo in Lhorong

county, Xizang, is located near the section of the road that links with Sichuan.

When visitors arrive at the village, the first things they see are usually two big trees — a poplar and a willow — standing on the public square.

While offering shade to people, the two trees are also something that locals take pride in because of their special significance.

Gyalto, an official of the village, said the trees were planted by a Han-Tibetan couple some 200 years ago.

"The village square with the trees at the center is always a venue of public celebrations," Gyalto said. "This is especially true for weddings."

According to local history books, a number of soldiers stationed in the garrison near the village married local women and many of the local residents are descendants of these multiethnic families.

"So the two trees also stand as witness to the exchanges of commerce and ethnic cultures over the two centuries," Gyalto said.

The county of Markham in southeastern Xizang, is another hub of cultural exchanges and integration, as it is where the Tea-Horse Road enters Xizang from Yunnan.

One example of the frequent cultural exchanges is the great number of multiethnic families in the county, especially in its southern townships of Tsakhalho, Mogshod, Naxi and Chutsankha.

Tsering Nyizin in Naxi township has a family whose members are all native. Despite that, the family is multiethnic and multifairth.

Such families are common in Naxi, which, bordering Yunnan, is home to a number of ethnic groups.

Tsering Nyizin is a Naxi and a believer of Tibetan Buddhism. Her husband is a Tibetan and a Catholic. Despite their different faiths, they got married in the late 1990s.

"We respect each other's religion and endure the differences in cultures and customs," Tsering Nyizin said. "That's how we have kept our family united for more than two decades."

Tsering Nyizin is a mother of three children. Her family was not

rich in the early years, but she and her husband made great efforts to raise the children and support their education.

Thanks to their efforts and the free compulsory education offered by the government, their children all went to universities and were able to find jobs after graduation.

On her parents' side, Tsering Nyizin has a large multiethnic and multicultural family. Her elder brother married an ethnic Hui woman who is a Muslim and her younger brother married a Han woman.

## Promoting local growth

To help to promote local development, Princess Wencheng pioneered to bring advanced farming techniques and crop seeds into Xizang. This practice has been common to this day among those who have moved to Xizang from the rest of the country.

For instance, vegetable farming used to be an impossible mission in most parts of Xizang due to its high altitude and cold weather. However, this began to change about two decades ago with the help of agronomists from the other parts of country.

On a warm summer day, Chen Qian, an agronomist from Hubei province, held a training class in a greenhouse farm in the village of Charikha in Nyingchi city. Nyingchi is among the earliest cities in Xizang to develop the vegetable farming industry.

"Reasonable spacing of crops is crucial as it is the quality, instead of quantity, of the produce that matters most in the marketplace," Chen told local farmers attending the training.

Chen is now the chief technical officer of a local vegetable-farming cooperative in Nyingchi. He was among the vegetable-farming pioneers in Xizang when he came to the city more than two decades ago.

He and his colleagues founded the cooperative in 2014. Since then, it has grown into a large entity that includes six farming bases and a company for processing and sales.

The farming base in Charikha, consisting of 95 greenhouses, can produce 1.68 million metric tons of vegetables a year. The vegetables can bring a total annual revenue of 9 million yuan (\$1.27 million) to villagers.

According to Chen, the land of the cooperative farm has been rented from local villagers, who are given rental on an annual basis and also paid for their work on the farm.

Thonga, a resident in Charikha, said his family leased 0.4 hectares of land to the cooperative.

"My family was paid about 3,600 yuan as annual rental in the early years, and now the figure is more than 8,000 yuan," Thonga said.

"I'm paid more than 3,500 yuan a month as I work with the cooperative farm," Thonga said. "It's more important that we learned farming skills from the agronomists, as the cooperative gives training regularly."

Dorje, head of the village, said local residents have benefited significantly from the farming cooperative.

"Residents in our village are paid 350,000 yuan in total annually from their land leased to the cooperative," Dorje said. "People have also seen a substantial increase in revenue as they've worked with the cooperative or operated their own farms after learning skills from the cooperative's agronomists."

The village official noted that per capita net income of Charikha residents surpassed 20,000 yuan last year.



From left: Agronomist Chen Qian (center) shares his farming expertise with local farmers in Charikha village, Nyingchi. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA



Tsering Nyima and his wife Kalzang Yangdron have a meal at their home in Lhasa. PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY



Tsering Nyima and his family members pose for a picture. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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# BUSINESS

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## China's foreign trade maintains stable growth

China's total imports and exports of goods expanded 5.3 percent year-on-year in yuan terms in the first three quarters of this year, maintaining stable growth, official data showed on Monday.

The goods trade volume expanded to 32.33 trillion yuan (\$4.57 trillion) in the January-September period, reaching a new high, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Exports rose 6.2 percent year-on-year to 18.62 trillion yuan, while imports climbed 4.1 percent year-on-year to 13.71 trillion yuan in the first three quarters, the GAC data showed.

China's export product structure continued to improve during the first three quarters. Wang Lingjun, deputy head of the GAC, told a State Council Information Office news conference.

Mechanical and electrical products continued to dominate China's exports during the period, accounting for nearly 60 percent of the total, according to Wang.

Specifically, exports of high-end equipment, integrated circuits, automobiles and home appliances rose 43.4 percent, 22 percent, 22.5 percent and 15.5 percent, respectively.

"The current domestic and international environment is increasingly complex, posing challenges to the development of China's foreign trade," said Wang. "Overall, thanks to the dual drive of supply and demand, the country's imports and exports have maintained stable growth."

Moreover, "it is the first time in history for the scale of imports and exports to exceed 10 trillion yuan for three consecutive quarters," Wang added.

Various types of market entities have remained active in the first three quarters.

Private enterprises achieved imports and exports of 17.78 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 9.4 percent, contributing 93.8 percent

to the overall growth of foreign trade.

Imports and exports of foreign-invested enterprises increased by 1.1 percent, achieving growth for two consecutive quarters.

Driven by stable growth in industrial production and consumer markets, China's import volume of bulk commodities increased by 5 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters.

Among them, energy products such as crude oil, natural gas and coal reached 901 million metric tons, an increase of 4.8 percent year-on-year. Metal ore imports totaled 1.14 billion tons, an increase of 4.9 percent year-on-year.

During the same period, imports of consumer goods exceeded 1.3 trillion yuan.

From an international perspective, market diversification is steadily progressing. In the first three quarters, China's trade with over 160 countries and regions around the world achieved growth.

During the period, China's trade with economies participating in the Belt and Road Initiative reached 15.21 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 6.3 percent, accounting for 47.1 percent of the total.

Trade with other BRICS countries increased by 5.1 percent year-on-year, trade with other members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership grew by 4.5 percent year-on-year, while that with ASEAN countries rose 9.4 percent.

Wang pointed out that China's advantages such as sound economic fundamentals, a vast market, strong resilience and enormous potential remain unchanged.

"With the continued implementation of existing policies and the introduction of new policies, the positive factors for foreign trade development have accumulated," said Wang, adding that China has the foundation for stable trade growth in the fourth quarter.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



Overseas buyers look at NEVs on show at the 136th session of the China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Emerging mkt buyers embrace Canton Fair

Global trade extravaganza being held from Tuesday through Nov 4

By ZHONG NAN in Beijing and QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou

Buyers from emerging markets are steadily taking the lead at the 136th session of the China Import and Export Fair, or the Canton Fair, replacing those from Europe and North America as the primary participants, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The global trade event, held twice a year in Spring and Autumn, is being held from Tuesday through Nov 4, in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province.

A total of 125,000 overseas buyers had registered for the 136th session of the fair by Oct 9. Among them, about 76 percent are from countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, while 12.5 percent are from North America and Europe, said the Ministry of Commerce.

The driving forces behind this trend include the diversification of China's export markets, rising business and consumer demand in emerging markets and shifting global trade dynamics, as economies in Southeast Asia, North Africa and South America become increasingly integral to global supply chains.

"These economies often show strong demand for the industrial products and consumer goods available at the Canton Fair," said Chu Shijia, director of the Guangzhou-based China Foreign Trade Center under the Ministry of Commerce, one of the Canton Fair organizers.

As China is in the midst of a

green transformation, its traditional exports — like household appliances and industrial equipment — are also making room for a fresh wave of technologically advanced and eco-friendly products, further meeting the needs of buyers from both developed and developing markets, said Han Yonghui, a professor specializing in foreign trade at Guangzhou-based Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

Emerging markets represented by Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, with their vast market potential and promising development prospects, are attracting a growing number of Chinese enterprises seeking business opportunities, according to a report jointly released by Deloitte and WorldFirst, an international payment services provider.

As the internationalization of Chinese manufacturers and traders reaches a more mature stage, an increasing number of enterprises are embarking on a deeper level of internationalization — transitioning from product exports to establishing operations overseas — according to the report released on Monday in Guangzhou.

This involves contract fulfillment supported by the integration of "local entities, local operations and local supply chains". For instance, according to data from WorldFirst, the number of Chinese merchants using the payment platform to expand their overseas operations in the first quarter surged 56 percent year-on-year.

Between 2018 and 2023, China

maintained high growth rates of exports to its major trading partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Middle East and Latin America, with compound annual growth rates generally exceeding 10 percent, according to the report.

"Over years of development, we have seen an increased number of trade partners from emerging markets," said Li Zhaoying, CEO of ChillSun Technology Co.

The company, based in Huizhou, Guangdong, is attending the Canton Fair. "In addition to maintaining sustainable growth in developed markets, we are making efforts to reach more trade deals with buyers from emerging markets, especially those from member countries of ASEAN," said Li.

Xiao Lu, deputy director of the department of foreign trade at the Ministry of Commerce, said China's new trade growth drivers are gaining momentum. Armed with accumulated capital and technology, Chinese companies are eager to demonstrate their innovation and technological strengths, leveraging digital and green concepts to shape the future direction of the market.

"For instance, China-made new energy vehicles are now reaching over 170 countries and regions worldwide," Xiao said.

Over a million new products and items with proprietary intellectual property rights will be showcased at the Canton Fair this time, including a range of humanoid robots, smart devices and autonomous driving products making their debut, said the Ministry of Commerce.

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## Hainan aims big for niche sector

By CHEN BOWEN in Haikou chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

Hainan province plans to boost its low-altitude economy by aiming for a total economic output value exceeding 30 billion yuan (\$4.24 billion) by 2026.

The island province plans to achieve this by establishing nine general airports, designating over 300 low-altitude routes, and constructing eight low-altitude application scenarios, according to a three-year action plan for the development of low-altitude economy in Hainan province (2024-26).

The action plan, released in September, outlines its support for Haikou in hosting the low-altitude aircraft international trade fair regularly, with a focus on the international market to establish a hub for the overseas sales and delivery of low-altitude aircraft.

Additionally, it backs efforts in cities and counties located along the province's round-the-island highway, such as Haikou and Sanya, in integrating rest stations along the highway to introduce vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL), flying cars, and other low-altitude tourism sightseeing routes, which aim to enhance the variety and content of low-altitude tourism experiences.

In a significant development, the first interprovincial cross-sea helicopter flight from Sanya, Hainan, to Zhanjiang, Guangdong province, completed its maiden launch on Sept 29, with a journey time of around one hour.

Operated by China Southern Airlines General Aviation Co Ltd, the route aims to enhance connectivity to and from the island province with agile flight services using advanced Sikorsky S76 medium twin-engine helicopters, which can carry 12 passengers.

During its trial operation, the route will primarily offer charter services, allowing both domestic and foreign travelers to customize their travel plans and enjoy a new, efficient and convenient cross-sea travel experience.

Based on market response, the company plans to schedule regular and non-regular flights, adding more services during weekends, holidays, exhibitions, and peak tourist seasons, said Li Erbao, chairman of the company.

"The opening of this low-altitude flight route will facilitate economic, cultural, and social exchanges between Hainan and Guangdong, constructing a swift and convenient pathway for interactions and travel between the two regions," Li said.

In addition to passenger travel, Hainan has also seen advancements in drone logistics.

On April 24, an FP-98 cargo drone, China's inaugural large-scale fixed-wing drone, transported 455 kilograms of seedlings for shrimp breeding from Haikou to Zhuhai, Guangdong province in less than three hours — the maiden cross-sea flight of a drone for public cargo logistics between the two provinces.

The use of a cargo drone not only expedited transportation, saving a minimum of 10 hours compared to traditional land transportation methods, but also achieved a 100 percent survival rate for the transported seedlings.

Peng Yushan, head of the business unit of China General Aviation Co Ltd, said that the introduction of low-altitude application scenarios can lay a solid foundation for future urban logistics and distribution, representing an innovative shift from traditional logistics models.

"It sets a good example for expediting the advancement of an innovative integration model combining low-altitude technology with logistics. This heralds the increasing importance of drone logistics services in future urban life, bringing unprecedented convenience and efficiency to people's daily lives," he added.

## Making it straight



Builders from China Railway No 4 Engineering Group Co Ltd, working on the western extension of Shanghai metro line 13, make a curved section at Beidi Road parking garage into straight tracks to enhance the line's safety and efficiency for trains. ZHAO YUANKUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Briefly

### Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 107 pips to 7.0830 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

### High coal-bed methane output in Shanxi

North China's coal-rich province of Shanxi achieved a record coal-bed methane output of 9.1 billion cubic meters in the first eight months of this year, up 23.1 percent year-on-year, said the provincial statistics bureau. In recent years, Shanxi has established two major coal-bed methane production bases in the Qinshui Basin and the eastern edge of the Ordos Basin, taking the lead nationwide in coal-bed methane development.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## Clean energy utilization helps in meeting green goals

By LIU YUKUN liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese businesses ought to hone their focus on optimizing fossil fuel efficiency, ramping up clean energy utilization and harnessing green financial instruments to slash financing expenses spent on low-carbon initiatives, amid the ongoing global wave of green transformation, said an executive.

These strategic moves, coupled with investments in green technology research and development, active engagement in carbon trading and a suite of other measures, are underscoring a concerted push toward achieving China's decarbonization goals, said Alex Zhu, APAC industrial and energy industry group co-leader at accounting firm EY.

The remarks were to address rising concerns among businesses on how to balance low-carbon development with profitability during their green transformations, and how to alleviate pressure from green investments and

turn them into new growth opportunities.

Zhu emphasized the importance of businesses conducting a comprehensive assessment of their carbon assets and footprints to develop effective emission reduction plans. By strategically investing in areas with high-emissions but relatively low emission-reduction costs, businesses can maximize benefits.

"Furthermore, businesses should integrate emission reduction plans into their long-term development in an organized manner, focusing on improving fossil fuel efficiency, increasing clean energy usage and extending the industrial chain to achieve a gradual green transformation," Zhu said.

Growing global demand for environmental protection is propelling businesses to actively pursue green transformations. Many countries are now promoting carbon emission trading systems as a market-based mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through economic incentives, setting emission limits and allocating

Furthermore, businesses should integrate emission reduction plans into their long-term development in an organized manner ..."

Alex Zhu, APAC industrial and energy industry group co-leader at accounting firm EY

rights to companies for cost-effective emission reductions.

China has established the world's largest carbon market, with a comprehensive institutional framework in place. The country saw significant growth in carbon trading in 2023, indicating a maturing market with increasing demand for carbon trading, said a recent report by EY China.

In addition to carbon trading, some countries have begun

implementing carbon taxes to curb excessive carbon emissions.

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism was also introduced to price carbon emissions into the production of carbon-intensive products entering the European Union, thus promoting cleaner industrial practices. After a transitional phase, the CBAM will be fully implemented after 2024, posing challenges for enterprises exporting to the EU.

"Besides carbon offset methods, technological innovation is crucial for businesses to achieve core emission reductions. Meanwhile, businesses are advised to leverage green financial tools, invest in green technology R&D, and embrace sustainable practices like green energy and energy-efficient buildings to reduce emissions, lower energy costs and improve operational efficiency. Active participation in carbon trading can also provide additional income amidst the expanding carbon market and diverse emission reduction projects," Zhu said.

# BUSINESS

## PV firms urged to secure greater sector stability

By ZHENG XIN  
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The photovoltaic sector is in need of stricter measures to curb below-cost pricing practices that are destabilizing the solar power market, as recent falling prices have led to intense competition that impacts the entire sector, an industry association said.

The China Photovoltaic Industry Association (CPIA) said on Monday that the sector should enhance self-discipline, avoid unhealthy competition, resolve supply-demand imbalances and eliminate excess capacity in an orderly manner.

It hosted a special forum in Shanghai at which industry representatives agreed on measures to promote fair competition, phase out inefficient capacity and ensure sustainable development.

Since last year, the photovoltaic upstream polysilicon sector has faced a "price collapse" due to supply-demand imbalances, resulting in significant losses for companies. Currently, prices of polysilicon, wafers, cells and modules have fallen below cash production costs, putting pressure on the entire value chain.

Liu Hanyuan, chairman of new energy company Tongwei Co Ltd, said the slowdown in industry growth has led to oversupply and falling prices, exacerbated by intensified competition. As a result, each segment is incurring losses, with the extended supply chain amplifying these challenges.

Despite a threefold expansion in capacity, industry profit margins have decreased by about 70 percent, according to media outlet Yicai.com.

"The root of unhealthy competition lies in the limited market growth," said Lu Chuan, chairman of Chint Solar, suggesting companies restrain expansion and pricing to avoid price wars, while industry associations and regulatory bodies should guide production capacity and pricing mechanisms to stabilize the sector.

When existing markets can no longer support the survival and growth of more companies, lower-tier competition becomes an inevitable choice. However, this type of competition fails to drive overall industry progress. Instead, it leads to resource misallocation, stifles innovation and ultimately harms the sector's sustainable development, Lu said.

Analysts recommend stabilizing

the market by promoting advanced technologies through demonstration projects and moving beyond low-bid competition strategies. They emphasize that strengthening self-discipline and implementing regulatory oversight will be essential to achieving sustainable growth and protecting the vitality of the industry.

Nicholas Lua, an analyst at global consultancy Rystad Energy, said the global solar market currently faces an oversupply situation.

Market consolidation in China could well be on the horizon as smaller and less efficient solar manufacturers exit the market, he said.

The third quarter has already seen multiple small domestic manufacturers undergo restructuring, and more such examples are expected in the coming months, Lua said.

While China has been at a pivotal moment in both national and global energy transitions, with rapid development seen in renewable energy in the country buoyed by supportive policies, competitive advancements in the domestic supply chain and a reliable grid system, production capacity across all key segments of the supply chain, from polysilicon down to solar panels, is currently more than double global solar demand, the consultancy said.

Over half of the additions to renewable capacity this year will come from China, Rystad Energy said. By the end of July, China had installed 1,206 gigawatts of wind and solar power capacity, exceeding the 1,200 GW national target set for 2030, meaning it has accomplished the target six years ahead of schedule.

On the other hand, solar wafers and polysilicon made in China have seen record-low prices this quarter, it added.

Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, said that intense competition among leading photovoltaic companies for market share has, to some extent, undermined efforts to promote the industry's healthy development.

Despite calls for greater industry self-discipline and sustainability, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been limited. The competition-driven focus on expanding market share has made it challenging for the industry to stabilize prices and phase out inefficient capacity, which could hinder the sector's long-term growth, he said.



TCL's booth at a high-tech expo in Barcelona. GAO JING / XINHUA

## Appliance makers eye bigger global pie

TCL boosting output capacity of big-screen TVs at Mexico factory

By FAN FEIFEI  
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Chinese home appliance makers have intensified efforts to make forays into overseas markets to seek new sources of revenue, and are upgrading and optimizing their products to make them "smarter", industry experts said.

Consumer electronics major TCL Technology Group Corp is beefing up its global operational capabilities, with a key focus on three core business segments covering intelligent terminals, semiconductor displays and photovoltaics.

"Our intelligent terminals unit has established production bases in Vietnam, Poland, Mexico, Brazil and India, and we will further improve localized production and operations," said Li Dongsheng, founder and chairman of TCL, emphasizing that the company plans to strengthen its global layout in industrial chains, marketing, and research and development.

TCL is expanding its presence in North America by boosting production capacity of big-screen TVs at its Mexico factory. It has also established photovoltaic cell and module factories in Malaysia, the Philippines and Mexico through joint ventures. "Looking ahead, we will actively consider increasing industrial centers in Africa and strengthening our business in the Middle East," Li said.

Highlighting that globalization is an unstoppable trend for Chinese enterprises, and boosting global competitiveness has always been an important strategy for TCL, Li said Chinese manufacturers should shift from exporting products to exporting industrial capacity, accelerate the building of global industrial chains and improve localized operations in overseas markets.

Looking ahead, we will actively consider increasing industrial centers in Africa and strengthening our business in the Middle East."

Li Dongsheng, founder and chairman of TCL

TCL has set up 46 R&D centers and 33 manufacturing centers around the world, with operations in more than 160 countries and regions. In the past five years, TCL's overseas revenue has risen from 59 billion yuan (\$8.29 billion) to 125.3 billion yuan, with an average annual growth of 17.6 percent.

Data from global market consultancy Omdia showed that global shipments of TCL's TVs reached 25.26 million units last year — ranking second worldwide.

The European market is of great significance to the company's global layout. Li Yongping, general manager of TCL Industries Holdings' European marketing department, said sales on the continent surged more than 50 percent year-on-year in the first half, mainly driven by product upgrades and sales channel expansion.

TCL's products sold in Europe have expanded from TVs to air conditioners, washing machines, refrigerators and mobile phones, Li said. He is confident that the European market will maintain its growth momentum in the current half.

Chinese home appliance makers are expanding their presence in the Middle East. In September, Haier Smart Home (HSM), a subsidiary

of Haier Group, held a groundbreaking ceremony for the second phase of its industrial park in Egypt.

With an investment of about \$40 million, the second phase of the project will cover an area of 50,000 square meters and have an annual production capacity of 300,000 units of home appliances, including refrigerators and freezers, providing about 1,000 job opportunities.

The first phase of the industrial park was inaugurated in May, with trial production of air conditioners, TVs and washing machines. The industrial park is expected to accelerate HSM's presence and growth in the Middle East and Africa by leveraging its global supply chain to serve consumers in the region.

Zhou Yunjie, chairman and CEO of Haier, said the construction of the second phase of Haier Egypt Ecological Park will further optimize the company's product portfolio in Egypt, and other regions of Africa.

Midea Group has set up an office in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. It announced in November the launch of its third manufacturing base in Egypt. With a total investment of 830 million yuan, the new factories, where refrigerators and washing machines will be produced, will see operations likely begin in the second half of 2025.

It is inevitable that Chinese home appliance manufacturers are expanding their footprint abroad for new profit growth points and long-term development, as the domestic home appliance market is almost saturated, said Zhao Meimei, assistant president of Beijing-based market consultancy All View Cloud.

Building a sound global industrial chain and enhancing operational capacity in overseas markets will help Chinese home appliance makers utilize global resources, reduce costs and improve management efficiency, Zhao said.

## Eli Lilly to expand medicine production in China

By ZHOU WENTING  
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US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Co recently announced a roughly \$200 million expansion of its manufacturing site in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, that will enable it to increase production of innovative medicines for type 2 diabetes and obesity.

The new investment, which will bring the company's cumulative investment in China to exceed 20 billion yuan (\$2.81 billion), aims to boost production of such innovative therapies in the country and support the company's future product pipeline.

Expansion of the company's sole manufacturing site in China will also support exports to the European market, the company said.

"The investment reinforces our commitment to bringing innovative medicines to patients and will enhance our capabilities to boost production of our medicines, helping people with diabetes and obesity live the healthiest lives possible," said Edgardo Hernandez, executive vice-president and president of Lilly manufacturing operations.

Liu Hua, vice-chairwoman of the administrative committee of Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP), said Eli Lilly, which established its manufacturing plant at SIP in 1996, has grown together with the industrial park, which commemorates the 30th anniversary of its founding this year.

"Today, the company increases investment here and introduces blockbuster innovative new medicines, fully reflecting its confidence in the China market and its recognition of the investment environment of the industrial park," she said.

SIP has been expanding international cooperation, and has become home to more than 2,000 enterprises in biomedicine and health, one of the strategic emerging industries that it focuses on, said Liu.

The National Medical Products Administration approved Lilly's tirzepatide injections for the treatment of type 2 diabetes and obesity in May and July, respectively.

Tirzepatide represents the company's inaugural chronic weight management treatment approved in China, and so far the world's first and only product that activates both GLP-1 and GIP — two receptors playing key roles in regulating blood sugar and energy balance in the human body.

The synergistic effect of GLP-1 in suppressing appetite and reducing food intake and GIP in affecting blood sugar levels and aiding in fat splitting, provides a scientific basis for weight management and fat loss.

London-based data analytics and consultancy GlobalData predicts that by 2029, global sales of tirzepatide may exceed \$34 billion, expected to surpass Novo Nordisk's Ozempic and become the world's largest-selling blood sugar-regulating medicine.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, China has about 140 million individuals diagnosed with diabetes. The country has also the largest number of overweight and obese people in the world.

According to a study published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology in 2021, more than one-third of Chinese were overweight and around one in six among Chinese were obese, and the trend was growing.



Employees install PV panels at a power plant in Zhangye, Gansu province, on Oct 1. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## CIG, EV makers team up to extend footprint in Africa

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou  
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Trading firm Choice International (CIG) is ramping up efforts to take more Chinese new energy vehicles to overseas markets, with the latest achievement being a series of strategic cooperation agreements signed with Nigeria covering electric vehicle shipments.

According to the agreements, project E-Mobility has been jointly launched by CIG and the Lagos state government, Nigeria, in early July, based on which the company will introduce a total of 5,000 EVs to Lagos and help establish the local EV infrastructure.

The project aims to promote

green transportation and sustainable development by promoting intelligent dispatch systems with Chinese EVs and ride-hailing solutions, to optimize traffic resource allocation, improve local transportation conditions and boost green transition in the African country, said Chen Xiuxia, chairwoman of CIG, a Guangzhou, Guangdong province-based company.

Chinese new energy and charging service providers — such as Qingdao Teld New Energy and Shenzhen Topsunlight New Energy — have also become strategic partners in the E-Mobility project.

"There is huge potential for Chinese EVs and other companies

along the chain in African countries," said Chen.

In 2022, the Lagos state government and CIG launched the largest ride-hailing mobility platform in Africa — Lagride.

The E-Mobility project is a result of the enhanced cooperation between the two sides based on Lagride, Chen said.

"The E-Mobility project is not only a business initiative, but also an important public welfare undertaking that will promote social development in Nigeria," said Chen at a signing ceremony on Saturday in Guangzhou.

The project will also help create more job opportunities in Nigeria. "The initiative provides Nigerians

with a comprehensive travel solution, greatly promoting Lagos state's economic development and overall industrialization process," said George Collins Onwuekwe, consul general of Nigeria in Guangzhou.

Chinese EVs and mobility services have been gaining in popularity in Africa in recent years, said Wang Xingliang, general manager of the African business department of GAC International, a unit of Chinese EV maker GAC Group.

The GAC unit is among the Chinese EV companies taking part in the strategic partnership agreements.

"We are accelerating EV exports to African countries as demand for advanced EVs from China is growing

There is huge potential for Chinese EVs and other companies along the chain in African countries."

Chen Xiuxia, chairwoman of Choice International

rapidly," said Wang, adding the company's vehicles are sold in eight countries on the continent.

"We will introduce comprehensive new energy and charging solutions to Lagos to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly travel services," said Li Jianbo, vice-president of Teld.

## BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

## Cruises, visa-free entries boost tours to China

Foreign tourists visiting nation forecast to exceed 15 million in H2

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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Hundreds of foreign visitors flew to Shanghai this fall to board the first cruise ship designed specifically for international travelers visiting China.

Operated by international cruise company Viking Cruises, the tours include four routes and last between 10 and 20 days, stopping at major Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, as well as smaller cities such as Pingtan, Fujian province, and Dongtou, Wenzhou, Zhejiang province.

Targeting international visitors who are generally conversant in English, the voyages are being operated by 930-guest *Viking Yidun*, the first Chinese-flagged luxury ocean cruise ship. Eight such voyages will be operated in total between September and November.

For the 20-day tour, the trip will start and end in Beijing, and stop at inland cities such as Chengdu, Sichuan province; Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region; and Xi'an, Shaanxi province. The inland itineraries will be operated by flights, Viking said.

"We are prepared to make significant investments in China, just like we did in the United States market, where we spent \$3 billion over time to build our brand. We see a huge opportunity in China and are committed to making substantial, long-term investments," said Torstein Hagen, founder, chairman and CEO of Viking Cruises. "I have huge confidence in the Chinese market. We will keep pushing forward and developing the market, but it will take time. We see this as the time to commit and position ourselves for the future."

China has adopted unprecedented policies to facilitate foreign visitors' entry and transit into the country since the latter half of 2023. By continuously adding new countries to the list that their citizens can enter China with unilateral visa-free policies, the nation's inbound tourism has witnessed significant momentum in growth.

In May, a 15-day visa-free entry policy came into effect for foreign tour groups arriving at 13 Chinese ports via cruise ships and received by Chinese travel agencies.

Globally, the cruise tourism market is showing strong signs of recovery. Viking said it remains optimistic about the growth prospects of China for the next two years, fueled by the enormous growth potential of the market, and is actively preparing next year's routes that will be optimized on market demand and passenger feedback from this year's tours.

Bringing US travelers on board



*Viking Yidun*, the first Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, docks in Shanghai in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Visitors browse a market in Shanghai in September. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

the Chinese-flagged luxury cruise ship, the inaugural sailing in September was booked with more than 650 guests, a number the company said was beyond its expectations.

Hagen said people's understanding of different countries is sometimes influenced by one-sided information. Yet, facts are often more diverse and colorful than stereotypes.

He added that China is a safe, clean and vibrant country, and Chi-

nese people are hardworking, intelligent, friendly and enthusiastic. The company hopes to provide international tourists with a comfortable and safe travel experience, and enable more people to understand the real China through word-of-mouth.

By 2035, China's cruise tourism market is expected to see a scale of 14 million passenger trips a year, and sales of the market are foreseen to reach 531.7 billion yuan (\$74.73

billion), according to a forecast by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

China's inbound tourism sector has witnessed remarkable growth momentum. So far this year, for every four inbound foreign visitors, one of them has been to China before. Daily average booking volumes of travel products by visitors who come from Italy, Malaysia, Russia and the US have more than tripled on a yearly basis, according

to Trip.com Group.

During the National Day holiday in the first week of October, booking volumes of inbound travel products hit a record high compared with the same period historically. During the break, more than 50 percent of foreign visitors stayed for more than seven days in China, Trip.com said.

Some of the most popular inbound tourism destinations include major domestic cities such as Shanghai; Shenzhen and Guangzhou in Guangdong province; Beijing; Chengdu; and Hangzhou, Zhejiang.

"Besides, some niche domestic destinations for foreigners became newly added hot destinations for them during the break. Those places include Guiyang, Guizhou province; Lanzhou, Gansu province; Guilin; Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region; Qinhuangdao, Hebei province; and Yantai, Shandong province," said Mao Lin, a researcher with Trip.com.

For the latest development, China has expanded the scope of unilateral visa-free entries for ordinary passport holders from Portugal, Greece, Cyprus and Slovenia, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

From Oct 15 to Dec 31, 2025, individuals holding ordinary passports from the above-mentioned countries who come to China for business, tourism, visiting relatives and friends, and transit for no more than 15 days are eligible for visa-free entry, the ministry said.

In the first half of this year, 14.64 million foreigners entered China from different ports across the

country, jumping 152.7 percent year-on-year. Among them, 8.54 million foreigners entered the country using visa-free entries, surging 190.1 percent year-on-year, according to the National Immigration Administration.

In the latter half of this year, the number of foreigners visiting China is expected to exceed 15 million, according to a forecast by the China Tourism Academy.

"For the second half of this year, China's inbound tourism market is expected to recover to the same level seen in 2019, or before the COVID-19 pandemic period, and enter a new cycle of prosperity and growth," said Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy.

Meanwhile, local governments have been making more efforts to promote the high-quality growth of inbound tourism. For instance, Shanghai is building itself as the first destination for inbound tourism, according to a research report by the China Tourism Academy.

"Beijing, Hainan province, Anhui province and other provinces and cities have held multiple inbound tourism conferences and events, and built closer connections with international travel industry players," said Liu Xiangyan, a researcher with the academy.

"In East China's Anhui, where the renowned Huangshan Mountain is located, the local government has been comprehensively promoting the building of itself as a world-class tourist destination and developing inbound tourism."

## Increasing appetite witnessed for off-peak travel

By ZHU WENQIAN

More middle-aged and elderly Chinese travelers are venturing out this fall, as they "strategically" choose to take trips on regular days rather than during holidays, thus booking cheaper travel products and avoiding the crowds, industry observers said.

After the weeklong National Day holiday, the tourism market has gradually returned to its regular status. Between Oct 8 and Oct 14, booking volumes of travel products from travelers aged 50 and above grew by nearly 20 percent year-on-year, according to online travel agency Trip.com.

In the first nine months of the year, the silver-haired population's hunger for travel showed no sign of abating, and such travelers tend to have high per capita spending power. Bookings from those aged 50 and above grew by 26 percent on a yearly basis, and bookings from travelers aged between 61 and 65 jumped by 58 percent year-on-year,

higher than other age groups, Trip.com found.

"Elderly travelers prefer to travel by plane and stay at luxury hotels. A well-off group with enough leisure time has been a prominent feature for silver-haired travelers," said Wang Xinxin, director of elderly travel at Trip.com.

"They tend to avoid popular destinations that are crowded. Instead, they prefer natural landscapes with fresh air and cultural products with strong cultural attributes," Wang said.

Wang added that their rich life experiences have shaped their taste for travel, and they have a strong pursuit of quality. The frequency of their trips and the money spent on travel have been significantly higher than the overall average.

Meanwhile, more young travelers are shifting their long holiday travel demand into daily lives to obtain more cost-effective and comfortable travel experiences.

After the Golden Week break, pri-

ces for flight tickets, hotels, group tour products, and customized tours have generally declined by more than 30 percent on average, making off-peak travel more cost-effective, Trip.com said.

The increasing appetite for off-peak travel is expected to lead to some changes in the tourism market, and the pricing and marketing systems of airlines and hotels may need to be adjusted accordingly. The new trend will also help expand the tourism market, the online travel agency said.

Since the start of October, many young employees prefer to take trips as the year-end draws near, and they would like to use any remaining days of annual leave.

Chinese travelers who are aged between 31 and 40 have a lot of enthusiasm for traveling, and the group accounts for over 30 percent of off-peak travelers, according to Tuniu Corp, an online travel agency.

"For people who have ample time and plan to travel during off-peak season, it would be a good window period for travel now. The group tends to take domestic long-haul trips and outbound travel with longer itineraries," said Qi Chunguang, vice-president of Tuniu.

The beautiful fall scenery has further boosted travelers' interest in taking trips during the off-peak period. Some domestic scenic areas have attracted tourists with their fall colors, including sightseeing spots such as Huangshan Mountain in Anhui province, Huangguoshu Waterfall in Guizhou province, and Wuyuan in Jiangxi province, Tuniu said.

For outbound trips, Japan, Maldives, Thailand, New Zealand, Spain, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Ireland are listed as some of the most popular destinations for off-peak travel, industry players found.

Outbound tourism is undergo-



Tourists take a camel ride in Alshaa League, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Oct 13. BEI HE / XINHUA

ing structural changes. With multiple countries now issuing visa-free entries to Chinese travelers, as well as the availability of cheaper airfares and hotel prices, more residents from smaller cities are taking advantage of the lower costs to travel abroad, and their main destinations are Southeast Asian countries, said Qunar, a Beijing-

based online travel agency. "Consumers from first-tier cities are traveling abroad further and spending more, although the increase of outbound travel orders made by them is not high. They are the main source of tourists for long-haul destinations such as Europe and the United States," said Cai Muzi, a Qunar researcher.

## WORLD

## FRIENDS AFAR

**Editor's note:** China Daily presents the series Friends Afar to tell the stories of people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries. Through the vivid narration of the people in the stories, readers can get a better understanding of a country that is boosting openness.

## Journey to strengthen friendship continues

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
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In an era of strained US-China relations, Steve Harnsberger is on a mission to rekindle the flame of friendship between the two nations.

From a family with deep ties to China, Steve Harnsberger has taken up the mantle of "citizen diplomat", dedicating himself to discovering and sharing forgotten stories of cooperation and mutual respect between US and Chinese people during trying times.

Steve Harnsberger, the founder of US/China People-to-People Exchange, or PPX, an educational nonprofit organization based in San Anselmo, California, believes it is his "calling" to tell such stories.

"These stories are deeply rooted in our families' histories, including oral accounts and photographs. We are the descendants who can share how Americans and Chinese worked together during past disasters and pandemics," he said in a recent interview with China Daily.

Steve Harnsberger's journey began in 2001 when he accompanied his Chinese-born father on a trip back to the country. Visiting the houses and cities where his family had lived decades earlier, he was profoundly moved by the experience.

"When we first returned to Gaoyou (a city in Jiangsu province), all my father wanted to do was go on the Grand Canal on a boat because he had grown up living on a native Chinese houseboat," he recalled.

"The life of an innocent child born in a different country and his desire to 'go home' before he died moved me in a way that changed my life," said Steve Harnsberger. His father passed away in 2005.

The transformative experience led to his first project in China: a 2005 exhibit about the 1931 flood in Gaoyou in partnership with the Gaoyou Water Conservancy Department. The exhibit honored his grandfather, Thomas Harnsberger, who arrived in China in 1912 as a missionary and was known as He Bokui among Chinese people.

Thomas Harnsberger played a crucial role during the catastrophic 1931 Yangtze River flood, one of the world's deadliest natural disasters, with an associated death toll exceeding 2 million.

In August of that year, he traveled



**Above:** Steve Harnsberger (first from left) and Ellen Roots (first from right) are greeted by Chinese Consul-General in San Francisco Zhang Jianmin and his wife at an event in July.



**Left:** Thomas Harnsberger (front center) is welcomed by representatives of the Gaoyou chapter of the China International Famine Relief Commission in 1931 to help with disaster-relief efforts. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

to the Gaoyou dikes to assess the situation and proposed raising funds for reconstruction to the Shanghai-based China International Famine Relief Commission. The commission funded the project, with Thomas Harnsberger serving as a supervisor.

"This story has persisted in my family for 75 years. This was my father's dream to remember his father," Steve Harnsberger said.

For his efforts to commemorate this forgotten chapter of US-China friendship, Steve Harnsberger was named an honorary citizen of Gaoyou city in 2005.

For years, Steve Harnsberger balanced his passion for US-China cultural exchange with running a small software company. However, a trip to China in October last year changed everything.

"When I was in Shanghai, a porter at my hotel walked up to me and said, 'We are not the enemy! This came out of nowhere, and it really affected me — just a common man in Shanghai seeing an American. This is why I feel a responsibility

now," Steve Harnsberger recounted.

The encounter prompted him to commit to his cultural exchange work full time. He recently established PPX to broaden the scope of his efforts.

Steve Harnsberger is currently leading two projects that exemplify his approach to cultural diplomacy. One is a concert in memory of Frances Roots' *The Lushan Suite*, a piano duet composed to celebrate her love for the Chinese people and the Lushan Mountain.

### Bond of music

Frances Roots is the daughter of missionary Logan Roots, who arrived in China in 1896.

At the invitation of the then Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, Frances Roots returned to China and composed *The Lushan Suite*, and performed the suite in 1972 in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

This act of "music diplomacy" helped pave the way for reviving cultural exchange as China began opening its doors to the world.

To bring this forgotten chapter

back to life, Steve Harnsberger reached out to Ellen Roots, Frances' great-niece, in 2020. Ellen subsequently wrote a book, *The Lushan Suite: A Love Song from the West to the East*, published last year to commemorate this special bond.

The second major project involves a partnership between the Pennsylvania-based Pearl S Buck International and Lushan city and Jiangxi province. The collaboration aims to establish a museum and cultural exchange program, including an educational sponsorship program for local students.

Steve Harnsberger's efforts have received positive feedback from the US consulate in Wuhan and the foreign affairs department of Jiangxi province.

Having visited China more than 20 times, Steve Harnsberger often reflects on why his forebears chose to go to China and remain there during times of famine and war.

"Now I'm getting older and I'm realizing ... we need a better understanding between the Chinese people and the American people, and that's why I decided to start doing this with my heart and soul," he explained.

"It's crucial that future generations inherit a more peaceful world and hear voices advocating for mutual respect," he said.

# China-Brazil ties contribute to world peace

Countries applauded for opposing unilateralism and upholding justice

By YANG RAN  
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The cooperation between China and Brazil is important for improving global governance and tackling challenges in a turbulent world. China's policy of openness and win-win results have also made important contributions to world peace and development.

These remarks were made at the International Conference on Global Governance and China-Brazil Cooperation held on Monday in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Over a hundred experts, scholars and entrepreneurs from both countries engaged in in-depth discussions on topics such as multilateralism and global governance.

Gao Xiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that in today's complex international landscape, China and Brazil, as key members of the Global South, share similar views on major issues affecting world peace and development. Their cooperation helps to create new opportunities for emerging economies and add momentum to global governance reform, he said.

On platforms like the United Nations, Group of 20 and BRICS, the two countries work closely to oppose unilateralism and bloc confrontations, uphold international fairness and justice, and push for a more equitable global governance system, said Gao, adding the upcoming G20 Leaders' Summit in Rio de Janeiro in November is crucial for enhancing multilateral cooperation and improving global governance in these new circumstances.

Aloizio Mercadante, president of the Brazilian Development Bank, echoed Gao's view, stating that the Global South is facing both opportunities and challenges under the current geopolitical dynamics. In this context, he emphasized that strengthening strategic cooperation between China and Brazil is crucial for effectively addressing global challenges. He also highlighted that China's policy of openness supports global peace and development.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil. Over the years, the two countries have made significant strides in political, eco-

nomical and cultural cooperation, said Tian Min, Chinese Consul-General in Rio de Janeiro.

In 2023, China was Brazil's largest trading partner, while Brazil ranked ninth for China, with bilateral trade reaching \$181.53 billion, a 6.1 percent increase from 2022.

The relationship between China and Brazil has evolved beyond simple bilateral ties, taking on strategic and global importance, said Tian. As they move forward, China and Brazil have immense opportunities for cooperation. By collaborating on global governance, climate change, and sustainable development, the two nations will play a positive role in building a community with a shared future for mankind, she noted.

Esther Dweck, Brazilian minister of management and innovation in public services, said this year marks a pivotal moment for China-Brazil relations.

Both countries should enhance dialogue between policymakers and think tanks to strengthen cooperation and further explore collaboration opportunities in economic reform, new energy, digitalization, and environmental protection, she said. Brazil would like to learn from China's poverty alleviation experience to achieve more inclusive development, she added.

Luiz Idefonso Simoes Lopes, vice-president of the board of trustees at the Brazilian Center for International Relations, an independent think tank, noted that the center has been closely tracking China's reforms and development. He emphasized that China's unique modernization path provides valuable lessons for other developing nations.

Luiz Augusto de Castro Neves, president of the Brazil-China Business Council, said that in recent years, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and anti-globalization trends, trade and investment between China and Brazil have grown rapidly. This growth underscores the strong complementarity and resilience of bilateral trade and economies.

The conference was jointly hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Brazilian Center for International Relations, T20 Brasil and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

## Freight train services enhance regional trade

HANOI — The Dong Anh railway station in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi remains busy in the early hours as container handling vehicles are moving back and forth, loading containers onto a timber express bound for Nanning, the capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

The timber was purchased by a Chinese papermaking company as raw material from southern Vietnam. Speaking of the China-Vietnam freight train service, Zhang Cunwei, head of VTO International Port Development Joint Stock Company, said a single train like the timber express might have 10 or 20 containers, all carrying the same type of product.

"We often launch trains reserved for transporting agricultural products, fruits or others," Zhang said.

The China-Vietnam freight train service began in 2017, and has expanded from transporting basic goods to more than 300 types of goods, said Nguyen Hoang Anh, deputy general manager of Railway Transport and Trade Joint Stock Company of Vietnam Railways.

Vietnam exports mainly agricultural products, fruits, electronics, textiles and footwear, while China sends raw materials, steel and construction materials for manufacturing to Vietnam, he said.

He added that Vietnamese goods are delivered through the freight train service to more than 20 provinces and cities in China, and Central Asia and Europe by connecting with the China-Europe freight train.

"Meanwhile, Chinese goods are not only transported to Vietnam but also pass through Vietnam to reach Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and other ASEAN countries," he said.

With the promotion and support by both countries' railway authorities, more and more companies on both sides have ordered the freight train service for shortened transport time, simplified procedures, and reduced costs, he said.

"With stable capacity, pricing and timing, the market appeal of this service has increased. Now the service is covering China's southwestern market and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area," said Peng Weijun, deputy director of the freight logistics service center of the Nanning Railway Administration.

According to data from the Nanning Railway Administration, as of Sept 30, the China-Vietnam freight trains departing from Guangxi had shipped a record 10,380 containers this year.

XINHUA

## NASA launches spacecraft to study Jupiter's moon

LOS ANGELES — NASA and SpaceX launched a new mission to Jupiter on Monday to explore the mysteries of Europa, Jupiter's ocean moon.

The Europa Clipper spacecraft, which is NASA's largest planetary spacecraft, launched on a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

NASA later confirmed the spacecraft separated from the rocket, and is now sailing through space on its own, bound for the Jupiter system.

The Deep Space Network in Canberra, Australia, received a signal from Europa Clipper after its launch, marking the first indicator that the spacecraft is communicating with Earth, according to NASA.

"Today, we embark on a new journey across the solar system in search of the ingredients for life within Jupiter's icy moon. Our next chapter in space exploration has begun," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said on social media platform X.

Europa Clipper is the first mission designed to conduct a detailed study of Jupiter's moon Europa.

It is the largest spacecraft NASA has ever developed for a planetary mission with solar arrays spanning more than 30 meters when deployed and weighing nearly 6,000 kilograms at launch.

Europa Clipper will travel about 2.9 billion kilometers to reach Jupi-



A SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket with the Europa Clipper spacecraft aboard launches from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Monday. GREGG NEWTON / AFP

ter in April 2030. The spacecraft, in orbit around Jupiter, will make nearly 50 flybys at closest-approach altitudes as low as 25 km above the surface, soaring over a different location during each flyby to scan nearly the entire moon, according to NASA.

The mission aims to understand the nature of Europa's ice shell and the ocean beneath it, along with the moon's composition and geology.

Even though Europa, the fourth-largest of Jupiter's 95 officially recognized moons, is just a quarter of Earth's diameter, its vast global ocean of salty liquid water may contain twice the water in the Earth's

oceans. The Earth's oceans are thought to have been the birthplace for life on our planet.

Europa, whose diameter of roughly 3,100 km, is approximately 90 percent that of our moon, has been viewed as a potential habitat for life beyond Earth in our solar system. Its icy shell is believed to be 15-25 km thick, sitting atop an ocean 60-150 km deep.

NASA Associate Administrator Jim Free told a prelaunch briefing on Sunday that Europa boasts one of the most promising environments for potential habitability in our solar system, beyond Earth, though he noted this mission will

not be a search for any actual living organisms.

"What we discover on Europa," Free said, "will have profound implications for the study of astrophysics and how we view our place in the universe."

"Scientists believe Europa has suitable conditions below its icy surface to support life. Its conditions are water, energy, chemistry and stability," said Sandra Connelly, deputy associate administrator of NASA's science mission directorate.

Europa Clipper will be operating in an intense radiation environment around Jupiter, our solar system's biggest planet.

Jupiter is enveloped by a magnetic field about 20,000 times stronger than Earth's. This magnetic field spins, capturing and accelerating charged particles and creating radiation that could harm spacecraft. NASA has fashioned a vault made of titanium and aluminum inside the Europa Clipper to protect its sensitive electronics from this radiation.

"One of the Europa Clipper mission's main challenges is delivering a spacecraft hardy enough to withstand the pummeling of radiation from Jupiter but also sensitive enough to gather the measurements needed to investigate Europa's environment," Connelly said.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

## WORLD

## UN urges security, respect for personnel

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong  
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The United Nations Security Council has urged all parties to respect the safety and security of its personnel, emphasizing the need for diplomatic endeavors to end the Israel-Lebanon conflict.

Members of the Security Council expressed "strong concerns" after several positions of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon "came under fire in the past days", the council's rotating president, Pascale Baeriswyl, Switzerland's permanent representative to the UN, said.

"They urged all parties to respect the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and premises. They recalled that UN peacekeepers and UN premises must never be the target of an attack," she said in a statement, adding the council reiterated its support for UNIFIL, underscoring its role in "supporting regional stability".

The council also expressed its deep concern for civilian casualties and suffering, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the rising number of internally displaced people, she said, calling on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, including the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701.

"They also emphasized the need for diplomatic endeavors that



A girl in a Syrian-Lebanese family plays with her sibling on Monday at their makeshift camp in Martyrs' Square in Beirut, Lebanon, after being displaced by the conflict with Israel. CARL COURT VIA GETTY IMAGES

would bring a durable end to the conflict and allow civilians on both sides of the Blue Line to return safely to their homes," she said.

The statement came as Lebanon's mission to the UN filed two complaints against the Israeli military's orders for peacekeeping forces to vacate their positions, which they deemed "illegitimate". They also complained about the Israeli attacks' effect on Lebanon's education sector.

The mission said Israeli attacks on UNIFIL set a dangerous precedent and constituted a flagrant violation of international law and Resolution 1701 — a position echoed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on X earlier this week.

However, in a video message, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

dismissed the accusations as "completely false", denying that the Israeli military deliberately attacked UNIFIL personnel.

"It's exactly the opposite. Israel repeatedly asked UNIFIL to get out of harm's way," he said.

Arhama Siddiqi, a research fellow at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in Pakistan, said Israel "has repeatedly stretched the limits of what it calls its right to self-defense".

"Article 51 of the UN Charter, which is often cited to justify such actions, clearly states that the right to self-defense only applies in response to an armed attack and remains valid only until the Security Council intervenes to restore peace and security. The reality we witness, however, tells a much darker story," she said.

European Union foreign policy head Josep Borrell said the bloc's 27 member states "agreed" on asking Israel to stop attacking UNIFIL. He also raised the issue of attacks against civilians, destruction of infrastructure and the increasing violence of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.

"The member states will have to discuss again about what to do. There are proposals on the table: sanctioning violent (Israeli) settlers — even two ministers of the Israeli government," Borrell said.

Lebanon's health authorities said on Monday the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has killed 2,229 people and caused 10,380 injuries across Lebanon. It has also displaced more than 1 million people within Lebanon.

## China plays peace broker in Gaza crisis

Analysts laud Beijing's stance as FM talks with Israeli, Iranian counterparts

By ZHAO JIA  
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China has once again demonstrated its responsibility as a major country by upholding a balanced and objective stance on the Gaza conflict, as Foreign Minister Wang Yi held separate phone calls on Monday with his Israeli and Iranian counterparts in a bid to de-escalate the crisis and restore peace at an early date.

The diplomatic efforts came amid rising regional tensions and the spillover effects of the Gaza conflict. Israel is reportedly planning a retaliatory strike against Iran, after Iranian attacks earlier this month in response to Israel's ground offensive in southern Lebanon.

During the calls, Wang urged all parties to exercise caution, avoid further escalation of violence and make more efforts to safeguard regional peace and stability.

He told Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz that renewed conflict and turmoil in the region serves no one's interests, urging all parties to proceed with caution to prevent falling into a vicious circle.

"China is not self-interested in the Middle East and never engages in geopolitical contest," Wang said, adding China has always stood on the side of peace, international law and truth.

He reiterated China's commitment to playing a constructive role in de-escalating the situation and restoring peace in the region.

Talking to Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, Wang said China has always advocated resolving hot spot issues through dialogue and consultation and opposed "exacerbating tensions, expanding conflicts and taking military adventures".

Araghchi said Iran is deeply concerned about the risk of an overall escalation of the current regional situation and does not want to see a further expansion of the conflict.

Iran highly values China's influence in international affairs and is willing to strengthen communication and coordination with China to cool down the situation through diplomatic means, Araghchi said, adding Israel

should avoid taking risks and proceed cautiously.

Wang said China will proceed from the merits of the issue, strengthen communication among all parties and build a broader international consensus.

Analysts warned that the current regional security dilemma and the failure of dispute management and control mechanisms may lead to more parties being involved in conflicts that risk spiraling out of control. They said China's impartial stance positions it as a natural and fair mediator in such geopolitical crises.

"While at present there is no reliable communication channel between Iran and Israel, China has stood up as a reliable mediator to promote peace talks, as it has never chosen any side in the conflict," said Li Zixin, an assistant research fellow at China Institute of International Studies.

"In fact, Beijing has kept quite good relationships with the two countries," Li added.

## Mutual interests

Regarding bilateral relations, Katz said during the phone call with Wang that developing ties with China is an established policy for Israel, one that serves the mutual interests of both countries. Wang also expressed hope of resuming exchanges in all aspects as soon as possible when the situation eases.

In their phone conversation, both Wang and Araghchi pledged to maintain exchanges at all levels and promote practical cooperation.

Li said, "The friendly relations between China and both Israel and Iran will not change despite the current regional turmoil."

Li Shaoxian, director of the China-Arab Research Institute at Ningxia University, said China, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, is a crucial force in promoting peace in the Middle East.

"At this critical moment, China's timely communication with Israel and Iran — both of which can influence the future direction of the situation in the Middle East — fully shows that Beijing is trying its best to cool down the situation," he said.

## Dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters arrested in NY

WASHINGTON — Police arrested more than 200 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had staged a sit-in outside the New York Stock Exchange on Monday to demand an end to US support for Israel's military campaign in Gaza, authorities said.

The protesters, many of them from activist groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace, chanted "Let Gaza Live" and "Stop Funding Genocide" in front of the exchange's iconic building near Wall Street in Lower Manhattan.

None of the protesters got inside the stock exchange but dozens crossed a police security fence set up outside its main building.

Police said 206 arrests were made, without providing further details. Jewish groups involved in the protests said about 500 demonstrators attended. The stock exchange had no immediate comment.

The protesters directed anger at US defense contractors and weapons manufacturers. Others chanted slo-



Demonstrators protest against Israel's military assault in Gaza outside the New York Stock Exchange on Monday. YUKI IWAMURA / AP

gans against Israeli attacks in Lebanon, where Israel says it is waging war against Hezbollah militants.

"(Hundreds) of Jews and friends are shutting down the New York Stock Exchange to demand the US stop arming Israel and profiting from genocide," Jewish Voice for

Peace said on X. Israel denies genocide allegations at the International Court of Justice, and says its military operations in Gaza target Hamas militants.

There was also a much smaller number of pro-Israel counterprotesters at the site, who carried Israeli flags.

The demonstration was the latest expression of anger against US support for Israel's assault on Gaza, which it launched after Hamas killed 1,200 in Israel and took 250 others hostage in the Oct 7, 2023, attacks, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's subsequent military assault on blockaded Gaza has killed more than 42,000 Palestinians and displaced nearly the entire population, according to Gaza health officials.

On Tuesday, Israeli military strikes killed at least 50 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip as Israeli forces tightened their squeeze around Jabalia in the north of the enclave, amid fierce battles with Hamas fighters.

The United Nations described dire conditions affecting the civilian population remaining in Jabalia, with more than 50,000 people displaced and water wells, bakeries, medical points and shelters shut down.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Global public debt expected to cross \$100 trillion

By JONATHAN POWELL  
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Global public debt is poised to surpass \$100 trillion for the first time, with the International Monetary Fund warning on Tuesday that it could grow faster than anticipated because of political pressures for increased spending.

The IMF's latest Fiscal Monitor report paints a concerning picture of global public debt, projecting it to reach 93 percent of the world's GDP by the end of the year and nearly 100 percent by 2030 — 10 percentage points higher than in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

The trend is exacerbated by sluggish economic growth, which increases borrowing needs and costs for governments, the report said.

Published just days before the IMF and World Bank's annual gatherings in Washington, the Fiscal Monitor suggests that future debt levels could even exceed current projections, Reuters reported.

"Fiscal policy uncertainty has increased and political red lines on taxation have become more entrenched," the report said. "Spending pressures to address green transitions, population aging, security concerns, and long-standing development challenges are mounting."

The IMF's warning came just three weeks before the United States presidential election where both candidates have pledged new tax reductions and spending initiatives that could add trillions of dollars to federal deficits.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's proposed tax cuts

would contribute about \$7.5 trillion in new debt over a decade, according to estimates from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal policy think tank.

This is more than double the \$3.5 trillion debt increase projected from plans of Democratic candidate Vice President Kamala Harris.

The IMF report said debt projections often fall short of actual outcomes by substantial margins. It finds that realized debt-to-GDP ratios, when measured five years into the future, typically average 10 percent higher than initially forecasted.

It presents a "severely adverse scenario" incorporating these elements, which projects global public debt potentially reaching 115 percent in only three years, which would be a figure 20 percentage points above current forecasts.

The IMF reiterated its call for increased fiscal consolidation, emphasizing that current efforts averaging 1 percent of GDP from 2023 to 2029 are inadequate to stabilize debts.

"Postponing adjustment will only mean that a larger correction is needed eventually, and waiting can also be risky, because past experience shows that high debt and lack of credible fiscal plans can trigger adverse market reactions and can limit the room that countries have to deal with future shocks," said Era Dabla-Norris, the IMF's deputy director for fiscal affairs.

She said cuts in public investment or social spending tend to have a much larger negative effect on growth than more poorly targeted subsidies such as for fuel.

Agencies contributed to this story.

## Elephant exodus



The Kenya Wildlife Service rangers release elephants from the Mwea National Reserve into the Aberdare National Park in Mweiga, Nyeri County, on Monday. The relocation exercise was taken up because of overpopulation as the elephant numbers in Mwea more than tripled to 156, showing poaching incidents have been reduced, the Kenya Wildlife Service said. THOMAS MUKOYA / REUTERS

## Boeing prepares layoff notices for thousands of workers

WASHINGTON/SEATTLE — Thousands of Boeing employees will get layoff notices within weeks, a union and industry sources said, as a senior US official flew to Seattle to try to ease a crippling strike.

Acting US Labor Secretary Julie Su's first in-person intervention comes days after Boeing unveiled plans to cut 17,000 jobs and take \$5 billion in charges, continuing a year of tumult for the company.

"Acting Secretary Su is meeting with both parties today to assess the situation and encourage both parties to move forward in the bargaining process," a Department of Labor spokesperson said on Monday.

While Su has previously spoken with Boeing and the striking West Coast factory workers' union, it is her first time in Seattle meeting both sides in person.

The International Association of

Machinists and Aerospace Workers, or IAM, said its lead negotiator Jon Holden had updated Su on the current talks, "stressing the Union's commitment to a negotiated contract that values our members' skills and dedication".

About 33,000 workers have been on strike since Sept 13, seeking a 40 percent wage increase over four years.

Boeing will next month send out 60-day notices to thousands of

workers, including many in its commercial aviation division, meaning those staff members will leave the company in mid-January, one source familiar with the matter said.

A second phase of notices, if needed, could be rolled out in December, the source said.

A spokesperson for the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, which represents Boeing engineers, said the company

informed the union on Monday that 60-day notices to its members would be issued on Nov 15.

A Boeing spokesperson said the company had shared information with managers, including plans for 10 percent reductions at its commercial unit involving both union and non-union workers. The spokesperson added the striking IAM employees were not currently affected.

Brian Bryant, the IAM's international president, called the job-cut plan "corporate greed at its worst". "Boeing just turned its back on 17,000 of its own workers — the

same people who carried Boeing through crisis after crisis, year after year," he said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Boeing filed papers with the US markets regulator for raising up to \$25 billion through a stock and debt offering and entered into a \$10 billion credit agreement amid upcoming debt maturities.

It is looking to boost its finances, which have been strained because of a slump in production of its best-selling 737 MAX jet following a door panel blowout and the crippling strike.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Solution to EV dispute must be found to avoid breaking beneficial partnership

Despite the eight rounds of intensive talks they have held since Sept 20 in Brussels, China and the European Union have yet to reach a mutually acceptable solution to the bloc's planned tariffs of up to 45 percent on Chinese-made electric vehicles. Major differences still remain.

The current situation serves neither side's interest, given that not resolving their differences on the issue could trigger a full-blown trade war between the two major trading partners, and cause irreparable damage to their mutually beneficial cooperation.

It is the EU that should bear the blame for the dispute and the lack of progress in finding a way to end it.

The EU started the troubles by adopting protectionist measures against the Chinese EV industry on the false grounds that China has provided generous subsidies to its EV producers. Yet it has so far failed to address the core concerns of enterprises both in China and the EU, as a Ministry of Commerce spokesman said.

Moreover, the 27-state bloc has reportedly been conducting separate negotiations over the price of Chinese-made EVs sold in the EU with selected companies, a move that could "undermine the foundation of the negotiations and mutual trust".

This is in contrast to the utmost sincerity and flexibility China has shown during the talks, as evidenced in the many "pragmatic and constructive" solutions the country has proposed to address the EU's concerns.

China has always valued its trade partnership with the EU, and sought to resolve its trade disputes with the bloc through dialogue and consultations. The country has reportedly proposed a minimum price of 30,000 euros (\$32,950) for imported EVs made in China to be sold in the EU. But this practical proposal was rejected by Brussels, which insists that is not doing enough to protect European EV makers. Beijing has therefore been seeking to negotiate an alternative to tariffs that would involve some form of "flexible pricing commitment", according to reports.

The success of China's green industries including its EV industry has been built on technical innovation, fair market competition and the country's complete industry and supply chains. It has nothing to do with so-called government subsidies, as the EU has wrongfully presumed.

Moreover, Chinese-made EVs now account for only about 8 percent of new sales of EVs in the EU, posing no substantial threat to the development of local EV industry.

The confrontational approach the EU has adopted targeting Chinese-made EVs and other industries — Brussels is also probing Chinese "subsidies" for solar panels and wind turbines — seems more like an effort by the China hawks in some of the EU member states to toe the "de-risking from China" line of the United States, rather than a serious move to address the problems that many European automakers face such as high costs and lack of innovation.

In particular, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in the name of reducing the risks posed to Europe by China, has claimed the bloc must seek to "rebalance" the relationship and reduce the EU's reliance on China in high-tech sectors and key minerals.

Such a strategy runs counter to the basic norms governing the market economy, such as free trade and fair competition, on which the EU has long built its economic success, and risks turning the EU into an obedient "US follower" at the expense of its own interests.

In the face of the EU's increasing crackdown on Chinese high-tech industries, Beijing has vowed to protect the legitimate interests of Chinese enterprises. After the bloc voted to impose tariffs on Chinese-made EVs, the Ministry of Commerce announced that preliminary findings of an investigation had determined that the dumping of brandy by the EU threatens to cause "substantial damage" to China's own brandy sector. The escalation of tensions does not bode well for the development of stable and healthy China-EU economic relations.

The EU should exercise "strategic autonomy" in its economic ties with China, rather than being led astray by Washington, so as to prevent a "lose-lose", tit-for-tat trade war from happening.

## Genuine effort to bring peace to Gaza

In a demonstration of true statesmanship and genuine effort to help end the Gaza crisis, Foreign Minister Wang Yi called both the Israeli and Iranian foreign ministers over the phone on Monday, asking the two sides to exercise caution and avoid further escalating the conflict.

In the latest move to mediate peace between the conflicting parties in the Middle East, Wang urged all sides to prevent the already grave situation from spiraling into a vicious circle where violence begets more violence.

More than a year since the Hamas attacks, Israel, as it proudly claims, is fighting seven enemies, all of which it portrays as "evil", on different fronts. The negative impacts of the Gaza crisis are clearly spilling over, leaving no party unscathed. The question is: For how long will the international community, the United States in particular, allow the rampage in Gaza to continue and let the region turn into a permanent war zone? Aren't the deaths of more than 42,000 Palestinians and the near total destruction of Gaza enough for the US and its Western allies to act?

Teheran and its regional proxies have denied having any intention to declare an open war against Israel, leaving Tel Aviv, and its sole unconditional supporter, Washington, to answer those questions. Israel's attacks on the bases of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon over the past few days show that the Benjamin Netanyahu government has no regard for international law and no interest in declaring a cease-fire. Nor is he interested in bringing home the hostages held by Hamas.

China is not a party to the conflict, and it has always wanted it to be settled through peaceful negotiations. And yet Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz urged China to adopt "a balanced and fair position in relation to the war", in his talks with Wang. The fact that China has all along been doing exactly that shows Tel Aviv needs to give some serious thought to the crux of the Middle East crisis: Allowing the Palestinian people to run their own country.

There are signs suggesting Israel is being guided by a desperate warmonger's calculation that as long as he can get US material and military assistance, Israel can make its control over Gaza a foregone conclusion, and set up a buffer zone on its north border with Lebanon.

Even if he succeeds in accomplishing that goal, the feud between Israel and its neighbors will not end. He cannot safeguard the security of the future generations of Israelis. Instead, he will make them intergenerational enemies.

The Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East crisis. The first step toward ending the crisis, as China proposed, should be to call a comprehensive cease-fire in Gaza and ensure humanitarian assistance and relief materials reach the Palestinian enclave.

The second step should be to work out a mechanism which would allow the Palestinian people to govern Palestine. To that end, Beijing has tried its best to help end the factional feuds among the Palestinian people by persuading 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, to jointly pledge to end their divisions and strengthen Palestinian unity by signing the Beijing Declaration in April.

The third step is to promote Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations and implement the "two-state solution".

China has close and stable trade and economic relations with both Israel and Iran. The three-step solution China has put forward shows it holds a neutral position on the Middle East conflict and at the same time it wants the conflict to be put to an end.

China has been reiterating that the path to lasting peace in the Middle East passes through the "two-state solution" for Palestine. Only the implementation of the "two-state solution" will help restore stability and peace in the region.

What China seeks to help achieve in the Middle East is by no means a makeshift plan to address some crying needs but a balanced, permanent and sustainable resolution to the crisis.



## Opinion Line

## Some countries restrict exports and cry about China's trade surplus

China's imports and exports in the first three quarters of 2024 added up to 32.33 trillion yuan (\$4.54 trillion), up 5.3 percent year-on-year.

China's domestic consumer market has also maintained a steady growth momentum. In the first three quarters, the volume of bulk commodities China imported increased by 5 percent year-on-year, and the import of integrated circuits in particular increased by 13.5 percent. The structure of China's exports has also been improving, with mechanical and electrical products accounting for 59.3 percent of the total, up 8 percent year-on-year, while the exports of high-end equipment increased by 43.4 percent, and that of integrated circuits, automobiles and household appliances by 22 percent, 22.5

percent and 15.5 percent respectively.

However, customs data also show China's exports growth in September was only 1.6 percent in yuan terms and 2.4 percent in US dollar terms, both showing a weak momentum. Aside from the high exports base in September 2023, extreme weather conditions, difficulties faced by the global shipping industry, and the expected strike by dockworkers on the US' East Coast, the slowdown in external demand served as a major reason.

Behind China's expanding trade surplus in goods is the strengthening of its industrial competitiveness, the resilience of its exports, as well as the recent decline in global commodity prices, which has lowered the value of its imports.

To evaluate whether a country's trade surplus is reasonable, one should not only look at the absolute size of its trade surplus, but also the proportion of its trade surplus to GDP. Currently, the proportion is not high. At the same time, to judge whether a country's trade is balanced, one should look at both its trade in goods and trade in services, and also trade statistics and balance of payments data. The ratio of China's current account surplus to GDP is only 1.1 percent, which means it is within a reasonable and balanced range.

It is inexplicable that some countries, while pointing fingers at China's trade surplus, continue to tighten measures restricting their exports to China.

— GUANCHANG

## Standing with SCO to address global challenges

After assuming the rotating presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in July, China has commenced its work and will organize over 100 meetings and events to further deepen pragmatic cooperation in various fields and promote the building of a closer SCO community with a shared future.

Over the past two decades, the SCO has played a significant role in maintaining global and regional stability. Expanding from six founding members to nine members, and 17 dialogue partners and observer states, the SCO's influence, cohesion and appeal have been continuously enhanced.

As a founding member of the SCO, China has always prioritized it in its foreign policy. The SCO has maintained its vitality primarily because it has consistently upheld the Shanghai Spirit. China has made it clear that after assuming the rotating presidency, it will work in

solidarity with SCO partners and move forward hand-in-hand with more countries and international organizations that subscribe to the Shanghai Spirit, making the prospect of building a community with a shared future for mankind even more promising.

The 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, which will be held in China next year, is the most important event within the SCO framework and the core activity during China's presidency. The meetings and events hosted by China will focus on advancing pragmatic cooperation in five directions, namely consolidating political mutual trust, safeguarding common security, promoting common prosperity, strengthening people-to-people exchanges, and enhancing institutional effectiveness.

Achieving modernization is a common goal of SCO countries. China proposes to designate 2025 as the SCO

Year of Sustainable Development and will continuously promote high-quality synergies between the Belt and Road Initiative and the development strategies of regional countries, thereby helping them pursue modernization. Promoting global governance in a more just and rational way is an important path for creating a better future for mankind.

During China's presidency of the SCO, it will issue a summit declaration in conjunction with the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, voicing the common stance of SCO member countries on major international and regional issues and helping strengthen the SCO to addressing global challenges.

— PEOPLE'S DAILY

## What They Say

## Clear direction set in incremental policy package

The National Development and Reform Commission has recently emphasized that it will systematically implement a package of incremental policies with various departments to boost the economy that is expected to show practical results within the year.

These policies the top economic policymaker announced include measures aimed at expanding domestic demand; increasing support for enterprises; promoting the stabilization of the real estate market; and boosting the capital market, among other things.

Since then, the market regulatory, industry and information technology, financial and judicial departments have introduced many specific measures. This can be seen as a response of these functional departments to the NDRC's call. As a comprehensive coordination department, the NDRC aims to ensure that the consistency of the macroeconomic policy orientations of var-

ious departments work with synergy.

What the country needs now is an organic combination of countercyclical and cross-cyclical macroeconomic policies. It is necessary to pay attention to solving not only the current difficulties and problems, but also some medium- and long-term problems hindering the development of the economy.

It is the responsibility of the NDRC to optimize this policy structure, form an effective combination of policies, and ensure they are systematically implemented by various departments. This also highlights that in order to cope with the current downward pressure on the Chinese economy, various departments cannot act alone, and their actions must be coordinated.

Increasing the intensity of the countercyclical adjustment of macroeconomic policies and further expanding domestic demand have set the tone of expansionary policies. Promoting the real estate market to stop falling and stabilize and striving to boost the capi-

tal market show the Chinese government is seeking to stabilize asset prices. Investors should see that in putting forward these goals, the government is determined to promote economic growth and consolidate the market's confidence.

In fact, the NDRC also has some more comprehensive development-promoting tasks, such as the construction of new urbanization, standardization of enterprise-related law enforcement and supervision, optimization of the business environment, market-based allocation of factors and the construction of a unified national market, which involve institutional reform.

The market should maintain firm confidence in that in the short term. The authorities should focus on clearing the bottlenecks in policy implementation, and in the long term promote and implement various reforms to stabilize the economy and improve its structure.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

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## COMMENT

Wang Junsheng

## Korean Peninsula issue born out of mistrust

Tensions have escalated on the Korean Peninsula. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) blew up parts of roads connecting to the Republic of Korea after Pyongyang's announcement on Oct 9 to cut off all inter-Korean roads and railways, the Republic of Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Tuesday.

In a rapid succession of events, the DPRK accused the ROK of flying drones over Pyongyang on Friday, calling it a serious act of provocation. The DPRK is also reinforcing its defense infrastructure and has informed the US military of its decision on the phone, asking it to avoid any accidental clashes. By Sunday, the DPRK had put its front-line troops on high alert, ready for action.

The situation on the peninsula has become very volatile, increasing the risk of conflict due to miscommunication or misunderstanding.

At first glance, one might feel the DPRK is over-reacting to what has become "normal" military maneuverings and rhetoric. But a closer look would show that the actions of the ROK, the United States, and the DPRK have contributed to the escalating tensions, and exacerbated hostility. The factors behind the increasingly tense situation on the peninsula are the ROK's intensified efforts to influence DPRK citizens, the US-ROK alliance's increasing military pressure on the DPRK, and the DPRK's perception of the ROK as a hostile enemy state.

Another primary factor contributing to the escalating tensions is the ROK's increased ideological penetration into the DPRK. Since taking office, ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol has adopted a tough stance toward the DPRK. Making his intentions clear in a speech he delivered in Singapore on Oct 9, Yoon said the ROK will use different methods to promote "freedom", "human rights" and "cultural awareness" in the DPRK, thus laying the "groundwork for reunification". Also, the Yoon administration has been encouraging defections from the DPRK. In fact, the ROK Ministry of Defense recently awarded a soldier for inducing a DPRK citizen to defect to the ROK.

This heightened ideological offensive has not gone down well with Pyongyang. The closure of roads and railways along the inter-Korean border, coupled with the DPRK's fortification of defense facilities, can be seen as a preventive measure against further ROK attempts to influence DPRK citizens or encourage defections. Tensions have risen also because the DPRK sees such actions as a direct threat to its sovereignty.

Compounding the issue further is the use of drones, which Pyongyang claims have dropped anti-DPRK government materials in the capital city. In the past, the ROK's propaganda campaign was limited to dropping balloons just across the border. But the use of drones, which cross the border, fly over sensitive areas and structures such as the headquarters of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, to drop propaganda materials in the DPRK, has incensed Pyongyang. The DPRK's decision on Sunday to make its military combat-ready can be attributed to the ROK's aggressive propaganda campaign, which Pyongyang perceives as a provocation, even an existential threat.

The US-ROK alliance has also played a critical role in stoking tensions on the peninsula. Since Yoon took office, the US and the ROK have ramped up their joint military drills and other arrangements, much to the DPRK's alarm. The US has been berthing its latest nuclear submarine at the ROK's Busan Port and its US B-1B bomb-

ers have been flying over the Korean Peninsula.

Besides, the US-ROK issued a joint declaration on nuclear deterrence on July 11 which says the two sides will upgrade the foundation of their military alliance from conventional weapons to nuclear deterrence, in order to put the DPRK at a disadvantage.

The DPRK, already feeling encircled by US and the ROK militaries, perceives these moves as part of a broader strategy to undermine its government. This fear is heightened by the rhetoric emanating from Seoul. In an Oct 1 speech marking the ROK's Armed Forces Day, Yoon warned that any attempt by the DPRK to use

nuclear weapons would mark the end of its regime. Similar threats were issued by the ROK Ministry of National Defense on Oct 13, stating that if the DPRK endangered ROK citizens, it would face total destruction.

The DPRK sees these statements, and the open military buildup on the peninsula, as an imminent threat. By making its military combat ready, therefore, the

DPRK is not only demonstrating its strength but also warning the US and the ROK to refrain from making any provocative moves. Pyongyang may not seek war, but it is clearly preparing for one.

A third significant factor behind the latest crisis is the dramatic change in the way the DPRK perceives its relationship with the ROK. Historically, despite their political and ideological differences, the two Koreas have felt ethnically inclined. But recent statements by DPRK leader Kim Jong-un suggest the complete abandonment of any such inclination. In fact, at the 9th plenary session of 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea in December 2023, Kim declared that the relationship between the DPRK and the ROK had changed from one of kinship to one of enmity. The DPRK now sees the ROK as a hostile state, marking a significant departure of inter-Korean relations over the past 70 years.

This shift in the DPRK's approach stems from its frustration with both progressive and conservative governments in Seoul. Kim's decision to physically cut off the Gyeongui Line — the symbolic link between the two Koreas — indicates the DPRK no longer has any faith in the ROK's ability to foster positive inter-Korean relations. For Pyongyang, even the former liberal Moon Jae-in government, which actively sought reconciliation, failed to live up to expectations. No wonder the DPRK sees little hope for future dialogue with Yoon's conservative administration.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains fraught with danger. Both the DPRK and the ROK are in the middle of significant military buildups, with neither side showing any sign of de-escalation. The DPRK, for its part, seeks to increase its strategic weapons arsenal to counterbalance US-ROK threats, while the ROK looks to the US for strategic assets to mitigate the DPRK's nuclear capability. And although neither side seeks war, the risk of accidental conflict is real given the lack of effective communication channels.

What is urgently needed is restraint, particularly from the ROK. Seoul must scale down its propaganda activities and temper down its rhetoric, and together with Washington, reassess the potential risks of their military maneuvers, especially because Pyongyang considers them as provocative moves.

Only by exercising restraint, holding dialogue, and avoiding further provocations can the DPRK, the ROK and the US prevent a potential catastrophe on the Korean Peninsula.

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*The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Xiong Yi

## Stimulus package this time may prove different

The recent news conference of the National Development and Reform Commission affirmed that the Chinese government remains committed to achieving 5 percent growth this year, provide more financial support for low-income and vulnerable groups, and ensure policy continuity between 2024 and 2025.

Expecting the likely timing of a fiscal stimulus announcement to be in mid-to-late October, I took a closer look at China's current stimulus packages, comparing the one announced last week with those implemented in the past and analyzed why China's stimulus this time could be different.

China's latest stimulus package represents a clear break from the past, signaling a more determined and potentially effective approach.

While early market reactions have been positive, sustained momentum hinges on swift implementation of announced measures and delivering on the highly anticipated fiscal stimulus. Ultimately, success will depend on its ability to facilitate a rebound in domestic demand and a turnaround in the property sector.

How is the latest stimulus package different from those announced in the past?

**This alignment is crucial, allowing China's stimulus to take root without triggering financial destabilization.**

Deutsche Bank Research sees three key reasons why China's stimulus this time could be different from the previous ones. This stimulus package is different because of its comprehensive scale and good timing; strategic focus on reviving market sentiment by supporting asset prices; and clear commitment to further action if needed.

The sheer scale of the stimulus package matters. Based on what has been announced and/or reported by the media, we estimate the total size of the stimulus could potentially exceed 5 trillion yuan (\$705.52 billion), much larger than what the government did in the past few rounds of policy support over the past two years.

Critically, China's stimulus is aligned with the US Federal Reserve's recent shift toward an easing cycle. This alignment is crucial, allowing China's stimulus to take root without triggering financial destabilization. This supportive global backdrop wasn't present during the previous efforts, highlighting a key difference this time around.

A major challenge for China's economy in recent years has been the deeply entrenched negative sentiment. To break the loop, the government is trying to boost asset prices at the same time with the stimulus.

Perhaps the most significant shift is the willingness of the People's Bank of China to accept riskier assets, such as stocks and stock exchange-traded funds, as collateral for liquidity operations. This unprecedented policy change came as a big surprise to the market when the stimulus package was announced. The initial success is evident in the CSI 300 Index's recent 15.7 percent rally and a surge in trading volume. Sustained market momentum could trigger a positive wealth effect, potentially reversing the downward spiral in sentiment and encouraging consumer spending and business investment.

While not explicitly stated, China's move resonates with a "whatever it takes" commitment to economic recovery. This demonstrates commitment. Given the complex challenges facing China's economy, it is difficult to determine ex-ante the precise scale of stimulus required. As such, the end goals — what the government commits to achieving — are perhaps more important than the specific means already announced.

How does this round of stimulus compare to the past?

According to the Deutsche Bank Research's estimation, the total size of China's fiscal and monetary stimulus could reach 7.5 trillion yuan, or 6 percent of GDP, in 2024, making it potentially the largest in history in nominal terms, and the third largest when measured as a percentage of GDP.

China is poised to implement one of its largest stimulus packages in recent history to support its economy and financial markets, though its success depends on whether it can facilitate a rebound in domestic demand and a turnaround in the property sector.

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*The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

Wang Huiyao

## Chinese democracy a blend of traditional wisdom, innovation

The Athens Democracy Forum held early this month, featured a dialogue between Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, and me. Our discussion, titled the "Aristotle-Confucius Dialogue", explored the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western philosophies. In today's rapidly changing world, reflecting on the wisdom of ancient sages is not just an academic exercise but also an endeavor to find ways to address contemporary global challenges.

Confucius and Aristotle, despite being separated by cultures and thousands of kilometers, share remarkable similarities in their philosophical approaches. Both emphasize the importance of balance and moderation in social order, as evidenced by Confucius's "Doctrine of the Mean" and Aristotle's concept of the "Golden Mean". These ancient thinkers advocated for the cultivation of virtues, and stressed the need for adaptable problem-solving in the face of changing circumstances.

However, their views diverge on political ethics: Confucius prioritizes "benevolence" and "ritual propriety", grounding governance in moral virtue, while Aristotle emphasizes the rule of law to ensure societal justice. In today's world, effective governance draws upon both these traditions, balancing virtue-based leadership with robust legal frameworks.

The intellectual legacy of these ancient philosophers continues to shape the political systems of modern nations, influencing governance, ethics and social structures. For instance, Confucius's emphasis on harmony resonates in China's projection of itself as a peaceful and cooperative major power, advocating for the resolution of international disputes through dialogue and negotiation.

Domestically, Confucian principles that

regard the people as the foundation of a nation and set high moral standards for government officials have contributed to the development of China's unique democratic framework, characterized by "whole-process people's democracy" and consultative democracy.

Chinese-style democracy, evolving amid the influence of traditional values and modern trends, exhibits several distinctive features:

First, China can be described as a meritocratic democracy, emphasizing personal ability and virtue. This aligns with Confucian principles: "The officer, having discharged all his duties, should devote his leisure to learning; The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an officer."

This philosophy manifests in modern China's educational and civil service systems. Every year, more than 13 million students participate in *gaokao* (college entrance examination), with about 12 million gaining admission to higher education institutions and entering the "elite system". Concurrently, 2 to 3 million candidates compete in the civil service exam, though only about 10 percent clear it to work as civil servants for the central, provincial or municipal government.

This rigorous selection process creates a system of "voting by examination" for access to public service careers and higher education. Typically, Chinese officials begin their political careers in local governments, from townships to counties to municipalities to provinces and then advance to serve the central government through further performance exams and competitions.

This meritocratic selection and election approach contrasts with Western systems, where politicians often secure votes based on their oratorical skills and popularity. Many times they make false promises and

under-deliver. In short, in other countries ministers and officials are not judged after, but before, performance.

Second, the widespread adoption of online platforms has given rise to a form of digital democratic check and balance in China, transforming how citizens oversee civil servants. Gone are the days when Chinese citizens had to physically visit government offices to voice their opinions or provide feedback on officials' performance. Now, they can engage with their local government anytime and anywhere through hotlines and social media.

A prime example of this is the "12345 Mayor's Hotline", implemented in numerous cities, which directly channel citizens' concerns to local administrative officials.

Furthermore, popular social media platforms such as Weibo and Douyin have become powerful tools for public supervision of officials. Citizens frequently use these platforms to report official misconduct, uploading text, images and videos as evidence. Such reports often draw significant public attention and support, frequently resulting in appropriate disciplinary actions against the erring officials.

While this form of oversight is not infallible, the proliferation of social media in the age of big data has greatly expanded its reach and effectiveness. This digital and technological approach to democracy with more than 1 billion smartphone users in China is steadily supplanting the traditional model that relied heavily on the oratorical skills and public gatherings in town squares and conventions.

Third, China's engagement with the global society of democracies subjects it to international scrutiny, an integral aspect of its democratic evolution. In this context, the United States arguably functions as the primary opposition party, with the European Union playing a comparable role. International media outlets and non-

governmental organizations further contribute to this oversight, offering specialized perspectives on China's governance. A notable example of this dynamic is China's response to international criticism of Beijing for air pollution. The US embassy's installation of PM2.5 monitoring equipment to track air quality epitomized this external oversight.

While China initially resisted such foreign scrutiny, it ultimately served as a catalyst for significant environmental improvements. The dramatic improvement in Beijing's air quality stands as a testament to the effectiveness of such global pressure. This case illustrates the broader principle that we now live in an era of mutual enhancement, where global interconnectedness drives positive changes across national boundaries.

China's governance system, which its roots dating back to the traditional civil service exams, has developed distinct characteristics that combine elements of meritocracy, digital engagement and international accountability to deliver positive results. This approach, shaped by China's specific historical and cultural context, aims to enhance the decision-making process and increase citizens' participation across various sectors of society.

As China navigates its path in the international community, its governance model faces both opportunities and challenges. The ongoing evolution of this system, blending aspects of traditional wisdom with advanced technology, presents a unique case of how countries can find different ways to approach governance in the 21st century.

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*The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## GLOBAL VIEWS

EFE CAN GÜRCAN

## A blueprint for survival

China's green revolution shows us that a shared future rooted in sustainability, equity and cooperation is not only possible but within our reach

Humanity is facing an unprecedented ecological crisis driven by climate change. Record rise in temperatures in recent years has led to oceans warming, rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Nearly 1 million species are at risk of extinction, while land degradation and food system failures are contributing to widespread hunger and forced migration.

As the ecological crisis intensifies, its impacts are felt most sharply by developing countries, which bear the brunt of environmental degradation, food insecurity and mass displacement, yet have fewer resources to adapt. Equitable solutions are essential for a fair ecological transition, and China — standing as the world's largest developing nation and a key actor in global governance — offers a compelling model with its vision of "ecological civilization". This vision seeks harmony between humans and nature, emphasizing a development model that prioritizes environmental and social sustainability over short-term economic gains. For China, ecological civilization is not merely an environmental agenda but a whole civilizational transformation grounded in collective well-being, social justice and environmental stewardship.

China's journey toward ecological civilization comprises at least four core, interlinked pillars: a clean energy revolution, a sustainable land management revolution, a green urban revolution, and stronger leadership in global environmental governance. These elements not only illustrate China's approach to addressing its ecological challenges but also underscore the potential of State-led interventions in driving impactful environmental outcomes, considering that the global ecological crisis is mainly a consequence of unrestrained capitalism and unchecked markets.

China's clean energy revolution, launched with the 2005 Renewable Energy Law and accelerated through its ambitious five-year plans, has transformed it into a global leader in renewable energy. By 2009, China had already become

the top investor in sustainable energy technology, and by 2015, it was the world's largest producer of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. This leadership has drastically driven down global costs, with solar panel prices halving in 2024 alone. Today, China's installed renewable capacity stands unmatched at 1,453 gigawatts, as compared with the US capacity of 388 gigawatts as the second leading country. Moreover, China has achieved substantial efficiency gains, cutting energy and carbon intensity significantly.

China is ramping up its focus on green agriculture and conservation, positioning itself as a leader in sustainable land management. Beyond agriculture, China's commitment to reforestation and parkland expansion is notable. Forest cover rose from 16.7 percent in 1990 to 23.6 percent in 2021, marking the world's largest net gain, and parkland has expanded dramatically to 673,000 hectares by 2022 as part of the country's "Beautiful China" initiative.

China's commitment to sustainable urbanization is also transforming its cities into models of green development. Once heavily polluted, many Chinese cities have cleaned up their air. China also leads in sewage treatment capacity, electric vehicle use and efficient public transport, with cities that dominate global production and consumption of electric buses and boast of the world's longest subway systems. China's eco-city movement deserves special mention, pushing cities to adopt low-carbon, circular economies by expanding green spaces, recycling initiatives and sustainable architecture. With the second-largest number of sustainable buildings globally, China is setting a new standard for urban resilience, resource efficiency and environmental health.

Finally, China has taken a leading role in multilateral environmental cooperation, particularly with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations establishing the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center in 2009. Through the Green Belt and Road Initiative, China has launched the Green Silk Road Envoys Program to foster global sustainability, and expanded its green vision globally, advocating for biodiversity protection and climate resilience. The Second Belt

and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in 2019 in Beijing established green investment principles and members were invited to join the initiatives such as the International Green Development Coalition, the Sustainable Cities Alliance, the South-South Cooperation Initiative on Climate Change, the Environmental Technology Exchange and Transfer Center, the Environmental Big Data Platform and the Green Investment Fund. Also central to the Green Belt and Road Initiative is green finance, with China becoming a global leader in green bonds and credits. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, launched in 2016, funds these efforts, promoting balanced development and environmental sustainability.

China's vision of ecological civilization offers a powerful model for countries grappling with the ecological crisis, proposing an alternative to profit-driven economic systems that often neglect sustainability and shared well-being. As nations increasingly recognize the urgency for tackling this crisis, China's example highlights the potential of State-led initiatives and international collaboration to foster a systemic change.

Ultimately, this moment demands cross-border leadership and decisive action, with solutions tailored to diverse challenges yet united in their commitment to the planet and its people. In other words, meeting this crisis will require all of us — nations, communities and individuals — to reconsider what we prioritize and embrace a collective resolve to transformative action, elevating the health of our environment and society above short-term economic interests. China's journey maps out a practical pathway for this vital socio-ecological transition, showing us that a shared future rooted in sustainability, equity and cooperation is not only possible but within our reach.

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MAXUEJING / CHINA DAILY

YAO ZHE

## To Cali, with a backlog

China's UN biodiversity COP presidency will come to an end soon, but the Kunming-Montreal Framework is a legacy that should be protected

Delegates from over 190 countries will be gathering in Cali, Colombia, from Oct 21 to Nov 1, for the 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16). It is also the time when China will officially hand over its presidency to Colombia.

China's presidency was prolonged because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The journey of

COP15 started in Kunming in 2021 and continued in Montreal, Canada, in 2022, with a historic agreement on key targets that will guide the global efforts to protect nature in the current decade, known as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The 2030 targets include conserving at least 30 percent of land, waters and seas globally, recognizing the rights and roles of indigenous peoples and local communities, to minimize the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience, and to reduce harmful incentives and mobilize financial resources for biodiversity.

The year 2030 is not too far away, so countries must be committed to taking immediate actions to achieve these targets. And in Cali, for the first time since this landmark agreement was reached, countries will meet to focus on their implementation. But, it is not hard to conclude that the implementation is not going to be as promising as we had hoped.

Global targets need to be broken down and taken up at the national level in order to be implemented, and the main instruments are the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs). In Montreal, countries agreed to update their NBSAPs by COP16, to better align with the new 2030 targets. But so far, just over 10 percent of the 196 parties to the CBD have kept their promise to submit updated plans. Most of these countries are in Western Europe and Asia, including China. A further 60 or so countries have simply updated their national targets, but without providing any details on how they intend to achieve them. With

COP16 just around the corner, a large number of countries will miss the deadline.

And the quality of those plans that have already been updated is not without concern, according to an online tracker developed by the World Wild Fund in collaboration with Greenpeace. While most of the updated plans respond to the targets set under the Kunming-Montreal framework, few adequately address the most relevant local issues that drive biodiversity loss in their respective countries. Yet ambitious plans need both. As a result, only China, Japan and France scored high on ambition. In addition, only a few countries provided actionable steps and monitoring mechanisms to track progress.

It's worth noting that countries that have not submitted updated plans have different reasons. Some simply have not made biodiversity a priority, while some others are constrained by their capacity and resources. And even when a national plan is ready, it is only the beginning of the implementation, which requires financial resources.

All countries have committed to mobilizing more resources through domestic channels, but some countries need additional international support. Globally, biodiversity hotspots — the places that are rich in biodiversity but facing imminent threats — are mostly located in countries that are less developed and less equipped financially. At COP15, a commitment was made to increase total biodiversity-related international financial resources to developing countries to at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least \$30 billion per year by 2030. The funding should come from developed countries, and from countries that voluntarily assume the responsibilities of developed countries.

The OECD's latest report showed that finance for biodiversity protection globally had grown to \$15.4 billion by 2022. But there is still a gap, and the downside of the increase is that most of it comes from loans rather than grants. An alarming trend is that dedicated funding for biodiversity specific projects, such as protected areas and restoration, has declined since 2015.

As COP15 president, China has made its efforts to narrow the gap.

At the opening of COP15, President Xi Jinping pledged 1.5 billion yuan (\$212.25 million) to protect biodiversity. In May, this was turned into the Kunming Biodiversity Fund that is co-chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme. According to China's Foreign Ministry, the fund is set up to support biodiversity conservation in developing countries, and work primarily through providing grants.

Nevertheless, the lion's share of the responsibility lies on developed countries. The \$20 billion is the most imminent goal for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and finance is always one of the most contentious issues at negotiating tables. In Cali, progress toward the \$20 billion target will be scrutinized, and eyes will be on rich countries to see if there are more champions to accelerate the delivery of their commitments.

Aside from increasing financial resources, it is equally important to shift existing harmful subsidies that cause biodiversity loss. Those harmful subsidies exist widely, in agriculture, fishing and energy sectors. Countries have committed to reducing harmful investments including subsidies by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030, but the NBSAPs have submitted to giving little confidence that this has been allocated with the necessary political determination across governments.

When delegates arrive in Cali, these implementation challenges mentioned above will be front and center. In the last decade, not a single target from the 2010 Aichi Global Biodiversity Framework was met. As biodiversity and climate crises worsen, our world simply cannot afford a repeat of that failure.

China's CBD COP presidency will end in Cali, but the Kunming-Montreal framework is a legacy that China should protect. As its implementation has only just begun, there is still much to be done, and a continued need for leadership from China.

*The author is global policy advisor in Greenpeace East Asia. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



MAXUEJING / CHINA DAILY

# Foreign enterprises embrace enduring appeal of Shanghai

Almost 1,000 overseas companies have headquarters based in the city



The Shanghai Hongqiao International Central Business District is a main destination for global businesses to establish regional headquarters. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Shanghai remains a magnet for international investors in East China; it is one of the top choices for multinational corporations establishing regional headquarters in 2024, even amid global economic uncertainties.

In the first six months of the year, 29 multinational company headquarters in Shanghai were honored with recognition certificates from the city government. By June 30, the city boasted a total of 985 foreign company headquarters, according to data from the Shanghai Commission of Commerce.

In the first half of 2024, a total of 3,007 foreign investors chose Shanghai to unlock potential business opportunities, marking an 18.3 percent year-on-year increase and showcasing the city's enduring appeal as an investment destination.

## Connecting businesses

Among the 29 companies recognized by the Shanghai government is DKSH, a Swiss market expansion service provider specializing in technology, performance materials and fast-moving consumer goods.

Carole Lin, head of country management at DKSH China, said that receiving the certificate for its regional headquarters underscores the Shanghai government's appreciation for DKSH's significant contributions to the Chinese market.

"This acknowledgment not only elevates DKSH's brand standing but also solidifies its role as a pivotal market expansion services provider for businesses. Operating as a regional headquarters, DKSH is poised to intensify resource consolidation, expedite business growth, refine management strategies and bolster commercial development throughout the Asia-Pacific region and other global markets," said Lin. "The recognition will also tell our upstream clients that the Shanghai government will continue to welcome and support

foreign investors. The business environment is better than previous years."

Lin added that the recognition serves to strengthen employees' sense of belonging and pride, "making them feel part of a globally influential company and thus enhancing DKSH's competitive edge in talent acquisition."

Setting up in the Pudong New Area in 1996, DKSH has been expanding its operation in Shanghai to better connect international markets to the Chinese market. In recent years, it has attached significant attention to innovation, in response to quality development trends in China. The company has upgraded its scientific instrument labs into the precision instrument demonstration center. It also added coffee and catering equipment centers, personal care labs and specialty chemical centers to its maps to provide technical support to its clients in navigating market changes and technological advancements.

"All those investments will help our overseas clients to better showcase their products to their Chinese clients," said Lin.

Over the past few years, the company achieved high double-digit growth in China.

In the future, DKSH will continue to "uphold the principle of innovation, excellence and sustainability". It will leverage its Shanghai-based regional headquarters to promote customer service enhancement, digital innovation and sustainability in China, according to Lin.

"By leveraging in-depth market analysis, supply chain engagement, marketing and after-sales services, we will continue to provide comprehensive market expansion services to help international brands succeed in China."

"With strategic guidance and resource integration from the headquarters, we can manage our supply chain and distribution network more effectively, achieving broader market coverage," said Lin. "We will use digital technology to optimize business progress



Kraft Heinz relocates its Asian headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai in 2020.

and customer experiences and develop e-commerce and digital channels. We aim to improve operational efficiency and give our clients a competitive edge in a rapidly changing market."

Shanghai, where DKSH embarked on its journey in China, will continue to be a steadfast partner to support DKSH's development, according to Lin.

"Our growth in Shanghai and China has benefited from the city's favorable business conditions and continuous opening-up policies. We are optimistic about the future of Shanghai's business environment," said Lin.

## Vast market

In 2020, US food manufacturer Kraft Heinz made a strategic move by relocating its headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai, aiming to capitalize on extensive market opportunities. During the certification ceremony for its new Shanghai headquarters in March this year, Frederico Freire Jardim, president of Kraft Heinz Asia, said that the relocation was intended to streamline decision-making processes and enhance marketing efficiency in China.

"In 2020, we made the decision to shift our Asian headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai. Looking at the business landscape in China, particularly in Shanghai, I believe it was a well-timed and advantageous choice," said Jardim.

In the past three years, Kraft Heinz has significantly increased its investments in Shanghai. In addition to establishing its headquarters, the company allocated 18 million yuan (\$2.55 million) in 2021 toward advancing digitalization within its Shanghai factory.

Subsequently, in 2022, Kraft Heinz unveiled its state-of-the-art customer experience center in Shanghai, featuring fully equipped labs, industrial-grade kitchens and a creative workspace, aimed at accelerating its pace of innovation.

Bill Feng, chief financial officer

of Kraft Heinz, highlighted three pivotal factors that attracted the company to Shanghai: a favorable business environment, Shanghai's exceptional leadership in shaping consumption trends and its abundant talent pool.

Feng said that in recent years, Shanghai has consistently implemented strategies to enhance and modernize its consumer industry through various policies and support initiatives. Notably, the city introduced the annual Double Five Shopping Festival, offering platforms for companies like Kraft Heinz to engage with targeted consumers. In the first half of 2024, Shanghai unveiled an action plan focusing on equipment renewal and consumer goods trade-ins, emphasizing environmentally friendly and sustainable practices, safe production methods, digitalization and intelligence — aligning with Kraft Heinz's own initiatives.

"Shanghai is always being regarded as one of the most open and modern international cities in China or even in the world, with a large, diversified and demanding consumer market. In Shanghai, we can better understand directly the dynamic changes in consumer needs and consumption trends, which can help us respond to the market changes in a timely manner," said Feng.

"Meanwhile, Shanghai maintains a large talent pool, which can provide us with talented global professionals. Now, in our Shanghai office, we have more than 40 percent of employees with a master's degree and above. Also, more than 40 percent of our management trainees studied or worked overseas."

In recent years, Shanghai has promoted quality development across various sectors. Kraft Heinz is committed to leveraging its expertise to contribute to the advancement of Shanghai's developmental landscape.

"We are encouraged to see that Shanghai has introduced a package of policies designed to

enhance the city's attractiveness to foreign investors. In particular, the focus on industry transformation and upgrading is a positive step forward," said Feng. "We look forward to receiving further guidance on the policies regarding large-scale equipment renewal, green factories, smart factories and other related matters. We would like to collaborate with the Shanghai government to promote high-quality development."

## Proven record

In 2016, Germany-based Leica Camera, known for its 35-millimeter film camera and lenses, settled its regional headquarters in Shanghai with the aim to connect with this market and formulate strategies that are more in line with it.

According to Siegmund Dukek, managing director of Leica Camera Greater China, there is no doubt that Shanghai, as an international business center, is the hub for the domestic market. Dukek appreciated Shanghai's premium business environment, highlighting the establishment of the free trade zone, which aids companies in enhancing operational efficiency.

"By establishing our headquarters in the city, we can better integrate resources, coordinate global business layouts and accelerate brand expansion in the Asia-Pacific region," said Dukek.

"Shanghai can provide top-notch services in various aspects such as legal, tax, finance and human resources management. For a brand like Leica targeting the high-end market, Shanghai's diverse talent pool and advanced logistics supply chain have provided strong support for our smooth operations and business expansion," said Dukek.

Over the past eight years, Leica Camera has undergone rapid expansion in China. Building on the experience in Shanghai, the company has extended its reach to second and third-tier cities, thereby bolstering its brand recognition among Chinese consumers.

Additionally, Leica has forged partnerships with prominent Chinese companies, such as smartphone maker Xiaomi, to advance the evolution of China's smartphone industry. Furthermore, collaborations with China's TV producer Hisense have been established to innovate in the development of laser TV technology.

Dukek said that one of Leica Camera's strategic focuses in China is to enhance brand awareness, especially among the younger generation. Shanghai will continue to be a pillar of Leica's development.

"We will collaborate with local businesses, artists and media to establish Leica as a cultural symbol in China and further promote the art of photography. Additionally, leveraging Shanghai's international platforms, we will strengthen the image of the brand, utilize Shanghai's exhibition resources and business opportunities to participate in more international exhibitions and forums and enhance the brand's exposure," said Dukek.

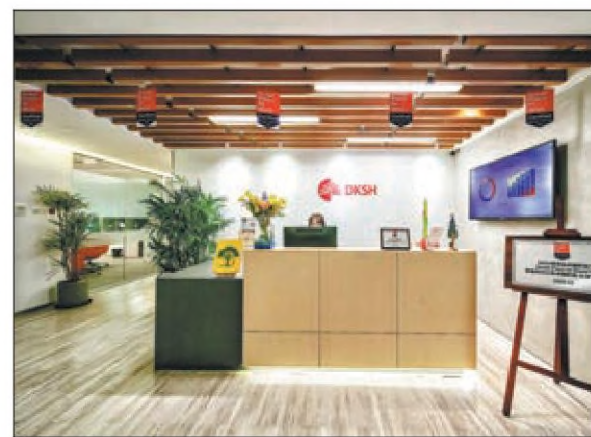
Dukek also suggested Shanghai strengthen its efforts in intellectual property rights protection and control the transportation and sale of smuggled and counterfeit products, which is particularly crucial for technology-driven enterprises like Leica. Support mechanisms on tax and innovation will also be beneficial to companies.

"We are confident in the future development of Shanghai and look forward to growing together with this city," said Dukek.

Over the past few years, Shanghai has been implementing a series of measures to bolster economic development and cultivate new high-quality productive forces. Shanghai's GDP exceeded 2.23 trillion yuan in the first half of 2024, marking a 4.8 percent year-on-year increase. The combined industrial production value of its three key industries — integrated circuits, biomedicine and artificial intelligence — experienced a 6.1 percent year-on-year increase.



Leica sets up its regional headquarters in Shanghai in 2016.



DKSH's regional headquarters in Shanghai receives a recognition certificate in June.

ADVERTORIAL

## Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

## Z WEEKLY

## Social Media Digest

## Different wedding bells

"Weddings don't need to be extravagant spectacles, but they should reflect personal tastes and individuality." This has become the modern consensus among Gen Zers when it comes to planning their wedding ceremonies, and it is evident in their choices of food and decor.

Traditionally, alcoholic drinks have been staples at Chinese weddings. However, with concerns about guests driving and the growing symbolic significance of milk tea as a social token, it has recently emerged as a popular beverage choice for weddings.

Hey Tea is one of the go-to brands for milk tea, with its Chinese name "Xi Cha" featuring the character "xi", which symbolizes "happiness" in Chinese culture. Another favorite is Chagee, known for its elegant packaging in auspicious red, a color traditionally associated with luck.

Everyday snacks like *latiao* (spicy gluten strips), once considered too casual for wedding occasions, have also made their way into wedding festivities. For many couples, these spicy treats represent the exciting journey they're embarking on together, adding a playful touch to wedding candy and games.

As for wedding decor and accessories, an increasing number of young couples are incorporating elements from their hobbies, such as blind box figurines.

Xiaohongshu blogger "Tieguaixiaoli" shared with news site 36Kr that her bridesmaids' wrist flowers and the best men's corsages were crafted using figurines from the Molly Wedding Flower Girl collection, a popular IP from Pop Mart. "These figurines can continue to serve as home decorations after the wedding. Seeing them will bring back memories of this joyful experience," she said.



Casual foods are making their way into wedding celebrations. TUCHONG

## Take my place

In today's world, people can hire services for a variety of tasks, from walking dogs to playing video games. In Japan, a new service has emerged that allows individuals to hire someone to resign from their job on their behalf.

Resigning from a job has become increasingly challenging in Japan, primarily due to the country's labor supply-demand imbalance.

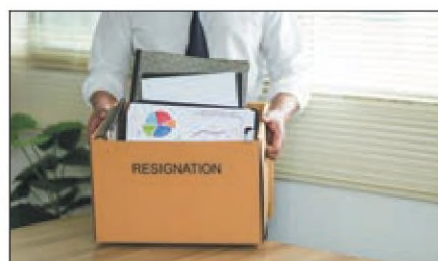
To reduce labor loss, many companies have added several steps to the resignation process. Employees wishing to resign must prepare a job description pamphlet for their successor, submit a resignation petition one to two months in advance, undergo rounds of interviews, and finally submit a formal resignation letter before informing colleagues.

In addition to this complex and time-consuming process, employees must also brace themselves for harsh language and potential threats from their superiors.

As a result, resignation agencies have become a growing industry, offering a way for employees to quit their jobs painlessly for a fee of 22,000 yen (\$147). Once hired, the agency contacts the company to confirm the details, handles all necessary paperwork, and even packs and ships the client's personal belongings to a designated address.

By acting as a go-between for employers and employees, these services help individuals maintain their dignity in Japan's culture of tolerance and harmony.

LI XINRAN



Resignation agencies assist employees in quitting their jobs more smoothly. TUCHONG

## Taking to the high seas anew

Young naval cadets share their experiences aboard modern Chinese naval ships as they explore new ports of call, **Gui Qian** reports.



Cadets from the Naval University of Engineering held a National Day celebration ceremony in the South China Sea on Oct 1. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

On Oct 1, as the first rays of sunlight touched China's Nansha Islands, a fleet primarily comprising cadets from the Naval University of Engineering (NUE) held a flag-raising ceremony in the South China Sea to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Over 1,300 cadets and crew of the PLA Navy Task Group 83 stood in neat rows on the decks of ships *Qi Jiguang* and *Jing Gangshan* as they raised the national flag and sang the national anthem.

The fleet then held a soldiers' oath renewal ceremony, where participants signed a banner, expressing their firm commitment to the country.

On the morning of Sept 28, over 1,300 cadets and officers from NUE set sail from Zhanjiang, South China's Guangdong province, for an offshore training and visit mission.

The task group traveled through the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, visiting Malaysia and Bangladesh, and is scheduled to dock in Singapore before returning to China.

The cadets engaged in exchanges and cooperation with the navies and locals of the host countries, contributing to building a maritime community with a shared future.

Shen Xudong, a 23-year-old junior from Anyang, Central China's Henan province, delivered a speech at the National Day ceremony, representing his fellow cadets. Standing before the vast sea and his peers, all brimming with high morale, he felt a profound sense of national pride.

This voyage marks NUE's exploration of a new model for offshore training. Students participated, engaging in practical exercises alongside the ships' crews and gaining valuable hands-on experience.

According to Shen, the *Qi Jiguang* is known as a "floating university at sea", equipped with advanced teaching facilities and classrooms. It also features cadet dining halls, recreation rooms, and gyms. The crew members are also more experienced in teaching than those on regular ships, helping cadets learn more efficiently.

Dou Shiyu, a 24-year-old student specializing in data link engineering and command from Zhengzhou, Henan, recalled her experience standing watch with the crew. They observed how power equipment was fueled and



"In our 20s, we are in the prime of our lives. Through this voyage, we have demonstrated the vitality and confidence of young soldiers in the Chinese Navy, conveying our image as peace-loving and open."

**Dou Shiyu**, 24, a student at the Naval University of Engineering

jetted in the engine room and monitored sea conditions and radar signals from the bridge.

"Previously, our courses on land were more theoretical, but now, as I operate the equipment on the ship, I truly understand the principles," she said. "The crew also shares practical experiences with us. For example, they explain what certain floating objects at sea are and how to adjust angles to avoid collisions."

"Training in skills closely related to our future roles is new but essential for us," Shen said.

International exchange and cooperation were also key objectives of this voyage. During stops in Malaysia and Bangladesh, the fleet hosted various events, including open ship days, deck receptions, and Chinese city promotions. Host navy officers, local citizens, and overseas Chinese were invited aboard to participate in these activities.

"The deck reception is a good opportunity for exchanges, which not only shows the traditional Chinese culture, but also shows the enterpris-



"The deck reception is a good opportunity for exchanges, which not only shows the traditional Chinese culture, but also shows the enterprising spirit of naval cadets."

**Shen Xudong**, 23, a student at the Naval University of Engineering

ing spirit of naval cadets," Shen said.

In addition, Dou performed two dances with Chinese characteristics at the deck reception, showing the harmony among China's multiethnic groups as well as the combination of traditional Chinese culture and modern trends, presenting China's warm and friendly image to other countries.

The naval cadets also visited a Chinese-language school in Malaysia and a naval academy in Bangladesh, where they engaged in friendly basketball and table tennis matches.

Liu Dingyuan, a 20-year-old information security student from Chengdu, Southwest China's Sichuan province, was a member of the foreign affairs team during this trip, providing bilingual tours during the open ship days.

"I needed to give an English presentation to Malaysian military cadets and officers with only one day to prepare. Although I was nervous, I wanted to showcase the demeanor of a Chinese soldier and highlight our nation's grace, so I dedicated myself



"The navy is a messenger of friendship, spreading the seeds of peace and harmony around the world, and this training at sea has allowed us to forge emotional bonds with people around the world."

**Liu Dingyuan**, 20, a student at the Naval University of Engineering

fully to the preparation. In the end, I delivered the presentation fluently," she said.

"Our younger generation of naval cadets, including myself, is driven by passion and motivation. The Chinese Navy is my home, and I'm dedicated to embracing this responsibility and making meaningful contributions," she continued.

"The navy is a messenger of friendship, spreading the seeds of peace and harmony around the world, and this training at sea has allowed us to forge emotional bonds with people around the world," Liu said.

Many cadets referred to this journey as a "voyage of youth".

"In our 20s, we are in the prime of our lives. Through this voyage, we have demonstrated the vitality and confidence of young soldiers in the Chinese Navy, conveying our image as peace-loving and open," Dou said. "It's not just about us seeing the world; it's also about letting the world see us."

Contact the writer at [guiqian@121st.cn](mailto:guiqian@121st.cn)

## Z WEEKLY

# Russian students embrace life in Hainan

Russian exchange students in Hainan celebrate Chinese culture and build connections that foster mutual understanding.

By CHEN BOWEN in Haikou  
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

Irina Ianshina, an exchange student from Russia, has developed a deep passion for learning Chinese calligraphy since arriving in South China's Hainan province a year ago.

The 24-year-old adopted the Chinese name Lin Wan, carefully selecting characters that phonetically resemble her Russian name, each with a special meaning. "Lin" signifies forest in Chinese, reflecting her love for nature, inspired by her outdoor-filled childhood. "Wan", chosen for its gentle connotations, was recommended by her Chinese friends.

"Many say Chinese is the most challenging language to learn, but I've had a fondness for Chinese culture and even dabbled in calligraphy at school in Moscow when I was 14," Ianshina said.

For many international students unfamiliar with Chinese characters, calligraphy feels more like a form of painting. However, at Hainan College of Software Technology (HNCST) in Qionghai, Ianshina has made impressive progress in calligraphy under the guidance of her teacher Zhou Xiayu, who praised her understanding of character formation and her dedication to practice.

In Ianshina's dormitory, her calligraphy and Chinese painting works adorn the walls.

"These pieces were completed during class," she said, pointing to a lotus flower painting. "My teacher explained the unique symbolism of lotus flowers in China — they grow in mud yet remain pure and flawless."

Ianshina chose to study in Hainan because she loves the pleasant winter temperatures above 20 C, the fresh air, and especially the seafood.

Planning to extend her studies in China, she aims to achieve HSK-4 proficiency, which will enable her to discuss a wider range of topics and communicate more effectively with native speakers.

"Since the college began admitting international students in 2015, we have enrolled over 100 students from Russia, who have demonstrated exceptional academic performance, with most holding undergraduate or advanced degrees," said Chen Huiyang, Party secretary of HNCST.

She explained that, in addition to core Chinese language courses in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the curriculum for international students includes modules on Chinese culture and an introduction to Hainan's unique characteristics and tourism resources.

Anastasiia Zubkova, a 23-year-old junior from Russia, has a deep admiration for Chinese culture. She noted the similarity between Russians and Hainan locals in their shared love for chicken dishes. She also expressed her fascination with the wide variety of fruits available in Hainan, a diversity she doesn't find in Russia.

According to Chen, to enrich the cultural experience for international students, the college regularly organizes lectures and activities covering diverse topics such as Chinese tea culture, calligraphy, painting,

cuisine, *baijiu* culture, Chinese (Hainan) music, tai chi, and coconut carving.

Chen also highlighted that the college has established partnerships with several universities in Russia.

## A place to belong

Aleksei Andreev embarked on a transformative journey as an exchange student from Russia in 2016. Prior to his arrival in Hainan, Andreev had been studying Chinese in evening classes in Russia, a mandatory requirement for his major in professional communication between Europe and Asia, which included learning foreign languages.

Enthralled by the two-week short-term language program at HNCST, Andreev gained a foundational understanding of the Chinese language and culture.

"I developed a deep appreciation for the teachers, campus environment, and new experiences," he said.

Andreev then pursued a one-year program focused on Chinese language at the college, funded by the Hainan provincial government international student scholarship.

After completing his one-year study, Andreev returned to Russia in 2017 to finish his master's degree and work. In 2018, he returned to Hainan for another year of study, ultimately passing the advanced HSK-5 exam.

During his time at HNCST, Andreev engaged in various activities, including playing soccer with Chinese students and locals and participating in martial arts competitions. He also performed Russian songs at the college's music festivals, singing for

his fellow students and faculty.

Andreev's passion for Hainan and cultural exchange led him to assist with international student affairs at the college from 2019 to 2021, before transitioning to teaching Russian language and cultural courses at Hainan University in the provincial capital, Haikou. "I hope that by teaching my students about Russia, they will be inspired to pursue studies and careers that connect Russia and China," he said.

Andreev also shared his deep connection to the island province, emphasizing the wealth of possibilities for young people in Hainan.

"With the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port, the province is becoming a more internationally oriented destination, offering a wide range of opportunities for expansion and progress," he said.

Committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration between Russia and China, the 30-year-old also engages in translation work for both languages and utilizes social media to showcase the warmth and hospitality of China. He aims to present an authentic view of China to the world, strengthen the bond between the two countries, and promote further investment in Hainan's growing economy.

Party Secretary Chen emphasized the importance of cultivating a new generation of high-quality talent with international perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills to enhance cooperation between China and Russia in fields such as economics, technology, and culture.

"This will lay a solid foundation for the long-term development of the bilateral relationship," Chen noted.



Top left and bottom left: Russian students at Hainan College of Software Technology explore tea culture and Chinese painting in cultural classes. Top right and bottom right: Russian students try their hand at making dumplings and lanterns during the Lunar New Year celebration event at HNCST on Feb 7, 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Overseas Report

# Chinese and German youth team up for green designs

From Aug 18 to 31, we visited Clara-Schumann-Gymnasium in Bonn, Germany, for the first time. Instead of feeling shy and hesitant, we were excited because we had already connected online in April while working together on an environmental project.

The trip was an exchange program between Clara-Schumann-Gymnasium and our school, Hangzhou Entel Foreign Language School. Our mission was to reduce the human carbon footprint by designing sustainable solutions — from environmentally friendly buildings to eco-friendly shirts and reusable cardboard boxes.

We worked closely with the German students, combining our knowledge to tackle the issue from multiple angles.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of our school's partnership with Clara-Schumann-Gymnasium, as well as the comprehensive strategic partnership between



Jiang Ziyi (left) with Rebecca Vad, his host and partner at Clara-Schumann-Gymnasium. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

China and Germany. This exchange was more than just a chance to explore a new country — it was a celebration of a long-standing tradition between our schools, filled with cultural surprises as we focused on our project.

After arriving in Germany, we were immediately struck by how advanced the country was in its environmental efforts. Many of the buildings we visited had ultrathick insulation and innovative air circulation systems instead of traditional air conditioning.

During a tour of Ludwig Maximilian University, we learned that many of their structures were built from wood, which is not only faster to construct but also leaves a smaller environmental footprint compared to concrete and steel.

These insights deeply influenced our project, where we focused on designing buildings that minimized heat loss and incorporated renewable energy solutions.

Our collaboration with the German students was enriching not just on the technical side, but also through our daily interactions — working together, exchanging ideas, and learning from each other. For example, during one session, we

experimented with different computer-aided design models, trying to create a building structure that could maximize solar input while ensuring thermal efficiency.

It was fascinating to see how the German students approached problem-solving differently from us. They were meticulous and methodical, while we tended to brainstorm and adapt quickly. These contrasting approaches complemented each other, leading to a richer and more innovative final product.

This human connection extended to my experience with my host family. They had an impressive collection of teas — something I hadn't expected to find in Germany. Coming from China, where tea is a cultural cornerstone, I was surprised by how much my host family valued it.

Their cabinet was filled with varieties like Earl Grey, herbal blends, and even green teas. Each morning at breakfast, we

would laugh and compare tea traditions, realizing that, despite our geographical distance, some small but meaningful connections bridged our cultures.

By the end of the project, we had not only learned about sustainable design but also experienced the power of cultural exchange firsthand. Through our shared environmental goals, we built friendships that transcended language and national boundaries.

On the last day, my classmate Fu Ziyi reflected on the experience, saying, "This trip wasn't just about reducing our carbon footprint — it was about understanding how different countries can work together, learn from each other, and make the world a better place."

Written by Jiang Ziyi, 17, a student at Hangzhou Entel Foreign Language School. Edited by his English teacher Feng Yineng.