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XI'S VISION | THOUGHT ON CULTURE

Museums key to promoting intl exchanges

Exhibitions highlighting role of different civilizations in fostering mutual learning

By DENG ZHANGYU
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Since it opened a special exhibition in September, the Guimet Museum in Paris has drawn throngs of visitors eager to marvel at more than 100 exquisite pieces of Chinese gold artistry, including ornaments, jewelry and decorative objects dating back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The items offer a glimpse into the finery of Chinese women from royal families at the time.

Next month, the museum will unveil another exhibition featuring millennia-old antiques that are on loan from Chinese museums. The exhibition, which will feature more than 200 items, will offer a journey to discover the wonders of Chang'an, the bustling capital of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), a vibrant hub where merchants, scholars, musicians, artists and craftsmen from around the world once converged.

Yannick Lintz, president of the Guimet Museum, noted that the facility, which is dedicated to Asian art, has forged extensive collaborations with Chinese institutions this year. In total, the museum will present four exhibitions spotlighting China's rich cultural heritage.

Earlier this year, a show displaying the art and culture of two mysterious states in Central China's Hubei province 2,000 years ago was presented to a US audience at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. It was the biggest archaeological show from China since 2020 and received strong support from six key museums in China.

The active collaborations between foreign museums and their Chinese counterparts in recent years can be attributed to President Xi Jinping's frequent promotion of exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations, a key aspect of Xi Jinping Thought on Culture that was put forward at a national meeting on the work of public communication

and culture in October last year. An instruction by Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, was conveyed at the meeting covering seven aspects, including enhancing international communication capacity and promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations.

It was not the first time that Xi emphasized the importance of exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. When he proposed the Global Civilization Initiative at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-level Meeting in Beijing in March last year, he called for respect for the diversity of civilizations.

Delivering a keynote address at the meeting, Xi said that countries need to uphold the principles of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilizations, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and inclusiveness transcend any sense of superiority.

As the future of all countries will be closely connected, tolerance, coexistence, exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations will play an irreplaceable role in advancing humanity's modernization process and making the garden of world civilizations flourish, Xi said.

Tan Ping, director of Art Exhibitions China, a governmental body that aims to promote Chinese cultural heritage overseas, said that "antiques and cultural heritage are a unique medium and play a key role in enhancing understanding and respect among different civilizations and promoting exchange and mutual learning".

Since its establishment in 1971, Art Exhibitions China has held 240 large-scale Chinese antique shows overseas and introduced 140 foreign shows to China.

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Sports improve understanding between nations

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco
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Sports can enhance understanding and collaboration between Chinese and Americans, and has given people a better understanding of other cultures and built up friendships by participating in and competing at the Olympics, said athletes, coaches, organizing committee members and sports

enthusiasts at a recent event.

On Tuesday, an American and Chinese Sports Forum was held at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the venue used for the opening ceremony of the 1984 Summer Olympics, and which will be adopted for the track and field competition and the opening ceremony for the 2028 Summer Olympics.

It drew hundreds of industry

insiders and the sports community to share ideas and thoughts through panel discussions about how sports can play a more important role in strengthening communications between China and the United States.

Speakers included Olympic champions, medalists and seasoned athletes including four-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer John Naber, former Chinese national diving team member

Li Hongping, and former member of the Chinese women's volleyball team Li Yueping, who is a two-time Olympian and a bronze medalist at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

"It's of great significance for us to have meaningful discussions here in Los Angeles, the host city for both Olympics," said Li Hua, president of

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Vital rail link turns one



A passenger takes a selfie in front of the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train on Thursday, at Padalarang Station in West Java, Indonesia. The railway project marked its first full year of operation on the same day. Over the year, a total of 5.79 million passenger trips were made and the number of passengers has been rising steadily. XU QIN / XINHUA

STREET DANCE SHEDS 'BAD BOY' IMAGE, RISES IN POPULARITY

Urban art form brings joy, resilience, self-expression to young workers

By CHEN NAN
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Fan Xiaoyu's parents used to worry that their son was turning into a "bad boy". As a teenager obsessed with street dance, Fan spent a lot of time dancing in baggy, flashy outfits instead of

studying hard at school as his parents expected.

Now, the 34-year-old runs G-Steps studios, one of the largest dance

instruction companies in the country, which has more than 30 branches in Beijing and has trained over 150,000 people.

"I never imagined my passion for dance would be shared by so many people," Fan said. "Nowadays, not only is it accepted in the mainstream, but it is becoming truly

recognized and popular among the general public."

In China's bustling urban landscapes, a vibrant street dance culture is emerging, particularly among young professionals seeking an escape from their demanding work lives.

See *Leisure*, page 2

Rejuvenating China-Pakistan relations

The recent visit of Premier Li Qiang to Islamabad marked a pivotal moment in the evolving relationship between Pakistan and China. The visit underscored the strategic importance of the shared future of both nations. By hosting the high-profile Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting, Pakistan seized the opportunity to further solidify its ties with China and other regional partners, strengthening not only diplomatic ties but also promoting economic collaboration through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Premier Li's emphasis on an "upgraded version of the CPEC" symbolizes a new phase in the long-standing partnership between the two countries. Launched in 2013, CPEC aimed to transform Pakistan's infrastructure landscape and connect western China to the Arabian Sea via Gwadar Port. This multi-billion-dollar project, part of the Belt and Road Initiative, has significantly impacted Pakistan's energy, transportation, and communication sectors. Upgrading CPEC suggests an ambition to enhance these projects with advanced technology, deeper investments, and broader economic integration.

The upgraded version of CPEC could entail an increased focus on emerging technologies, sustainability and new sectors. An enhanced CPEC could bring about deeper industrial cooperation and job creation in Pakistan, as well as skill development initiatives to train the workforce for modern production.

CPEC has been critical for Pakistan's economic development. Since its inception, it has attracted over \$65 billion in investment, leading to the construction of highways, energy projects and industrial zones. The project has helped address Pakistan's energy shortage, improved connectivity and contributed to GDP growth. The CPEC's upgraded version could offer Pakistan a path to greater economic stability and reduced reliance on international loans.

Deepening ties between China and Pakistan through CPEC and beyond serves as a deterrent to common security threats in the region. Li's visit and the opening of the Gwadar airport symbolize China's steadfast commitment to CPEC, even in the face of security challenges. Enhanced counterterrorism efforts, as highlighted in the



CPEC has been critical for Pakistan's economic development. Since its inception, it has attracted over \$65 billion in investment, leading to the construction of highways and energy projects.

discussions between Li and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, are critical for ensuring the safety of foreign investments and the progress of CPEC projects.

Hosting the SCO meeting is a milestone for Pakistan. This gathering of regional leaders in Islamabad provides Pakistan an ideal platform to project itself as a leader in regional security and economic

cooperation. China's presence at this event sends a strong message of support for Pakistan and underscores the depth of the two nations' strategic partnership.

The SCO meeting is an opportunity for Pakistan to showcase CPEC's potential to other member states, as a model for regional connectivity and development. The presence of regional stakeholders may encourage other countries to consider similar collaborative projects, potentially expanding the influence of the BRI framework. This aligns with the SCO's goals of enhancing connectivity and fostering economic cooperation among member states.

For decades, Pakistan and China have shared a time-tested friendship. This enduring relationship has been marked by mutual respect, economic collaboration and shared strategic interests. China has consistently supported Pakistan, in regional matters and on the global stage. In return, Pakistan has provided China with a reliable partner in South Asia, and the two countries have frequently backed each other in international forums.

Li's visit, the inauguration of the New Gwadar International Airport, and the SCO meeting all signify a renewed chapter in this friendship. As Pakistan continues to navigate

its economic and security challenges, China's support through initiatives like CPEC is crucial. This relationship serves as a beacon of cooperation that can inspire other nations in the region to pursue similar partnerships, thus contributing to a more interconnected and prosperous South Asia.

The SCO meeting and Li's visit mark a historic juncture in the China-Pakistan relationship, reaffirming the mutual commitment to a future of shared prosperity. The emphasis on an upgraded CPEC offers a glimpse into the potential for transformative development, while Pakistan's role as an SCO host underscores its growing regional importance. These initiatives, rooted in friendship, diplomacy and economic ambition, not only promise a brighter future for Pakistan and China but also present a model of cooperation for the region. By investing in shared goals, both nations are set to achieve milestones that will not only enhance their bilateral relationship but also promote stability, connectivity and economic resilience in the region.

The author is an Pakistani analyst on China and assistant professor at the National Defence University Pakistan. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



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Left: Japanese freestyle dancer Kyoka (center) gives instruction to students at a G-Steps store in Beijing in August last year. **Right:** Wu Qiping attends a class at a dance studio in Chengdu, Sichuan province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



An instructor shows students how to dance during a class at G-Steps. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Leisure: Escaping from office fatigue

Hao Xin has pursued her dancing hobby since college. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



ness and helps individuals to stay mentally focused."

Fan said the development of dance culture is closely linked to urbanization.

"Regardless of background — whether an office worker who is a beginner or a seasoned dancer with years of experience — everyone possesses the same potential to dance. Young people are willing to invest in dance, marking a positive shift," he said. "The youngest student we have is about 4 years old and the eldest one is more than 60 years old. Dancing is a universal pleasure for people of all ages and occupations."

Fan said when language fails to convey meaning, we can communicate through our bodies.

"Dance transcends words, allowing us to express emotions and connect on a deeper level, showcasing the powerful resilience of the human spirit," he said.

G-Steps instructor Yu Zhongyuan joined the company in 2017 after he finished second in the popping category at Juste Debout, in Paris, one of the biggest street dance

competitions in the world.

Yu has been dedicated to street dance since he was a teenager. After he moved to Beijing from Qingdao in Shandong province to study law, he won a number of street dance competitions and gave street dance classes at universities in the capital.

"Unlike dance professionals, this love for dance among amateurs is not just a trend; it represents a shift in lifestyle and a means of self-expression for a generation striving to balance work and personal fulfillment," Yu said.

What a feeling

Street dance originated in the United States in the late 1970s and includes a variety of styles, such as breaking, or hip-hop, locking and popping.

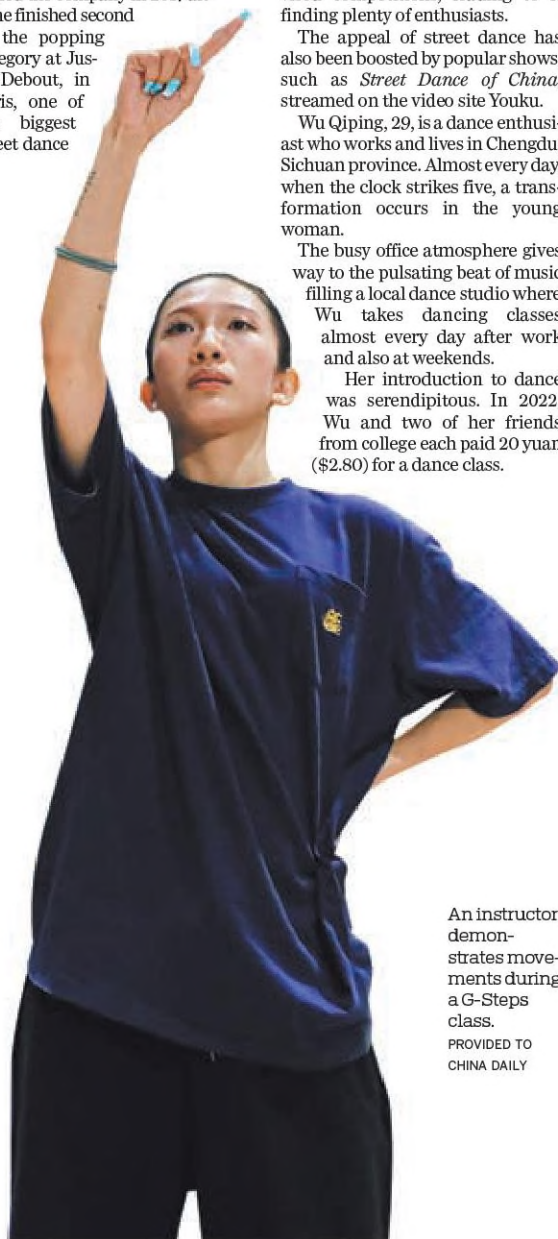
In China, street dance has taken root for various reasons, including internet exposure, high-profile celebrity collaborations, and televised competitions, leading to it finding plenty of enthusiasts.

The appeal of street dance has also been boosted by popular shows, such as *Street Dance of China*, streamed on the video site Youku.

Wu Qiping, 29, is a dance enthusiast who works and lives in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Almost every day, when the clock strikes five, a transformation occurs in the young woman.

The busy office atmosphere gives way to the pulsating beat of music filling a local dance studio where Wu takes dancing classes almost every day after work and also at weekends.

Her introduction to dance was serendipitous. In 2022, Wu and two of her friends from college each paid 20 yuan (\$2.80) for a dance class.



An instructor demonstrates movements during a G-Steps class. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From page 1

For many young workers, the day begins with the grind of a typical office environment — emails to answer, reports to generate, and endless meetings to attend. These professionals often spend long hours in front of screens.

Don't stop believing

Fan was no exception. In 2013, he started working at an internet company in Beijing. He had earlier moved from Baoshan, Yunnan province, to the capital city to study business administration at college.

After the company shifted to a new building, Fan discovered a spacious yoga room with mirrors lining the walls that the company had prepared for its employees.

"When I saw the room, I instantly associated it with a space for dancing. Then I started dancing in front of the mirrors, and soon people who shared the same interests came and we danced together," recalled Fan.

"Since most of them had never danced before, I started to teach them, and I was surprised to find that those without a dancing background learned very fast. What impressed me most was their passion for dancing," Fan said.

In four years, Fan gathered together about 500 of the internet company employees to participate in the informal dance groups. The company, which has about 10,000 employees, supported Fan's idea and hired more dance teachers to give classes every day after work.

One of the teachers was Wang Xiao, who was also from Yunnan and who had learned to dance as a child.

"I can still recall the first class. I taught those who had never received dance training before. They found it

hard and followed my moves reluctantly," recalled Wang, now an experienced G-Steps instructor.

"I thought that they may not return to my class, but to my surprise more people came."

In 2017, Fan launched his first dance studio near Beijing's 798 Art Zone. His colleagues and bosses questioned his decision to become an entrepreneur, but Fan was determined.

"I wanted to open the dance studio because I never stopped loving dance. It's my greatest passion," he said. "With the experience of teaching my former colleagues to dance, I wanted to bring the joy of dancing to more people."

Fan named his dance studio "G-Steps", after a dance club he started when he was a high school student. He described the venture as "rediscovering and returning to what I love".

Drawing inspiration from stars like Michael Jackson, whose unique dance style fused pop, funk, soul and hip-hop, as well as from K-pop groups, Fan started dancing as a teenager because it "made me feel cool".

Urban roots

With diverse movements and rhythmic music, dance intrigues most people.

Young Chinese professionals have embraced a number of dance styles such as contemporary, Chinese folk, and classic Chinese dance, but street dance is the most enjoyable one for amateurs and beginners, Fan believes.

"Compared with other dance forms, like ballet and classic Chinese dance, street dance is easy to learn, makes individuals overcome their fears and builds confidence," he said. "It also promotes mindful-

"After experiencing significant burnout from work, we were looking for a way to recharge. Though none of us had danced before, we decided to give it a try," said Wu.

The moment she stepped into the studio, the vibrant energy and infectious hip-hop beats enveloped her.

"The first class was very awkward. I was very uncoordinated. We stood at the back of the classroom and found it very challenging to follow the lead of the teacher," recalled Wu, adding that she wore her office outfit to the dance studio, which made her stand out from the other students.

Though her two other friends dropped out of the class, Wu found the experience unlike anything she had encountered before.

At first, she struggled with the choreography; her movements were — stiff and unsure. However, the supportive atmosphere and encouragement from her instructor and peers motivated her to push through her initial discomfort. The dance studio became a place of liberation, allowing her to express herself outside the constraints of work.

As the weeks turned into months, Wu's commitment to dance deepened. With each session, she gained confidence not only in her dancing but also in her overall demeanor. The emotional release she experienced through dance was profound, and it became a form of therapy, allowing her to process the stress and anxiety accumulated from her day job.

As she reflected on her experiences, she recognized that dance had transformed not just her approach to life, but her overall well-being: from her fashion sense to her self-confidence. It became a vital part of her identity — a source of joy, connection, and resilience in an ever-demanding world.

Dance me to the end

Hao Xin, 25, also finds joy in dancing, a hobby she started in college.

"After a long day of work, the freedom of dance provides me with a necessary outlet for stress relief. I enjoy the dance studio which is filled

with the sounds of laughter and music. It fosters a sense of community as these dancers bond over shared experiences, supporting each other's growth and celebrating personal milestones," said Hao, who works for an advertising company in Beijing.

Wang Jiatong fell in love with street dance when he was 13 while passing by a street dance studio in Hanzhong, Shaanxi province. He believes it was one of the first dance studios of its kind in the small city, and he was deeply intrigued by the energetic music and an environment where he could express himself in a creative and unique way.

Wang came to Beijing to attend university, secured the advertising company job, worked hard, and tried to live the life he had dreamed of, but reality intervened.

"The office was dull and only the dancing made me feel alive," said Wang, 34.

Last year, he returned to Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province. Four months ago, he launched J-Dance studio, which offers street dance courses for enthusiasts.

"So far, we have more than 300 registered users, which is beyond my expectation," Wang said.

"Unlike first-tier cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, street dance studios like ours are still a growing trend in Xi'an. But the first month after the studio opened we received warm feedback from the users," he said.

Compared with dance studios from about 10 years ago, which attracted professional and aspiring professional dancers, dance studios are nowadays popular with amateurs, he said.

The dance studio has become a sanctuary where young people can reclaim their identities beyond their job titles, he said.

"Ninety percent of our clients are young women who are white-collar workers, full-time mothers, and young students," said Wang. "They enjoy the atmosphere in the dance studio. From the outfits to the makeup, they show great interest and passion when they appear in the dance studio, showcasing themselves in front of the mirrors."

TOP NEWS

Ministry: UK foreign secretary set to begin visit

By ZHANG YUNBI
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With United Kingdom Foreign Secretary David Lammy set to make an official visit to China on Friday and Saturday, Beijing has expressed its hope to work together with London on building trust and holding dialogues on cooperation.

The trip, announced by China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday, marks the first visit to China by a member of the new UK Cabinet led by Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who took office in July.

Analysts noted that both China and the UK are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and both are major world economies.

"A sustained and steady China-

UK relationship serves the interests of the two countries, facilitates the joint response of the international community to global challenges and boosts world peace and development," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Thursday.

The two sides "will have in-depth discussion on enhancing strategic mutual trust and strengthening dialogue on cooperation in various areas" during Lammy's visit to China, Mao told a daily news briefing in Beijing.

President Xi Jinping held his first phone conversation with the new UK prime minister in August.

The two sides reached an important consensus on sticking to the principle of mutual respect, strengthening contacts and dia-

logues, and expanding exchanges and cooperation.

Lammy's talks in Beijing are expected to center on implementing the important consensus reached between the two leaders in the phone talks in August, Mao said.

Beijing is willing to work with London to continue seeing each other as partners, uphold open cooperation, strive for mutual benefits and a win-win situation, and promote the sustained and steady growth of bilateral relations, she said.

The UK was one of the first major Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China, and it has been 52 years since the two countries established diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level.

Observers noted that in recent

months, China and the UK have seen good momentum in exchanges at various levels, as senior officials from the two countries, including ministers, have held talks or made phone calls covering areas such as economy, finance, diplomacy, military and energy.

Zheng Zeguang, China's ambassador to the UK, has said that China and the UK "have their own specialties in economy, education and culture, and there is enormous potential for mutually beneficial cooperation".

"China and the UK can join hands to contribute to the resolution of major international issues, which is also the responsibility of both countries as permanent members of the UN Security Council," he said at a reception in London last month.

Flagship BRI project marks anniversary

By LUO WANGSHU
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The Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, a flagship project of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, marked the first anniversary of its official operation on Thursday, showcasing impressive achievements in both transportation and economic development.

Over the past year, the railway has handled 5.79 million passenger trips, with a peak daily seat occupancy rate of 99.6 percent, according to China Railway International, the company operating the service.

Since its commercial launch on Oct 17 last year, the 142.3-kilometer railway has safely completed 15,826 train trips, covering a distance of more than 2.57 million km.

The railway, which boasts a maximum design speed of 350 km/h, has reduced the travel time between Indonesia's bustling capital, Jakarta, and the popular tourist destination of Bandung from over three hours to just 46 minutes. This has made it a highly popular commuting option for residents as well as tourists, providing a safe, green and comfortable means of transportation.

To meet the passenger surge, the number of trains in service daily has increased from 14 to as many as 52 during peak periods, with the daily seating capacity growing from 8,400 to more than 31,000. The railway has seen its single-day passenger trip volume peak to 24,132.

The high-speed train service has become a game changer for many Indonesians. Rahmanda, who runs a transportation consultancy in Jakarta, said he could now reach Bandung within an hour. "The punctuality and reliability of the train service ensure that I can meet clients without worrying about traffic delays," he added.

Improved services

Passenger services have been improved to encourage more consumption. The introduction of online ticketing has been a major success, with 82 percent of tickets now purchased through digital platforms. The system also supports online ticket changes and refunds, while physical ticket windows remain available.

A flexible pricing policy offers passengers more options, and additional staff members are deployed during peak travel hours to ensure smooth boarding and departures. Several stations along the route, such as Halim and Padang, offer a variety of amenities including restaurants, convenience stores and cafes.

The railway owes its huge success to the close collaboration between Chinese and Indonesian teams. More than 400 Indonesians have completed certification training under Chinese mentors, and some have already taken on critical roles

in the railway's daily operations.

Agus Dewiono Widodo, who trained under Chinese high-speed train pilot Zhang Yue, said he is proud to be one of Indonesia's first high-speed train drivers, crediting the support and guidance of his Chinese mentor and colleagues for his achievement.

Like Widodo, many Indonesians who have successfully completed certification training can now independently operate the high-speed trains. This progress in technology transfer has set the foundation for Indonesia to independently manage and operate the railway in the future.

Economic driver

The Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway is more than just a transportation project — it is a powerful driver of economic development in the Southeast Asian country.

By connecting Indonesia's capital with the capital of West Java, the country's most populous province, the railway has enhanced regional connectivity and facilitated economic integration. The cities along the route are now experiencing a boom in commerce and job creation, with local businesses around major stations benefiting from higher customer traffic.

The Indonesian government is also leveraging the railway to boost tourism, promoting scenic and cultural attractions along the route.

Nia Niscaya, a senior official at Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, said: "Bandung, with its cool climate and stunning landscapes, is a major tourist destination. The high-speed railway will help attract more international visitors, including Chinese tourists, to experience Bandung's beauty, food and cultural heritage."

Erick Thohir, Indonesia's minister of state-owned enterprises, said the use of electricity to run the high-speed trains is in line with the country's green development goals, significantly reducing its reliance on fossil fuels.

According to the Indonesian government, the railway helps save approximately \$208 million in fuel costs annually. Between 2019 and 2023, the project added about \$5.62 billion to the GDP of Jakarta and West Java, government data showed.

As the railway embarks on its second year of operation, the Chinese and Indonesian teams plan to continue their close collaboration to meet evolving passenger demands. Efforts will focus on improving service quality, optimizing train schedules and further enhancing passenger capacity.

The anniversary of the railway marks a significant milestone in the deepening China-Indonesia partnership under the BRI, bringing tangible benefits to the people of the Southeast Asian country and further strengthening ties between the two nations.

Debris alert shuts beaches

Workers in hazmat suits clear up "tar balls" — which are formed when oil comes into contact with debris and water, often as a result of oil spills or seepage — on Coogee Beach in Sydney, Australia, on Thursday. Seven beaches in the city, including the iconic Bondi Beach, have been closed to the public due to the black ball-shaped debris washing ashore.

BROOK MITCHELL
/ GETTY IMAGES

Heritage: Exhibitions called ambassadors for culture

From page 1

The shows outside China reached more than 60 countries and regions across five continents, attracting over 100 million visitors from both home and abroad.

"Cultural relics and heritage are tangible witnesses of history. They show the cultural characteristics, technological levels and lifestyles of a particular historical period in a more intuitive way, which allows audiences to directly experience the unique charm of different civilizations. I see these exhibitions of cultural relics overseas as a 'golden card' and an 'ambassador' for promoting Chinese culture," Tan said.

In addition to taking shows overseas, Tan's team introduced foreign relic exhibitions to China in recent years, showcasing the remarkable achievements of various civilizations. These exhibitions have included relics from Afghanistan, Syria, Italy, Greece, Russia, Kazakhstan and Mexico, all of which received a warm welcome from Chinese audiences.

In July, when the Shanghai Museum opened its largest-ever themed exhibition featuring 788 artifacts from various periods of Egyptian history, visitors had to book tickets a month in advance. People showed a great passion for ancient Egyptian civilization, and related cultural products quickly sold out.

Xi's report to the 20th National Congress of the CPC in 2022 also called for and emphasized cultural exchanges.

In response to the call, cultural forums and activities held in various cities across China have provided excellent platforms for museum directors and cultural relics experts to communicate with one another, fostering future collaborations.

In September, the Beijing Culture Forum gathered hundreds of experts, scholars and museum directors from across the globe to discuss culture-related topics, including how cultural exchanges help improve mutual learning and common progress.

Many museum directors from home and abroad were invited to the forum, at which they met counter-

parts who could be future partners.

At a museum expo held in August in Hohhot, the capital of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Jade Guyard, a sales manager at Museum Connections, said that she had welcomed a group of Chinese museum directors to Paris for a Museum Connections fair in January. These included the heads of the Henan Museum, the Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum and the China Grand Canal Museum.

The Chinese museum directors were hoping to show their collections outside China to a wider audience, and their French counterparts were interested in introducing Chinese relics to visitors and presenting their collections to a Chinese audience, Guyard said.

Lintz, the Guimet Museum director, signed cooperation agreements with the Dunhuang Academy, the National Museum of China and the Palace Museum to deepen collaboration in various areas such as exhibition activities, academic research and talent development, when she attended a cultural forum

in Hong Kong in March. She said that with collections of different civilizations, museums are important for cultural exchanges.

Her museum's Tang Dynasty show, set to open next month, is co-organized with Art Exhibitions China, which is preparing the loan of items from museums across China. Every year, the institution holds large-scale relics shows in China and abroad.

Tan, the Art Exhibitions China director, said that in more than half a century of cultural relics exhibitions and international exchanges, there has been a significant evolution, from telling China's story to narrating the stories of world civilizations and now to illustrating the exchanges and mutual learning between different cultures.

"This journey marks a transformation from 'Who am I?' to 'The World and I,'" he said. "This transformation reflects the confidence and strength of Chinese culture, embodying the vitality and dynamism of China's rich cultural heritage as it flourishes in the new era."

Forum: China a strong intl player

From page 1

the American Chinese Athletes Association, the organizer of the event.

A professional athlete, Li was on China's national beach volleyball team and won a gold medal at the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok, Thailand. "By reflecting on the past, we can draw lessons, accumulate experiences and apply them to future practice," Li added.

David Simon, vice-president of the World Union of Olympic Cities who served on the organizing committee for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, agreed. He recalled many detailed arrangements, logistics and overall planning for one of the "landmark events in sports history".

China was a very important part of the 1984 Olympics, said Simon, adding the event was more successful and competitive because China attended. "They were very warmly welcomed. Their participation meant a great deal to the organizing committee

here," he said.

Peter Gao, one of the founding members of the ACAA, called China's participation in the 1984 Olympics "a defining moment in the history of China's sports. China sent a delegation of 250 athletes to Los Angeles, who would compete against international peers at 105 events in 19 sports between July 28 and Aug 12. In 1984, a few years after China's launch of the reform and opening-up policy, the West remained very curious about what a new China looked like, said Gao.

When the Chinese athletes lined up and walked into the stadium at the opening ceremony, "they represented the vigorous and promising People's Republic of China, and of course caught the attention of the world," said Gao.

On the afternoon of July 29, 1984, the 25-year-old Chinese shooter Xu Haifeng made history by winning the 50-meter free pistol event, pocketing the first gold medal at that Olympics,

which was also the first championship for China.

In the following days, China harvested 14 more golds, eight silver and nine bronze medals with gymnast Li Ning, fencer Luan Jujie and the Chinese female volleyball team rising into the international spotlight as China's national heroes.

"China finished fourth in 1984, a great milestone and achievement that lifted the national morale and spirit," said Li Hua. "It also symbolizes the beginning of China's transformation into a strong player in the international sports community."

Looking ahead, the Olympics means all members need to respect each other, collaborate, stick to team spirit and seek common ground when dealing with differences, said Li Li, vice-chairman of MEBO Group. She learned the Olympic spirit firsthand in June when she flew to Cannes, France to relay the Paris Olympics torch. "On a team of eight, we have to act as an entire group in order to



Speakers share their experiences with and insights into sports at the American and Chinese Sports Forum held recently at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. From left: Moderator Ni Chen; Li Hongping, former Chinese national diving team member; John Naber, four-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer; and David Simon, vice-president of the World Union of Olympic Cities who served on the organizing committee for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

hit the target and accomplish our tasks on time," Li said. "I am ready to join another torch relay for our 2028 Olympics here in Los Angeles."

Chai Yun, cultural consul from the

Chinese Consulate General in Los Angeles, said the forum induced stronger enthusiasm and support from sports circles in China and the United States. "The organizers unite

all forces to work together. That will ultimately benefit the development of the sports industry in both countries, and benefit bilateral collaborations and our athletes," he said.

CHINA

Digitalization of Buddhism in full swing

Scholars embrace technologies to preserve Buddhist heritage and culture

By CUI JIA in Ningbo, Zhejiang
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As technology experts endeavor to develop a "Digital China", more efforts to digitalize Buddhist scriptures and antique books have been made, which has significantly helped better preserve and promote the religion and related culture in modern times, Chinese scholars and senior Buddhist monks said.

Venerable Master Shi Yongxin, abbot of Shaolin Temple in Henan province and vice-president of the Buddhist Association of China, said on Thursday that digital technologies have been widely used to preserve Buddhist scriptures, architecture, statues and paintings, making Buddhist culture more accessible to the public.

In October 2021, Shaolin temple — the cradle of Chinese martial arts — launched a big data platform to preserve and showcase the temple's unique Buddhist cultural resources with digital technologies. The platform marked the temple's entry into the digital age, Shi said at a sub-forum themed Digitalization of Buddhist Scriptures during the 6th World Buddhist Forum in Ningbo, Zhejiang province.

"Besides digitalizing more than 246 stone tomb pagodas, more than 5,480 scrolls of Buddhist scriptures and many inscriptions on stone tablets, we have also been using digital technologies to preserve Shaolin martial arts," Shi said, adding that such efforts have been stepped up since the country introduced the plan to build a "Digital China" in January last year.

The creation of a "Digital Shaolin", has made it easier for the public to use the internet to learn about Shaolin culture and how it has evolved over time. So far, more than 30,000 documents have been digitalized, he added.

Lhashamgyal, director and researcher of the Institute of Religious Studies at the China Tibetology Research Center, said the digitalization of Tibetan Buddhist

“During the project, new technologies have been developed to digitalize scriptures in Tibetan and Sanskrit languages without damaging them.”

Lhashamgyal, director and researcher of the Institute of Religious Studies at the China Tibetology Research Center

scriptures has also seen great progress in recent years.

In 2018, restorers began making efforts to preserve antique documents at the Potala Palace — an icon of Tibetan Buddhism — in Lhasa, the regional capital of the Xizang autonomous region. The project, undertaken by the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, is expected to be a 10-year process of protection, repair, digitalization and exhibition. The digital files are expected to be accessible to researchers and the general public in the future, Lhashamgyal said.

"During the project, new technologies have been developed to digitalize scriptures in Tibetan and Sanskrit languages without damaging them," he said.

Furthermore, the center is currently developing a database for archives and antique books in Tibetan. So far, more than 2,000 antique books, including Buddhist scriptures and biographies of senior monks, have been digitalized and can be accessed online and via mobile applications, he added.

"More Buddhist scriptures and antique books in China will be digitalized in the future, which can make it easier for people to explore their values in modern society," Lhashamgyal said.

Musical expo



Artists perform with traditional instruments, drums and *suona*, a double-reed woodwind instrument, at the Eighth China Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo in Jinan, Shandong province, on Thursday. The expo, which opened on Thursday, will run until Monday and is themed on protecting heritage, upholding tradition and promoting innovation. More than 100 inheritors are at the expo to interact with visitors. WANG FENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Shenzhen deploys drone units to prevent accidents, maintain order

By WANG XU in Shenzhen, Guangdong
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The hum of rotors is becoming a familiar sound in the skies above Shenzhen, a city in Guangdong province known for its technological innovations. But these aren't just recreational drones; they're the newest recruits in Shenzhen's public security force, transforming how police monitor, respond to and prevent accidents in the city.

"A total of eight specialized drone units, each with a unique role such as patrolling, monitoring traffic flow and locating drug trafficking have been established," Song Zhuoyuan, a spokesperson from Shenzhen Municipal Public Security Bureau told China Daily, adding that the adoption of unmanned aerial vehicles in policing represents a significant step forward in modern law enforcement.

In fact, as a global hub for drone manufacturing and research, Shenzhen's public security sector had leveraged the city's technological prowess to create a sophisticated, multifaceted policing system that integrates drones into their work.

Early in the fall semester, parents of some students at Qiaoxiang School in Futian district noticed a

drone patrolling the school and its surrounding area during busy drop-off and pick-up times. Police officers, usually two, work at the school gate to operate the drone and use it to broadcast safety reminders via loudspeaker to pedestrians and drivers breaking traffic rules.

"Unlike fixed CCTV cameras, drones offer flexible, mobile surveillance, eliminating blind spots and improving visibility in complex situations," said Pang Wenhui, deputy chief of UAV office of Shenzhen bureau's special police detachment. "High-definition video feeds allow for real-time decision-making in a command center. For example, a drone could quickly identify illegally parked cars near a school, and thus enable a swift police response."

According to Pang, the enhanced school safety initiative using drones is now active in 11 Shenzhen districts.

Beyond daily life, police in Nanshan district in June utilized a drone to create a detailed map of a gambling den hidden within a complex construction site. The aerial mapping proved crucial in planning the raid, leading to the arrest of 16 suspects.

"Drones offer a significant advantage in such situations, providing a safe and efficient way to survey difficult-to-access locations and gather

crucial evidence before a raid. In this case, the drone provided valuable visual evidence of the gambling operation, including its layout and the presence of suspects, which could be used as supporting evidence in the subsequent investigation and prosecution," said Song from the public security bureau.

However, the integration of drones into policing also raises questions. Concerns about privacy and potential misuse of surveillance technology are valid and require careful consideration.

Shenzhen authorities have emphasized the importance of transparency and adherence to strict operational guidelines to mitigate these risks.

"While challenges persist regarding the safe operation of drones and the prevalence of unauthorized drone activity, or 'black flying', we are implementing a multi-pronged strategy to address these concerns, which include investments in infrastructure, the development of a counter-drone system and a public awareness campaign encompassing education and enforcement," said Wang Lei, deputy director of the guidance office of the Shenzhen public security bureau's management detachment. "We are also engaging with the private sector to foster safe and efficient drone operations."

Indian musicians 'at home' in Yunnan

By CHEN LIUBING in Kunming
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Cultural exchanges and people-to-people communication are conducive to the development of bilateral relations, said Indian musicians who have been experiencing Chinese music and culture during their trip to the country.

At the invitation of the Consulate General of China in Kolkata, India, the six-member delegation of musicians is visiting Southwest China's Yunnan province from Monday to Saturday.

They began their trip in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan. During their two-day visit there, members of the delegation watched Chinese performances, met with teachers and students at Yunnan Minzu University, and took part in cultural exchanges with experts and scholars at the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences.

After watching *Dynamic Yunnan*, an original ethnic dance musical at the Yunnan Art Theater, Alobo Naga, an Indian singer and composer, said he was amazed by the performance.



An Indian folk musician plays a flute made by the Jingpo ethnic group in Longchuan county, Yunnan province, on Thursday. CHEN LIUBING / CHINA DAILY

"It's a very good experience, especially the culture. I could see lots of similarities (of our cultures). It's something very unique, but we feel that we are at home," Naga told China Daily in an exclusive interview.

He also noted that India and China are and will always be neighbors.

"We have to be good to one another, and to be friends, because no matter what happens, we will be neighbors for a lifetime," Naga said.

He said the delegation has come to know more about China, and he hopes the cultural exchanges initiated in China will continue so the friendship between the two countries will grow stronger.

Led by composer, conductor and music teacher James Shikye Swu, the delegation includes tribal singers, folk musicians and educators.

Music instructor Nise Meruno said that the purpose of India-China bilateral exchanges is not only to celebrate diversity, but also to celebrate unity and to make the world a more peaceful place to live.

During the visit, some members of the delegation found that many of Yunnan's ethnic groups, especially the Yi and Jingpo people, had many similarities in dress, language, food and architecture with their counterparts in India.

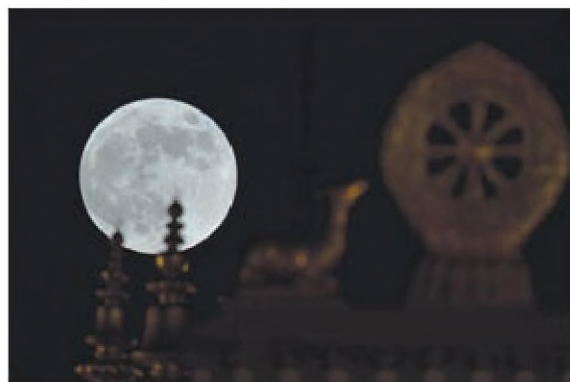
Swu, head of the delegation, said that the musicians learned so much by coming to China, and he hopes the trip marks the beginning of increased people-to-people exchanges between the two nations.

"Maybe we should come back here again and do some research and stay longer, and go to the villages of the Yi and Jingpo people to take a look," Swu added.

According to Zhang Zhizhong, director of the Bilateral Section of the Consulate General of China in Kolkata, this is the third delegation that the consulate has sent to Yunnan this year, with three Indian Buddhist monks having visited the province in April, and 10 artists and young scholars in July who participated in events at the China-South Asia Cooperation Forum.

The current delegation's itinerary includes visits to Mangshi city, Longchuan county and Ruili city. On Friday, it will return to Kunming, where members are expected to participate in a cultural exchange activity with musicians from the Yunnan Musicians Association.

Super close to Earth



A supermoon is captured over the roof of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region, on Thursday. A supermoon is a full moon that occurs when the Moon is closest to Earth in its orbit. LI LIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Former COFCO official pleads guilty

By CAO YIN
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Zhou Zheng, former deputy general manager of China's leading agricultural and food trader COFCO Corp, pleaded guilty to taking bribes, embezzlement and abuse of power while standing trial in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, on Thursday.

According to the indictment provided by Yuncheng prosecutors, Zhou took advantage of his positions in the company from 1998 to 2023 to assist departments and individuals in matters such as project contracting,

recruitment and work promotion, and in return accepted bribes worth more than 6.05 million yuan (\$849,000).

From 2003 to 2021, Zhou was found to have used his positions at the State-owned company to defraud public funds of over 2.41 million yuan by various means, including pretending to increase salary bonuses and falsely listing expenses, prosecutors said.

In addition, between 2013 and 2014, he was found to have abused his power to promote some company projects, resulting in a loss of State-owned assets worth more than 101 million

yuan, they added.

They provided evidence to the Yuncheng Intermediate People's Court, noting that Zhou should be held criminally liable for bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power.

During the trial, Zhou and his lawyer also shared their opinions on the evidence, and Zhou confessed to the crimes in his final statement.

The court said the verdict will be announced at a later date.

More than 40 people, including Zhou's family members, national lawmakers, political advisers and journalists, attended the trial.

Scientists unveil optimal therapies for type 2 diabetes patients

By LI WENFANG in Guangzhou
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Chinese scientists have found that short-term intensive insulin therapy followed by oral anti-hyperglycemic therapies can sustainably improve blood sugar control in patients who have been newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

A report on the research led by Li Yanbing, a professor at the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, was published in British Medical Journal on Tuesday.

Data from the International Dia-

betes Federation shows there are an estimated 537 million people worldwide who have the disease, according to the report.

Hyperglycemia is a primary risk factor for chronic complications of diabetes and even death. Early, intensive blood sugar control can dramatically reduce the risk of death and complications.

However, despite various treatments, more than half of diabetes patients still struggle to control their blood sugar, an indication that traditional treatment strategies have been unable to curb the

progression of diabetes.

Significant hyperglycemia is common in patients with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes.

Owing to the limited efficacy of monotherapy, the American Diabetes Association and the European Association for the Study of Diabetes recommend that a combination of therapies can be used. But a standardized treatment path for these patients remains undetermined.

Emerging evidence has shown that the progression of type 2 diabetes is reversible, especially in its early stages.

The research conducted by Li's team was carried out on 412 patients with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes in 15 Chinese hospitals between 2017 and 2020.

Using what is known as the intense simplified strategy, the team used short-term intensive insulin therapy followed by oral therapies, especially the combination of two drugs — linagliptin and metformin, Li told the media on Thursday.

The treatment sustainably improved blood sugar control and beta cell function in those

patients, she said, adding that the team's research can help improve patient compliance with treatment plans, lower medical costs and reduce complications.

This approach offers a promising direction for decision-making in the clinical management of type 2 diabetes patients.

More practical and feasible intensive approaches that can be applied in outpatient settings could be explored for the "intense" treatment method, and more convenient drugs could be considered in the "simplified" one, Li said.

VISUAL

Editor's note: This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and to celebrate we have created a series of illustrations depicting the changes over decades since the country opened up to the rest of the world. China Daily and Luxun Academy of Fine Arts cooperated to create this page and animation.

OPENING-UP AND THE DAZZLING STORY OF NEW CHINA

Policy shift unleashed wave of economic dynamism that propelled nation onto global stage

WANG XIAOYING AND SHI YU / CHINA DAILY



Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

By **ZHUANG QIANG**
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At the founding of New China in 1949, few could have predicted the astonishing economic transformation that would follow. For nearly three decades, China's development was characterized by limited global engagement. However, everything changed in 1978 when China launched

its historic reform and opening-up policy under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. This policy shift unleashed a wave of economic dynamism that would propel China onto the global stage. The opening-up policy marked the beginning of a new era, where China welcomed foreign investment, embraced market reforms and began integrating with the global economy. One of the greatest milestones in

this journey was achieved in 2001, when China, after going through lengthy and tough negotiations, joined the World Trade Organization in December of that year. The WTO accession is also widely considered as a landmark economic event in world history. In more recent years, China's technological advancements have continued to impress the world. The C919, China's first domestically pro-

duced large passenger jet, made its maiden flight in 2017, signaling the nation's ambitions in the aerospace industry. This achievement was complemented by the launch of the China International Import Expo in 2018, a groundbreaking event that underscored China's commitment to global trade and cooperation. The CIE has since become a vital platform for international businesses to access the Chinese market,

solidifying China's role as a global economic powerhouse. As China celebrates its past achievements, it also looks to the future with confidence. The nation's leadership has made it clear that the doors to China will only open wider, promising more opportunities for international collaboration and economic growth. This vision reflects the spirit of innovation and openness that has driven China's transformation over

the past several decades, ensuring that the country will continue to play a pivotal role in the global economy for years to come. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, China's story is one of resilience, ambition and unwavering commitment to progress. As the nation continues to build on its remarkable achievements, the world watches closely, knowing that China's journey is far from over.



A bilingual sign for the Annual Conference of Financial Street Forum 2024 is prominently displayed on Beijing Financial Street to promote the event. SONG JIARU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Hot topics set for discussion in Beijing

Financial Street Forum to welcome more than 500 senior guests

By HAO NAN

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A prestigious financial event is to commence on Friday in Beijing, where senior government officials, along with experts, scholars and representatives from global financial institutions, will deliver keynote speeches.

The Annual Conference of Financial Street Forum 2024, running until Sunday, is co-hosted by the Beijing government, the People's Bank of China, the National Financial Regulatory Administration, the China Securities Regulatory Commission, Xinhua News Agency and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

This year's event is to attract more than 500 distinguished guests from more than 30 countries and regions around the world.

Over the course of three days, participants will engage in discussions on current economic and financial hot topics, aiming to enhance mutual trust, deepen win-win cooperation and share development opportunities.

The theme of this year's forum is "Trust and Confidence — Work Together to Promote Financial Openness and Cooperate for Shared Economic Stability and Growth".

"Trust is the cornerstone of international cooperation and confidence is the support for economic development," said Liu Dongwei, executive secretary-general of the forum's organizing committee and head of Beijing's Xicheng district.

"This theme fully reflects the deep consensus among the forum's organizers, financial institutions and industry insiders, highlighting the development concepts of co-consultation, co-construction, co-governance and co-sharing.

"It also showcases the inclusiveness, the role of demonstration and leadership of the Financial Street Forum," he added.

This year's forum is structured around a main forum plus parallel forums and a fintech conference. It features 25 thematic activities and three investment and financing matchmaking events.

The main forum includes opening and closing ceremonies, as well

as six thematic activities focusing on such topics as improving the modern central banking system, deepening capital market reforms, empowering industries through finance to lead high-quality development, and enhancing mutually beneficial international trade and investment cooperation.

The activities will also provide authoritative interpretations of international and domestic economic development trends and financial regulatory policies.

Additionally, the international level of this year's forum has been enhanced. It has set up three subvenues in Hong Kong, Luxembourg and Tokyo, inviting local governments and enterprises to participate. And, for the first time, it has invited the Hong Kong Financial Services Development Council to host thematic activities in Beijing.

The closing ceremony will be held in conjunction with the Hong Kong subvenue, inviting representatives from the governments and institutions of Beijing and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to

participate in an in-depth discussion on the theme of "green finance", promoting financial exchanges and cooperation between the Chinese capital and the SAR.

Also, it will continue to host high-level dialogues with former central bank governors from major global economic and financial countries, like China, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

The parallel forums will focus on "strengthening economic and financial cooperation for coordinated development" and "finance supporting sustainable economic development", setting up a series of professional, cutting-edge and in-depth activities.

The fintech conference, serving as a specific segment of the forum, will run until Tuesday. It will feature 17 events, focusing on artificial intelligence plus financial innovation; data elements plus financial applications; fintech development and achievements; and bridging the digital divide through fintech.

Liu highlighted five major features of this forum, one of which is the richer thematic setting. For instance, the forum has, for the first time, invited the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and centrally-administered and State-owned enterprises to host themed activities. These aim to emphasize the forum's role as a platform for positive interaction between finance and the real economy.

The forum has also innovated the path of sci-tech transformation by creating a fund-themed forum and holding corporate roadshows and industry-finance matchmaking meetings.

This year, the forum offers a variety of supporting activities, making it not only a professional exchange platform for financial industry practitioners but a grand event for the public.

For example, during the forum, a large-scale cultural performance will be held at the Beijing Tianqiao Performing Arts Center, covering various art forms such as dance, song, music and opera.

In addition, the forum will conduct a large-scale series of shopping activities. Starting from Oct 1 and lasting nearly a month, these activities are taking place mainly at Beijing's Seasons Place luxury shopping mall and its surrounding areas.

They include a coffee market, auto shows, electronic product roadshows and outdoor dining experiences. There will also be a global product launch and sale event, offering substantial discounts and consumption vouchers to the public.

Stock exchange focuses on developing expertise of technological SMEs

By YUAN SHENGGAO

As part of the Annual Conference of Financial Street Forum Stock Exchange research center; Liu Ping'an, chairman of GGR Capital; and Wu Jinjun, chairman of Machinery Technology Development.

In response to the annual conference's theme of "Trust and Confidence — Work Together to Promote Financial Openness and Cooperate for Shared Economic Stability and Growth", the parallel forum will focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in pursuing specialization and sophistication to serve the development new quality productive forces.

Liang Zhifeng, head of the SME Bureau at the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology; Shang Qingjun, deputy director-general of the Department of Public Company Supervision at the China Securities Regulatory Commission; and Zhang Wen, president of Beijing Financial Court, have been invited to make keynote speeches at the forum.

Other keynote speakers will include Huo Xuewen, chairman of Bank of Beijing; Zhang Qicheng, chairman of Caitong Securities; Li Xiaowei, deputy general manager of Fullgoal Fund Management Company; and Zhou Guihua, chairman of BSE.

Since its inception in 2021, BSE has positioned itself as a main arena for serving innovation-driven SMEs and helping with their growth on the journey toward specialization and sophistication, according to its management.

During the parallel forum, attendees will discuss improving the quality of BSE-listed companies by enhancing the accumulation of innovative SMEs, which use specialized and sophisticated technologies to produce novel or unique products.

Among the panel discussion participants are Zhang Peng, deputy director of the listed companies research center at the

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Zhu Haibin, general manager of Kaiyuan Securities Beijing Stock Exchange research center; Liu Ping'an, chairman of GGR Capital; and Wu Jinjun, chairman of Machinery Technology Development.

At the forum, BSE, the National Equities Exchange and Quotations, and Beijing Financial Court will sign a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in assisting SMEs in their innovative development and serving new quality productive forces.

As the youngest stock exchange, BSE puts an emphasis on internationalization, helping domestic businesses with their innovative development and sharing the opportunities arising from China's high-quality development.

Thus BSE has arranged a special sharing session at the forum, inviting executives from stock exchanges from Oslo in Norway, Singapore and China's Hong Kong to offer insights into how overseas capital markets serve tech companies and foster future industries.

Over the past three years, BSE has focused on target groups, continuously played the role of an experimental field for reform, explored the path of inclusive financial development in the capital market and made substantial progress in high-quality construction.

Data from the BSE show that of the listed companies, nearly 80 percent are from strategic emerging industries and advanced manufacturing. Specialized and innovative enterprises that have been granted the national "little giant" status account for more than half. Also, a large number of businesses have been recognized as "champions" in their respective segments of the manufacturing industry or have won national-level science and technology awards.



The Beijing Stock Exchange's exhibition at a high-tech expo in the city in July. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Intl institutions choose hub in heart of capital

By YUAN SHENGGAO

As the Annual Conference of Financial Street Forum opens in Beijing on Friday, the place where the forum happens and takes its name from is stepping into the spotlight.

Located in Xicheng district of Beijing, Financial Street is now home to more than 1,900 financial institutions. Their combined assets exceed 150 trillion yuan (\$21.09 trillion), accounting for one-third of the country's total.

After more than 30 years of development, the street has become a leading economic hub in the city center and become a globally renowned financial district.

"Financial Street in Beijing, occupying only two 10,000ths of the city's total area, contributes nearly 40 percent of the added value of the city's financial industry and close to 70 percent of tax revenue of the financial industry, making it a leading financial hub in Beijing," Liu Dongwei, head of Xicheng district, said at a recent news conference.

In the 2.59-square-kilometer core area of Financial Street stand more than 60 commercial buildings.

Among them, the Winland International Financial Center has attracted more than 40 global financial institutions including Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan and UBS.

"Since 2002, we have been communicating with international financial institution clients," Yu Zhiqiang, chairman of Winland Group, told Xinhua News Agency.

"Over the past 20 years, the needs of our clients have continuously evolved and our service standards have kept pace, forming an operational service and security system that is in line with the stan-



Financial Street is a bustling economic hub in downtown Beijing, where more than 1,900 financial institutions from China and abroad have made a presence. WEN ZHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

dards of top international financial institutions," Yu said, adding: "We have received positive feedback from our clients."

Mi Yang, head of research for JLL North China, told Xinhua that in the fourth quarter of 2023, rental prices for pure leasing projects in Financial Street saw a slight decrease but still remained at the top nationwide. It had the lowest vacancy rate for commercial buildings in Beijing. In his opinion, the street has embarked on a path of high-quality development.

There are nearly 210,000 financial industry professionals working on Beijing Financial Street, two-thirds of whom have a master's degree or above.

"For young people, Financial Street is a comprehensive platform for growth," said Feng Kai from the Export-Import Bank of China, who has been working on Financial Street for more than 10 years.

"Here, you can keep abreast of the latest financial trends and the highest-level financial expertise, and access the most professional financial talent."

"In the process of serving the real economy, preventing financial risks and deepening financial reform, you can realize your own value," said Feng.

Data from the Beijing Financial Street Services Bureau show that the talent, information and service aggregation effects in the Financial Street business district are increasingly evident.

In 2023, 50 new financial institutions were introduced to the street, with an additional registered capital of 41.3 billion yuan. Currently, Financial Street has gathered more than 800 key financial institutions and 175 headquarters enterprises. Of them, 16 have joined the ranks of the Fortune Global 500 companies.

A sound business environment has proved to be the biggest magnet for these financial institutions. For more than 30 years, Financial Street has adhered to the service concept of combining government, chambers of commerce and enterprises, catering to the needs for the development of the financial industry, financial institutions and financial professionals, and continuously improving services.

Facing the complexity of the global economic situation, Beijing Financial Street is promoting the inflow of financial institutions, professionals and information; improving the quality of modern financial services; strengthening its role as a national financial management center and contributing to the construction of a financially strong country, local officials said.

Driven by the street, Xicheng district has posted strong performance in its financial industry.

The district's financial industry achieved an added value of 322.75 billion yuan in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 6.8 percent. That has been higher than the average growth of the city's financial industry for three consecutive years and accounted for 37.3 percent of the total added value of the financial industry in the city, according to Lu Wuxing, head of the Beijing Financial Street Services Bureau.

The momentum continued into the first half of this year, when the added value of the financial industry in Xicheng amounted to 158.4 billion yuan, up 6 percent from the same period of 2023. That accounted for 54.4 percent of the district's GDP, setting a record.

Nineteen financial institutions were introduced to the street this year, adding registered capital worth 75.4 billion yuan.

Shopping season adds festive joy to key event

By HAO NAN

A vibrant shopping season is underway in Beijing's Xicheng district, as a supporting event for this year's Annual Conference of Financial Street Forum.

Launched on Oct 1, this nearly monthlong event marks the first large-scale consumption promotion in conjunction with the forum, according to organizers.

Yuan Li, director of the Xicheng commerce bureau, said that the shopping season is part of Beijing's initiative to establish itself as an international consumption center demonstration zone.

The aim is to cultivate a festive atmosphere around Financial Street, where the forum is being held, and harness Xicheng's strengths in commerce, culture and technology to bolster the support services of Financial Street, he added.

The main offline activities of the shopping season began on Thursday and will span four days, featuring a temporary pedestrian street stretching from the west end of Jinchengfang Street to Taipingqiao Street.

Highlights include the Financial Street International Coffee Gala, showcasing around 60 renowned domestic and international coffee

brands; an auto show spotlighting high-end imported vehicles and new energy innovations like XPeng's flying car; and a roadshow featuring Huawei's latest smartphones.

Parkson, a comprehensive shopping mall, is serving as a subvenue for the shopping season, hosting fashion shows and an exhibition of jewelry designed by college students.

Online, 89 merchants at the Seasons Place luxury shopping mall in Xicheng will offer exclusive discounts throughout the shopping season. For example, international luxury and retail products will have approximately 300 yuan (\$42) off for every 1,000 yuan spent. Other lifestyle services will offer discounts of about 2,500 yuan for every 50,000 yuan spent.

Additionally, the district will release surprise vouchers on the "Xicheng Consumption" online platform at scheduled intervals and in limited quantities to encourage shoppers.

The season also includes the second phase of a trade-in program for consumer goods. Individual consumers purchasing any of the eight eligible categories of home appliances will receive a trade-in subsidy of approximately 10 percent of the purchase price.

GLOBAL LENS



A crab is seen at the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary in the Colombian Pacific on Sept 8.



Nazca boobies are seen at the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary on Sept 8.



A school of fish is seen at the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary on Sept 8.

LIFELINE

Wildlife protectors help turn the tide in major marine reserve



Divers take in the aquatic life at the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in the Colombian Pacific on Sept 8. PHOTOS BY LUIS ACOSTA / AFP

In the Colombian Pacific, a lone catamaran named *Silky* patrols waters around the remote island of Malpelo — a refuge that is protected yet full of peril for endangered marine species.

Silky crew members look out for boats illegally fishing inside the reserve some 500 kilometers off mainland Colombia, one of the richest countries in terms of marine fauna.

The vast Pacific coastline of Colombia, which is due to host the United Nations biodiversity conference 2024 (COP16) starting Oct 21, is on a key migratory route for hammerhead sharks, whale sharks and other wildlife species, many of them endangered.

But the bountiful waters of the sanctuary attract vessels far and wide. The crew members of *Silky* shoo away intruder vessels and dive

under the water to cut loose sharks caught in nets or on lines.

On round-the-clock alert since 2018, the team said the tide is turning in the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary, a mecca for divers and the largest no-fishing zone of its kind in the Eastern Tropical Pacific.

"The success of the project can be seen in the fact that they (the illegal fishers) do not return," said Colombian diver Erika Lopez, 51, who created the foundation Biodiversity Conservation Colombia, which was born from what the activists view as a lack of official shark protection.

The crew of the *Silky* has rescued 508 animals since 2018, scared away 302 boats and confiscated more than 70,000 meters of fishing line, according to Lopez's foundation. It has not been spotting any major fishing boats near Malpelo island in the reserve of more than

850,000 hectares recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"We try as much as possible to take the equipment away from them, to free the species that are trapped, that's the main mission," said 53-year-old Dario Ortiz, an artisanal fisherman-turned-environmentalist, on the *Silky*.

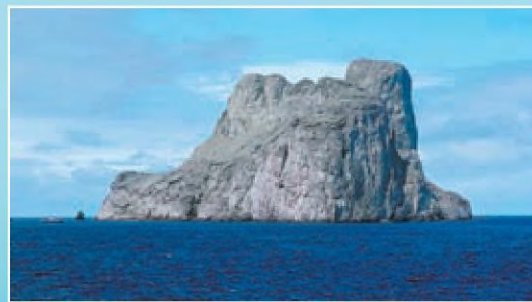
"This boat has to be basically 24/7, 365 days a year containing this threat," said Lopez, who dreams of upscaling the project to a flotilla of vessels dedicated to conservation and science in the Pacific.

Colombia's environment authorities said more than 334 metric tons of fish meat illegally harvested were seized between 2012 and 2022.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Colombian authorities detain a vessel found illegally fishing in the Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary in the Colombian Pacific on Sept 8.



A view of Colombia's Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary, home to a variety of endangered marine species and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, taken on Sept 7.



Dario Ortiz (center), captain of the *Silky* vessel of the Biodiversity Conservation Colombia foundation, helps patrol Colombia's Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary on Sept 7.



A diver views wildlife at Colombia's Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary on Sept 8.

BUSINESS

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Relations with Central, Eastern European nations to grow

By ZHAO RUIXUE
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Participants at the 6th China and Central and Eastern European Countries Local Leaders' Meeting said the China-CEEC cooperation mechanism has promoted bilateral relations and collaboration between China and European countries, and they called for increased joint efforts to enhance the quality of life for citizens.

The two-day meeting which opened on Wednesday in Yantai, Shandong province, brought together over 300 participants from Central and Eastern European countries, including former officials, provincial and municipal leaders, diplomats, representatives from universities, research organizations and business associations.

Established in 2012, the cooperation mechanism between China and the CEEC has evolved into a trans-regional platform based on cooperation and shared development. Over more than a decade, it has fostered cooperation in diverse fields such as trade, culture, education, tourism and technology.

"Local exchanges are a crucial aspect of China-CEEC cooperation," Li Hongzhong, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said at the meeting's opening ceremony.

He called for enhanced alignment of development strategies, improved mechanisms for local cooperation platforms, and a focus on practical cooperation in key areas to ensure the steady and far-reaching progress of China-CEEC cooperation.

In recent years, Shandong has expanded exchanges with provinces and states in Central and Eastern Europe in fields such as economic and trade relations, high-level visits, and cultural exchanges.

The province signed an agreement on Tuesday with the autonomous province of Vojvodina, Serbia, to establish and develop friendly relations and cooperate on mutually beneficial issues.

"This agreement provides an opportunity for knowledge, experience, and resource exchange to enhance the quality of life for citizens through joint efforts," said Maja Gojkovic, governor of Vojvodina.

Gojkovic said Vojvodina has thus far signed cross-regional cooperation agreements with nine Chinese provinces including Jilin, Hunan, Henan, Guangdong, Hainan, Hebei, Fujian and Zhejiang, laying a solid foundation for future cooperation.

During the meeting, the China-CEEC Modern Agricultural Science and Education Innovation Alliance was established to encourage joint efforts on promoting cooperation and development in the agricultural sector. The alliance now includes participation from 64 domestic and foreign universities, research institutions and enterprises.

"The difference between the agricultures of China and the CEE countries is one of the prerequisites for cooperation and development in the sector," said Momchil Stanishev, director of the Association for the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries.

He emphasized the need to address the issues of food security, evolving consumer preferences, increasing demand for higher-quality food, investments in farm productivity, and the adoption of new technologies.

"The alliance will further integrate education, technology, talent and resources from both sides, creating an efficient and stable platform for cooperation and exchange," said Liu Zhenjie, deputy head of the department of agriculture and rural affairs of Shandong province.

Shandong and CEEC have seen robust growth in economic and trade exchanges. In 2023, the total volume of imports and exports between Shandong and CEEC reached 51.55 billion yuan (\$7.2 billion), a year-on-year increase of 18.6 percent. The average annual growth rate over the past five years has been around 18 percent.

Enhancing power supply



Employees from Henan Anyang Power Supply Co install power line accessories on Towers 5, 6 and 7 of the Wenfeng-to-Juyuan 220 kV line project on Wednesday in Anyang, Henan province, aiming to boost power supply in the city's northwestern areas.
ZHANG YANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 29 pips to 7.122 against the US dollar on Thursday, said the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the greenback is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank

market each business day.

Hainan sees robust Jan-Sept foreign trade

Hainan province posted imports and exports of goods totaling 205.95 billion yuan (\$28.93 billion) in the first three quarters, a record high for the period and up 20.2 percent year-on-year, Customs statistics showed. During the period, general trade with longer industrial chains and higher added value accounted for more than 70 percent of Hainan's total foreign trade.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY



A property project under construction in Beijing. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

New measures set to revive realty sector

Move seen boosting sentiment among homebuyers, investors; spurring sales

By WANG KEJU
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China has rolled out new policy measures to rejuvenate the shaky property sector, with expanded funding for troubled property developers and renovation of an additional 1 million homes high on the agenda.

Analysts said this will shore up sentiment among homebuyers and investors, and facilitate an upturn in home sales.

Noting that the real estate industry is a crucial driver of the Chinese economy, analysts said a swift transition from decline to stability will better help the world's second-largest economy achieve its annual growth target of around 5 percent.

Ni Hong, minister of housing and urban-rural development, said on Thursday that the Chinese real estate market has seen broad-based stability since October, particularly in major cities.

China will expand its "white list" program, which allows unfinished housing projects and developers to access credit, with the loan quota under this initiative set to reach 4 trillion yuan (\$561.8 billion) by the end of the year, Ni said.

Policymakers are working to include all qualified real estate projects in the "white list" program, ensuring that eligible projects can access the necessary financing, Ni said at a news conference.

The measures are the latest in a series of high-level government policy announcements aimed at bolstering the economy.

Under the "white list" mechanism launched in January, local authorities are recommending financial institutions to real estate projects eligible for financial support.

As of Wednesday, the total amount of loans approved for white-listed real estate projects reached 2.23 trillion yuan, and this is expected to double to over 4 trillion yuan by the end of 2024, according to data from the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

The increased financing support for qualified "white list" projects will empower developers to fulfill their delivery commitments, which is essential for rebuilding consumer confidence in the housing market, said Yan Yuejin, vice-president of the Shanghai-based E-House China R&D Institute.

However, with a sizeable credit line for white-listed projects, the actual scale of approved and realized financing remained modest previously, analysts said.

The doubling of the financing scale signifies the country's efforts to resolve the obstacles that previously hindered the translation of "white list" approval into realized funding and alleviate the financial strain on troubled developers quickly, said Dong Ximiao, chief researcher at Merchants Union Consumer Finance.

Apart from ensuring timely home deliveries, the government has also introduced a new initiative to stimulate effective demand in the real estate market.

Chinese cities will renovate 1

million more homes known as urban villages or dilapidated homes, and residents will receive money to buy new apartments, Ni said.

The new measure primarily targets the most ready-to-implement projects, where increased policy support can accelerate the process. In particular, local governments will be allowed to finance these programs by issuing special bonds, Ni said.

This influx of new demand from the renovation program will play a crucial role in addressing the imbalance between supply and demand in the housing market, said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International.

In 2023, the total sales area of commodity housing reached 948 million square meters, equivalent to around 9.48 million units. From January to August 2024, the sales area of commodity housing declined by 25 percent year-on-year. It is estimated that the full-year 2024 commodity housing sales area will reach 711 million sq m, equivalent to around 7.11 million units, Wang said.

The new policy will create some 1 million units of housing demand and account for around 14 percent of the estimated 2024 housing sales area, which is a significant contribution to the market, Wang added.

The number of homes in urban villages that require redevelopment in 35 major cities has reached 1.7 million units. This figure is likely to be even higher after including the needs of other cities. The renovation programs could be expanded should the situation call for it, Ni said.

China mulls hiking levies on fuel vehicles

By ZHU WENQIAN
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China is studying measures to raise import tariffs on large-displacement fuel vehicles, and will make a cautious decision after considering all factors comprehensively, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

This move follows the European Commission's recent announcement of plans to impose import tariffs of up to 36.3 percent on electric vehicles produced in China. These potential measures, if implemented, would remain in effect for five years, although a final decision has yet to be made.

In response to the negotiation process between China and the EU regarding the imposition of tariffs on electric vehicles, China has shown the greatest sincerity and flexibility, and both sides have made important progress in some areas, He Yadong, a spokesman for the ministry, said during a news conference in Beijing.

"Still, the EU has not actively responded to the core concerns of industry players in China and Europe, and there are still some significant differences in the negotiations," He said.

He added that China has officially invited the European technical team to come to China as soon as possible to continue the next stage of negotiations. China has made all the preparations and is waiting for the European side's response.

The automotive industry chains in China and Europe are interdependent and have broad prospects for cooperation, said the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products.

"We hope that the European side will uphold an open and cooperative attitude and support comprehensive cooperation between the Chinese and European automotive industries," said Shi Yonghong, vice-president of the chamber.

In another development, the 136th China Import and Export Fair, popularly known as the Canton Fair, has witnessed significant achievements so far. The fair kicked off in Guangzhou, capital of South China's Guangdong province, on Tuesday, and will run until Nov 4.

New companies, products and technologies are making their debut. This year, more than 1,700 companies are first-time participants, and there are approximately 3,600 enterprises involved in businesses related to digital technology and intelligent manufacturing taking part, the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the Canton Fair app was launched this year, further optimizing multiple functions of the online platform, providing exhibitors with more convenient and efficient multi-scenario applications and mobile services, He said.

HK investment plan likely to bolster capital inflow

By LIU YIFAN in Hong Kong
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The expansion of Hong Kong's investment-for-residency program to include investments in residential properties, as revealed in the chief executive's 2024 Policy Address, is expected to breathe new life into the city's wealth management by drawing wealthy individuals and facilitating capital inflow into luxury homes, experts said.

The New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme, which gives residency to people who invest HK\$30 million (\$3.86 million) in the city, started to allow investment in homes priced at HK\$50 million or above to qualify from Wednesday. The amount of real estate investment to be counted toward the total is capped at HK\$10 million.

Moreover, investments made via an eligible privately held company owned entirely by an applicant will

be considered part of the applicant's qualifying investment with effect from next March.

The program was initially introduced in 2003 before being suspended in 2015. Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu announced its return last October.

Officially relaunched in March, the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme requires applicants to put HK\$3 million into a portfolio managed by the Hong Kong Investment Corp to support the local technology sector. Other eligible assets include stocks, debts, funds as well as industrial and commercial real estate.

An official from the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau disclosed that by the end of September, the program had garnered close to 600 applications, from which 62 had been approved.

This expansion was implemented in response to the substantial demand exhibited by applicants for

residential properties in Hong Kong, he added.

Following the relaxation of property cooling measures in February, including residential properties as qualified investments in the program is among a range of measures to bolster the city's real estate market.

Diao Zhihai, executive director of China International Capital Corp, said the move is expected to further attract high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth individuals to invest in luxury properties, potentially drawing global talent and forging significant capital agglomeration.

"This could positively contribute to Hong Kong's development as an international asset and wealth management center," Diao said.

Hong Kong's wealth management sector demonstrated resilience last year, with assets under management logging a modest

growth of 2.1 percent year-on-year to above HK\$31 trillion, said the Securities and Futures Commission. The city's net capital inflow surged more than 3.4-fold last year compared with 2022, thanks to the strong performance of private banking and private wealth businesses.

Raffles Family Office CEO Kwan Chi-man described the move as a "significant upgrade" that can attract a broader range of international capital and asset owners to Hong Kong, as it further enhances the program's appeal to wealthy individuals and families.

"Since the announcement of the relaunch last year, we've received numerous inquiries," Kwan said, pointing to Hong Kong's strategic location, low-tax environment and robust financial infrastructure. "The improvements are likely to turn interest into action, especially for those planning to establish family offices in Hong Kong."

WORLD

Food sovereignty in Gaza urged

Occupation and starvation tactics continue to destroy region's agriculture

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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Grassroots groups are demanding accountability and the revival of Palestine's agricultural sector, amid widespread damage and starvation tactics attributed to Israel's military operations in Gaza over the past year, which threaten food sovereignty in the region, as highlighted in a recent World Food Day webinar.

In her video message on Wednesday, Lisa Shahin, advocacy and research officer at The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, said that for decades, the Israeli occupation has been "stripping Palestinians of water and other natural resources".

Shahin said at the webinar titled "Zero In: Palestine/Uphold the Palestinian people's food sovereignty!" that before the recent aggression triggered by Hamas' Oct 7, 2023, attacks on Israel, about 45 percent of Gaza's food consumption came from local production, contributing significantly to the region's food security.

The agricultural sector was largely self-sufficient in producing various plant species, including a range of vegetables and fruits, she said.

Al Jazeera reported that staff members at three hospitals in northern Gaza said on Wednesday that food was running out as Israel's siege of Jabalia continued for the 13th day.

A day before, Palestinian Civil Defense spokesman Mahmoud Basal said residents in Gaza were "not only trapped but also lacking food, drink and medicine".

The United Nations said on Monday that more than 400,000 Palestinians "could be starved to death" because Israel decided to bar humanitarian aid or goods from reaching northern Gaza.

The UN update also said dozens



Palestinians gather at a water distribution point in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Thursday. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

of Palestinians trapped in the Jabalia refugee camp were forced to head to the main food supply center of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on Monday to secure food for their families.

However, the Israeli army reportedly "targeted them with shells and quadcopter drones, killing 10 people and injuring at least 40 more", the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor said in a statement on Monday.

The dire humanitarian situation is exacerbated by constant Israeli attacks. At least 28 Palestinians, including children, were killed on Thursday after an Israeli strike hit a school in Jabalia that is sheltering displaced people, a Gaza Health Ministry official told Reuters.

Shahin said the Israeli occupation "has systematically targeted Gaza's local food systems, destroying food sovereignty and the agri-

culture heritages of the region".

"The occupation employs many tactics that aim and force Palestinians to forgo their rights," she said.

Abbas Milhem, executive director of the Palestinian Farmers' Union in the West Bank, told the webinar that there was "renewed concern" over the escalating attacks carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinian farmers. The attacks had increased four times since October last year, he said.

"These attacks are not merely attacks on individuals — they are attacks on the economic, cultural and social lifeline of the Palestinian people," Milhem said.

"We, as a farmers' union, are expecting that the olive harvest this year will be bloody due to the increased and intensified settler attacks. Palestinian farmers are insisting on access and resisting denial to access their farmlands, despite increasing attacks."

Ghassan Makarem, from the AgriMovement in Lebanon, said displacement and "unfortunately the late reaction of donors" have put huge pressure on Lebanon.

He said they set up a community kitchen in southern Lebanon a year ago when it was "relatively safe". Since fighting intensified between Israel and Hezbollah, 2,000 hectares of land in Lebanon had been burned by Israel, he added.

Makarem said up to 70 percent of Lebanon's food comes from Syria via the Masnaa border crossing, which had been bombed recently by Israel.

"People are using it to flee to Syria from the bombings also. It's only proof of what we saw as ecocide," he said.

It is important to consider reparations as an issue for discussion, he added.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Kenya relocates elephants to tackle overpopulation

By OTIATO OPALI in Nairobi, Kenya
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In a spectacular conservation effort, Kenya is addressing the challenge of an overpopulated elephant community in the Mwea National Reserve by relocating 50 elephants to the more expansive Aberdare National Park.

Thanks to concerted conservation efforts, the 42-square-kilometer Mwea has seen its elephant numbers surge from 49 in 1979 to 156 today, surpassing the reserve's capacity. Meanwhile, the sprawling 760-square-kilometer Aberdare offers a more spacious habitat for the thriving herd.

Rebecca Miano, Kenya's cabinet secretary for tourism and wildlife, said on Monday that the exercise reflects the government's commitment to improving human-wildlife coexistence and mitigating environmental degradation in Mwea.

"The reason we are translocating the elephants is to manage overpopulation. Mwea National Reserve should ideally hold 47 elephants, but our conservation efforts have seen the elephants reproduce and the park had 156 elephants," Miano said.

"We are using technology in the relocation process where the transferred elephants have been tagged so that their settlement and movement can be monitored closely."

The elephants are being moved in family groups, with one individual from each group fitted with a tracking device to be monitored for the next two years. In an update released on Tuesday, the Kenya Wildlife Service said 44 elephants have been successfully relocated so far, with the remaining six scheduled for transfer by the end of the week.

Erustus Kanga, director-general of Kenya Wildlife Service, empha-

sized the importance of elephants as a keystone species in maintaining healthy ecosystems. However, unchecked population growth in confined spaces can lead to environmental degradation and escalate human-wildlife conflicts.

"At Aberdare, there is plenty of room for the elephants to roam, unlike here in Mwea, where the growing numbers led to human-wildlife conflict, with villagers complaining the elephants were raiding their farms," Kanga said.

The overpopulation in Mwea highlighted the success of the government's conservation efforts over the past three decades, he said, noting that low poaching rates have allowed the elephants to thrive. An additional 50 elephants from Mwea are expected to be relocated in the future, but no specific date has been set.

Combating poaching

Between 1979 and 1989, Kenya's elephant population plummeted from an estimated 170,000 to just 16,000 because of rampant poaching for ivory. In response, the Kenya Wildlife Service was established in 1989 to combat poaching.

The conservation efforts eventually paid off and Kenya's elephant population rebounded, with the national wildlife census of 2021 recording 36,280 elephants.

In March 2021, the African forest elephant was listed as critically endangered and the African savanna elephant as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. The assessment revealed that African forest elephant numbers had declined by more than 86 percent over 31 years, while the African savanna elephant population had dropped by at least 60 percent over the past 50 years.

Making a dash



Jockeys compete in a buffalo race festival in Chonburi, Thailand, on Wednesday. This centuries-old event celebrates both the rice harvest and Chonburi's rich history as a former commercial hub in Thailand's east, where buffaloes once played a vital role in trade and agriculture.

CHAIWAT SUBPRASOM VIA SOPA IMAGES

Poll: State of Sino-US ties hurts Asian Americans

By Belinda Robinson in New York
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The state of the US-China relationship and tense rhetoric used by politicians and the media has a huge impact on the way Chinese Americans feel they are treated by strangers and coworkers, research has found.

Most of the Chinese Americans recently polled by the non-profit organization the Committee of 100 and NORC at the University of Chicago believe that the US-China relationship is strained.

At least 61 percent said that the language used by US media when reporting on relations between the countries negatively affected how strangers treated them. A quarter said their relationship with acquaintances and coworkers had been impacted.

"Understanding the ... discrimination and political perspectives of Chinese Americans is essential to create inclusive and informed policies," said Cindy Tsai, interim president of the Committee of 100.

With just weeks before the US general election, trade and business with China is a key topic for Democratic Vice-President Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump.

Trump regularly mentions his proposed policies for China, such as a possible 60 percent tariff on goods imported into the US.

Harris has not mentioned China as much, or specifically addressed her stance on US-China relations. But the Biden-Harris administration did condemn racist rhetoric toward Asian Americans in 2021.

As a voting bloc, Asian Americans saw a 20 percent increase in their share of the electorate between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, the highest rate of change among all racial groups.

The largest group of Asian Americans are Chinese, with a population of 5.8 million.

Yet, since the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, anti-Asian hate crimes have soared.

Around two-thirds polled by the

Committee of 100 said that they faced at least one form of discrimination in an average month.

Some feared that heated political rhetoric about US-China relations could further inflame discrimination.

Last year, 49 percent of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) said they had been the victim of a hate crime, and 26 percent a physical attack, a September report by Stop AAPI Hate and the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago found.

Others reported feeling nervous while out in places like New York City, the Asian American Foundation (TAAF) found in its research in May.

At least three out of four said they had adjusted their behavior as they went about their day.

However, less than half who had experienced a crime or abuse had reported it to anyone or the NYPD due to not wanting to draw attention to themselves, feeling uncomfortable, or simply not knowing how to file a police report, TAAF said.

To make the community feel safer, some told the non-profit TAAF that they wanted to see a change in the way Asians were spoken about nationwide.

"Increased investments in inclusive education and narrative change initiatives, like those we support at TAAF, will help the broader community recognize the full humanity of AAPIs," Eugena Oh, TAAF New York regional director, told China Daily.

Several key business speakers also echoed those sentiments at the Committee of 100's annual conference and gala in New York in April.

Many stressed that maintaining a cordial relationship and open dialogue between the US and China was vital for bilateral business and positive people-to-people exchanges.

Former US ambassador to China Max Baucus told China Daily at the April conference that, "Much more needs to be done in dialogue, communication, back and forth meetings, between American people and Chinese people."

Chinese-invested airport has 'smooth' 1st year in Cambodia

SIEM REAP, Cambodia — A Chinese-invested airport in Cambodia has handled more than 14,000 flights with 1.3 million passengers in its first year, the operator said on Wednesday.

The figures were released as Siem Reap Angkor International Airport, or SAI, celebrated its anniversary.

During the event, Mao Havannal, minister in charge of Cambodia's State Secretariat of Civil Aviation, praised the airport operator for delivering quality service, enhancing passenger experiences and contributing to socioeconomic growth, national heritage protection and green development.

"The SAI has not only contributed to the development of the civil aviation industry in Cambodia, but also helped boost the nation's economic growth and tourism, as well as attract investment," Havannal said. The airport was the fruit of Cam-

bodia-China's close cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, which has accelerated Cambodia's progress in key areas such as trade, tourism and logistics, he said.

The airport, invested by Angkor International Airport Investment (Cambodia), an affiliate of China's Yunnan Investment Holdings, has run smoothly since its launch, said Liu Minglin, vice-chairman of Yunnan Investment Holdings.

"As a landmark project under the BRI cooperation between China and Cambodia, the SAI has drawn much attention," Liu said. "We will further explore investment opportunities in Cambodia in cultural tourism, park development, aviation logistics and renewable energy."

The SAI is Cambodia's largest airport and serves as the main gateway to the Angkor Archaeological Park.

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WORLD

EU tariffs on Chinese EVs draw criticism

Scholz reaffirms opposition to bloc's divided vote, calling for an agreement

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Wednesday criticized the European Union for its decision to impose punitive tariffs on electric vehicles made in China, just a day ahead of an EU summit in Brussels.

In a wide-ranging speech to the German parliament Bundestag, Scholz expressed that 17 EU member states were skeptical about the tariffs, as well as all the executives of carmakers with whom he had spoken. He was referring to the Oct 4 divided vote in which only 10 EU member states voted in favor of the new tariffs of up to 35.3 percent, while 12 member states abstained and five states, including Germany, opposed.

"My request is that we come to an agreement between China and the European Union," he told Germany's lawmakers.

German automakers, including BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and the German Association of the Automotive Industry, known as VDA, have opposed the tariffs.

A Chinese team returned to Beijing last weekend after conducting eight rounds of intensive talks with the EU side starting Sept 20 to find a solution. While some progress was made, the two sides still had huge differences and failed to find a solution.

The two sides agreed to continue talks on a price commitment solution that is acceptable to both.

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, which represents 12 Chinese EV makers, voiced dissatisfaction on Wednesday that the EU has separately approached some of the 12 EV makers for minimum price commitment while talking to the Chinese team at the same time, saying it would "shake the foundation and confidence" of the negotiations.

Olof Gill, the European Commission spokesman for trade and agriculture, said negotiations are ongoing.

"The European Union remains fully open to finding a negotiated solution," he said at a Wednesday news briefing in reply to China Daily

questions. He added that such a solution must be WTO compatible, adequate in addressing the risk to EU injury identified in the investigation, and enforceable.

He did not directly address the concern expressed by the Chinese chamber and only said the EU has strictly adhered to WTO rules.

Carl Bildt, co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations, expressed his hope that there won't be a full-scale trade war between China and the EU.

"They have no interest in a trade war, either from the EU side or the Chinese side," he said on X on Monday.

"We should not forget that, for the moment, there are a hundred times more cars sold by European companies in China than Chinese vehicles, or cars exported to Europe," said the former Swedish prime minister.

Uri Dadush, a nonresident fellow at the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, called the EU's tariffs on Chinese EVs "a mistake".

'A mistake'

"The duties are a mistake. They will harm EU citizens more than help them, and they will eventually backfire on the European automotive industry," he said in an article on Bruegel's website on Oct 8.

Dadush noted that Chinese-made EVs, many in joint ventures with EU and US carmakers, now match world quality standards and are much lower-priced, and subsidies in China and elsewhere now play a minor role in market outcomes.

"The price/quality advantage of Chinese EVs appear to reflect China's vast economies of scale (it produces 60 percent of all EVs), low labor costs, a technology and materials edge in batteries, intense competition among over one hundred Chinese-based producers and their early mover advantages," he wrote.

He argued that duties would not make EU's EV makers more competitive because it would "insulate them from global competitive pressures, reducing the incentives to cut costs and innovate", adding that many EU citizens potentially willing to green their vehicles will be unable to do so due to the duties.

Enlightening story wall



Visitors watch drawings projected on the inner walls of the Bassins des Lumieres during a press preview of the exhibition *Le Petit Prince - L'Odysee Immersive*, based on the tale *Le Petit Prince* by French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery, in Bordeaux, France, on Wednesday. The exhibition officially opens on Friday and runs until Dec 31. CHRISTOPHE ARCHAMBAULT / AFP

Malaysia eyes role as key AI, tech hub

By PRIME SARMIENTO
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Malaysia is strengthening its governance on artificial intelligence, or AI, and cloud technology as it vies to become a key technology hub, but analysts warned such policies need to consider the impact of emerging technologies on people and the planet.

Some of the biggest tech companies, including Google, Nvidia, and Microsoft, have pledged to invest in Southeast Asia's third-biggest economy, boosting Malaysia's popularity as a cloud and AI data center hub.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has said the government plans to create a national cloud policy and introduce regulations on the ethical use of AI. Deputy Minister of Economy Hanifah Hajar Taib said expanding the AI ecosystem is part of the 13th Malaysia Plan, or 13MP, the national development program for 2026-30.

Elina Noor, a senior fellow in the Asia Program at the US-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said a national AI and cloud technology policy will determine resource allocation over a certain time frame to realize a certain vision.

However, she said the bigger question is whether such a policy "suffi-

ciently takes into account the actual costs of technology investment or operations in the longer term to the people and the environment".

Elina said that discussions on AI governance in Malaysia usually focus on growth, development, and investment priorities. She said this is "an outdated approach" given the fluctuating geopolitical situation and climate change.

She said if Malaysia wants greater agency in how technology shapes its future, it should consider being more proactive in shaping the governance frameworks and mechanisms of how technology operates.

"AI governance conversations in Malaysia and the Southeast Asian region should be more grounded and holistic, taking into account technology's impact on people and the planet rather than being overly tech-optimistic," she said.

Elina said stakeholders need to answer questions about the people who annotate the data needed to train AI, how much they are paid, and if there are social safety nets for them if they have to sift through and label traumatizing content.

Chin Yew Sin, president of Malaysia Strategy Research Centre, said Malaysia's success in becoming a regional hub for cloud and AI centers includes its strategic location with 600 industrial

estates with good connectivity, strong digital infrastructure, and abundant land, power, and water supply.

He said the Malaysian government's "proactive and supportive role" in drafting an AI policy will attract more investors.

Chin said that under 13MP, Malaysia will continue AI development. "The aim is to pivot Malaysia as a world leader in AI technology via strategic investments and stronger collaborations," he said.

Malaysia's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation launched the Artificial Intelligence Governance and Ethics, or AIGE, guidelines on Sept 20 to promote the responsible and ethical use of AI, manage risks from deploying AI technology, and maximize AI benefits.

Julia Rognifard, an international relations expert, said the AIGE and the presence of such policies like the National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap 2021-2025 demonstrate to potential investors that Malaysia is taking AI development seriously and is embarking on long-term plans in these industries.

"That, in turn, will mean continuing favorable policies such as tax incentives, land for facilities, and other essential components," she said.

Briefly

DPRK Road, railway to ROK blocked, KCNA says

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea said on Thursday the roads and railways connecting the Republic of Korea in the eastern and western parts of the DPRK southern border have been completely blocked, the official Korean Central News Agency, or KCNA, reported. "This is an inevitable and legitimate measure taken in keeping with the requirement of the DPRK Constitution, which clearly defines the ROK as a hostile state, and due to the serious security circumstances running to the unpredictable brink of war owing to the grave political and military provocations of the hostile forces," according to the KCNA report. The Ministry of National Defense said that the DPRK will continue to take measures to "permanently fortify the closed southern border", the KCNA added.

UNITED STATES

Helene joins ranks of most costly storms

Monstrous hurricanes Helene and Milton caused so much complex havoc that damages are still being added up, but government and private experts say they will likely join the infamous ranks of Katrina, Sandy and Harvey as hugely expensive \$50-billion-plus killers. Making that even more painful is that most of the damage — 95 percent or more in Helene's case — was not insured, putting victims in a deeper financial hole. Storm deaths have been dropping over time, although Helene was an exception.

INDIA

More than 18 die after drinking tainted liquor

At least 18 people have died and several more are in hospital after consuming tainted liquor in India's eastern state of Bihar, a senior government official said on Thursday. The death toll is likely to rise, the official, who did not want to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the media about the matter, said. Local police have arrested 22 people for their alleged involvement in the sale of tainted liquor in the state, which banned the sale and purchase of liquor in 2016.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Budget battle



Students march against Argentine President Javier Milei's economic adjustments which include sharp spending cuts to the public university education system in Buenos Aires on Wednesday. LUIS ROBAYO / AFP

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba sent an offering to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, his office said on Thursday, drawing criticisms from China and the Republic of Korea.

Ishiba sent the ceremonial tree, called "masakaki", on the first day of the three-day ceremony at the war-linked shrine located in central Tokyo's Chiyoda district.

This is the first time that Ishiba made such an offering since taking office on Oct 1. He is unlikely to visit the shrine during the festival, local media cited sources close to him.

The Yasukuni Shrine honors 14 convicted Class-A Japanese war criminals from World War II, including Hideki Tojo. It has long been a source of diplomatic friction for Japan and its neighbors.

For a long time, some Japanese politicians and members of parliament have insisted on visiting the shrine, which has been strongly opposed by many peace-loving people at home and abroad.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning on Thursday said Yasukuni is a symbol of Japan's militaristic war of aggression.

"We urge Japan to face up to and reflect on its history of aggression and to be cautious in words and deeds regarding historical issues such as Yasukuni Shrine," Mao said.

The ROK on Thursday also expressed regret over Japanese leaders sending offerings to the notorious shrine.

ROK's foreign ministry urged

leaders of Japan's new cabinet to squarely face history and demonstrate through action their humble reflection and sincere remorse for Japan's past acts, noting this will become an important foundation for the establishment of future-oriented bilateral relations based on mutual trust.

Risk of losing majority

Meanwhile, Japan's ruling party may lose its majority in the lower house, according to polls held ahead of the Oct 27 election, meaning it would likely have to rely on coalition partner Komeito to stay in power.

The Liberal Democratic Party may not reach the 233 seats it needs for an outright majority in the 465-seat chamber, the Nikkei

newspaper said on Thursday. The LDP has held sole control of the chamber since it returned to power in 2012 after three years in opposition.

In a separate poll by Jiji Press, support for Ishiba's cabinet came to 28 percent, marking the lowest for new governments dating back to 2000. The survey was conducted Oct 11-14 and published on Thursday.

Ishiba's government is already depending on Komeito for a majority in the upper house. Extending that reliance to the more powerful lower house could give the group, backed by Japan's largest Buddhist lay organization, a greater say in policymaking.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

NATO shows no sign of letting Ukraine join soon

BRUSSELS — NATO showed no sign on Wednesday it would invite Ukraine to join anytime soon as allies sought more information from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky about his "victory plan" for ending the ongoing conflict.

The plan centers on a request to NATO to move forward on the "accelerated" membership application that Zelensky made two years ago to seek protection under the military alliance's security umbrella.

NATO's credibility is based on its collective security guarantee, Article 5 of its founding treaty. It's a commitment by all the 32 member countries to come to the aid of any member whose sovereignty or

territory might be under attack. However, it does not apply to a partner country like Ukraine.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte declined to welcome the "victory plan", saying only that he and the allies "take note" of it. He did not discuss when Ukraine might join the world's biggest military alliance, beyond insisting that it would become a member.

"The plan has many aspects and many political and military issues we really need to hammer out with the Ukrainians to understand what is behind it, to see what we can do, what we cannot do," Rutte said at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

"We are in close contact with allies, with Ukraine, to see how we can take the next steps," he added.

For now, Rutte said, the focus must be on helping Ukraine to win back more territory and strengthen its hand for any future peace negotiations.

Zelensky explained elements of his plan on Thursday to leaders of the European Union, most of whom also stand among NATO's ranks.

Zelensky said that Ukraine would continue to fight even if Kyiv's Western allies did not agree to support his "victory plan".

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden spoke to Zelensky on Wednesday about efforts to increase security

assistance to Ukraine and announced a new \$425 million military aid package, the White House said.

It all comes as Ukrainian troops are struggling to hold off Russian forces, especially in the eastern Donetsk region where they are gradually being pushed back. Kyiv is surviving with Western help, but Ukraine says it is coming too slowly.

On the battlefield, Russia's defense ministry said on Thursday its forces had captured the village of Maksymilianivka, in Ukraine's east as part of its advance in the Donetsk region toward the logistics hub of Pokrovsk.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Hands that care



Victims of a tanker explosion from Majiwa town receive treatment inside an ambulance at the Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital in Kano, Nigeria, on Wednesday. The death toll from the explosion has risen to at least 153, with another 100 people injured, police said. SANI MAIKATANGA / AP

COMMENT

Editorials

US' dirty geopolitics again on display exposing its idea of 'fair competition'

The great lengths the Joe Biden administration has gone to over the past months to prevent a Chinese enterprise from acquiring a mining company in the Democratic Republic of Congo testify to the new lows the US can stoop to in order to win its "competition" with China.

Chemaf Resources Limited, a copper and cobalt mining company based in the DRC, published a statement in June, saying it had reached an agreement to sell the company (and its subsidiaries) to China's Norin Mining. The statement also said the transaction was expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year, and the DRC government had approved the sale.

Chemaf's Etoile mine has produced more than 300,000 tons of copper and 55,000 tons of cobalt hydroxide over the past 20 years. The plan is to expand Etoile and build the Mutoshi copper-cobalt mine project, which could produce more than 75,000 tons of copper and 20,000 tons of cobalt hydroxide per year. These minerals are widely used in the manufacturing of jet fighters, drones and electric vehicle power batteries.

It is through "a highly competitive international auction process," as Jeremy Meynert, chief adviser to Chemaf Group of Companies, put it, that Norin Mining won the bid to acquire Chemaf. The Chinese mining and trading company has a portfolio of base metal projects across the African continent, including two operational in the DRC — Comica and Lamikal.

"We are pleased to have signed a transaction with Norin Mining which will allow CRL and Chemaf to meet their obligations to existing lenders and creditors," Meynert said.

However, over the past few weeks, the Biden administration has reportedly held talks with some North American companies — including KoBold Metals and Orion Resource Partners of the United States, and First Quantum Minerals of Canada — to persuade them to acquire the DRC-based company either jointly or alone.

According to reports in The Wall Street Journal, Washington's latest efforts to block the deal have apparently produced some effects. Sources familiar with the deal said the acquisition has been blocked due to pressure from the US, as the DRC government said it wants to "diversify" Chemaf's partnership, although a spokesperson for Chemaf asserted that the company is still committed to the deal with China's Norin Mining.

The Biden administration's focus now is on Chilean Cobalt Corp, a Pennsylvania-based critical minerals exploration and development company, whose CEO Duncan Blount had earlier rejected the idea of acquiring Chemaf, saying it was overpriced. However, Blount told the media recently that he was still interested in acquiring Chemaf and that he is communicating with the US State Department and forming a consortium with other companies to execute his plan.

Other Western companies on the Biden administration's wooing list that are reportedly interested in acquiring Chemaf include Anglo American, Rio Tinto and Freeport-McMoRan.

In recent years, the Biden administration has pledged to invest in infrastructure projects across Africa, including the DRC where the US promised to build a railway to facilitate the transportation of copper and cobalt to the Atlantic port of Lobito via Angola. However, due to the lack of modern infrastructure and skilled labor in the DRC, Washington has found it difficult to attract US investors to fund infrastructure projects in the country.

Although it is not known how the Biden administration has managed to dispel the Western companies' concerns on the DRC company's debt burdens, many see US geopolitics at play in the latest developments. In general, before investing in African countries, US investors usually want some "favors" from Washington, which could include financial support, guarantees against possible expropriation or sudden tax increases, or exemption from the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

The possibility of the US administration adopting a take-it-or-leave-it approach to force bankruptcy upon Chemaf so as to block its deal with Norin Mining cannot be ruled out if it fails to persuade any Western company to acquire the DRC company. When it comes to the US, no abyss is deep enough for it to stoop to.

Thriving BRICS answer to bloc politics

The expansion of BRICS grouping from five to 10 member countries has successfully pushed it onto the fast track of becoming a "Greater BRICS" cooperation mechanism. Riding the momentum of deepening Global South solidarity this year, countries from all over Asia and even beyond have applied to join the grouping, indicating the wide recognition of its more prominent role on the world stage and its growing international clout.

With the 16th BRICS summit, which is scheduled to be held in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24, drawing near, a number of countries have expressed their desire to join the grouping, demonstrating the mechanism's growing appeal.

The upcoming summit in Kazan, themed "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security", will be the first summit after BRICS' expansion from five to 10 members last year, when Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia were admitted at the Johannesburg summit as new BRICS members, effective on Jan 1, although Saudi Arabia is yet to complete the formalities to become a full member.

On Monday, Sri Lankan Foreign Affairs Minister Vijitha Herath said his country is to place on record its request for membership of BRICS at the upcoming Kazan summit, citing the grouping as an effective partnership for mutually beneficial cooperation, peace and development, and inclusive multilateralism.

It joins Cuba, Syria, Malaysia, Thailand, Belarus and Pakistan in seeking membership of the grouping, as they have all applied to join it. Russia has already confirmed that along with the 10 members more than two dozen other countries that have applied for or are considering membership will participate in this year's summit. The high number of new applications suggests another expansion of the grouping may be underway.

There are some countries that are less than happy that BRICS should prove so appealing. Japan is one such country that has reportedly expressed concerns over Malaysia and Thailand applying to join BRICS. A South China Morning Post article, citing Japanese experts, said Japan is worried that the Southeast Asian nations may be moving away from their balanced diplomacy and leaning toward a grouping largely influenced by China and Russia. Given Japan's role as an Asian mainstay in the Western bloc, which has been fomenting bloc confrontation and seeking exclusive interests worldwide, it is not surprising that many in Japan harbor such a view. To them, BRICS presents a challenge to the Western-dominated international order.

In fact, Western countries, including Japan, should grasp the fact that the popularity and strong appeal of BRICS is because of the many injustices in the world order today that BRICS is viewed by countries of the Global South as having the potential to change. Exacerbating these in-built injustices in the global governance system, the Western countries have been sparing no effort to create divisions and confrontations among the countries of the Global South in pursuit of selfish gains.

The BRICS mechanism has thrived to become an increasingly important cooperation platform for countries of the Global South because of its spirit of openness, inclusiveness and emphasis on win-win cooperation. Rather than being a means for Beijing and Moscow to exploit some countries' resentment against the United States and its wealthy allies in service to their efforts to overcome the Western countries' endeavors to constrain their development, the still-expanding BRICS grouping is simply a natural manifestation of the dissatisfaction with and determination to challenge the structural advantages in the international system that enable the Western countries to enjoy unfair and exorbitant privileges.

But BRICS is not, as Western countries seek to portray, an assault on the global order. Instead, it is a means for the countries of the Global South to pursue measured and incremental changes in the global governance system to shape and build a just and equitable world.

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Shen Tiancheng



Opinion Line

New policies need to account for repercussions of external reflation

Since the US Federal Reserve cut the federal funds rate in September by a larger-than-expected 50 basis points, the market is expecting more rate cuts. However, recent data released by the United States showed that jobs in its nonagricultural sector increased by 254,000 in September, far exceeding the expected 150,000. Thus US unemployment rate dropped to 4.1 percent in September, below the expected 4.2 percent.

Driven by the surge in orders and strengthening business activity, the US ISM services PMI stood at 54.9 in September, much higher than the expected 51.7, the third consecutive month of expansion. A series of US data in September far exceeded market expectations leading to a sharp reversal of rate cut expectations, resulting in short-selling of the yen and euro at the global exchange market, and also the interruption of the recent apprecia-

tion of the renminbi.

Correspondingly, there have emerged concerns about reflation in the US, also because of the uncertainty involving the presidential elections. This will interrupt the pace of the Fed's rate cuts. If the new president supports the policy of a strong dollar, or imposes a 20 percent tariff on all US imports, it will put inflationary pressure on the US that mainly relies on imported consumer goods.

The strengthening of the US dollar brought about by the current reflation expectation may produce some external effects on a series of incremental policies recently introduced by China, such as causing temporary depreciation of the RMB exchange rate. However, the US economy does not support sustained high interest rates, especially as interest payments on the US' federal debt will be as high as \$892 billion this year.

The main problem facing China's

economy is the lack of effective domestic demand, but China's exports still remain internationally competitive. Therefore, what China should do next is to implement a package of incremental policies and actively expand domestic demand.

As the US economy enters a soft landing process and China starts to implement a package of incremental policies, the impact of US factors on China's economy may be reduced under the two different cycles. It is believed that with the orderly and gradual strengthening of its incremental policies, China's economy will be on the track of sustained recovery. China's systematic and gradual fortification of policy intensity will avoid irrational fluctuations caused by speculative sentiment, consolidating its economic growth foundation and improving growth quality.

—21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

Domestic companies, beware of foreign surveyors

The Ministry of State Security has released details of a case in which a foreign enterprise was caught collaborating with a Chinese company to illegally collect geographical information and conduct mapping activities within China.

The foreign company being a contractor for key sensitive projects in another country is not entitled to independently conduct geographical surveys or mapping activities in China. However, in order to evade supervision, the company subcontracted a domestic qualified company under the pretext of autonomous vehicle driving research to carry out the survey.

Equally noteworthy is the way they went about collecting the info, by pur-

chasing several vehicles and equipping them with high-precision radar, GPS, and optical lenses so that all they needed to do was to drive through the places marked for survey; the instruments carried out the surveying and mapping work.

Technologies such as radar, high-resolution cameras and fast mapping software are so commonplace these days that an ordinary-looking car on the road can carry out the survey without arousing any suspicion.

Which further highlights the importance of stricter regulatory measures against such potential threats to national security. The law has made it clear that companies with improper background,

such as the foreign company in the aforementioned case, are not permitted to carry out such surveys, but they escaped supervision by subcontracting to, or collaborating/cooperating with, domestic qualified companies. To plug that loophole, domestic businesses need to be extra cautious and report to the national security departments if a foreign contract requires them to carry out survey or mapping jobs in sensitive areas.

A self-regulatory mechanism is needed for these domestic businesses that are qualified to do the work. It would be best if their societies can make it a rule for all members to follow, thus minimizing the cost for all.

—ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

SCO to deepen practical collaboration to address challenges

Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Wednesday called for deepening and expanding cooperation within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the SCO held in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The SCO is an important platform for safeguarding regional peace and stability as it promotes the development and prosperity of all countries. The SCO member states, as reflected in the consensus they reached at the SCO Astana summit in July, are committed to jointly building a common home featuring solidarity and mutual trust, peace and tranquility, prosperity and development, good-neighborliness and friendship, as well as fairness and justice.

To build such a common home, a more solid political foundation, more reliable security guarantees, closer economic ties, deeper emotional bond and more coordinated multilateral

cooperation are needed, as Premier Li urged.

To that end, China stands ready to work with all parties to translate the consensus reached by the heads of state into effective actions and turn the aforementioned vision of building a common home into reality.

The SCO member states should strengthen their strategic alignment based on missions and tasks, formulate the SCO's development strategy for the next decade, draw a roadmap for cooperation in various fields, strengthen strategic communication, eliminate differences and enhance mutual trust through dialogue.

They should expand practical cooperation in line with the development needs of the SCO region, particularly in such fields as poverty reduction, digital economy and green development, so as to better facilitate regional trade and investment, enhance connectivity and maintain stable and unimpeded industry and supply chains.

They also need to focus on major risks and actively respond to them.

The SCO member states should step up joint actions to combat extremist, separatist and terrorist forces, and accelerate the building of a universal center to address the challenges and threats to the security of SCO member states.

They should always expand people-to-people exchanges in response to public expectations. As Premier Li said, SCO member states should give full play to the SCO Committee on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation, build the SCO digital education alliance, and organize events under signature programs such as the Forum on People-to-People Friendship.

In the face of the complex and volatile international environment and changes unseen in a century, all parties need to actively implement the outcomes of the Astana summit, work closely in solidarity and coordination, and strengthen the synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union.

—XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

COMMENT

Ole Doering

EU's stance on EVs shows integrity crisis

China-European Union relations could be just as healthy as the figures in this article suggest. China is the EU's second-largest trading partner for goods, after the United States, with two-way trade reaching about 730 billion euros in 2023. In overall terms, China is the EU's third-largest destination for exports and its biggest source for imports. For the record, the EU-China trade balance is in favor of China.

Last year, the EU's deficit was 292 billion euros. There are more things that Europeans buy from China than the other way around. This may have to do with the relative level of wages, standards of living, demographic factors and fiscal issues. China has not yet reached the peak of its "stability dividend", while the EU decided to squander its "peace dividend", as it broke its promises to Russia not to allow any more eastward expansion of NATO. When politicians at the EU Headquarters in Brussels advise their pundits that foreign countries are to blame for the EU's economic problems, it is time to pause.

When the blame-game violates the interests of domestic stakeholders, the public should think twice. The EU's trade-war threats are perhaps the culmination of a failed China strategy and reflect a deep internal crisis. Four under-

lying conflicts are shaking the EU's integrity and rendering the relative decline of the self-fulfilling "EU-vs-China" prophecy.

First, from the perspective of liberal market economy, promoted by the EU as long as it felt self-sufficient and self-reliant, protectionism is self-contradicting and must backfire, especially when the markets and production chains are global. Yet the European Commission claims it is obligated to protecting EU carmakers that, incidentally, are against imposing any punitive tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, because many of them also manufacture EVs in China and sell some of them in Europe.

However, bilaterally, Chinese investments in Spain, Poland and Hungary may facilitate the sales of affordable Chinese-made EVs — which are not subject to customs duties if they are produced in the EU. Protectionism and sanctions inspire innovation.

Second, a decade ago, China "took over" the solar industry from the Europeans, who were not able to develop viable strategies for mutually beneficial collaborations. The European Commission has now warned that the same should not happen with EVs, ignoring the EU's own failure to establish proper infrastructure and the golden rule that diversity of competition is the best regulator. China is exporting EVs to the EU not because of "overcapacity", but because the demand exists.

Moreover, China is taking the lead in the fields of innovative automobile technology, quality and comfort. That's market economy.

Third, European small and medium-sized enterprises depend most on realism and suffer worst from idealism. The EU's rhetoric of "forcing China into playing fair" is an apt example of Sinophobia and wishful thinking, with the idea emerging from the economic giant United States. Regulators use bureaucracy to meddle with entrepreneurial risk engagement, cut deals with major companies with promised corporate privileges. Maintaining the myth of Western superiority and combining it with lachrymose self-pity over lost glory will impress less than hard work and fair play. A reality check shall become easier with time, but more painful for citizens who bear the social cost.

Ultimately, this dispute is not about cars, tariffs or privileges, but about the integrity of the EU's position in the new world order. According to the "multifaceted approach" to China that has replaced the win-win paradigm, the EU now sees China as "a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor, and a systemic rival."

EU-China relations have become increasingly complicated of late. This self-description means, the EU is confused and ill advised. Accordingly, 10 EU states supported the tariffs, 12 abstained, and five said no.

Fourth, conflicting loyalties are at the heart of the EU's integrity crisis. While no EU position claims loyalty obligations toward China, the transatlantic bonds seem unquestionable. However, there isn't even a public debate on EU's allegiance to European nations and citizens. There is no unity but open conflict. The incumbent EU Council president finds himself defamed by the European Commission president, for demanding reason, peace and a corruption-free approach.

The triple lack — of European leadership, of people's representation, and of institutional reform — has led the EU into a threefold crisis, of regulation, governance and legitimacy. This crisis must be seen as the hotbed of anti-China measures, which partly deflect attention and partly express cultural prejudice. Obviously, the EU's "countermeasures" are unfair, illegal and unreasonable. However, China will gain clout by steering clear of the noise. It will allow Europeans to see the difference between submission under declining hegemony or political, cultural and social interdependence in an economically interdependent world.

The author is a professor at Hunan Normal University in China and an associate professor at Karlsruhe Institute for Technology in Germany.

The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Ma Xiaolin

Middle East needs peace, not conflicts

Israel's Security Cabinet reached a consensus on Oct 15 on how to thwart Iran's Oct 1-style missile attacks. After reportedly holding talks with the US' Joe Biden administration, Israel has largely ruled out attacking Iran's nuclear and oil facilities, choosing instead to focus solely on military targets. The decision is intended to prevent the further destabilization of the Middle East, avoid jeopardizing the US presidential election on Nov 5 or the ongoing presidential campaign, or ruining the chances of Israel normalizing relations with the Gulf Arab states.

The Washington Post, citing US officials, reported on Oct 14 that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given formal assurances to Washington that it may launch a "limited" retaliatory attack on Iran. But the report also said that the "sword of Damocles" (of Israel's retaliation) could fall before the US election, meaning the outcome is likely to be known in the next couple of weeks.

In response, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries issued a monthly report on Monday, lowering its global oil demand expectations for the fourth quarter of the year and for 2025. This suggests a panic-driven surge in oil prices, fueled by the fear of a major potential conflict between Israel and Iran, may subside.

Given Israel's strategic practices and the Middle East's geopolitical landscape, Israel would have launched a massive attack on Iran, but the fact that it has not yet prepared militarily and diplomatically, especially due to the constraints imposed on it by the US and Gulf Arab states, has prompted Tel Aviv to shelve its retaliation plan — perhaps for now. Iran fired about 200 missiles at Israel in response to Israel's bombing of Hezbollah's headquarters in Lebanon, which killed the outfit's leader Hassan Nasrallah, senior Iranian Revolutionary Guard commander Abbas Nilforoushan and other Hezbollah activists.

Despite the Iranian attacks being con-

These developments have helped ease Israel's anxiety, which means that despite the stick of Israel's retaliatory attack raised high, it may only fall symbolically.

demned by the West, the US in particular, and Israel claiming to have intercepted all the Iranian missiles, some of them hit Israeli military and intelligence facilities, demonstrating Iran's long-range strike capability and exposing the loopholes in Israel's air defense system.

Netanyahu has said that Iran will be made to pay for the attacks. Since its founding, Israel has had a deterrence-centered defense strategy, characterized by overpowering military capability, violation of international law, and disproportionate punishment for any armed challenge. Yet Israel has not retaliated against Iran even more than two weeks after the attacks, because of several reasons.

First, since Israel, as it proudly claims, is fighting on "seven fronts", it has to consider the consequences of escalating the conflict with Iran. For more than one year, Israel has been battering the Gaza Strip and making incursions into the West Bank, tackling Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthi rebels in Yemen and Shia militias in Iraq and continuing its airstrikes on Syria, all the while continuing its confrontation with Iran.

Second, Israel's military focus has shifted from operations in Gaza in the south to Lebanon in the north, leaving it incapable of launching a cross-border strike eastward against a more formidable and resilient Iran because, despite all the hype, Israel is a small country with limited strategic maneuvering space, and lack of conventional military power. Based on its knowledge of wars in the

Middle East, Israel has worked out a strategy of tackling threats one at a time while striving to attain air superiority, and using its forces to neutralize the most immediate dangers.

However, Israel cannot replicate its past military successes against neighboring countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan when facing a much larger and stronger Iran. If a counter-strike proves ineffective or provokes a fresh round of Iranian missile attacks, the loopholes in Israel's decades-long strategic deterrence mechanism will be fully exposed, shattering its reputation of being "invincible".

Third, internal divisions in Israel are growing, leading to political failures despite some military victories. Israel's Security Cabinet remains divided on whether to expand the conflict, with increasing focus on the differences between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, which have turned into a competition for controlling the Likud Party in the future.

Israel's focus on boosting its development has shifted to managing conflicts, which have deteriorated the investment and living environment, with large-scale withdrawal of foreign capital, companies and expatriates from the country. The trend of elite talents leaving the country has intensified, with an increasing number of Israeli citizens considering migrating to other countries.

Fourth, the US-Israel relationship is a key factor behind Israel not retaliating against Iran. Although it considers Israel's security its top priority in the Middle East, Washington has shifted its strategic focus away from the region to Europe and the "Indo-Pacific" region to the extent of taking measures to prevent the conflict from spreading to the Persian Gulf which would drag the US into direct confrontation with Iran.

As the US presidential election approaches, the Biden administration, concerned about the impact of the conflict on the Democratic Party's votes,

appears unhappy with the aggressive Israeli government, with complaints against Netanyahu becoming almost public. Washington strongly opposes Israeli strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, fearing it could result in a nuclear leak or cause Tehran to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation regime. It also advises Israel to avoid targeting Iran's oil facilities to prevent triggering a new global energy crisis.

And fifth, Gulf Arab states' opposition to Israel escalating the conflict has forced Israel to shelve its plans to launch a major attack on Iran. The Israel-Palestine conflict has changed the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East, with traditional Arab-led opposition to Israel giving way to a confrontation between Israel and the Iran-led "Axis of Resistance".

The six Arab countries that have normalized relations with Israel now want to continue dialogue and reconciliation with Iran, while focusing on their own development and praying for peace in the Middle East. These countries recently said they will not open their airspace to Israel nor will they allow US military bases on their soil to help Israel launch air strikes on Iran.

If Israel proceeds to launch a retaliatory attack on Iran, the trilateral security framework among the US, Israel and the Arab states, often described as the "Middle East minilateral" or "Middle East NATO", could collapse, undoing years of diplomatic hard work. In fact, Iran has conveyed through Saudi Arabia that it will not retaliate further if Israel's response is not treacherous.

These developments have helped ease Israel's anxiety, which means that despite the stick of Israel's retaliatory attack raised high, it may only fall symbolically.

The author is the dean of and a professor at the Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean Rim at Zhejiang International Studies University. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



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China's bid to help green transition good for the world

When I attended a seminar on climate change in Brussels on Tuesday morning, the biggest question on my mind was how the rising geopolitical tensions have undermined global solidarity and cooperation in the fight against climate change.

Jean-Marc Jancovi, an expert on low-carbon economy, soberly reminded the audience that global temperatures had already risen more than 1.5 degrees Celsius from the pre-industrial levels, a harsh reality that some scientists sounded the alarm in July.

While climate change is regarded the biggest threat to the planet and, therefore, humanity, the United States has over the past years tried to portray China, including China's green industry, as its biggest threat. The US has been engaging in zero-sum games by claiming China's green products pose a national security threat to the US and the rest of the world.

US President Joe Biden's announcement in May, imposing 100 percent tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles, 50 percent on Chinese-made solar cells and 25 percent on EV batteries and parts are typical protectionist moves that hurt China's green industry, as well as US consumers by denying them affordable but quality green products.

As a result of such policies, the US' green transition will slow down and become costlier. Similar is the case of Canada, where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government blindly follows in the US' footsteps.

China has demonstrated its firm determination to continue its green drive, and has achieved phenomenal success in its low carbon transition over the past more than a decade.

The European Union, too, has decided to impose tariffs up to 35.3 percent on Chinese-made EVs despite a sharply divided vote. The good news is that the EU and China are continuing their negotiations in order to find a solution and avoid a potential trade war.

A European Commission spokesperson did not directly address my questions when asked if such tariffs would slow down the EU's green transition, especially its goal of phasing out new fossil fuel cars by 2035, a big concern for many European experts.

Just last week, the European People's Party, the largest political party in the European Parliament which European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen belongs to, posted a message on its website urging the EU to change its planned ban on combustion engines.

The fact that both the US and the EU have been undermining and fearmongering about Chinese-made green products is something that should be discussed at the 29th UN Climate Change Conference scheduled for Nov 11-22 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

China has demonstrated its firm determination to continue its green drive, and has achieved phenomenal success in its low carbon transition over the past more than a decade. The fruitful result is reflected in the latest report of the International Energy Agency, which was issued last week, that China will account for almost 60 percent of all renewable capacity installed worldwide between now and 2030. That would make China home to almost half of the world's total renewable power capacity by the end of this decade.

But China's potential contribution to the rest of the world in terms of renewables has been greatly hampered by the trade barriers erected by the US and some other countries.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has blamed China for so-called overcapacity, but many experts I have talked to have said that there is no such thing as "overcapacity", but "undercapacity" when it comes to meeting the huge global demand for green products.

Worse, the US' protectionist measures have hurt the limited mutual trust that existed between the two largest economies. It is true that John Kerry and John Podesta, former and current US climate envoys, have held several talks with their Chinese counterparts. But such talks have often been marred by Washington's strategy to curtail China's economic and technological rise, particularly in the green industry.

Sino-US cooperation led to the finalization of the historic Paris Agreement in 2015 and its signing in 2016. The US should reflect on that spirit, and immediately stop sabotaging China's green and renewable industry. Because climate change, not China, is the biggest threat to the US and the world.

GLOBAL VIEWS



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

ONG TEE KEAT

Making the pie bigger

An expanding BRICS has the potential to emerge as a cooperation mechanism with the largest area, population and resources in the world

The upcoming 16th BRICS summit scheduled for Oct 22-24 is all set to draw global attention amid rising discord between the US-led West and the non-West.

The host, Russia, is well poised to emerge as the favored destination for those developing countries that aspire to join the fast-growing group through intense lobbying. This indirectly grants Moscow a break from its toxic portrayal as an "international pariah" by the Washington-led West following the Russia-Ukraine conflict.



At the same time, 40 or more aspiring nations from the developing Global South are earnestly awaiting the outcome of their respective applications for BRICS membership. This means the alphabet soup of five founding members has now evolved into a potent group of global multilateral cooperation, and is touted as a force to reckon with in challenging the dominion of greenbacks across the world.

Beyond the excessive assertion that BRICS has been hyped as the driving force to dethrone the US currency, apart from being labeled a tool to defy the existing US-dictated global order, the underlying truth remains that more and more countries are indeed keen on bringing some kind of transformative reforms to the ailing global order.

While more emerging economies are echoing the call for settling their inter-nation trade payments with local currency, the BRICS-founded New Development Bank is set to increase the local currency lending to 30 percent of the total lending by 2026, to meet the rising needs of infrastructure and sustainable development across the developing and low-income nations. Never before have the Bretton Woods institutions been rivaled by an alternative multilateral development bank such as NDB.

The reason is rather simple. The expanded BRICS merely provides an alternative platform for the developing countries to embark on an egalitarian model of multilateral cooperation. As sovereign states, they are not obliged to be pliant to any major power, including the reigning hegemon. They reserve their unchallenged rights in determining what's best for their individual interests.

Over the years, bifurcation of the world into the West versus

non-West, Global North versus Global South has been undermining the global order. Taking advantage of its primacy and global dominance, the West is making its former colonies in the non-West regions to fall easy prey to its persistent resource plundering. The hard-fought sovereignty has thus been hollowed out, leaving the new nation states with virtually no say in their governance.

Plainly put, Pax-Americana enables a hegemonic primacy representing only 12 percent of the global population to silence and lord over the remaining 88 percent population in the non-West. Precisely it's this sense of preclusion prevailing in the Global South that makes room for an alternative model of governance, which appears more egalitarian and meets the contemporary aspirations of the multipolar world.

Washington and its allies have to acknowledge, if not embrace, the emerging reality of multipolarity in the contemporary global dynamics. After all, no global hegemony has ever been perpetual in the annals of history.

BRICS, which rose from scratch, was initially dismissed as a motley grouping of developing countries of diverse interests and aspirations. As it expands with the induction of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, the growing bloc has the potential to emerge as the largest alliance with the largest area, population and resources in the world. Collectively, the bloc represents approximately 27 percent of the world's GDP and 45 percent of the world's population. It controls more than 60 percent of the global oil and gas reserves and includes the world's largest exporters and importers of petroleum if Saudi Arabia were to formally join it later. With this, certainly it has sufficient clout to reshape the global order.

Meanwhile, taking it as a potential threat to the sagging US preeminence, spin doctors from the West have been quick to respond with the bloc in their crosshair of narratives. From their perspective, the diverse aspirations and geopolitical stance of the expanded BRICS is an exploitable Achilles' heel.

Motivated by such insidious agenda, the age-old Sino-India discord is again being resurrected to drive a further wedge between the two founding member states of BRICS. Alongside this, Washington's bid to endear itself to the Global South is conspicuously clear when it promised to reform the United Nations Security Council

with the inclusion of representation from the Global South.

The recent call for adding two permanent seats for African nations to the UN Security Council, and an elected seat for a small island developing nation by the Joe Biden administration was framed as "an effort to give more power to countries historically isolated from decision-making on international peace and security".

While the US overture is welcomed cautiously, it also reminds us of Washington's prior commitment to permanent representation from Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to the long overdue unfulfilled promises made to India, Japan and Germany. Indeed, Washington is having a growing list of commitments to deliver.

Beyond the gesture of such a charming offensive, we could anticipate that the US' repeated offers of coveted permanent seats in the yet-to-expand security council are sufficient to trigger fierce jostling across the diverse Global South, including among the present member states of the expanded BRICS. This sets to complicate the inter-state relations within the bloc. Perhaps, it may also explain why the Western mouthpieces are optimistic that the rapid expansion of the BRICS would ultimately hasten the weakening of its intra-bloc cohesiveness.

Be that as it may, the collective West generally remains hawkish to the bloc. It's not too far-fetched to suspect that the "carrot" of UN Security Council permanent seats might just be a strategic move to sow discord among the Global South countries in the zero-sum interest of the West.

Under the prism of Washington and Brussels, hosting the BRICS summit in Russia this year will only facilitate the host to weaponize the bloc as an anti-West geopolitical tool. Little would they endeavor to compete with the expanded BRICS in positive light to prove the preponderance of its global governance to humanity, much less in fostering collaboration to bridge the gap between the Global North and the Global South in pursuit of enduring peace and common prosperity for the world.

The author is president of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific (BRICAP). 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.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

JAVIER VADELL AND LI XING

An emerging game-changing club

The expanded BRICS is creating a model where governance on global issues is shared, rather than being dominated by a superpower or a small group of Western nations

The upcoming BRICS summit, scheduled to take place in Russia from Oct 22 to 24, is expected to see the inclusion of several countries.

The BRIC was introduced to highlight emerging market opportunities. South Africa joined in 2010, forming the BRICS. Since the 2023 Johannesburg summit, the grouping has included more Global South countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, the hierarchy of the world economy and global governance shaped by the United States-led liberal

economic order is undergoing a systemic crisis. This crisis encompasses several dimensions: a crisis of functionality, marked by the failure of traditional international institutions; a crisis of scope, characterized by an overwhelming number of pressing issues; a crisis of legitimacy, reflecting a decline in trust toward the conventional institutions; and a crisis of authority, highlighted by the challenges posed by the rise of emerging economies.

Consequently, more and more countries in the periphery and semi-periphery are trying to sever exploitative ties with global financial capital and align their external relations with domestic needs and development. As a result, this delinking process is gaining traction in various regions worldwide, with the expanded BRICS — led by China's economic influence — serving as a natural point of attraction. This delinking helps the Global South fulfill its aspiration for alternative forms of globalization that give it greater room for development.

The BRICS has evolved beyond merely being a coalition of emerging countries seeking greater participation. The expanded BRICS signifies a qualitative transformation, not just in terms of increased membership but also as a centripetal geopolitical force in this new era of global transformation.

Several key factors contribute to the appeal of the expanded BRICS for countries in the Global South.

The first is geopolitical factor. Many countries, including US allies such as Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, have lost confidence in US leadership because of its inability to pro-

vide public goods they once depended on.

The second is international financial factor. The weaponization of the US dollar against its adversaries is eroding the confidence of the international monetary system and pushing forward the momentum for de-dollarization. The long-term impact of this trend could lead to a more multipolar global financial system. This shift could pave the way for a new international economic order that includes alternative institutions for means of payment, units of value and reserves of value, such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The third is global governance. The expanded BRICS aims to promote an alternative set of norms and values that challenge the current Western-dominated global order. The focus is on creating a multipolar world, where emerging economies and Global South countries have greater influence over global governance, economic systems and international relations. This ambition aligns with the group's broader goal of rebalancing the global economic and political order in favor of developing nations, many of which feel marginalized by existing international institutions dominated by the West.

The fourth is cultural and civilizational factor. The expanded BRICS is promoting a new type of inclusive globalization that acknowledges cultural and civilizational diversity as opposed to the universalism often espoused by the West. This approach is rooted in a shared framework of values, such as sovereignty, peaceful coexistence and nonintervention in internal affairs, reflecting the spirit of the Bandung Conference of 1955.

Thus, the significance of the expanded BRICS should be understood in its contribution to the creation of a new model of "interdependent global governance", where governance over global issues becomes more shared and collaborative among various powers, rather than dominated by a single superpower or a small group of Western nations. It implies an interactive process of mutual challenge, mutual constraint, mutual need and mutual accommodation engaged by both existing and emerging powers. It represents a dynamic situation in which existing and emerging powers are interconnected in a continual interactive process of shaping and reshaping the international order.

Interdependent global governance indicates that globalization is leading the world economy into real changes in the international system, encompassing "varieties of

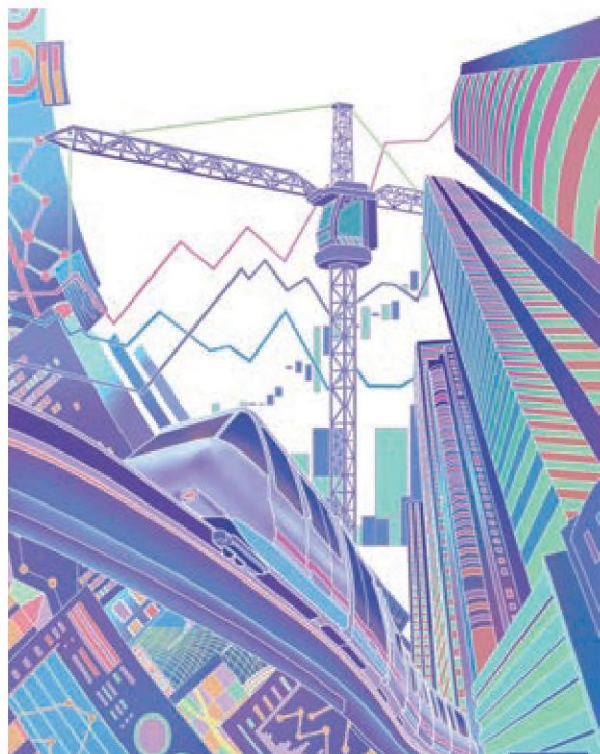
economic system" rather than adhering solely to the single free-market model dictated by Western neoliberal doctrines.

Interdependent global governance signifies the transition from the US-led Western hegemonic dominance into one where no single hegemon or hegemonic bloc defines the prevailing global norms and values. This shift creates opportunities for the accommodation and inclusion of alternative development strategies and policies. It also opens the door to different perspectives on the mechanisms, norms and values that drive national development and growth. The Western doctrines surrounding various mutually interdependent relationships, such as those between property rights and economic growth, the rule of law and market economies, free currency flow and economic order, and, importantly, democracy and development, are becoming increasingly flexible, less rigid and nonuniversal.

As the rise of emerging economies drives a transition in the international order, interdependent global governance suggests that the traditional North-South axis and conventional core-periphery distinctions are insufficient for understanding the current complexities of global relationships.

Interdependent global governance denotes a new situation, in which globalization has generated a world economic structure that is characterized by complex and intertwined interconnection and interdependence. Emerging economies are playing a significant role in the global division of labor, supply chains, value chains and finance, providing both the Global North and the Global South with various opportunities and challenges. Policies implemented by these emerging economies regarding finance, currency, investment, trade, security, environmental concerns, resource security, food security and commodity prices are increasingly having a global impact.

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JIN DING / CHINA DAILY



The campus of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen.
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CUHK-Shenzhen reviews 10 years of achievements

University measures itself against world's top-rated schools

By WANG JINHUI
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As The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen marks its 10th anniversary, the institution has swiftly risen as a leading educational force in the Chinese mainland, carving a niche with its visionary educational philosophy, robust talent recruitment, interdisciplinary approach, internationalization, and whole-person development.

"We benchmarked ourselves against world-class universities from the very beginning, taking on the mission of exploring valuable experiences for the comprehensive reform of higher education in China," said Professor Xu Yangsheng, CUHK-Shenzhen's founding president and a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

"Establishing an international university in Shenzhen, China's hub of technological advancement in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, by collaborating with a prestigious Hong Kong university allows us to complement each other's strengths in talent cultivation, scientific research, and technology transfer, thereby achieving rapid progress," Xu explained.

"Our university was founded with a macro-perspective, grasping global development trends, including the demands that international politics, economics and technology impose on regional and national development strategies. We actively respond to the strategic needs of China and the Greater Bay Area," he added.

Global talent

In a decade, CUHK-Shenzhen has established itself as a magnet for global academic talent. With a firm commitment to attract a top-tier faculty, the university has recruited more than 650 renowned scholars, including six Nobel laureates, more than 40 academicians and 100 national-level experts.



Xu Yangsheng, CUHK-Shenzhen's founding president

Recently, Elsevier, a global information analytics company, and the Stanford University released the 2024 list of the world's top 2 percent scientists. CUHK-Shenzhen has 44 scientists making the Lifetime Scientific Impact Ranking and 65 scientists on the Annual Scientific Impact Ranking.

The university's student body has also attracted attention. Over the past nine years, CUHK-Shenzhen has consistently ranked as one of the top universities in Guangdong province for admissions based on *gaokao* (the national college entrance exam) results. In most provinces, its minimum scores for liberal arts and sciences fall within the top 1 percent and 2 percent.

Innovation

One of CUHK-Shenzhen's standout



The library of CUHK-Shenzhen. CHEN MING / FOR CHINA DAILY

features is its commitment to interdisciplinary education and research.

Xu said that from the beginning, CUHK-Shenzhen conducted in-depth research into disciplinary trends and national and regional needs, focusing its academic planning on emerging and interdisciplinary fields.

"Its flat organizational structure, with no departmental divisions, encourages cross-disciplinary collaboration, increasing both efficiency and creativity," he added.

To date, CUHK-Shenzhen offers 28 undergraduate programs, focusing on emerging fields such as big data, artificial intelligence, robotics, biomedicine, materials science and energy. By balancing fundamental disciplines with new applied sciences, CUHK-Shenzhen has fostered a unique academic ecosystem where research drives social progress.

Several of the university's key disciplines, including economics, AI and data science, biomedicine, and materials chemistry, are on par with those at leading global universities. Seven of CUHK-Shenzhen's disciplines rank in the top 1 percent globally in the Essential Science Indicators database, and its computer science program ranks 10th among domestic universities in CS Rankings.

Internationalization

From its inception, international-

ization has been central to CUHK-Shenzhen's identity. With 150 partnerships with prestigious institutions worldwide, the university has created a vibrant global network, fostering student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives and academic collaborations.

"An international university must not only increase academic exchanges with foreign universities in the traditional sense, but also create a holistic international education system," Xu added.

To achieve this, CUHK-Shenzhen adopts international teaching systems and quality review mechanisms, incorporating original and internationally recognized textbooks and uses English as the primary language of instruction.

A clear teaching plan, measurable learning outcomes and assessment standards have been established, and an outcomes-based approach is employed to cultivate students' problem-solving, independent thinking and innovative abilities, Xu said.

The university also enhances its academic exchanges and collaboration with globally renowned institutions, creating international joint innovation platforms and improving mechanisms for faculty exchange and resource sharing.

CUHK-Shenzhen has built a full-cycle innovation ecosystem covering basic research, technical breakthroughs, industrial application, tech financing and talent support.

This includes 95 research institutes and key laboratories, three of which are Nobel Prize labs, focusing on areas such as robotics and AI, big data, bioinformatics, new materials and energy sciences. It has undertaken more than 370 national-level projects and more than 1,000 international projects.

Liberal education

CUHK-Shenzhen inherits CUHK's 60-year tradition of college-based and whole-person education, establishing seven residential colleges and implementing a four-year liberal education curriculum.

"CUHK-Shenzhen places students at the forefront of its mission," Xu said. "Residential colleges create a community space that integrates living, learning and socializing. Through various informal cultural and practical activities, students' education is enriched and their horizons broadened."

School building cooperative networks across China

By HAO NAN
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The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, which is rooted in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, is committed to China's higher education and technological innovation.

Over the past decade, CUHK-Shenzhen has recruited more than 650 renowned experts and scholars from across the globe, all of whom have teaching or working experience at top international universities or research institutions.

It has established a batch of research teams led by top scientists, with 11 teams receiving special provincial and city funds totaling nearly 320 million yuan (\$45.4 million). After seven years of effort, CUHK-Shenzhen obtained approval for three postdoctoral research stations in 2023. These are in the fields of computer science and technology, materials science and engineering, and applied economics.

Additionally, the university has led or participated in nearly 30 national

key research and development projects, with a total funding of nearly 80 million yuan. It has also established 95 high-level sci-tech research platforms at various levels, with a total construction cost of nearly 3.2 billion yuan.

Currently, CUHK-Shenzhen is attempting to establish a national key laboratory for mathematical foundation and optimization of network systems, with support from the Ministry of Science and Technology, as well as provincial and city authorities.

In terms of academic research, the university has published more than 6,700 papers in top international journals such as *Nature*, *Science*, and *Cell*; applied for more than 629 patents; formulated six industry standards; and won more than 200 domestic and international academic awards and honors.

Moreover, it has established joint laboratories with 33 well-known enterprises and institutions, including Huawei, Tencent, JD and Shandong Jincheng Petrochemical.

Responding to the national strategic plan for deepening cooperation

between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, CUHK-Shenzhen leverages its geographical and institutional advantages to promote technological cooperation and exchanges with universities and research institutions in Hong Kong and Macao.

In addition to attracting outstanding talents, the university has formed innovation teams with scholars from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. They cover fields such as chemistry, information technology, mathematics, big data, materials, artificial intelligence, robotics and biomedicine.

It has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with CUHK to establish a regular cooperation mechanism, promoting complementary and mutually beneficial collaboration in teaching and research, and jointly building a first-class university brand both domestically and internationally. CUHK-Shenzhen organizes several high-end academic conferences, forums, lectures and undergraduate exchange programs annually. In

the Greater Bay Area, the university plans to build a collaborative innovation platform, and cooperate in fields such as AI, new energy, new materials, future networks, smart cities and pharmaceuticals.

CUHK-Shenzhen has been developing emerging and interdisciplinary fields that align with Shenzhen's development needs, leveraging its talent pool and technological innovation advantages.

For instance, in the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone, the university has explored new models of cooperation with the government. It is also engaged in innovative and pragmatic collaboration in areas such as institutional innovation, technological innovation, modern service industries, education, healthcare and social welfare.

Currently, CUHK-Shenzhen and the Qianhai zone have jointly established the Qianhai Institute for International Affairs led by Professor Zheng Yongnian, and the Shenzhen Institute of Data Economy led by Professor Xiong Wei.

Partnerships with an international outlook

By HAO NAN

Over the past decade since its establishment, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen has been committed to becoming a world-class research university.

It has continuously expanded strategic partnerships with globally renowned universities and built high-end international exchange platforms. To date, the university has established substantial exchanges and cooperation with 150 prestigious overseas universities, including the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, and Yale University, spanning 34 countries and regions worldwide.

It offers more than 250 international cooperation programs for its students, aiming to cultivate high-level talents with international perspectives, cross-cultural communication skills, and a sense of social responsibility. In recent years, approximately 900 students have been admitted to these programs annually, entering world-renowned universities to experience diverse academic opportunities.

In the entry list for the 2024-25 academic year of the Visiting Student Programme at the University of Oxford, CUHK-Shenzhen secured 19 available spots, accounting for nearly 70 percent of the total, leading mainland universities for the fifth consecutive year.

Starting this autumn, these 19 undergraduate students from CUHK-Shenzhen will embark on an academic journey for one year or a term at St. Peter's College, St. Hilda's College, Mansfield College, Pembroke College, Worcester College and St. Edmund Hall of the University of Oxford.

This year, a total of 30 undergraduate students from more than 10 mainland universities have been

admitted under the programme, including Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

In June, CUHK-Shenzhen signed an agreement with Columbia University in the United States to engage in comprehensive and in-depth cooperation in areas such as talent cultivation, youth exchanges and faculty visits.

According to the agreement, CUHK-Shenzhen and Columbia's Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (Columbia Engineering) will be each other's main strategic partners in their respective countries, jointly striving to promote a vision of friendly cooperation in higher education between China and the US.

They have launched a 3+2 program this autumn. Participating students will complete three years of undergraduate study at CUHK-Shenzhen, during which Columbia's faculty will teach part of the curriculum. During their second and/or third year, the CUHK-Shenzhen students will have access to learning and research opportunities with the Columbia Engineering faculty.

Additionally, students in this program will be invited to participate in special events and leverage the summer research and course offerings at Columbia Engineering.

In their fourth year, students will study at Columbia Engineering, engaged in advanced coursework and related academic pursuits. In the fifth academic year, students who have completed their bachelor's degree requirements at CUHK-Shenzhen will be master's students at Columbia Engineering.

Upon meeting the graduation requirements of both institutions, students will be awarded a bachelor's degree from CUHK and a master's degree from Columbia University within five years.



International students at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

New students across the globe gather at campus

By WANG JINHUI

Excitement filled the air as students gathered for an orientation session recently at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen. The event provided a platform for incoming students to connect with one another and gain insights from experienced peers, marking a new step in their academic journey.

Richard Cornelius Suwandi, a former undergraduate at the School of Data Science, who is now pursuing a PhD in computer and information engineering, took center stage to share his experiences. He motivated his younger peers to remain curious, courageous and connected, emphasizing the importance of resilience in navigating university life.

Among the new faces was Kellen Joudan, a freshman from Indonesia planning to major in computer science and engineering. Eager to explore her new environment, Joudan expressed her excitement about arriving on campus.

"My dad loves to tell me about how great China is, especially with its advancements in technology like mobile payments and high-speed rail networks. I came to experience these innovations and improve my Chinese language skills," she said.

Life at CUHK-Shenzhen has proved to be an adventure for Joudan, who has been exploring local cuisine and connecting with upperclassmen. "I've heard many good things about our professors, which makes me even more excited to study here," she added, highlighting the vibrant community at the university.

International perspectives were

also shared by Yves Oliver Luetolf, an exchange student from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Luetolf expressed his desire to immerse himself in a new culture while gaining insights into the Chinese economy. "I believe we can learn a lot from China and vice versa," he stated.

Reflecting on his experience, he said: "Life in China is totally different from Switzerland; your phone is your best friend here. Although I can't speak Chinese yet, everyone on campus is friendly and helpful, making it a great experience."

Konstantin Kozlov, a Russian freshman who grew up in Shenzhen, saw his enrollment at CUHK-Shenzhen as a dream come true. Planning to major in applied psychology, Kozlov served as the master of ceremonies for the welcome session and expressed his eagerness to engage in more student activities in the coming weeks and years.

This autumn, CUHK-Shenzhen has recorded a remarkable increase in its international student population. More than 10 percent of the incoming freshmen are international students, hailing from 17 countries. These are Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Panama, Russia, Thailand, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uzbekistan.

In a milestone for the institution, CUHK-Shenzhen has also admitted 20 freshmen from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan this year, marking the first time since its establishment in 2014 that students from these regions have joined the university.

CULTURE

Yangtze inspires with its power

River continues to fascinate as exhibition proves, report **Lin Qi** and **Liu Kun** in Wuhan.

Roars the Yangtze River, sweeping everything eastward; the currents surge, in an unremitting way just like the emergence and disappearance of these luminous figures in history," chanted Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) scholar Yang Shen in one of his most famous poems, while journeying through Luzhou, Sichuan province, captivated by the river scene.

When facing this majestic spectacle, the longest river in the country, people would not spare any creativity or imagination in hailing its beautiful grandeur.

Just like Yang paid tribute to the river with verses, great Tang Dynasty (618-907) painter Wu Daozi once traveled along the Jialing River, a tributary of the Yangtze, for months and reenacted the enthralling views in a panoramic landscape to impress Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang era, who sponsored the trip.

The river has nurtured and witnessed the progress of Chinese civilization and in return, artists over centuries have never ceased to depict it with the utmost reverence.

Recent examples of these depictions were shown at *New Scenery of the Yangtze River*, an exhibition at the Hubei Museum of Art in the provincial capital of Wuhan. The exhibition was part of the First Yangtze River Culture and Art Season, which kicked off on Sept 14 and runs until Nov 4 in Hubei. The rich program of the culture and art season also includes film screenings, chorus performances and literary events.

More than 100 paintings, prints, watercolors, lacquer paintings, photos and mixed media works have been displayed at the exhibition.

Wang Yongping, vice-president of the Hubei Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles and curator of *New Scenery of the Yangtze River*, says that the works show varied natural landscapes, dynamic cultures and folklore along the waterway — "from the snowcapped mountains and array of ships across the Three Gorges to the rains and mists that engulf the beautiful Jiangnan (the region south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze), its openness and inclusiveness" — as well as the economic and social developments since 2012.

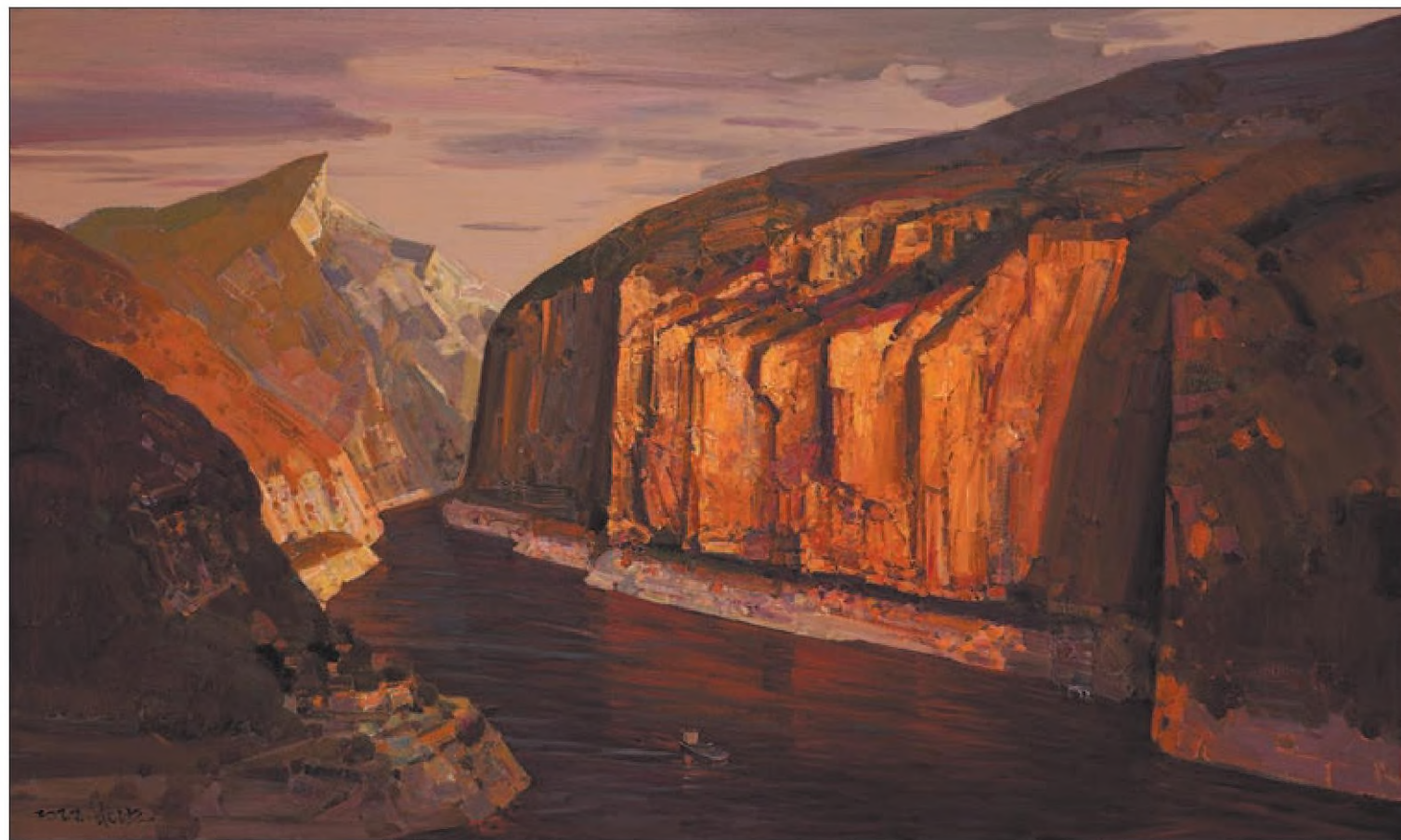
He says the works are "people-oriented, showing real lives and addressing people's concerns", such as the efforts made for rural revitalization, poverty elimination and the balance between livelihood improvement and environmental conservation.

The Yangtze has a high level of biodiversity. Its climate and terrain provide important habitats for many species, such as giant pandas that are popular on social media.

Quiet Nature, a group of drawings by ink artist Liu Wanming, shows the much-beloved giant panda in different poses not only to reflect its appeal but also to endeavor to protect this species and its environment.

Liu says what has been guiding his creation is an idea of Chinese philosophy "to pursue meticulousness in the treatment of details, while to present the extensiveness of the world?"

"It is a wisdom that keeps remind-



Center: Visitors to the Yangtze River exhibition at the Hubei Museum of Art in Wuhan, Hubei province. **Clockwise from top:** Exhibited pieces include *Sunset*, by Zhu Sha; *The Spectacular of the High Land*, by Wang Jie; *Cliff*, by Zhou Shaohua; *Quiet Nature*, by Liu Wanming; and *Yellow Crane Tower*, by Lu Yushun. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ing us to observe nature, to consider from the standpoints of other lives, and to learn to get along with the world," he says.

In *The Spectacular of the High Land*, oil painter Wang Jie from

Guizhou province offers an animated bird's-eye view in which a high-speed train "sails" across a remote village tucked in the mountains and is greeted by inhabiting ethnic groups.

Transportation is a great challenge in Guizhou, which is known for its geographic complexities. A network of bridges and expressways has been built to better connect locals to the outside.

Wang Yongping says the exhibition is the beginning of a long-term plan to cultivate a younger generation of artists in Hubei who would be sent to Beijing's major art academies. Meanwhile, they will invite

artists outside Hubei to visit, create and exchange, and to show works regularly.

Contact the writers at linqi@chinadaily.com.cn

What's on



Signature styles

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, more than 400 paintings, pieces of calligraphy, prints, sculptures, watercolors, lacquer paintings and mixed media works are on show at the *Ode to Motherland* exhibition at the China National Academy of Painting in Beijing until Oct 30.

The show displays the works of great artists of the 20th century, featuring their signature styles of brushwork and popular motifs, such as full fruits on a branch depicted by Qi Baishi; galloping, masculine horses by Xu Beihong; a blooming lotus pond revisited by Liu Haisu in his creation; the lush mountains engulfed in mist that mark the works of Li Keran; and female dancers under the animated strokes of Ye Qianyu.

The exhibition showcases the evolution of Chinese art over the past seven decades to reflect socialist

construction and to address people's changing lifestyles and mentalities in different periods.

9-11:30 am, 1:30-4:30 pm, daily. 54 Xisanhuan Beilu, Haidian district, Beijing. 010-6841-2606.

Spiritual realm

In a letter to computer scientists in 1990, Qian Xuesen, the father of China's space program, mentioned the Chinese translation for "virtual reality" and created the term *ling-jing* (spiritual realm), which he said was his favorite as it "has a strong Chinese feeling".

Re-creating Spiritual Realm, an exhibition at Shenzhen Art Museum running until Nov 24 in Guangdong province, shows how six contemporary artists visualize their understanding of this term created by Qian and how they embrace and envisage a future in which the boundaries between reality and VR will become blurred.

Zhu Xiaojun, the exhibition's



co-curator, says that it is not only to celebrate technological advancement but also to discuss how technology will shape the future of human civilization and humanity. You Jiang, another co-curator of the exhibition, says that the audience will find answers in the artists' reinterpretations of Chinese aesthetics and philosophy in their exploration of the integration of technology and art.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 32 Donghu Yijie, inside Donghu Park, Aiguu Lu, Luohu district, Shenzhen, Guangdong province. 0755-2542-6069.

Art for people

The 20th century saw dramatic changes in Chinese art. Many participants — namely figures of luminosity who initiated reforms — were members of the teaching faculty and graduates of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. Their work reflects social fluctuations and enriches the art landscape and culture.

The academy is exhibiting more than 200 selected pieces from its collection in its museum, encouraging viewers to experience three different periods of the last century.



It traces back to when the first groups of Chinese artists traveled to Europe to study art and brought back new ideas. It also looks at the early days of the People's Republic of China when artists were actively involved in showing the country's developments. The last three decades of the 20th century reflect the changes brought by reform and opening-up.

9:30 am-5:30 pm, closed on Mondays. 8 Huajiadi Nanjie, Wangjing, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6477-1575.

CHINA DAILY

LIFESHANGHAI



Left: Zhang Zufang (third from the left) and her team in Lyon, France. **Middle and right:** Zhang (right) and colleagues make adjustments to the paper apparel before the closing ceremony of the 47th WorldSkills Competition in Lyon. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Paper as a clothing fabric has unfolded new possibilities in the hands of Shanghai designers as 20 apparel designs made with paper stunned the world at the closing ceremony of the 47th WorldSkills Competition in Lyon, France.

Zhang Zufang, a 72-year-old professor at Donghua University in Shanghai, is the lead designer of this paper apparel.

"I am extremely honored to present the results on such a meaningful occasion and the world stage. China is the birthplace of paper and I feel proud to show the world the strength, culture, techniques and innovation of our university, Shanghai and China," says Zhang.

Following China's triumph at the WorldSkills Lyon 2024 competition with 36 gold, nine silver and four bronze medals, Shanghai is set to host the 48th competition in 2026. It is also worth noting that Shanghai reaped fruitful results at the competition. Eight participants from the city competed in seven events, securing three gold and a bronze.

Chinese participants Lu Junwei and Xie Huiyuan earned the prestigious Albert Vidal Award, recognizing competitors with the highest overall points across all skill competitions.

Echoing the remarkable achievements the Chinese competitors reached, Zhang and her team presented an astonishing show on Sept 15 with exquisite paper apparel that the world had seldom seen before.

With paper as the core and "invitation" as the concept, these pieces feature a blend of Chinese and Western cultural elements, as well as traditional and modern techniques, including *summao* (mortise-and-tenon) joints, paper cutting, paper folding, laser cutting, lanterns, church, pagodas, dragons, irises and the white magnolia — Shanghai's city flower.

Zhang introduced that Tyvek eco-friendly paper and washable kraft paper are the main materials used, making them light, durable, waterproof, sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Instead of using glue or sewing the pieces, Zhang's team skillfully chose traditional Chinese *summao* joints as the main method to make the clothing. *Summao* was often used in ancient Chinese architecture to connect materials without glue or nails. While different from wooden pieces, it has been challenging for the design team to implement the method.

"We made several experiments and adjustments to the techniques we used

Paper clothing makes fashion statement

Competition in France sees designers using traditional Chinese architectural technique to build innovative apparel, **Wang Xin** reports



Paper apparel showcased at the closing ceremony of the 47th WorldSkills Competition in Lyon, France, on Sept 15.

in making the apparel. *Summao* has many advantages as it is very flexible. With paper pieces of various materials and shapes, we could join them to make plain and three-dimensional creations, so they look light and beautiful," Zhang explains, adding that one piece of a paper dress can be the joint of hundreds of smaller pieces.

This is not Zhang's first attempt to make paper clothing. In 2013, she was invited to create several paper garments for TV hosts at Shanghai Media Group. However, Zhang still met many new challenges in completing the task.

"Unlike the case in 2013, the paper apparel we made this time is not static, as the models are set to walk, run, dance and perform at the ceremony rather than standing still and posing. The biggest challenge this time was to protect the shape and form of the clothing throughout long-distance transportation because paper wrinkles easily and cannot be ironed," says Zhang.

Zhang's team comprises over 50 teachers and students from the College of Fashion and Design at Donghua University and the School of Design and Innovation at the China Academy of Art. Assigned this task in late May, the team managed to produce 22 sets of paper apparel and 10 sets of non-paper futuristic clothing for the closing ceremony.

The team's efforts and hard work over three months paid off in Lyon. The show not only impressed global audiences but also motivated Zhang's team.

"I am honored to represent Shanghai and my country to participate in the world-class event, to show the charm of China's younger generation on a world stage. I am very excited and proud," said Xia Kunpeng, an undergraduate student majoring in costume design and performance at Donghua University, after the performance.

Zhang, as the team's leader and a veteran in the industry for over four decades, is geared up again for her future.

"With the application of *summao* in the paper clothing, we are paying tribute to ancient Chinese wisdom and techniques. I believe the best way to pay our respects is to inherit and innovate," says Zhang.

"Hopefully, we can roll out our experience to the public. I would be more than pleased to share about *summao* and promote traditional Chinese culture to more people."

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By HE QI

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Meet the latest catwalk trend in the ongoing fashion week in Shanghai — *xinzhongshi* — the new Chinese style.

The style of clothing is typically defined as seamlessly integrating traditional Chinese elements with modern designs.

But as this fusion of traditional Chinese culture becomes increasingly popular, it is gradually prompting the industry to reflect, challenging the industry's transformation, and seeking new solutions to ensure its sustainability.

During the 2025 Spring/Summer Shanghai Fashion Week, *xinzhongshi* shows were a dominant factor. On Tuesday, emerging fashion designer Chen Anqi, in collaboration with the tea brand Chagee, elevated the popularity of the new Chinese style through a cross-border fusion on the runway that blends traditional ethnic crafts and nomadic styles.

"I believe that China is a magnificent fusion of diverse cultures. In my eyes, the new Chinese style embodies the beauty of the nation and the world. It represents beauty in sharing, with a variety of possibilities. When we work on the new Chinese style, we explore more nomadic and primitive elements," says Chen, founder of fashion brand Angel Chen.

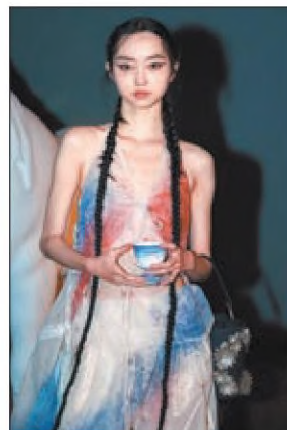
In addition, Hemu, a brand known

for giving contemporary twists to traditional Chinese patterns, adopts intangible cultural heritage materials such as Yunjin brocade in its designs. It also utilizes traditional dyeing techniques and combines various embroidery methods.

This season, Hemu draws inspiration from ancient Liangzhu culture, an important Neolithic culture from 5,300 to 4,300 years ago in the Yangtze River Delta. Alongside earth tones and the elegant colors of jade as the primary color palette, a hint of red is added to pay tribute to the ancestral lacquer craftsmanship.

"My designs have drawn inspiration from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) and the Song Dynasty (960-1127), but how to present a civilization from 5,000 years ago and integrate it into contemporary aesthetics is something we have always been contemplating," says Yang Fengrui, the founder and artistic director of Hemu.

Goldlion 3388, a fashion and lifestyle brand under the Hong Kong-listed Goldlion Group, derives inspiration from traditional Chinese architecture and landscape paintings. These include the iconic "gold" rivet elements inspired by the auspicious details commonly found in Chinese architecture, as well as printed patterns incorporating unique Eastern style, interpreting



Left: Emerging fashion designer Chen Anqi, in collaboration with tea brand Chagee, elevated the popularity of the new Chinese style through a cross-border fusion on the runway. **Right:** Fashion brand Hemu draws inspiration from ancient Liangzhu culture, an important Neolithic era from 5,300 to 4,300 years ago in the Yangtze River Delta. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

garden landscapes with designs. In fabric creation, Goldlion 3388 employs techniques such as jacquard weaving, burn-out printing, and three-dimensional embroidery to give clothing a unique visual expression.

In addition to advocating sustainable design, the new Chinese-style brand Tuyue is particularly meticulous in exploring the authenticity of culture. Yang Yingying, the founder



of Tuyue, says: "By consulting various sources and striving to acquire as much knowledge background as possible, we then contemplate how to apply it — whether through inheritance or innovation."

Apart from fashion shows, the *Oriental-Neo Chinese-Style Show Exhibition* kicked off at the West Bund, along with a forum that invites experts and designers to dis-

cuss the future of this style.

According to Zhang Wei, vice-president of Pop Fashion, one of the largest clothing design information platforms in China, industry data indicates that from January to October 2023, the number of posts related to new Chinese style on lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu increased by 110 percent compared to the same period in 2022.

While *xinzhongshi* has emerged as a crucial symbol in the Chinese fashion industry, the subsequent topics that arise need be addressed.

Zhang suggests that a key challenge lies in breaking the homogenization of this style.

"China's textiles offer a vast realm for exploration. Our textile craftsmanship is exceptionally refined, encompassing intangible cultural heritage that provides a rich tapestry of materials and cultural backgrounds," Zhang says. "However, it also confronts challenges. Preserving the original craftsmanship of intangible cultural heritage materials often gives rise to concerns such as cost and production cycles. However, China's modern textile technology is already among the most advanced in the world, so we are certain to find a solution."

Chai Fangjun, chairman of Ding-tian Fashion Textile Technology, echoed that his company is actively engaged in tackling the problem.

"Homogenization arises from the difficulty in personalizing fabrics. Balancing small batches, diverse varieties, personalization, and large-scale production poses a paradox," says Chai.

Chai's company started digitalization in 2009 and has achieved the ability to quickly create original samples. Currently, the company boasts 150,000 digital assets that can address the majority of questions from personalized designers and support color swaps based on these 150,000 samples.