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Return to Xizang

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# CHINA DAILY

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## China vows to enhance ties with Indonesia

Xi, Widodo express confidence in future of bilateral ties during phone conversation

By MO JINGXI  
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President Xi Jinping commended outgoing Indonesian President Joko Widodo for his important contributions to promoting the friendship between China and the Southeast Asian nation.

He made the remarks on Monday during a phone conversation with the Indonesian leader, whose 10-year presidency comes to an end on Oct 20.

China is willing to work with Indonesia to jointly promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, ensure the sustainable operation of the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, and create more highlights of cooperation to better benefit the people of both countries, Xi said.

Xi said he is confident that Indonesia's incoming government will continue with a friendly policy toward China and keep elevating the China-Indonesia community with a shared future, a consensus reached by him and Widodo in 2022.

Xi also expressed China's readiness to work with Indonesia to unite Global South countries for cooperation and safeguard the common interests of developing nations, in order to contribute to regional and global stability and prosperity.

China and Indonesia have witnessed deepening ties and extensive cooperation over the past decade. During his term, Widodo paid eight visits to China, while Xi and he met with each other 12 times. The Indonesian president

said he had developed a strong personal bond with his Chinese counterpart.

Widodo thanked China for its contributions to Indonesia's economic development, saying that the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway has become a prime example of the Belt and Road cooperation.

China has been Indonesia's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years, while Chinese investment in Indonesia has continued to grow, with cumulative investments exceeding \$52 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Widodo, who will be succeeded by Prabowo Subianto, said he believes that under the new government, the China-Indonesia relationship will continue to thrive.

Subianto visited China in April during his first overseas trip after winning the presidential election in March. He is expected to make another trip to China soon after taking office this month.

Muhammad Habib, a researcher at the Department of International Relations of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, said the two countries reached an unprecedented peak in bilateral ties under Widodo's presidency.

"(There are) many things we can celebrate together — from a closer people-to-people connection to notable strategic projects, including the Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway," he said.

## A story of two countries, three crucial dialogues

In 2014, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, Franco-Chinese dialogue was structured around three themes.

First was a strategic dialogue between two permanent members of the United Nations Security Council based on a shared observation: a world of imbalances and tensions, marked by rising inequalities, wealth concentration, deindustrialization, trade wars, trade deficits, and shrinking middle classes.

France and China agreed to work together to build a more equitable and cooperative trade order within this context. The two countries also developed a joint agenda, particularly addressing climate and biodiversity, and agreed to support efforts to resolve an increasing number of regional crises.

The second was a high-level economic and financial dialogue within the framework of an increasingly imbalanced trade relationship. China is France's second-largest supplier and seventh-largest customer, representing its largest bilateral trade deficit, despite significant cross-investments, the presence of French companies in China and Chinese companies in France, and major collaborations in civil nuclear energy, aviation, and the automotive industry.

Third was a high-level dia-

logue on human exchanges, addressing cooperation in culture, education, science and technology, tourism, sports and other areas.

The first two dialogues took place remotely in 2020, during the pandemic through four phone exchanges between French President Emmanuel Macron and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

In 2023, our relations resumed — including the high-level dialogue on human exchanges — in what we in France refer to as "the post-COVID world", a world witnessing the return of war in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere, and the Sino-US confrontation.

This is a world where geopolitical tensions, economic and technological disputes are multiplying, and where the rules that traditionally governed relations between nations are eroding in favor of power dynamics.

Despite this deteriorating context, President Macron's visit to China in April 2023 resulted in the signing of new agreements between the two countries in the areas of aviation, civil nuclear energy, decarbonizing maritime

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## Charred remains



Palestinian residents survey the damage on Monday after an Israeli strike hit temporary accommodations in the courtyard of Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip. At least four people were killed in the attack that left dozens of people with severe burns. ABDEL KAREEM HANA / AP

## US hackers' global cyberattacks, espionage uncovered

By CUI JIA  
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Hackers from United States cyber forces and intelligence agencies disguise themselves like "chameleons" in cyberspace, posing as other countries to conduct global cyberattacks and espionage operations, while also pouring dirty water on non-US allies like China, according to an investigative report published on Monday.

The report, titled "Volt Typhoon III: A Cyber Espionage and Disinformation Campaign Conducted by US Government Agencies", said more evidence has shown that "Volt Typhoon", which US politicians, intelligence communities and companies have claimed is a China-sponsored hacking organization, was part of a false narrative, promoted by US intelligence agencies, that cyberattacks were being launched on critical infrastructure in the US.

The report is the third of its kind released by the National Computer Virus Emergency Response Center and the National Engineering Labo-

Inside ratory for Computer Virus Prevention Technology. Comment, page 10

According to the latest report, the US has long deployed cyberwar forces in areas surrounding "adversary countries" to conduct close-in reconnaissance and network penetration.

To satisfy those tactical needs, US intelligence agencies have developed a customized stealth toolkit code-named "Marble" to cover up their operations, mislead attribution analysis and blame other countries.

The "Marble" framework has the ability to insert strings in various languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Korean, Persian and Arabic, according to the report. The feature is clearly intended to mislead investigators and defame countries including China, Russia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran and Arab countries, it said.

In the two previous investigative reports on "Volt Typhoon", published on April 15 and July 8, the Chinese technical teams pre-

sented evidence that US government agencies orchestrated and hyped up the "Volt Typhoon" cyberthreat narrative to secure additional funding from the US Congress and to bolster the cyber infiltration capabilities of US intelligence agencies.

The allegation originated from a joint advisory by the cybersecurity authorities of the US and its "Five Eyes" allies — the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The advisory was based on information released by US tech company Microsoft, which failed to provide a detailed analytical process for source tracing of the cyberattacks from "Volt Typhoon", the two previous reports said.

In addition, according to the latest report, US intelligence agencies have established a global internet surveillance network that has generated a large amount of high-value intelligence.

The report also said the US has long taken advantage of its well-developed information and communication technology industry to construct internet infrastructure to

control internet "choke points".

Furthermore, it said, there are at least seven access sites for tapping underwater optical cables spanning the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. All the access sites are operated by the US National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Cyber Security Centre of the United Kingdom.

According to the report, the NSA employs a "supply chain" attack method that uses advanced US information and communication technology and products against a variety of high-value targets of other countries that have high levels of protection and are challenging to penetrate in cyberspace.

With the cooperation of large internet enterprises or equipment suppliers in the US, the NSA is able to intercept US-made network products purchased by its targets. The products will then be unpacked and implanted with backdoor malware before being repackaged and shipped to the various targets, the report said.

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## On auto show mode



A logo of Xpeng can be seen on Monday, the Media Day at the 2024 Paris Auto Show, in Paris, France. Nine Chinese brands including BYD and Leapmotor will be unveiling their latest models at this year's event. BENOIT TESSIER / REUTERS

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## HERDERS LIVE IN HARMONY WITH DESERT OF 'FIVE WONDERS'

UNESCO listing of Badain Jaran a boon for tourism, conservation efforts

By ZHANG WEI  
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Deserts are typically associated with searing heat, dryness and inhospitable landscapes.

However, the Badain Jaran Desert in Alshaa League, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, defies these conventions. In this vast wilderness dotted with sparkling sapphire lakes and towering sand dunes, there is an unbreakable bond between people and the natural environment.

Nestled in the arid expanse of the Alshaa Plateau in northwestern China, the desert, a World Heritage site, challenges preconceptions of desolate deserts with its vibrant ecosystem.

Badain Jaran Desert is China's second-largest drifting desert and is renowned for its distinctive high dunes, "singing" sand, clusters of

lakes, clear springs and ancient temples — collectively known as the "Five Wonders".

Beyond these attractions, the desert is home to other spectacular attractions such as Daghtu Lake, a pink body of water that owes its unusual color to mineral salts.

Animals, particularly camels, flourish in this unlikely sanctuary and live in harmony with their human handlers.

"Our roots run deep in this land, spanning three generations. Camels are our lifeblood, inseparable from the essence of the Badain Jaran Desert," said Zhang Jun, Party secretary of Bayin Bo Rige village of Badain Jaran town in Alshaa Right Banner.

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## PAGE TWO

## Desert: UNESCO honor ignites tourism surge



From page 1

In 1956, Zhang's grandfather settled here, sustaining himself through herding animals as he traversed the land on foot. By the time Zhang's father was born in 1960, camels were the primary mode of transportation. For Zhang's generation, off-road vehicles are today the norm for traveling through the desert.

The rapid evolution of transportation in Badain Jaran Desert is a great source of pride for Zhang who sees it as a reflection of the nation's progress.

"From our life in the desert, I feel that the country has developed very quickly, which makes me particularly gratified," he said.

**Special connection**

The desert holds a special place in the hearts of the herders who inhabit, protect, and raise their animals in it.

"Across generations, we have grazed, survived, nurtured our kin, earned our livelihoods, upheld our heritage, and treasured these desert plains as our communal playgrounds," said Zhang. "This desert is not just our dwelling place, but our legacy. We must care for our land, leveraging the expertise of various departments to safeguard our resources for future generations."

Alatenggerile, a veteran herder from Badain Jaran Village in Yabulai town, epitomizes the enduring bond between the desert and its inhabitants. "Nearly every lakeside in the desert hosts herders like us, sustaining our livelihoods through the diligent care of camels and sheep," he said.

"As I grow older, I increasingly believe that my home is the best place," Alatenggerile added.

On July 26, following seven years of effort, Badain Jaran Desert: Towers of Sand and Lakes was finally admitted to the World Heritage List at the 46th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in New Delhi, India.

The desert has multiple tall dunes, including the Bilutu Peak, the world's highest such peak with an altitude of more than 1,611 meters and a relative height of over 500 meters, according to a People's Daily report.

The tall dunes are what create the desert's "singing sands", producing a mysterious booming sound when the wind blows. The Baoritaolegai area with steep peaks and sand dunes of varying heights on the edge of the desert is dubbed the "Kingdom of Singing Sands" because of its spectacular sounds.

There are 144 crystal-clear lakes nestled between dunes, supporting lush vegetation and diverse wildlife while creating unique desert landscapes, the report said. Natural springs in the desert are famous for their purity. The most famous spring water of the desert comes from the Yinderitu Lake, which has 108 springs.

Of the desert's temples, the Badain Jaran Buddhist temple built in 1755 is a major landmark and is often referred to as the "Forbidden City of the desert".

**Benefits of listing**

The UNESCO designation sets the stage for further exploration of the formation of the desert megadunes and the preservation of its interdunal lakes. Notably, the interests and needs of local inhabitants were fully considered during the application process for UNESCO listing. The herders' authentic lifestyle is seen as an indispensable component of the interconnected desert ecosystem, with locals actively involved in conservation efforts.

Preserving natural heritage sites involves not only maintaining the integrity of the natural surroundings, but also securing their legacy and sustainable use.

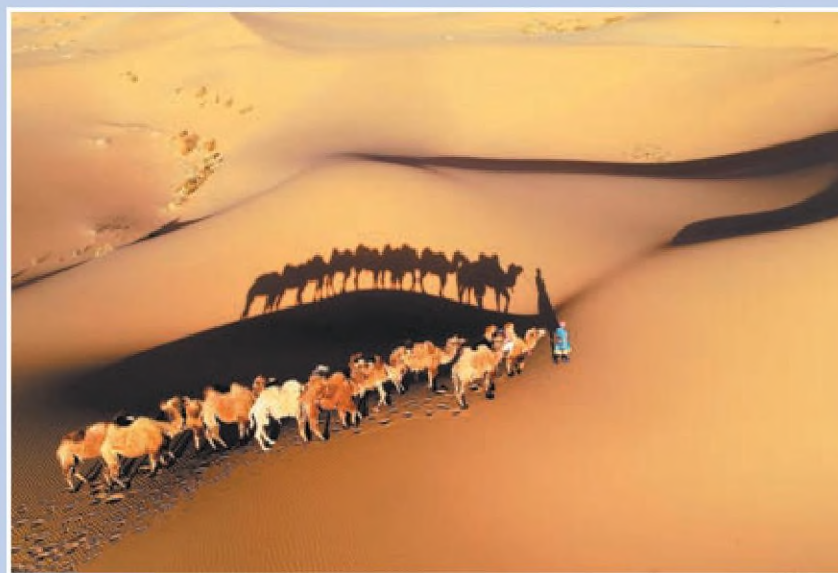
In 2023, from June 5 to 11, Professor Kyung Sik Woo from the International Union for Conservation of Nature conducted on-site assessments in the Badain Jaran Desert. During the evaluation, he observed the herders, who have long resided in the region, tending to sheep and camels as part of their daily routine.

"Pastoralists' grazing practices may enhance the natural landscape, attracting more tourists," the professor said.

"In reality, pastoralists have already become part of nature, meaning there won't be further restrictions on their way of life. They have seamlessly integrated with nature, and both pastoralists and the environment are entities we all need to protect," he added.

Alatenggerile's family has lived for generations in Badain Jaran Desert, sustaining themselves through herding and grazing animals.

"During the World Heritage application process, each village organized meetings with the herders, listened to our opinions, and addressed our concerns. Once we received assurances that we could continue to live here



**Top:** Su Min Jaran Lake in the Badain Jaran Desert, Alshaa Right Banner, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, pictured on Sept 20. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY **Above:** A herder walks with his camel caravan in the Badain Jaran Desert. WANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



**Clockwise from left:** Volunteers from Gansu province help lay sand-barriers in the Badain Jaran Desert in October. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Tourists walk through the desert. WANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY Camels drink water in a lake of the desert on July 31. BEI HE / XINHUA



**Bilutu Peak** in the Badain Jaran Desert, Alshaa Right Banner, Inner Mongolia autonomous region seen on Sept 21. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

and develop tourism, we all felt relieved and happy," Alatenggerile said.

"The application marks a positive step forward. The influx of tourists brings economic opportunities. Now that the application has succeeded we can expect a steady flow of visitors, propelling Badain Jaran toward a brighter future," he added with a smile.

**Visitors welcome**

The inhabitants of Alshaa Right Banner have long relied on nomadic herding, and have cultivated a distinctive culture in the desert.

Virtually every *haizi* (lake) nestled in the Badain Jaran Desert serves as a home for herders who tend to camels and sheep, creating a picturesque tableau against the desert backdrop.

In recent years, with improved transportation, more tourists have explored the desert, prompting some of the herders to enter the tourism industry.

"Since 2005, 13 households have offered homestays. Improved transport accessibility has made it easier for vehicles to reach us, enhancing travel convenience," Alatenggerile said.

"Significant changes have occurred in our living conditions. Life has improved since 2010, and the herders managing homestays are thriving, enjoying increased earnings."

Alatenggerile said when he was young a camel journey could take up to 15 days. "Nowadays, transportation is more convenient," he said.

During the busy tourist season, Alatenggerile works as a guide, which boosts his annual income by 50,000 to 60,000 yuan (\$7,125 to \$8,550). "This summer has seen a surge in tourist numbers, surpassing the figures of the last two years," he said.

Party official Zhang added: "The successful World Heritage application is a boon for our hometown. The increasing number of tourists has not only enhanced our quality of life but also brought about positive transformations." Alatenggerile's living conditions continue to improve. His 15-year-old son is enrolled in school in Alshaa Right Banner, where the family has a home.

Zhang said: "We are content. It is crucial to safeguard the desert's resources. Through hard work, I am confident that we can achieve greater prosperity. This land is full of treasures."

He added that safety is a priority in the desert. "We also urge all travelers to prioritize safety, tailoring their activities to their physical abilities and health conditions."

**Conservation efforts**

The local government prioritizes attracting tourists while at the same time protecting the ecological ethos that underpins tourism development. This approach has been a success, with environmental awareness among tourists gradually increasing over the years.

"The current state of ecological preservation is commendable. Litter is now a rarity," said Alatenggerile. "All waste is meticulously collected and processed in the town. There is a resolute commitment to environmental stewardship."

Zhang said: "We have been sustained by the desert's groundwater springs since childhood. The town also relies on this water source. The sanctity of the desert environment must be upheld at all costs."

Over the years, China has actively implemented the Three-North Shelterbelt Project to combat desertification. As a crucial location in the region, Alshaa Right Banner has been strongly engaged in efforts to prevent the merging of the Badain Jaran and Tengger deserts.

The World Heritage Committee concluded the commitment to controlling desertification in the Badain Jaran Desert showcased the deep concern locals have for their land, which contributes significantly to the conservation of the site.

The desertification control measures in the Badain Jaran Desert have bolstered its appeal and played a key role in its successful World Heritage designation.

"The most important safeguard for the Badain Jaran Desert is conservation, maintaining its original state," said Dong Zhibao, vice president of Shaanxi Normal University. He said there is symbiotic relationship between heritage conservation and desertification control.

"The crux of sand control and desertification prevention in the Badain Jaran Desert lies in halting the ongoing expansion of the desert, safeguarding human habitats, and honoring the desert as a vital component of Earth's natural ecosystem."

"By preserving the desert's original state, we can foster a harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature," he said.

## TOP NEWS

## On an extraterrestrial journey



Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) can be seen shortly after sunset on Sunday over Fisherman's Walk pier as two men fish in Tybee Island, Georgia, the United States. The comet, which passes by Earth every 60,000 to 80,000 years, made its closest pass to the Earth on Saturday. The comet will be most clearly visible in mid-October until it starts to fade from view by Nov 7. SAM WOLFE / REUTERS

## Foreign trade expected to maintain steady growth

By ZHONG NAN  
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China's foreign trade will maintain its steady growth for the remainder of the year, supported by the strong performance from January to September, government officials and exporters said on Monday.

Aside from upgrading their products, broadening sales channels in emerging markets and building factories in countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, Chinese companies are increasingly leveraging technologies and new foreign trade formats — including big data and cross-border e-commerce — to form new competitive advantages, they said.

Despite the current slowdown in global economic growth and the rise of protectionism and unilateralism, China's foreign trade grew 5.3 percent year-on-year to 32.33 trillion yuan (\$4.57 trillion) in the first three quarters, with its exports increasing 6.2 percent on a yearly basis, statistics from the General Administration of Customs show.

The country's foreign trade hit a record high in the first three quarters, with each quarter exceeding 10

trillion yuan. Its trade value with over 160 countries and regions continued to grow during this period, said Wang Lingjun, vice-minister of the administration.

Speaking at a news conference in Beijing, Wang said that with the continued efforts of both existing and new policies, positive factors supporting foreign trade growth are accumulating, providing a solid foundation and support for the stable growth of exports and imports in the fourth quarter.

Lyu Daliang, director of the administration's department of statistics and analysis, said that China's global market share has notably increased across a variety of products — from household appliances to vessels — demonstrating the sustained resilience of its exports.

Luo Junjie, executive vice-president of the Beijing-based China Machinery Industry Federation, said that Chinese companies had previously relied heavily on customer demand to drive production, making them relatively passive in market competition.

Now, with accumulated capital and technology, they are eager to showcase their innovation and technological strengths, using digital

and green concepts to shape the market's future direction, Luo said.

"This shift has enabled them, especially those from tech-intensive green product and intermediate goods sectors, to take a proactive stance in overseas markets," he added.

Jiangsu You'ao Intelligent Technology Co, a household appliance manufacturer based in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, has been heading in that direction. It recently sent several shipments of smart air conditioners to foreign markets.

Highlighting that these air conditioners feature WiFi connectivity, Xu Chuangang, the company's vice-president, said that appliance installations usually incur high installation fees in overseas markets, but the company's plug-and-play integrated air conditioners offer advantages in both cost-effectiveness and convenience.

The company saw its export value soar 24 percent year-on-year to 810 million yuan in the first eight months, customs data shows.

China's exports of electromechanical products rose 8 percent year-on-year to 11.03 trillion yuan, accounting for 59.3 percent of the country's total exports, according to GAC data.

"Overall, the strong performance

of China's exports during the January-September period benefits the country's economic growth for the whole year," said Su Qingyi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' institute of world economics and politics.

"However, given the global economic and geopolitical environment, China's exports still face numerous challenges," said Su. "While domestic macroeconomic policies are actively promoting the recovery of effective demand, additional support measures for ensuring export growth need to be further developed."

Zhejiang Apollo Sports Technology Co, a motorcycle manufacturer in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, will launch its latest electric motorbike at the 136th session of the China Import and Export Fair, or Canton Fair, which will be held in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, from Tuesday to Nov 4.

"From vehicle design and parts manufacturing to body strength, we have comprehensively upgraded our products, with emerging markets and cross-border e-commerce being our primary focuses this year," said Ying Er, the company's chairman.

## Li's visit sees progress in building BRI

China looks forward to working with Pakistan to boost traditional friendship

By ZHANG YUNBI  
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As Premier Li Qiang arrived in Islamabad, Pakistan, on an official visit on Monday, China and Pakistan signed a series of cooperation documents and celebrated the completion of a new international airport, marking the latest progress in their joint efforts to build the Belt and Road.

The visit, which runs through Thursday, is Li's first trip to the South Asian nation as Chinese premier. It highlights the exchange of visits achieved by Li and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in just four months, as Sharif made a visit to China in June.

Analysts said that Li's visit shows the great importance China attaches to the development of China-Pakistan relations and its strong support for the new Pakistani administration.

The two sides are actively implementing the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, and the relationship is running at a high level, they added.

Li arrived in the Pakistani capital after concluding visits to Laos and Vietnam, and Sharif held a welcoming ceremony for him before their talks.

Through this trip, China looks forward to working with the Pakistani side to advance the traditional friendship, strengthen strategic communication, and build on the region's peace and stability, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday.

Beijing aims to "promote the high-quality construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, deepen and expand all-around cooperation, and ensure the security of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions in Pakistan," she said.

Over the past 11 years, the CPEC — as part of the two nations' efforts in co-building the Belt and Road — has brought a total of \$25.4 billion in direct investment to Pakistan and created 236,000 jobs. It has helped Pakistan add 510 kilometers to its highways and 886 kilometers to its core grid, according to the Chinese embassy in Pakistan.

After their talks on Monday, Li and Sharif attended the comple-

tion ceremony of New Gwadar International Airport, located in the port city of Gwadar in southwestern Pakistan.

The construction of the airport, a flagship CPEC project, started in 2019. It is scheduled to open for operation by the end of the year, according to CAAC News, a newspaper affiliated with the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

The new facility will help further improve Pakistan's airport network, develop the country's integrated transportation, and improve local transportation conditions as well as the investment environment there, the newspaper said.

Later this week, the Chinese premier will attend the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Islamabad.

He will engage in an in-depth exchange of views with the leaders of the participating countries on the implementation of the consensus reached during the SCO summit held in July in Astana, Kazakhstan, and on advancing the practical cooperation of the group.

"China is confident that the meeting will achieve positive outcomes and provide more assistance to the security, stability and development of regional countries," said Mao, the Foreign Ministry spokeswoman.

Both China and Pakistan are members of the SCO and part of the Global South. China has assumed the rotating presidency of the SCO for 2024-25.

Analysts noted that Pakistan was among the first group of non-founding countries to join the SCO, and plays an increasingly important role in the organization.

On Sunday, speaking with local media representatives, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said, "We are ready to strengthen solidarity and expand cooperation with various countries including Pakistan."

Beijing is ready to strengthen cooperation in areas such as politics, security, the economy and culture, promote the building of a closer SCO community with a shared future, and make new contributions to the growth of the Global South and the prosperity of the countries in this region, the ambassador added.

## Relations: Dialogue more important than ever before

From page 1

transportation, agri-food, seawater desalination, and liquefied natural gas storage. During a visit to Guangzhou, Guangdong province, the French president inaugurated the China-France carbon neutrality center. A rich program of cultural activities in China, jointly organized to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, was also announced for 2024, a year labeled by both governments as the Franco-Chinese Year of Cultural Tourism.

In addition to these initiatives, following extensive discussions between Macron and Xi, a joint statement between France and China was issued, which serves as the roadmap for bilateral relations in the coming years. It includes 51 concrete commitments to strengthen political dialogue and mutual trust, jointly promote global securi-

ty and stability, enhance economic exchanges, reinforce human and cultural exchanges, and jointly address global challenges. A few months later, the two sides signed a framework document on establishment of maritime and aerial cooperation and dialogue mechanism between the Southern Theater of the People's Liberation Army and the French forces' command in the Asia-Pacific zone, now a region of multiple confrontations.

These directions were further reinforced by President Xi's visit to France in May of this year, during which he stated at the State dinner at the Elysee Palace: "The world today is experiencing changes and turbulence. The Ukraine crisis and Palestinian-Israeli conflict continue unabated. Economic recovery lacks momentum. Global challenges such as climate change are becoming tougher to tackle. Both being permanent members of the UN Security

Council, China and France are duty-bound to shoulder greater responsibilities."

"(President Macron and I) We agreed to stay true to our countries' original aspiration when forging the diplomatic relations six decades ago, deepen the high-level mutual trust and cooperation, and strengthen communication and coordination on major international issues, to jointly inject hope into a confused world and explore the way forward for human progress."

Like the SVOM space observatory, the new Franco-Chinese satellite launched in June 2024, the management of our bilateral relationship must reach new heights. What is its future in a world where China's Belt and Road Initiative and the United States' Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy are at odds? It also depends on the latter (the US), with whom France is allied but not fully aligned — as evidenced by

France's refusal to join the AUKUS alliance. Equally important is its reliance on the European Union, whose relations with China are strained, with discussions of "de-risking" and even economic and technological "decoupling."

One certainty remains: in this post-COVID world, a world full of dangers, beyond the differences of our political systems, the distance between our cultures, and the number of our short-term disagreements, the Franco-Chinese dialogue will remain more important than ever. So that between our two countries, knowledge and conversation will always prevail over satire and blame.

The author is president of the Federation of Franco-Chinese Associations and vice-president of the New Franco-Chinese Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## Train crash



Two railway carriages of a Cairo-bound passenger train can be seen partially submerged in an irrigation canal after a locomotive crashed into the train's tail on Sunday in southern Egypt. The collision occurred in the province of Minya, 270 kilometers south of Cairo, killing at least one person and injuring multiple others. AP

## Hacking: Service provider compromised by NSA with 'supply chain' attack method

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The method is usually used in attack operations against other countries' telecommunication and network operators. When the NSA gains control of the targeted tele-

com network operator's system, it is able to monitor the target's cell-phone communication content. In the attack against Northwestern Polytechnical University in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, the internet service provider located in China was

compromised by the NSA with the "supply chain" attack method. As a result, the telephone calls and internet activities of the victims were tracked by the NSA in real time.

Such an extensive surveillance program requires a substantial annual

budget, and with the explosive growth of internet data, the demand for funding is bound to rise, the report said, adding that this is one of the main reasons that the US government, in collaboration with its intelligence agencies, devised and promoted the

"Volt Typhoon" operation.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said on Monday that the report has further exposed some "shocking" facts.

Those facts have made people see who is the biggest threat to global

cybersecurity, Mao said. The US government has decided to turn a blind eye to reports on the issue while continuing to spread the false "Volt Typhoon" cyberthreat narrative, and the US should stop smearing China in the name of cybersecurity, she added.

## CHINA

## Hutong, street upgrades help bridge traditional, modern living in Beijing

By DU JUAN  
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After years of comprehensive renovations, the old neighborhoods surrounding Beijing's centuries-old landmarks have been revitalized, bridging traditional and modern living while becoming part of a popular tourist route.

Zhonglouwan Hutong, located near Beijing's iconic Drum Tower and Bell Tower in Dongcheng district, is the closest hutong to Beijing's Central Axis, the newly recognized UNESCO World Heritage Site. With a rich history, the traditional alley has attracted tourists from around the world eager to experience the authentic "Beijing life".

"This area is really beautiful with so many old buildings, and the atmosphere here is really chill and relaxed," said Arnold Geels, a tourist from the Netherlands who encountered local seniors playing shuttlecock on Saturday morning in a community park in front of the Drum Tower.

"It's my first time and first day in China," he said. "The Drum and Bell towers are our first site during our seven-day China tour. I love ancient buildings, and it's cool to see locals are living a peaceful life in the ancient buildings here. The weather is great, too!"

However, like other old neighborhoods in Beijing's historic core, Zhonglouwan Hutong had various problems, including dilapidated buildings, illegal structures, limited parking and cramped living spaces that made life uncomfortable for residents and visits messy for tourists.

"Based on the functional role of the city's core area and its current conditions, we've explored ways to improve the urban environment, from streets and alleys to entire blocks, creating a three-dimensional space that includes scenic corridors," said Wang Tao, deputy director of the Dongcheng district's urban management commission.

Since the citywide environmental improvement initiative for streets and alleys in 2018, Dongcheng has focused on meeting residents' needs by upgrading power, telecommunications, lighting, drainage and roads in Zhonglouwan Hutong. These measures have enhanced public spaces, highlighted the area's cultural heritage and made life more comfortable for locals.

"We're not trying to restore the hutong to a specific period, but rather

to preserve their historical essence while adapting them for modern living," said Tan Tao, a designer with the Tsinghua Tongheng Urban Planning and Design Institute.

Designers have carefully traced the cultural significance of each house and alley, updating and renovating them to align with contemporary lifestyles, with the guiding principle to restore the old while embracing the new.

"Look at my courtyard now — smooth ground, renovated houses and motion-sensor lights. It's so much better than before," said Fan Laiyou, a longtime resident in the hutong. "I often invite friends over to enjoy the beautiful views of the Drum Tower and Bell Tower from my home."

Since the completion of the renovations over the years, many idle courtyard spaces have emerged in Zhonglouwan Hutong. The local government has transformed these spaces, converting some into offices or businesses, while others have been repurposed for new industries, creating more public service areas for the community.

For example, one of the courtyards has become a mini firefighting station to protect the residents and cultural heritage sites nearby, and another was changed into a nursing home for the elderly, one of the first 80 such care centers built in Beijing.

"Through these renovation projects, Zhonglouwan Hutong and the surrounding community have gradually become a vibrant, fully functional and charming neighborhood," said Zhang Yu, head of the urban management office of Andingmen subdistrict, where the hutong is located.

In 2023, Zhonglouwan Hutong was recognized as one of Beijing's "10 Most Beautiful Hutong", drawing more tourists eager to explore its unique culture and charm.

The transformation of a single hutong reflects the broader progress of backstreet management across the city.

As part of Beijing's three-year action plan (2023-25) for improving backstreets and alleys, the city aims to enhance 5,393 alleys, including areas neglected due to demolition delays. This year, 2,114 alleys are slated for makeovers. Of these, 1,598 had been renovated by the end of August, achieving a 75.6 percent completion rate, according to the city government.

Li Boyu contributed to this story.



## Primped poodles

A pet owner waits with dogs to participate in the pet model auditions for the Third Shanghai Pet Fashion Week in Shanghai on Sunday. The event, set to take place from Oct 25 to 27 at the Shanghai Fashion Center, focuses on promoting the development of China's pet industry and creating the next "trend" in the pet fashion sector.

YIN LIQIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

# Dignitaries laud revitalization strategy in Northeast China

### Country strives to ensure no region left behind on the path to modernization

By CAO DESHENG in Changchun  
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Foreign political party leaders and diplomatic envoys have commended the country's strategy of revitalizing Northeast China amid efforts to comprehensively promote Chinese modernization, and they expressed hope that such an ambitious plan will bring about more opportunities for cooperation.

They made the remarks on Monday while participating in a thematic briefing series, called "The Stories of the Communist Party of China — Achievements of Northeast China in Practicing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", in Changchun, capital of Jilin province.

Monday's briefing, themed "Striving for New Breakthroughs in the Full Revitalization of Northeast China," was jointly

hosted by the International Department of the Communist Party of China, and the Party committees of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang. More than 200 leaders of political parties from over 50 countries, foreign envoys in China and foreign business representatives attended the event.

Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hamadi, ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to China, said that the strategy of revitalizing Northeast China is committed to ensuring that no region is left behind on the path toward modernization while addressing imbalances in development and promoting comprehensive and shared growth.

He was impressed by the remarkable changes made in China's strategy of coordinated regional development in the northeast region, including huge

investments in developing emerging industries such as biotechnology, renewable energy and infrastructure construction, the ambassador said.

"The development achievements we are witnessing in China today fully reflect the unremitting efforts of the Communist Party of China in promoting the all-around development of the people and ensuring that all people can share in the fruits of development," he said.

China's northeastern region, comprising Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and part of Inner Mongolia, has been an integral part of the country's industrial backbone for decades.

However, in recent years, the region has faced economic challenges, including declining heavy industries and a shrinking population. The revitalization of China's northeastern region has been a long-standing priority for the Chinese government.

During an inspection tour in Heilongjiang in September last

year, President Xi Jinping convened a key meeting on striving for the full revitalization of Northeast China in the new era. He urged the region to deepen reform and opening-up to blaze a path of high-quality and sustainable development with more courageous and concrete actions.

Rinchinyam Amarjargal, former prime minister of Mongolia and vice-chairman of the Mongolian Democratic Party, said that the Northeast region serves as an important gateway for China's opening-up to Northeast Asia, and the continued development and further opening-up of the region will bring new opportunities for economic and trade cooperation.

Amarjargal said he is happy to see the deepening comprehensive strategic partnership between Mongolia and China.

"The economic cooperation between our two countries is expected to make significant contributions to the development of China's Northeast region," he said.

## 72 nations to take part in World Buddhist Forum

By LIN QI and CHEN YE  
in Ningbo, Zhejiang

Spreading peace, development and prosperity around the world are common pursuit for Buddhists and all humanity. This shared vision will be illustrated at the Sixth World Buddhist Forum, which begins on Tuesday at Mount Xuedou in Ningbo, Zhejiang province.

Themed "Hand in Hand for Coexistence", the three-day event will be attended by some 800 participants from 72 countries and regions which aim to seek consensus and practical approaches to address global challenges in an

ever-evolving world, said Venerable Master Minghai, vice-president of the Buddhist Association of China, at a news conference ahead of the forum on Monday in Ningbo.

The forum will include one main seminar and several side discussions on topics such as the wisdom of inclusiveness in Buddhism, the digitalization of Buddhist scriptures and the charm of Buddhist art. The talks will be held both offline and online to increase participation in the dialogue.

The forum will serve as a diverse and dynamic platform to delve into the cultural essence, ideological significations and contemporary

value of Buddhism, featuring exhibitions, music performances and ceremonies.

Minghai said it will be a dialogue "to engage not only Buddhists but also all members of the world to communicate on ways of interaction to improve relations between people, and between people and nature, so as to realize harmonious coexistence".

The World Buddhist Forum was first held in 2006 in Hangzhou and Zhoushan, both in Zhejiang. It aims to serve as an equal, diverse and open platform of high-level dialogue for those who cherish the world, care for all sen-

tient beings, espouse Buddhism and embody compassion.

Ningbo is a vital port along the southeastern coast of China where agriculture meets aquaculture. As one of the key ports of the Maritime Silk Road, it is also a gateway for the Chinese to conduct exchanges with the world.

The long and rich history of Ningbo is vividly exemplified by its cultural resources, including centuries-old temples such as the Xuedou Temple, which is situated at Mount Xuedou.

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People practice a ribbon dragon dance under the Drum Tower in Beijing on Saturday. CHENG GONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Spotlight on role of public policy evaluation as conference begins

By ZHOU JIN  
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Officials from China and international organizations underscored on Monday the critical role of evaluation in addressing global governance challenges, calling for enhanced international cooperation to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The path toward achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals has faced significant challenges, and all nations are seeking peace, stability and development more than ever, they said, adding that public policy evaluation has become a crucial tool for enhancing governance and ensuring the effectiveness of the policies.

The remarks were made at the opening ceremony of the 2024 National Evaluation Capacities Conference on Monday. The conference, held in China for the first time, was co-hosted by the China International Development Cooperation Agency, the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Evaluation Initiative from Sunday to Friday in Yanqing district, Beijing.

Achim Steiner, administrator of the UNDP, said that evaluation is integral to an ever-improving way of managing development.

Co-hosting the conference with China is a tremendous opportunity to connect the expertise of a global community with rapidly evolving experience and expertise in China, Steiner said.

"We hope that our collaboration with China and the CIDCA will actually enable us to help many countries rapidly develop systems that are both from China's point of view and our point of view, that are central to successful and efficient development," he said.

Xiao Jie, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, said at the opening ceremony that the nation is willing to continue working hand in hand with all parties under the framework of the Global Development Initiative, leveraging key functions of evaluation to provide strong support and effective guarantees for national and global development.

Xiao noted that China has been sharing its development experience

with other countries, engaging in extensive exchanges and cooperation with developed nations and multilateral organizations like the UN. The country is also helping developing countries improve their governance through development cooperation projects and training workshops, he added.

China is willing to take a more active part in the UN-led review of global governance, listen more to the voices of the Global South, and actively respond to their aspirations and expectations, he said.

China would like to continue strengthening cooperation with developing countries in evaluation, he said, adding that he hopes that developed countries and international organizations, including financial institutions,

will provide more financial and technical support to the developing countries.

Under the theme of "Responsive Evaluation: For Government, For Inclusion, For the Future", over 500 representatives from over 100 countries will engage in in-depth discussions on key topics such as building robust evaluation systems, inclusive evaluation frameworks and future-driven evaluation systems and methodologies.

Isabelle Mercier, director of the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, said she believed that evaluation is not just a tool, but also an essential pillar of effective governance.

Noting governance is part of the core mandate of the UNDP, Mercier said that the organization plays a

very important role in helping countries strengthen decision-making through evaluative evidence.

Responsive evaluations involve not only the leaders and policymakers, but also the implementer, the civil society and especially the people with the highest stake in the outcomes, she said.

Carmen Nonay, director of the Finance, Private Sector, Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Department at the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank, emphasized the need to harness new data, technology and methods that would improve the rigor, quality and the usefulness of evaluations.

"By using tools like artificial intelligence or just special analysis, we can answer complex questions with greater efficiency, and we can bring more precision and push evaluation practices into a new dimension in the future," she said.

# CHINA

## Key facilities enable scientific advancement

75 years of development sees country rise from tech laggard to leader

By YAN DONGJIE  
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Over the past 75 years, China's development of key scientific facilities has advanced in leaps and bounds, most notably in the past several decades as the Chinese economy and technological capacity have accelerated at great speed.

A key component of these facilities has been technologies that have enabled Chinese scientists to look deeper and deeper into the unknown.

Light allows us to see objects, while X-rays help us see the essence of things. X-rays with higher brightness can allow us to "see" the microstructures inside materials more clearly. Therefore, obtaining X-ray light sources with higher brightness is a goal tirelessly pursued by scientists.

"The synchrotron radiation light source that produces high-brightness X-rays is like a super microscope that helps researchers see what is happening inside materials at the molecular and atomic levels," said Tai Renzhong, vice-president of the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The brightness of X-rays from synchrotron radiation can be billions of times higher than ordinary X-rays. By using such light for experiments, scientists have been able to better understand approximately 70 percent of the known biological macromolecular structures in the world such as proteins, DNA and viruses.

"As we advance certain industries, including super fibers, advanced engineering materials, energy catalysis, new energy batteries and other key technologies, understanding what is happening internally is crucial for solving bottlenecks," said Tai, who is also deputy manager of the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility, explaining why these large synchrotron facilities are widely recognized worldwide.

As the first third-generation synchrotron radiation light source on the Chinese mainland, the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility has the highest number of users and output of any large scientific facility in China. In its 15 years of operation, it has been used by more than 60,000 researchers from nearly 700 research institutions and companies, supporting over 20,000 projects.

A key project being undertaken is the X-ray brain imaging research being conducted at the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility. It is expected to complete the first mesoscale neural connectivity map of the human brain in about three years, providing a breakthrough research tool for neuroscience.

The Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility has 34 beamlines and 46 experimental stations open to users, catering to cutting-edge basic research in multidisciplinary fields such as life sciences, materials science and medicine, according to the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute.

It has become a significant technological infrastructure with the highest number of beamlines, widest coverage of energy range and most diverse experimental methods among third-generation medium-energy synchrotron radiation facilities worldwide, the institute said.

Gao Fu, a renowned Chinese immunologist and microbiologist who is an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has nothing but praise for the facility.

"The Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility has played a significant role in my scientific research, the transformation of scientific research results into technology, and the conversion of technology into products. From my research on emerging infectious diseases and immunology, it has played a very important role in China's scientific development in the 21st century," he said.

In June 1962, Derek John de Solla Price, a scientist from the United States, proposed the concept of "big science". The characteristics of big science include grand goals, massive investments and interdisciplinary collaboration. Big scientific facilities are essential infrastructure for contemporary scientific development, reflecting a country's or region's research capabilities.

China's construction of large scientific facilities can be traced back to the late 1970s with the building of the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider.

To advance high-energy physics, in 1972, 18 scientists including Zhang Wenyu and Zhu Hongyuan wrote a letter to then-premier Zhou Enlai.

At that time, high-energy physics experiments in China were almost nonexistent, and high-energy physics theoretical research relied entirely on foreign experimental data, according to records from the CAS.

Premier Zhou Enlai said: "This matter cannot be delayed any longer. The academy of sciences must focus on basic science and theoretical research,



**Picture 1:** A time-lapse photo of the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope in Guizhou province. Since being put into operation in 2016, it has helped provide key data in learning about cosmology. OU DONGQU / XINHUA **Picture 2:** Scientists inspect the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility in Shanghai in April. FANG ZHE / XINHUA **Picture 3:** An antenna of the China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station array in Lijiang, Yunnan province, last month. XINHUA **Picture 4:** A technician operates a part of the China Spallation Neutron Source in Dongguan, Guangdong province, in July. MAO SIQIAN / XINHUA **Picture 5:** Workers install the last electromagnet of the High Energy Photon Source in Beijing in December. JIN LIWANG / XINHUA **Picture 6:** A telescope is installed at the Large High Altitude Air Shower Observatory in Daocheng, Sichuan province, in April last year. WANG QIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

### Highlights of the completion of China's large scientific facilities

- 1986: China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station, a system for receiving, processing, archiving and distributing various remote sensing satellite data.
- 1988: Beijing Electron Positron Collider, China's first high-energy accelerator.
- 2001: ShenGuang-II Laser Facility, one of the few high-energy fusion lasers internationally.
- 2007: Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak, the world's first such device, known as the "artificial sun".
- 2009: Large Sky Area Multi-Object

- Fiber Spectroscopy Telescope, a new type of optical astronomical telescope with a large field of view and large aperture.
- 2010: Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility, a third-generation medium-energy synchrotron facility.
- 2015: Marine research vessel *Science*, China's first comprehensive scientific research vessel with independent intellectual property rights and deep-sea exploration and research capabilities.
- 2016: Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope, the world's

- largest and most sensitive single-aperture radio telescope.
- 2018: China Spallation Neutron Source, China's first and the world's fourth spallation neutron source.
- 2020: Shanghai Soft X-ray Free-Electron Laser User Facility, China's first X-ray coherent light source.
- 2023: Large High Altitude Air Shower Observatory, the world's highest-altitude, largest-scale and most sensitive cosmic ray detection facility.

YAN DONGJIE

while also integrating theoretical research with scientific experiments."

In March 1981, scientists from the CAS met with physicists Tsung-Dao Lee and Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky, the director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center in the US, to discuss the construction of the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider, which was unanimously considered the best development plan at the time.

After years of exploration, the collider was completed in 1988. Deng Xiaoping, China's late leader, at the inauguration ceremony, said, "Whether in the past, present, or future, China must develop its own high technology and occupy a place in the world of high technology."

Wang Yifang, the current director of the Institute of High Energy Physics, reflected: "Looking back, constructing the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider was the best choice at the time. It allowed China's high-energy physics to take a place in the international high-energy physics field, cultivated a team with international standards, and also promoted the construction of other large scientific facilities in the country."

The Beijing Electron-Positron Collider served dual purposes, and based on it, the Beijing Synchrotron Radiation Facility, the first generation synchrotron radiation light source, was built.

Soon after, in 1990, the second-generation synchrotron radiation light source, the Hefei Synchrotron Radiation Source, was built. Subsequently, in 2009, the medium-energy third-generation synchrotron radiation facility, the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility, was completed.

The fourth-generation synchrotron radiation light source, the High Energy Photon Source, located in Beijing's Huairou Science City, is expected to be fully operational by the end of next year.

Once completed, it will be China's first high-energy light source and one of the brightest fourth-generation synchrotron radiation facilities in the world, emitting light 1 trillion times brighter than the sun, according to the Institute of High Energy Physics, which is part of the CAS.



The CAS currently has over 30 large scientific facilities in operation or under construction, including specialized research facilities for specific scientific and technological goals in certain disciplines, such as the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider and the Heavy Ion Research Facility in Lanzhou.

There are also public experimental facilities serving multidisciplinary basic research, such as the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility and the Hefei Synchrotron Radiation Source; as well as public technology facilities providing basic data, such as the China Remote Sensing Satellite Ground Station and the BPL and BPM national time service systems.

According to the CAS, large scientific facilities in China play a strategic role in achieving high-level technological self-reliance, driving the transformation and upgrading of the manufacturing industry, ensuring the security of industrial chains and supply chains, and promoting high-quality economic development.

Over the past few decades, under the country's unified deployment of relevant departments, the layout of major scientific and technological infrastructure in the country has gradually improved.

This has not only made outstanding contributions to addressing key bottlenecks in national development but has also significantly promoted socioeconomic development, according to the CAS.

Leveraging these facilities, a number of nationally influential scientific and technological innovation centers and talent hubs have gradually emerged on the international stage.

The Beijing Spectrometer III International Cooperation Group, based on China's large scientific facilities such as the Beijing Spectrometer III and the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider, has attracted over 70 research institutions and more than 600 researchers from 18 countries and regions due to its leading research capabilities internationally.

The endeavor to develop large scientific facilities continues. This year, construction began on the Human Organ Physiopathology Emulation System, aiming to help scientists accurately simulate human physiological and pathological states, and analyze complex human functions and regulatory mechanisms, which is of great significance for life science research and biopharmaceutical development, according to the CAS.



Online  
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## Dedication to science heralds nation's progress

If we were to ask students in a primary school what they aspire to be in the future, many would likely mention being a scientist. In China, scientists are among the most coveted dream professions for children.

I, too, once echoed this sentiment, drawn to a career that directly impacts society's advancement. While I ultimately became a reporter covering science and technology — perhaps not too distant from my initial dream — I've had the privilege of engaging with numerous scientists through my work.

Some of these individuals have devoted decades to a particular field, earning pres-



Yan Dongjie  
Reporter's log

tigious accolades both in China and internationally. Yet, the quintessential image of a scientist often involves repetitive experiments conducted thousands of times in a lab or prolonged periods spent watching data on a computer.

Science isn't always glamorous; more often, it's characterized by solitude,

demanding patience and unwavering dedication, particularly in fundamental research. Several esteemed scientists, including Jian Zhimin and Guo Huadong, both members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have emphasized the necessity of perseverance and commitment to one's original aspirations, even in the face of years of seemingly fruitless endeavors.

Many major scientific facilities are situated in remote suburbs or even mountainous regions far from urban centers. During a visit to the Kashgar Ground Station of the Aerospace Information Research Institute — one of the country's five domestic ground stations

responsible for receiving and processing satellite data — I learned of the station director's relocation to Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region 17 years prior.

Initially devoid of electricity and running water, he and his colleagues had to erect fences around their dormitory for safety.

Today, with state-of-the-art facilities established, scientists at the station can analyze vast amounts of data transmitted by various satellites launched by China. This data includes crucial information on Earth's surface resources, global urban development, climate change and national security.

While the significance of this work is undeniable, the daily routine often involves monitoring data on screens and machines around the clock in shifts, a task that can be monotonous and routine when broken

down into individual responsibilities.

One of the station's laser communication ground stations is situated at an altitude exceeding 5,000 meters near the China-Tajikistan border. As I shared instant noodles with the scientists in their dormitory, surrounded by snow-capped mountains after hours of driving from the city, I began to grasp the essence of their experiences.

Following our meal, the scientists proudly presented the other fruits of their labor, actual fruits grown and harvested back on the Kashgar campus, noting that hundreds of fruit trees had been planted there over the past decade.

This act encapsulates their ability to find joy amid challenges. I enjoyed the fruits of their labor, just as the world enjoys the achievements of science.

## BUSINESS

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## African green projects set to grow

By ZHU WENQIAN  
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Countries in Africa have shown significant demand for building infrastructure over the past few years, and their demand for financing will increasingly tilt toward green and low-carbon projects for sustainable development, providing opportunities for builders and investors, industry organizations said.

Since 2020, some African countries have successively introduced a series of measures to develop their infrastructure, according to the China International Contractors Association. "These countries have launched a group of transportation and housing construction projects, while they have been facing a large funding gap," Fang Qiuchen, chairman of the association, said during a conference in Beijing on Monday.

Africa is facing a significant funding deficit for infrastructure development.

By 2025, the annual investment demand for infrastructure construction in Africa is expected to reach \$170 billion, with an investment gap ranging from \$68 billion to \$108 billion, according to an estimate by the African Development Bank Group.

Africa is the second-largest overseas contract engineering market for China, and cooperation between China and Africa in infrastructure construction has made significant strides, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Over the past decade, Chinese companies have signed contracts worth more than \$700 billion in Africa and achieved sales revenue of over \$400 billion. Chinese enterprises have completed a number of landmark and small projects in sectors such as transportation, energy, electricity, housing and people's livelihoods, data from China's Commerce Ministry showed.

Rahamtalla M. Osman Elnor, permanent representative of the African Union to China, said Africa's infrastructure needs are significant, and projects undertaken by China have helped to drive social, economic and sustainable development on the continent.

Meanwhile, the World Wide Fund for Nature China said the financing environment in Africa has not been optimistic due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and global uncertainties including the Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as climate change.

"Africa has a rich, but fragile biodiversity, and the continent is deeply affected by climate change. Green financing should become a major trend in Africa, including construction projects related to clean energy, electric transportation and renewable energy management," said Zhou Fei, chief program officer of WWF China.

PowerChina International Group Ltd, an arm of PowerChina, said Chinese companies should elevate overseas green investment and financing to a strategic level, and develop green investment and financing strategies tailored to local conditions.

With the global economy facing downward pressure and problems such as inflation and debt overload, building infrastructure on the continent is key to a rising Africa and its modernization, according to the Export-Import Bank of China, a policy bank.

"We are full of confidence in the development of Africa. Our key focus includes supporting the building of sustainable projects in Africa to promote the growth of a sustainable economy," said Gao Ning, deputy manager of the corporate banking department at the Export-Import Bank of China.



Employees work on the production line of a high-tech company in Tianjin. XINHUA

## Policies to support smaller enterprises

Private firms accounted for 92.3% of total business entities in 2023

By CHENG YU  
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China will implement a batch of policies, including those addressing financing and credit, to support small and micro-sized enterprises, platform firms and unicorns, so as to help them expand business and unleash vitality, it was announced on Monday at a conference by the State Council, the nation's Cabinet.

Buoyed by such signals of support for the private sector, share prices rose in China on Monday. The CSI 300, an index of large companies traded in Shanghai and Shenzhen, closed 1.9 percent higher. The ChiNext Index, which tracks China's Nasdaq-style board of growing and emerging enterprises, gained 2.6 percent.

Luo Wen, head of the State Administration for Market Regulation, the country's top market regulator, said that the country will work to introduce innovative quality financing and credit enhancement policies to ease financing challenges for SMEs.

Under such policies, financial institutions will factor in a company's quality management and brand reputation when issuing loans. Together with equity, funds and bond-based financing tools, the country aims to generate a credit enhancement and financing quota of 300 billion yuan (\$42 billion) each year, Luo said.

Luo emphasized that the SAMR will roll out a guideline to guide platform operators to help

merchants on the platform enhance brand awareness, increase market transactions and harness traffic.

It will help businesses, especially new entrants, agricultural firms and some unique companies on the platform, to enhance their ability to utilize online traffic more efficiently and tap into larger audiences, he added.

Beyond SMSE support, Wang Jiangping, vice-minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said the ministry will collaborate with the China Securities Regulatory Commission to launch the third batch of specialized boards for "little giant" companies in regional equity markets.

Little giant companies refer to small and medium-sized enterprises that typically specialize in niche sectors, command high market shares and boast strong innovative capacity. By the end of June this year, China had cultivated 12,000 such enterprises.

The ministry also plans to sign a strategic cooperation agreement with the Beijing Stock Exchange to further streamline financing channels for these firms, Wang said.

At the conference on Monday, Wang said that China is also placing a greater emphasis on developing unicorn companies — startups valued at over \$1 billion — in emerging high-tech fields such as 6G and brain-computer interfaces.

He said a nationwide unified system will be established to coordinate the development of unicorn companies between the central

government and provincial government levels.

Unicorn companies will be supported in technological innovation, and will be encouraged and guided to address national strategic needs and master unique, proprietary technologies, Wang said, adding that more efforts will be made to increase financial backing for these unicorns, including support for public listings, mergers and acquisitions, to accelerate their growth.

Despite China's growing unicorns, the country still lags behind the United States in terms of the overall number, according to the Hurun Research Institute. Last year, China had 340 unicorns while the US had 700.

Wang Peng, a senior researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said that encouraging SMSEs, platform firms and unicorn companies are part of broader efforts to spur the private sector, which is of great significance to counter the current global economic slowdown.

A report on private sector development by the State Council showed that private companies accounted for 92.3 percent of the country's total number of business entities in 2023, a significant increase from 79.4 percent in 2012.

"The Chinese economy will continue gathering momentum if the private sector, including smaller businesses, remains sound. More importantly, private enterprises stood undoubtedly at the forefront of technological innovations and the digital economy in recent years, especially in fields like new energy, information, communication, bio-pharmaceuticals and AI," the senior researcher said.

## Nestle bullish on China's infant nutrition sector

By WANG ZHUOQIONG  
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Global food and beverage giant Nestle will continue to invest in its infant nutrition business in China and is bullish about the market's long-term prospects, driven by the still large number of newborns in the country and the imminent approval of its new Human Milk Oligosaccharide (HMO) product, according to its executives.

"China remains the world's largest market for the infant and maternity sector due to the sheer number of newborns," said Adrian Ho, deputy head of Nestle Zone Greater China and corporate vice-president.

Ho said that this year, the Year of the Dragon — a zodiac sign believed to encourage Chinese families to have more children — could further boost sales of Nestle's infant nutrition products.

In Nestle's first-half financial results released in July, the company reported low single-digit growth in global infant nutrition sales, fueled by continued momentum for its NAN formula, Lactogen and HMO products.

While China's infant nutrition sector saw negative growth, Nestle's performance still outpaced the overall category decline. Globally, Nestle achieved organic growth of 2.1 percent.

The Chinese market's gains were driven by growth in soluble coffee, pet foods, confectioneries and infant nutrition.

Nestle acquired Wyeth Nutrition in 2012 for \$11.85 billion from Pfizer Nutrition, further strengthening its global position in the infant nutrition sector.

As a science-led, high-value category, infant nutrition has been central to Nestle's operations since its founding in 1866.

Ho emphasized that its new Illuma infant formula is about to launch with newly approved HMOs which will help communicate the brand's scientific expertise to Chinese consumers.

Isabelle Bureau-Franz, head of Research and Development for Nestle's Nutrition Business, highlighted the importance of HMO technology, which is inspired by human breast milk.

"Our Global HMO Research aims

to explore cutting-edge breast milk research, unlock the mysteries of the first 1,000 days of life, and support the healthy development of Chinese babies with advanced HMO formulas," she said.

Since the approval of two new HMOs by China's National Health Commission in October 2023, HMO products of Illuma, a high-end brand of Wyeth, have gained significant attention in China.

The company plans to strengthen its market position with a new generation of HMO-enriched infant formula to be launched soon.

Nestle's advancements in HMO technology come amid growing competition in China, where dairy companies such as Yili are also focusing on HMO products.

Jocelyn Lacida, global marketing manager for Wyeth Premium, said that formula innovation is a long-term process.

"For example, it took us seven years and three iterations to develop Illuma LUXA, evolving from two types of HMOs to six in our latest formula," Lacida said.

She added that Illuma continues to lead the market with innovative products, including the first growing-up infant formula and HMO-enriched liquid formula launched by a foreign brand in China.

"Each formula undergoes years of refinement to ensure both safety and effectiveness, while optimizing the balance of key nutrients like HMOs to deliver clinically proven health benefits," Lacida said.

Illuma's research in China spans 10 provinces, involving over 740 researchers and nearly 1,000 breast milk samples, providing a foundation for continued product innovation tailored to the local market.

"Winning in China means deep understanding of our consumers, knowing where they are, and offering products and services that meet their needs," said Ho.

Zhu Danpeng, an independent food and beverage analyst, said that the approval of two HMOs in China marks a significant advancement for the country's infant formula industry. This development enhances innovation, product iteration, and quality — a crucial step for both domestic and international players, Zhu said.



Two researchers check out human milk oligosaccharide at a Nestle research center. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Extensive renewable energy collaboration foreseen

By LIU YUKUN  
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China and Africa are poised for extensive collaboration in the realm of renewable energy, as the continent's abundant resources align with China's advanced expertise in wind and solar power technologies, said experts recently.

This partnership not only guarantees energy security but also propels Africa toward green, low-carbon practices and sustainable development, yielding a host of mutually beneficial outcomes, they said.

Currently, the African economy is undergoing sustained growth with a continuous rise in energy demand. According to the Continental Power System Masterplan currently being developed by the African Union Development Agency, Africa's electricity consumption may reach 3,842 terawatt-hours by 2040.

The International Renewable

Energy Agency predicts that by 2030, nearly a quarter of Africa's energy demand can be met by new energy sources.

While Chinese companies have implemented hundreds of renewable energy projects in Africa, aiding African nations in mitigating energy shortages and achieving sustainable development, experts said that the localization of technology and production, as well as green finance and talent development can further deepen and broaden China-Africa renewable energy cooperation.

Lu Junling, chief economist at China's National Energy Administration, said that energy cooperation between China and Africa aligns with the mutual interests of both parties, offering a solid foundation and promising prospects. He advocated for enhanced practical cooperation facilitation for future China-Africa energy projects, emphasizing the importance of exchanging energy project information, creating col-

laboration opportunities and maximizing the role of energy think tanks to realize more cooperative outcomes.

"Now is an opportune moment for clean energy collaboration between China and Africa. Further efforts are needed to advance the cooperation mechanisms between the two regions, help with planning research and policy alignment, foster deeper technological innovation cooperation, and explore tailored green projects that benefit communities," said Li Sheng, head of the China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute.

A recent report on China-Africa renewable energy cooperation, jointly prepared by the CREEI and the New Partnership for Africa's Development, an economic program of the African Union, underscores Africa's significant potential in renewable energy development, while highlighting the need for improvements in production and consumption levels. In 2022,

renewable energy accounted for a modest 9.67 percent of its total energy consumption.

Regarding production, Africa's total installed power generation capacity reached 252.8 gigawatts in 2023, with fossil fuels remaining the primary electricity source, constituting about three-quarters of total installed capacity. Among renewable energy sources, hydropower (excluding pumped storage) had an installed capacity of 37.1 GW, representing 3 percent of global hydropower capacity, while wind and solar power capacities were 8.7 GW and 13.5 GW, respectively, each accounting for less than 1 percent globally.

However, over the past five years, Africa's total installed capacity of renewable energy, excluding pumped storage, has grown by 23.2 percent, a substantial 16.8 percentage points higher than the growth rate of fossil fuel power generation capacity (6.4 percent) during the same period.

## Briefly

## Renminbi strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 8 pips to 7.0723 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

## Auto sector reports growth momentum

China's automobile industry has revealed a growth trend, with the production and sales of vehicles increasing steadily in the first nine months of 2024, data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers showed. From January to September, China's auto production totaled about 21.47 million units, up 1.9 percent year-on-year. Auto sales stood at 21.57 million units, an increase of 2.4 percent from the same period last year.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

## BUSINESS

# Stabilizing growth tops national agenda

Maintaining fiscal health, managing property woes seen as key objectives

By ZHOU LANXU  
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Securing stable economic growth while maintaining fiscal viability lies at the core of China's pursuit of national security amid intensified external uncertainties and a lingering real estate downturn, leading economists said.

To achieve these goals, they suggested taking decisive measures such as strengthening medium-term fiscal planning, optimizing supervision over local government debt, replacing local government debt with longer-term treasury bonds and establishing a central government-financed institution to acquire idle housing stock.

They made the remarks at a recent forum as the markets eagerly await China's next steps to revive the economy on the fiscal front. The forum, held by the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing, was themed around coordination of development and security, focusing on the areas of public finance, financial system, public governance and supply chains.

"Fiscal safety is closely interconnected and inseparable with security in economic and financial areas," said Ma Haitao, president of CUF and a senior expert, stressing that a robust fiscal system is the last defense against various economic and financial risks.

Ma said fiscal safety refers to ensuring steady fiscal revenue and expenditure over the short term, achieving cross-annual and cross-cyclical fiscal balance in the medium and long term, along with reserving adequate space and resources to resist any potential

shocks, including natural disasters, political incidents as well as other economic and social hazards.

Ma cautioned that China's fiscal security is now facing challenges such as slowing fiscal revenue growth, rising local government debt and an aging population, while the debt balance of local governments had nearly doubled from 2019 to 2023, leading to rising debt servicing costs.

Official data showed that from January to August, the country's general public budget revenue decreased by 2.6 percent year-on-year.

"It's important to strengthen medium-term fiscal planning to achieve fiscal balance across years and economic cycles," Ma said. It is a crucial transformation that can help correct any misalignment between the country's economic and social five-year plans and fiscal planning. Establishing a long-term mechanism of government debt management also holds the key, said Ma, who urged to intensify supervision by the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, over local governments' debt budget and management, to avoid any excessive project construction that adds to debt.

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

"Failure to resolve this issue will impact people's sense of gain, as well as political and social stability," Li said, stressing that the key to social and political stability lies in forestalling drastic macroeconomic fluctuations.

Affected by infrastructure and real

estate cycles, Li said China's macroeconomy now faces downside risks. To ensure economic security, an essential step would be a large-scale issuance of treasury bonds to replace local government debt, thus easing cash flow pressure on local governments.

On Saturday, the Ministry of Finance said it plans to increase the debt limit by a large scale all at once and replace the hidden debts of local governments, without disclosing the specific size of the plan.

Li said that a significant portion of local debt, at least equivalent to 20 percent of the country's GDP or around 30 trillion yuan (\$4.25 trillion), should be replaced with longer-term treasury bonds.

He added that as benefits of construction projects financed by the debt will last for years, the burden of debt repayment should not be concentrated in a short period.

Echoing Li's remarks, Zhang Ming, deputy director of the Institute of Finance and Banking, which is part of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that local government debt risks can be addressed properly if the central government is willing to offer help, given the robustness of the central government's balance sheet.

Instead, the most prominent risk to be resolved would be real estate woes, Zhang said, suggesting establishing a national institution — financed by special treasury bonds — to manage the acquisition of idle commercial housing in smaller cities.

Zhang outlined a plan for the institution to purchase housing stock in second and third-tier cities experiencing net population inflows through a tendering process with real estate developers. The acquired properties would then be converted into government-subsidized rental housing.

Yin Mingyue contributed to this story.



Dongfang Electric Corp's assembly line in Fujian province. LIN SHANCHUAN / XINHUA

## Milestone achieved in wind turbine tech

By ZHENG XIN in Beijing  
and HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou

The recent unveiling of a 26-megawatt offshore wind turbine in Fujian province marks a significant milestone for China's wind energy industry and reflects the country's growing leadership in renewable energy technology, said industry experts.

Dongfang Electric Corp unveiled the 26 MW offshore wind turbine in Fuqing, Fujian, the world's largest, on Saturday, entirely developed with independent intellectual property rights.

The turbine incorporates world-class technologies across key components, including the generator, blades, bearings and electronic control systems, it said.

Analysts said the turbine's debut represents more than a technological milestone. It highlights China's strategic intent to lead the renewable energy sector both domestically and globally.

"Chinese wind turbine original equipment manufacturers have been making efforts to increase turbine size and capacity to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of electricity," said Deng Simeng, a senior analyst for renewables and power research at global consultancy Rystad Energy.

"This 26 MW model is a key breakthrough in the Chinese wind turbine manufacturing industry, enabling offshore wind to capture higher wind speed and withstand stronger typhoons in the eastern and southern coastal regions,

which is in line with the national plans to develop offshore wind toward deep-far sea areas."

Deng said the fully localized components of this turbine model have ensured that the costs are kept under control or even reduced as production scales up.

This also strengthens the competitiveness of Chinese companies in the world's offshore wind power sector, and expands China's role in global energy transition, Deng added.

The turbine is a testament to China's rapid progress in offshore wind technology, representing the most powerful wind turbine globally. Such breakthroughs position China as a leader in high-capacity wind energy solutions, which were previously dominated by European manufacturers, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

This innovation is expected to attract international attention, further enhancing China's reputation for advanced offshore wind infrastructure and engineering capabilities, he said.

The 26 MW offshore wind turbine boasts a hub height of 185 meters, and is the largest single-capacity turbine with the longest rotor diameter globally, said Dongfang Electric.

The turbine is engineered with high corrosion resistance and features a dual anti-typhoon design, allowing it to withstand extreme typhoons. It is customized for medium-to-high wind speed in offshore regions with average wind

speeds exceeding eight meters per second, ensuring lowered levels of energy costs and meeting grid parity requirements, it said.

China has been accelerating the transition to green energy. According to the National Energy Administration, installed capacity of solar power came in at approximately 750 million kilowatts in the first eight months of 2024, rocketing 48.8 percent year-on-year, and the installed capacity of wind power grew 19.9 percent to some 470 million kW.

Rapid development of the new energy sector in recent years resulted from full market competition, a sound business environment, constant tech innovation and a complete industrial chain, said Pan Huimin, deputy head of NEA's new and renewable energy department.

Local governments and enterprises should actively seize opportunities and exploit wind and solar power in line with local resources and with the capabilities of the grid to absorb the generated electricity, Pan said.

At an average wind speed of 10 meters per second, a single unit can generate 100 million kilowatt-hours of clean energy annually — enough to supply the electricity needs of 55,000 households for a year. This would save over 30,000 metric tons of standard coal and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 80,000 tons annually, said the company.

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## Siasun Robot expands global footprint

By WANG ZHUOQIONG  
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Siasun Robot and Automation Co Ltd, a major robotics technology company, recently exported more than 100 robots to Europe, a significant step in the company's efforts to integrate with the burgeoning new energy manufacturing sector across the continent.

Exports cover three main categories — mobile robots including its V-groove forklifts, over 300 sets of buffer rack equipment and 400 docking stations. Most of the robots are destined for factories in France, the company said.

The robots will help to improve efficiency in battery handling and logistics, particularly for new energy companies.

The Shenyang, Liaoning province-based company is also preparing products for a battery factory in the United Kingdom.

"These orders are garnered with our long-term focus and technological advancement in the new energy sector. It demonstrates the competitive strength of Chinese enterprises, further solidifying our role in the global mobile robotics market," said Wang Yupeng, president of Siasun's mobile robot business, adding that Siasun is banking on customization to win the European market.

To better meet customer demand in the European market, the V-groove forklift mobile robot uses visual material identification technology to adapt to different material types and production processes autonomously, Wang said.

In addition, the robots feature a better design and materials to



Siasun's production line of robotic arms in Shenyang, Liaoning province. LI XULUN / XINHUA

enable faster delivery, which helps the company gain a competitive edge globally, he added.

"The V-groove forklift is a pioneering product for the new energy sector, as it is specifically designed to handle battery coils with high precision and safety," Wang said.

Apart from ensuring efficient logistics, the robot is able to conduct data processing for logistics procedures, offering improved flexibility and functionality than traditional ones, he added.

With years of experience serving China's new energy market, Siasun has developed a wide product range of mobile robots to cater to the industry's needs.

Its innovative logistics solutions span along the battery production chain — such as raw material handling and battery

assembly — addressing challenges in the manufacturing process, Wang said.

According to the company's first-half financial report, its revenue showed steady growth, with revenue reaching 1.66 billion yuan (\$234.4 million), a year-on-year increase of 10.37 percent. Its robotics and semiconductor equipment divisions performed well, with gross profit margin continuing its positive momentum.

Citing the global headwinds, the company said it remains committed to its international growth.

Apart from Europe, Siasun has launched key projects in Southeast Asia. Currently, the company's footprint covers over 40 markets, serving more than 4,000 enterprises.

Wu Yong in Shenyang contributed to this story.

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# BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

## Appliance makers chart big overseas expansion

Production bases abroad create more job opportunities for local people

By FAN FEIFEI

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Chinese home appliance makers are ratcheting up efforts to expand their presence in overseas markets and increase investments in localized operations covering research and development, production and marketing.

This is part of a broader push to seek new revenue sources and enhance the competitiveness of domestic enterprises globally.

Experts said establishing overseas manufacturing bases and production lines not only helps in taking China's advanced manufacturing, R&D and management capabilities abroad, but also creates job opportunities for local people and boosts the international awareness and influence of Chinese brands.

They also said that enhancing global operational capacity will help Chinese manufacturing enterprises better utilize global resources, thus further promoting the transformation and upgrading of China's traditional manufacturing sector, given that the country has placed great emphasis on establishing a modern industrial system.

Chinese home appliance maker Hisense Group has accelerated steps to expand its footprint in Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Australia and Southeast Asia and ramped up its investment in technological innovation to target high-end markets abroad.

Jia Shaoqian, chairman of Hisense, said the company has set up 26 R&D centers, 36 industrial parks and production bases and 64 overseas branches across the globe.

Jia also highlighted the company's determination and commitment to pressing ahead with its globalization strategy.

Jia said the company has established a complete industrial system, including R&D, production, sales, supply chain and services, while making forays into overseas markets, in order to better serve local markets and consumers. It aims to strengthen capacities in localized manufacturing, research and development, and talent cultivation.

Hisense's revenue reached 202.2 billion yuan (\$28.6 billion) in 2023, while its overseas sales stood at 85.8 billion yuan, accounting for more than 42.5 percent of the company's total revenue.

The Qingdao, Shandong province-based company has invested heavily in Africa.

According to Jia, Hisense entered the South African market 30 years ago and built an industrial park covering an area of more than 100,000 square meters in the country, creating over 1,000 direct employment opportunities and more than 5,000 indirect ones.

"Over the past three decades, Hisense has deeply integrated with African enterprises within the continent's industrial and supply chains," Jia said.

Sales of Hisense's televisions and refrigerators have taken the top spot in the South African market, he added.

Jia said Hisense is speeding up its business footprint in Nigeria, Angola, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, with the recent investment focus on North Africa.

For instance, the company signed an agreement with local partners to establish a new factory in Egypt in August. The plant will cover an area of about 200 mu (13.33 hectares), and commence production next year.

In addition to meeting local demand in Egypt, the products made by the factory will be exported to 21 countries and regions, including the League of Arab States, North Africa and East Africa before gradually expanding into West Africa, the European Union and the Americas.

The company has also helped build an intelligent bus system in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa and improved the operational efficiency of local public transportation.

The project is the first of Hisense's intelligent transport business overseas and is expected to optimize the



Employees work on a TV production line at Hisense's industrial park in Atlantis, Western Cape province, South Africa, in April. WU XIAOHUI / CHINA DAILY



Dreame Technology's humanoid robots are on display during the World Robot Conference in Beijing in August 2023. HUANG YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Visitors check out Dreame Technology's vacuum cleaners at a home appliances expo in Shanghai in March 2021. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

travel experience of local residents.

Fang Xueyu, president of Beijing-based market consultancy unit, said localization is at the core of globalization, and companies need to satisfy demand from local consumers and provide products suitable for local markets.

Apart from the African market, the company has also accelerated its expansion in Europe, having set up six R&D centers and five major manufacturing bases, with sales revenue in the continent rising 19.5 percent year-on-year to 3.8 billion euros (\$4.15 billion) last year.

Data from market consultancy AVC Revo showed that the shipments of Hisense TVs in Europe increased in the first quarter of this year by 35.9 percent year-on-year.

The company accounted for 13.6 percent of global TV shipments during the same period, ranking second in the world, according to market research company Omdia.

Moreover, it has boosted brand awareness and influence on the global stage via sponsorships of major world-class sporting events, including prominent soccer tournaments like the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, and UEFA 2016, 2020 and 2024.

"It is inevitable that Chinese home appliance manufacturers are expanding their footprint overseas for new profit growth points and long-term development, as the domestic home appliance market is

almost saturated," said Zhao Meimei, assistant president of Beijing-based market consultancy All View Cloud, which specializes in home appliances.

Building a sound global industrial chain and enhancing operational capacity in the overseas markets will help Chinese home appliance companies make better use of global resources, reduce operational costs and improve management efficiency, Zhao added.

She highlighted the growing importance of China's manufacturing on the global stage as the country has become the world's largest manufacturing hub and boasts complete industrial chains.

"Globalization is both an opportunity and a challenge for Chinese home appliance manufacturers," she said.

This will promote the sector's high-quality transformation and upgrading, Zhao added.

Exports of Chinese-made home appliance products have become a bright spot.

According to the General Administration of Customs, China's exports of household appliances rose 9.9 percent year-on-year to 617.42 billion yuan last year.

"Expansion into overseas markets will not only relieve the pressure of high inventories in the domestic market, but also increase the international influence of Chinese home appliance companies," said Dong Min, secretary-general of the China

Video Industry Association.

Dong said in the past, most Chinese enterprises adopted the original equipment manufacturer or OEM model, but nowadays they have built up self-owned brands in a bid to bolster competitiveness on the global stage.

Retail sales of China's home appliances sector reached 849.8 billion yuan in 2023, up 3.6 percent year-on-year, according to AVC.

Chen Hui, general manager of AVC Revo, said, "Chinese household appliance companies have increased their manufacturing capacities overseas and improved their global layout to mitigate the negative impacts of tariff barriers and reduce costs since the start of trade frictions between China and the United States."

Chen said establishing global R&D centers will help Chinese enterprises gain innovation advantages, master new technologies and obtain a greater voice in increasingly fierce international competition.

The Middle East and Africa serve as important markets participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, presenting huge growth potential for Chinese enterprises to expand their global footprint, industry insiders said.

Last month, Hisense opened a research and development center in Dubai, its first comprehensive R&D facility in the Middle East and Africa region, which represents one of the fastest-growing markets for the

company covering 74 countries and regions with a total population of about 1.5 billion people.

The center is designed for R&D of air conditioners, TVs, refrigerators and washing machines, as well as energy efficiency and sustainability projects. It will also serve as Hisense's training base for its regional sales and service teams and local partners.

"The establishment of the center represents not only Hisense's long-term commitment to engaging Dubai and the Middle East and Africa markets, but also its determination to get closer to its customers and provide them with higher-quality products and service," said Jia.

Hisense also recently opened a new factory in Egypt, as part of the company's effort to speed up its business layout in Africa. It has built multiple production lines or new factories with local partners, producing not only home appliances, but also business-to-business products such as car use air conditioners, Jia said.

Moreover, Chinese robotic vacuum cleaners, as a new type of intelligent home appliances, are gaining in popularity among overseas consumers as domestic players have stepped up their push to expand global presence.

Robot vacuum cleaner maker Dreame Technology has seen robust growth in international markets in recent years.

The company's export revenue surged more than 120 percent year-on-year in 2023, with global sales of its robotic vacuum cleaners surpassing 2.4 million units, skyrocketing 300 percent from a year earlier. Over 50 percent of its revenue came from overseas markets last year, it said.

Currently, Dreame Technology's products are available in more than 100 countries and regions, includ-

ing Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America.

The number of its brick-and-mortar stores has reached over 5,500 across the globe, and its robotic vacuum cleaners have captured the top spot by market share in Singapore, Germany and France.

Yu Hao, founder and CEO of Dreame Technology, said the company will increase investment in R&D, establish global industrial chain systems and retail networks and enhance operating capacity in international markets.

Liang Zhenpeng, an independent consumer electronics analyst, said overseas consumers have shown growing demand for China-made diversified, personalized and customized home appliances and are keen to buy intelligent and high-quality goods.

Liang said he is bullish on the growth prospects of Chinese home appliance makers abroad.

"Meanwhile, Chinese manufacturers face some challenges and difficulties when expanding overseas; they should capture local demand on time, learn more about relevant laws, regulations and quality standards in these countries and regions, and adjust supply chains to make products that meet local requirements," Liang said.

The demand for household appliances varies across countries due to the different living habits and culinary traditions of the people, said Pan Jun, a visiting professor at Donghua University in Shanghai.

Chinese household appliance companies should attach greater importance to products' R&D, pour more resources into technological innovation and optimize product functions to cater to the diversified needs of shoppers overseas, Pan added.

## WORLD

## Surveying the damage



US President Joe Biden speaks to the media after a tour of the damage caused by Hurricane Milton on Sunday in St. Pete Beach, Florida. Biden visited the area in the wake of back-to-back hurricanes that have caused extensive damage. JOE RAEDLE / GETTY IMAGES

## Relations with Beijing the 'right choice' for Honduras

By ZHAO JIA  
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The high-quality white shrimp from Honduras making its way into the Chinese market holds significant historical importance for both countries, marking yet another milestone in their practical cooperation that has enhanced the well-being of the two peoples, Honduran Ambassador to China Salvador Enrique Moncada said.

It also proved that the Central American nation has made the right choice in forging diplomatic relations with China, he added.

According to the ambassador, white shrimp is a premium specialty product and a major export commodity for Honduras. In less than three months after the establishment of diplomatic ties, Honduras gained approval to export white shrimp to China.

The first batch of white shrimps arrived at the port of Tianjin by the

end of September, enjoying zero tariffs and efficient customs clearance procedures. A trial sale was conducted later in Beijing which received positive responses. On Sunday, the shrimps were officially introduced to the Chinese market.

"We have an open mind about the people and the market, and China has been incredibly welcoming and positive to us," Moncada said.

In addition to white shrimp, Honduras plans to introduce other products such as coffee, tobacco and fruits to the second-largest economy in the world, he said.

Moncada sees great potential for Honduran coffee products in China's mature coffee market, expressing hope for enhanced bilateral commercial interactions over time.

The trade volume between China and Honduras in 2023 reached \$1.91 billion with a year-on-year increase of 21.1 percent, according to China's General Administration of Customs.

The ambassador also expressed

strong confidence in the Chinese economy, believing it will continue to grow. And it is encouraging, especially for countries in the Global South which are at the moment developing very rapidly, he said.

"Honduras takes pride in its diplomatic relations with China which goes with the historical trend," he said while affirming the country's commitment to the one-China principle.

"China is an example that we have to look at very carefully and with very positive eyes," he said, while commending the country for its efforts in lifting a huge number of people out of poverty.

"Every day I'm in China, I see things that would be important examples for our country which is making efforts to develop itself," he said, adding that Honduras will not copy exactly what China did but will study and learn from some wise measures China has taken.

In June last year, China and Honduras signed a cooperation document on jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative.

As Honduras develops green energy, including hydropower and solar power, Moncada believes the BRI would play a "crucial" role in helping the country.

## Green Chinese backing key for Australia

By KARL WILSON in Sydney  
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There are unparalleled opportunities for Australia-China collaboration in zero-emissions industries with the right policy settings, according to a report released recently.

The report, "Green capital tsunami: China's >\$100 billion outbound cleantech investment since 2023 turbocharges global energy transition", released on Oct 2 by the independent think tank Climate Energy Finance, or CEF, said Chinese firms have committed more than \$100 billion in outbound foreign direct investment since 2023.

Much of the investment has been directed toward decarbonization sectors such as solar, wind, batteries, grid, new energy vehicles, hydro and green hydrogen, encompassing Europe, the Asia-Pacific, Africa and South America.

When Australian Treasurer Jim Chalmers visited Beijing, one of the topics on his agenda was decarbonization and how Australia could benefit from cooperation with China.

The report said the "green capital

tsunami" has profoundly expanded and reshaped the "global energy transition and geopolitics, delivering a global decarbonization net positive".

"Importantly, it also embraces the growing domestic markets in the less developed Global South, as the world races to tackle climate change and nations prioritize and align their energy security, national security and economic prosperity objectives," the report said.

In Australia's case, the "current posture" disincentivizes Chinese private investors.

Chinese investment in Australia is relatively weak compared to the rest of the world and was at a multi-decade low at only \$613 million in 2023, according to the report.

One of its recommendations calls on the Australian government "as a strategic national-interest priority" to clarify the rules of engagement with the Foreign Investment Review Board, so Chinese firms looking to co-invest are incentivized by "transparent, stable, welcoming investment policy frameworks and guidelines".

Xuyang Dong, CEF's China ener-

gy policy analyst and co-author of the report, said China leads the world in clean energy.

"It is actively injecting more and more zero-emissions energy into its national power system even as it progressively shifts to electrifying everything and upgrading its energy policy to accelerate the energy transition progress," she told China Daily.

"China is increasingly the world leader in almost all these zero-emissions industries of the future, and that opens up opportunities to invest globally into clean energy," she said.

Dong said the problem for Australia is a "lack of effective communication and trust" between the two countries.

David Olsson, chair and president of the Australia China Business Council, said the challenge for Australia lies in balancing its security concerns "with the clear economic benefits that foreign investment brings".

Asked how Australia's perceptions can be changed, he said the "Future Made in Australia" legislation would be a good starting point, "ensuring foreign capital contributes to national goals".

## Trio awarded Nobel Prize in economics

By JONATHAN POWELL in London  
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The Nobel Prize in economics has been awarded to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson "for studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity".

The trio were commended for their groundbreaking research on how institutions and the rule of law significantly influence a nation's economic prosperity, in an announcement ceremony broadcast from Stockholm, Sweden, on Monday.

Acemoglu, from Istanbul, Turkey, earned his PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science and is currently a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology in the United States.

Simon Johnson, from Sheffield, the United Kingdom, received his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he now serves as a professor.

James Robinson, also from the UK, obtained his PhD from Yale University and is presently a professor at the University of Chicago.

"This year's laureates have pioneered new approaches, both empirical and theoretical, that have significantly advanced our understanding of global inequality," said Nobel committee member Jakob Svensson.

"Reducing the huge differences in income between countries is one of our time's greatest challenges," he added. While the prize winners did

not propose "simple recipes or concrete policy proposals", their work had a "huge societal impact", he said.

During a phone interview conducted as part of the announcement ceremony on Monday, Acemoglu described their work as an examination of the "natural experiment" that colonialism created. He explained that this historical process had "divided the world into very different institutional trajectories".

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences, often referred to as the Nobel Prize in economics, was established by Sweden's central bank and first awarded in 1969. It recognizes outstanding contributions to economic research alongside the traditional Nobel Prize fields.

## Two giant pandas on the way to zoo in DC

Excitement builds at National Zoo with Bao Li and Qing Bao due to arrive Tuesday

By HENG WEILI in New York  
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In a much anticipated event, two giant pandas left China on Monday en route to the National Zoo in Washington DC.

The 3-year-old giant pandas — Bao Li (a male born on Aug 4, 2021) and Qing Bao (a female born on Sept 12, 2021) — are on the way from the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Sichuan province, the China Wildlife Conservation Association said on Monday.

Bao Li means "treasure" and "energetic" in Chinese and Qing Bao, "treasure in green mountains".

The pair will soon start their 10-year life abroad, according to an agreement signed by the association and the zoo in April.

Bao Li is the son of Bao Bao, a female giant panda who was born at the National Zoo in 2013, and the grandson of Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, the DC zoo's last panda couple.



Qing Bao (top) and Bao Li, 3-year-old pandas sent from China to US PHOTO COURTESY OF CHINA CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE GIANT PANDA

"We hope the arrival of the pandas will inject fresh impetus into exchanges between China and the US, and help to stabilize the broader bilateral relationship as well."

Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington

In May, National Zoo Director Brandie Smith and Smithsonian Institution Secretary Lonnie G. Bunch III joined US first lady Jill Biden to announce that Bao Li and Qing Bao would arrive by the end of 2024.

Liu Pengyu, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington, said the United States was among the first countries to work with China on panda conservation.

Pandas have become an unofficial symbol of the US capital, dating to 1972, when the first pair — Ling Ling and Hsing Hsing — were sent as a gift from Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai following President Richard Nixon's historic diplomatic visit to China.

"Since we started the cooperation program with the National Zoo in 2000, positive outcomes have been achieved in panda conservation and breeding, disease prevention and treatment, and public awareness," Liu told China Daily on Monday.

Together, the researchers have successfully bred 17 panda cubs and solved a number of technical challenges, he added.

"The current round of cooperation will focus on prevention and treatment of major diseases, and protection of habitats and wild giant panda populations," he said. "We hope the arrival of the pandas will inject fresh impetus into exchanges between China and the US, and help to stabilize the broader bilateral relationship as well."

Elliott L. Ferguson II, president and CEO of Destination DC, said: "The giant pandas are an iconic part of the Washington DC story, both for locals and incoming travelers alike. The interest and excitement associated with their return directly benefits the entire city, bringing further interest and visitors to our hotels, restaurants and other attractions."

Zhao Huanxin in New York and agencies contributed to this story.

## CHINA DAILY USA

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## COMMENT

## Editorial

## Expanded common interests strengthen building of community with shared future

That Chinese Premier Li Qiang met with not only Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh but also To Lam, chief of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and Tran Thanh Man, head of the country's top legislature, during his eventful three-day visit to Vietnam starting Saturday shows the all-encompassing nature of China-Vietnam relations.

Li's visit, which comes just two months after Lam paid a state visit to China, is expected to create the ground to transform the strategic blueprint for advancing bilateral relations and building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future, as envisaged by the two heads of state, into concrete cooperative projects. It will also inject new vitality into the traditional friendship between the two countries.

Following their talks on Sunday, Li and Chinh witnessed the exchange of cooperation documents in various fields, including infrastructure connectivity, agricultural products, customs, finance, human resources, media and education.

The cooperation projects, according to the newly inked documents, cover fields such as industry, academia and research, with special focus on clean energy, biomedicine and artificial intelligence, highlighting the compatibility between the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and Vietnam's "Two Corridors and One Economic Circle" development policy, and the structural complementarity of the two economies.

The multilateral and bilateral economic and trade cooperation agreements which China and Vietnam are already signatories to, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the "Version 3.0 China-ASEAN Free Trade Area", will provide a broad platform and make it easier for the two countries to implement the freshly inked cooperation projects.

Economic and trade cooperation has always been a highlight of overall China-Vietnam cooperation, which in turn has helped advance bilateral ties to higher levels. China is Vietnam's largest trading partner, and Vietnam is China's largest trading partner in ASEAN.

By deepening their win-win cooperation on finance, technology, investment, transportation infrastructure, the digital economy, the green economy, and industry and supply chain connectivity, the two sides can effectively expand their common interests that will help prevent external forces from sowing discord between them.

In the face of the fast-changing international landscape and growing global risks and challenges, China and Vietnam, as socialist countries and friendly neighbors, need to make concerted efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and join hands to promote peace and common development in the region. China has always prioritized its relations with Vietnam in its neighborhood diplomacy, as Li said. Hearteningly, the Vietnamese side echoed Li, saying that developing relations with China is a top priority and strategic choice for the CPV and the Vietnamese government.

As Li emphasized, the two sides have every reason to stick to the principle of friendly consultation, properly handle their differences and deepen maritime cooperation, so that they can appropriately settle their disputes through friendly consultation, prevent external forces from exploiting them for their own narrow ends, and jointly safeguard regional maritime peace and stability.

The two countries should take the opportunity of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of China-Vietnam diplomatic relations and the "China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges", both to be observed next year, to further deepen people-to-people and cultural exchanges, deepen understanding between the two peoples, especially the younger generations, and carry forward the cause of China-Vietnam friendship.

China is ready to work with Vietnam to strengthen coordination and cooperation on multilateral platforms such as the United Nations and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings, in order to improve global governance, better safeguard the interests of developing countries and build a China-Vietnam community with a shared future, which is of strategic significance to regional peace, stability and development.

## To The Point

## Attacks on UN peacekeepers unacceptable

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon reported on Sunday that two Israeli tanks destroyed the main gate of one of its bases in southern Lebanon and "forcibly entered" the site after blocking the movement of UNIFIL personnel the previous day. The breach was part of recent Israeli attacks on UN forces and positions over the weekend.

Since Sept 23, the Israel Defense Forces have been carrying out an intense air campaign against Lebanon, dubbed "Arrows of the North", amid escalating tensions with Hezbollah. The campaign has included attacks on UNIFIL positions in southern Lebanon, in which at least five UN peacekeepers have been injured over the past week.

The IDF offered a different version of the events, saying it had encroached on a UNIFIL position to evacuate soldiers who had been wounded by an anti-tank missile.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned that any attacks on peacekeepers "may constitute a war crime", adding that "UNIFIL personnel and its premises must never be targeted". "Attacks against peacekeepers are in breach of international law, including international humanitarian law," Guterres said, according to a statement from his spokesman.

Israel has repeatedly urged the UN peacekeeping forces to withdraw from areas of southern Lebanon where fighting has intensified after it began a ground incursion into Lebanon on Sept 30, targeting the armed group Hezbollah.

Nearly 10,000 peacekeepers from around 50 countries are stationed in Lebanon, alongside about 800 civilian staff. Since 1978, they have been patrolling the area between the Litani River and the UN-recognized boundary between Lebanon and Israel known as the "Blue Line".

One of the countries that contributes to the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, China is gravely concerned over and strongly condemns the IDF's attack on the positions and observation tower of the UNIFIL, in which some UNIFIL personnel were injured.

The UNIFIL carries out its peacekeeping tasks under the mandate from a UN Security Council resolution. Any deliberate attack on UN peacekeepers is a serious violation of international humanitarian law and UNSC Resolution 1701. It is absolutely unacceptable. Israel should put an immediate stop to such attacks.

China has sought an investigation into the incident, in an effort to bring those responsible to account and urged the Israeli side to take measures to prevent such incidents from happening again. Parties to the conflict must earnestly ensure the safety and security of all UN personnel and property, including the UNIFIL's. China urges all parties, Israel in particular, to take immediate measures to de-escalate tensions, ensure the safety of UN peacekeeping personnel, and prevent the conflict from further expanding or spiraling out of control.

Gaza has become a hell on Earth. In the meantime, in Lebanon, there has been massive destruction of civilian facilities, thousands of casualties, and more than 1 million people have been displaced, including a large number of Palestinian refugees.

A cease-fire should be an overarching priority. All parties in Lebanon have already given a call for an immediate cease-fire. The Arab League, too, has issued an explicit appeal.

It is clear who holds the key to ending this crisis. Israel should set aside its obsession with use of force, make the right political decision, stop violating Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and end its dangerous adventure that could drag the region into a new catastrophe.

The United States, as the only country that provides unconditional military and financial support for Israel's military operations across the region, should stop its passive procrastination, cover-up and connivance. Washington is obligated to act responsibly and play a constructive role in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

## Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## Ishiba brings hope of better ties, if he matches words with actions

The goodwill gesture shown by newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba toward China comes as a ray of hope for the future of Sino-Japanese relations, but it remains to be seen if he means it or, like many Japanese politicians before, will say one thing and do another when it comes to handling relations with China.

At a recent news briefing during his debut in a series of ASEAN summits and related meetings in Vientiane, capital of Laos, Ishiba said "clues have been found to solve the problems in Japan-China relations", although he admitted the ties between the two countries are not entirely smooth sailing. "It is hoped that through the efforts of the two governments, the two peoples can share the fruits of the development of Japan-China relations," Ishiba said.

During his earlier meeting with Premier Li Qiang on the sidelines of the ASEAN summits, Ishiba said that Japan is willing to work with China to strengthen high-level exchanges, conduct closer dialogue and communication at all levels, and resolve pending issues through consultation, and push for steady and long-term development of China-Japan relations based on mutually beneficial cooperation.

If the Japanese government can honor Ishiba's words, it will indeed serve the common interests of the two countries. As two neighbors and important economic and trade partners, there is no reason for China and Japan to not follow the path of peace, friendship, mutually beneficial cooperation and common development. The two countries are still highly complementary

economically, and still have huge potential to explore more new growth points, especially in the fields of scientific and technological innovation, the digital economy and green development. A peaceful and stable Sino-Japanese relationship not only benefits the two sides, but will also help boost development in the Asia-Pacific and beyond.

However, it is regrettable that Japan has been the vanguard of the US' China-containment strategy. And if Japan fails to free itself from Washington's China-containment strategy, it will be difficult to improve its ties with China.

The Ishiba government is now at a starting point to repair Sino-Japanese relations. But the fundamental improvement of China-Japan relations entails Japan matching its words with actions.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

## Look who spies and puts the blame on others

A report jointly released by Chinese cybersecurity departments on Monday, named "Volt Typhoon III — Unraveling Cyberespionage and Disinformation Operations Conducted by US Government Agencies", best exposes the kind of hacking the United States engages in.

According to the report, the US has long deployed cyber-warfare forces against countries it considers enemies, conducting close reconnaissance and infiltrating targeted online networks. However, it has also developed a tool framework, Marble, which enables it to disguise itself as another entity while launching the attacks. The best evidence of this is seen in its source code, which contains Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Korean, and Persian languages, as interpreted by engineers at the National Computer Virus Emergency

Response Center. The US cyber-warfare forces use these fabricated identities to conduct cyberattacks and espionage and then put the blame on the impersonated countries for the attacks. The so-called Volt Typhoon operation is a misinformation campaign launched by the US, which is why its tactics are so similar to those of other operations conducted by the US-led Five Eyes alliance.

The US engages in what it is accusing others of doing. New evidence provided by the report shows that the US firmly controls the world's most crucial internet nodes, including the Atlantic and Pacific undersea cables. Working closely with the UK National Cyber Security Centre, US government agencies analyze and steal data transmitted through these cables, enabling indiscriminate surveillance of global internet users.

Ironically, two key projects undertaken by the National Security Agency are named "UpStream" and "Prism". While the "UpStream" project means to address significant issues such as encryption cracking and incomplete coverage of network communication traffic paths, the US government also directly obtains user data from servers of major US internet companies like Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, and Apple through the "Prism" project.

Both projects were authorized under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, allowing the US intelligence community to legally, openly, and continuously steal global internet link data on behalf of the US federal government. The US is using its internet hegemony to spy on others.

— CHINA MEDIA GROUP

## What They Say

## Hopes high Macao on road to bright future

Sam Hou Fai was elected the chief executive designate of the Macao Special Administrative Region on Sunday.

Pending his appointment by the central authorities, Sam is poised to be the sixth-term chief executive of the SAR. Sam said that his primary goal is to meet residents' expectations for a better life by accelerating the SAR's appropriate economic diversification, as well as better integrating the SAR economy into the overall national development strategy.

The election demonstrated the vitality of Macao's democracy. The election, the first of its kind taking place after the amendments to the Chief Executive Election Law took effect at the beginning of this year, effectively implemented the principle of

"patriots administering Macao".

Macao's residents are hopeful that the new leadership team will act decisively and press forward with determination to ensure that the SAR develops in a stable and prosperous manner.

Over the past 25 years, Macao has achieved success in numerous areas, demonstrating impressive economic vitality, social stability, and a strong sense of national identity and belonging.

Once a small town with a sluggish economy and a lack of social security, Macao has emerged as a safe and prosperous metropolis with international acclaim in merely a quarter of a century.

In 2023, Macao's per capita GDP grew by 80.5 percent year-on-year to 559,000 patacas (\$70,000), more than four times the figure in 1999 when it returned to the motherland. The

unemployment rate has also dropped significantly from 6.3 percent then to 2.7 percent last year.

Macao has drawn upon its unique history to leverage distinctive advantages as a major platform linking China and Portuguese-speaking countries and has actively participated in the Belt and Road Initiative.

The coming five years are a key period for Macao to achieve the goal of diversifying its economy by better integrating into the overall national development plan. To make the most of this period, just as Sam proposed in his election campaign, Macao must be dedicated to seeking innovations and expanding its development space, while consistently adhering to the "one country, two systems" framework.

— XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

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## COMMENT

Chi Fulin

## Tap RCEP's potential for regional growth

As a free trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership covers not only the largest free trade area in the world but also is ASEAN-centered, development-oriented and inclusive. Since coming into force almost 22 months ago, it has played a significant role in promoting regional economic cooperation, and enhancing the region's economic resilience and boosting its risk-resisting capacity. The next few years will be critical for the RCEP to perform to its full potential.

The RCEP comprises the 10 members of ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand. It covers 2.2 billion people (30 percent of the world's population), boasts a GDP of \$38.81 trillion (30 percent of global GDP in 2019), and accounts for nearly 28 percent of global trade.

The low utilization rate of RCEP rules of origin by China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has become a significant obstacle to realizing the full dividends of the RCEP. For example, in 2022, Vietnam's export utilization rate of RCEP rules of origin was only 0.67 percent, far below the average utilization rate (33.6 percent) of the other free trade agreements (FTAs) it has signed, while Thailand's export utilization rates of RCEP rules in 2022 and 2023 were just 1.9 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively, and Malaysia's export value accounted for just 0.07 percent of its total exports to the RCEP markets from April 2022 to February 2024.

Estimates show that in 2023, the utilization rates of RCEP rules of origin for China's exports and imports were 4.21 percent and 1.46 percent, respectively. Since a significant improvement in the utilization rate of RCEP rules can greatly benefit ASEAN, China and other members, think tanks should study ways to increase the members' utilization rates.

In the coming years, China's accelerated high-level opening-up will not only lead to major breakthroughs in China-ASEAN free trade but also inject new momentum into the RCEP's continuous upgrading.

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in July, while proposing major tasks for facilitating China's higher-level opening-up, suggested that the country's higher-level opening-up be toward least-developed economies — for example, Laos and Cambodia — before expanding to other ASEAN members.

With the cumulative GDP and manufacturing added value of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea accounting for more than 80 percent and their trade val-



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

ue over 50 percent of the RCEP region's total, the three countries are the key drivers of the full implementation of the RCEP, and have already reaped benefits from the regional FTA.

So China, Japan and the ROK should intensify efforts to achieve breakthroughs in their trilateral FTA negotiations and form higher-level and broader trilateral cooperation mechanisms, which will not only consolidate the achievements of cooperation under the RCEP framework but also promote a new type of regional economic integration.

The parties to the RCEP should also make concerted efforts to start all possible operations of the RCEP secretariat by the end of this year so that timely information is conveyed to the media and the public, all regional developments are monitored and analyzed, follow-up nego-

tiations on key issues including the transition of rules of origin from "partial cumulation" to "full cumulation" are coordinated, and a comprehensive negative list is prepared.

Also, the secretariat should coordinate the process of strengthening legislation and fair enforcement in areas such as equal market access, fair competition, intellectual property rights protection, and regulatory transparency, and initiate consultations on mutual recognition of rules, regulations, management and standards of service sector among the member states. And it should be accorded the authority to commission independent or joint research to think tanks in the RCEP region to chart a robust development plan for the RCEP's development in the next decade.

Sri Lanka, Chile and China's Hong

Kong Special Administrative Region have applied to join the RCEP. Hong Kong's early accession to the RCEP should be supported, as it would initiate the RCEP enlargement process, while Sri Lanka's and Chile's inclusion should be backed to make RCEP a cross-regional FTA.

In September 2022, the China Institute for Reform and Development initiated the establishment of the RCEP Think Tank Network, attracting 18 think tanks from 13 countries.

Since its establishment, the think tank network has conducted research, organized discussions and international academic exchanges on RCEP's major issues, and held training seminars on RCEP implementation, capacity-building, spreading the partnership's influence worldwide.

Yet the think tank network needs to make greater efforts to promote the RCEP's comprehensive implementation. To begin with, it should focus on helping member states improve their RCEP rules' utilization rates and regularly assess the extent of its comprehensive implementation, promote policy exchanges, coordination and communication among member countries, and provide intellectual support for mutual policy learning and macroeconomic policy coordination.

The think tank network should also help promote regional economic integration, conduct discussions, exchanges and dialogues on major issues in cooperation with the member states, and between the RCEP and other regional and sub-regional FTAs, carry out in-depth research on economic and trade cooperation between the Hainan Free Trade Port and ASEAN under the RCEP framework, build an institutionalized exchange and research platform and strive to hold an RCEP international forum in Hong Kong and develop it into a brand.

Moreover, it should find ways to strengthen the RCEP's implementation capacity building by, for example, establishing an RCEP "Implementation Capacity Building Academy" to conduct institutionalized RCEP implementation capacity training.

The RCEP has set an important agenda by releasing huge resources for trade and investment, and facilitating dynamic activities in regional and global value chains. It is a critically important FTA for the world amid rising global uncertainties and some countries' inward-looking policies, and provides an impetus for global trade and investment and supports open regionalism.

The author is president of China Institute for Reform and Development. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.



Kang Bing

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## Enhanced beauty can be compatible with intellectual development

Two girls are unpacking their luggage in a university dorm after going through their registration procedures. Greeting each other, they soon learn they come from the same province. Their conversation continues, and one minute later, they learn they come from not only the same province but also the same city and school.

At that moment, the two girls stop unpacking and look more closely at each other. "Are you Nancy?" one asks the other. "Are you Wendy?" the other responds. The girls then jump to embrace each other. Yes, they are Nancy and Wendy, and they were classmates and good friends in senior high school. The reason they failed to recognize each other is that after taking the college entrance exam, they both went for a series of cosmetic surgeries to "enhance their beauty" to the extent of looking like different persons.

This is the gist of a popular story online. According to reports, plastic surgeons have to work overtime during summer vacations, especially after the conclusion of the college entrance exam, because thousands of girls make appointments in advance for beauty enhancement procedure. More than 1 million Chinese people underwent cosmetic surgery in 2023, according to some reports.

## Some say cosmetic surgeries may weaken women's social standing and turn them into eye candies.

I am a bit skeptical about the accuracy of the figure because most of the plastic surgeries are done by private hospitals which sometimes are reluctant to report the correct number of such surgeries in order to evade tax. But one thing is for sure: the number of people undergoing cosmetic surgery is on the rise and more and more students like Nancy and Wendy are paying thousands of yuan to "look better".

Reports say an increasing number of girls are asking their parents to pay for their "beauty-enhancing procedure" as their reward for doing well in the college entrance exam. Parents, in general, are mostly happy to pay if they can afford to, because many think that inner beauty and outer beauty are equally important to their daughters' development.

The long summer vacation provides enough time for girls to undergo a cosmetic surgery. When a new school year begins in September, a girl who has undergone a cosmetic surgery and looks "more beautiful" can walk onto the campus with more confidence. In a completely new environment, few people would realize that the girl has probably undergone a double-eyelid or rhinoplasty surgery, or breast augmentation procedure, or all possible procedures.

Chinese society has become tolerant toward young women's efforts to "look beautiful" unlike about 20 years ago when a person with double eyelids would become the favorite topic of discussion of neighbors, people today tend to turn a blind eye toward someone who looks different after being absent from the neighborhood for a few days. Most people tend to believe those undergoing cosmetic surgery are not doing anything wrong by paying, with their own money, to enhance their beauty because it makes them feel more confident of and satisfied with themselves.

Opposing opinions do exist. Some say cosmetic surgeries may weaken women's social standing and turn them into eye candies. Others claim that by being obsessed with their physical appearance, young women could end up neglecting their studies, and lose out on intellectual and spiritual development.

Such criticisms compel us to choose either option A or option B. The question is: Why can't people choose both of them?

More than 100 years ago when the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was overthrown, the revolutionaries required all Chinese men to cut off their braids and bid goodbye to feudal rule. Many people refused, because they believed their hair was given to them by their parents and, hence, should never be cut off. Some even said they'd rather be beheaded than cut off their braids.

Keeping that part of China's history in mind, we should appreciate that Chinese society today understands and tolerates young women's wish to enhance their beauty. We hope our Nancys and Wendys walk onto college campuses not only looking more beautiful and confident but also excel in their academic fields.

Syed Kaleem Imam

## Hype, hope, and hard truths of CPEC

As the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) enters its second phase, it is time to take stock. After a decade of grand promises, billions of dollars in investments and countless ribbon-cutting ceremonies, the question remains: has the megaproject truly delivered, or are we merely giving it a new coat of paint?

CPEC was formally launched on July 5, 2013, during a visit by the Pakistani prime minister to China. The initial announcement laid the groundwork for a broader framework of economic cooperation between the two countries. Momentum picked up in April 2015, when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan, marking the inauguration of the first set of CPEC projects with significant agreements to enhance the initiative's scope and scale.

The vision was simple: a network of roads, railways, ports, and energy projects that would transform Pakistan into an economic powerhouse, all while giving China direct access to the Arabian Sea. On paper, it was a win-win for both nations. Fast forward to 2024, and the results are mixed.

Over the past decade, more than \$30 billion worth of infrastructure projects have been completed, including the Gwadar port, various power projects, and roads connecting Pakistan with Western China. Thirteen power projects have been completed, and a 4,000-megawatt electricity transmission line now sup-

ports roughly one-third of Pakistan's power grid. Transportation infrastructure, including key roads, ports, and even the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train, has seen significant improvements. China has poured over \$25 billion into direct investments, and if the official narrative is to be believed, CPEC has created more than 230,000 jobs.

Despite these successes, the road has been far from smooth. The development of nine planned Special Economic Zones, which were to be the centerpiece of Pakistan's industrial revolution, has been hit by delays. Only four of these zones are currently under construction, and the expected industrial relocation from China to Pakistan has yet to materialize. Debt concerns have also cast a long shadow.

Security remains another thorny issue, particularly in Balochistan, where key CPEC projects are based. Despite enhanced security measures, terrorist attacks on Chinese nationals and infrastructure projects have persisted, stalling progress and deterring potential investors. The recent attack on Chinese nationals in Karachi has once again posed challenges to Islamabad and Beijing, and put Pakistan's security apparatus under severe scrutiny. With the Shanghai Cooperation Organization conference held on Tuesday and Wednesday, the timing couldn't be worse. And security is not just a local issue. The West's narrative around CPEC has been consistently negative. With the West overtly and covertly pressuring Pakistan to back out of CPEC, the project has stopped being just an economic venture

and turned into a battlefield of narratives and perceptions.

Enter CPEC 2.0, the next phase of this ambitious endeavor, promising a shift in focus from infrastructure to industrial cooperation, agriculture, socio-economic development, and information technology. It sounds promising — a sign that both Islamabad and Beijing are keen to address gaps and learn from past mistakes.

For CPEC 2.0 to succeed, both Pakistan and China need to make some tough decisions. First and foremost, political stability and good governance are essential. It is the responsibility of Pakistan's civil government to take the lead on this by ensuring that democratic institutions are strengthened and competent professionals are placed in key positions. CPEC cannot be treated as a political football, with each new government fiddling with its priorities and stalling progress. There needs to be cross-party consensus on the importance of this project to ensure it stays on track regardless of who is in power.

Secondly, it is time to prioritize. Instead of spreading resources thin across too many sectors, the focus should be on completing key projects that can deliver immediate benefits. Industrial cooperation and job creation are great goals, but they need to be backed by real, tangible investments and incentives.

Thirdly, local capacity-building is crucial. Pakistan's industrial base is weak, and its workforce is under-skilled. If CPEC is to deliver on its promises, there needs to be a concerted effort to invest in vocational training, technology transfer

and capacity improvements. It is not enough to rely on Chinese expertise; Pakistan needs to develop its own. A country that cannot stand on its own feet is always going to lean on another.

Finally, security concerns need to be addressed head-on. The situation in Balochistan will not improve overnight; it needs a holistic approach that goes beyond simply deploying more troops. The rule of law and apolitical policing are the only answers. Engaging with local communities, addressing their grievances, and making them stakeholders in CPEC's success is key to ensuring the long-term viability of these projects. Simultaneously, countering hostile narratives and leveraging cultural connections will be essential in maintaining momentum and securing the trust of the local population. Law enforcement agencies should stop merely reacting to incidents and take security measures proactively. What's needed is not just more officers on the ground, but a strategic overhaul of Pakistan's approach to securing foreign nationals.

CPEC 2.0 is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a chance for Pakistan to finally capitalize on its strategic location and build a more vigorous, diversified economy. But it's also a reminder that the road to economic transformation is fraught with obstacles, many of them self-inflicted.

The author, former federal secretary and inspector general of police of Pakistan, teaches law and philosophy at universities. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

# GLOBAL VIEWS

GERT GROBLER

## Celebrating multilateralism

At its forthcoming summit in Kazan, BRICS will once again reiterate that it was founded for shaping an international order that is more fair, just, inclusive, equitable and representative

Since its inception, the BRICS has had a positive effect on the international system and BRICS countries have individually emerged to assume higher economic rankings. In the run-up to the summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24, the BRICS continues to actively implement measures to enhance intra-BRICS cooperation under three pillars — political and security, economic and financial, cultural and people-to-people exchanges — to speed up the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, further broaden and deepen the cooperation among BRICS members and elevate the influence of developing nations in global affairs.



In fact, during the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in New York on Sept 26 on the margins of the 79th United Nations General Assembly, the ministers discussed major global and regional issues, as well as various UN agendas covering topics such as politics, security, economics, finance and sustainable development, strengthening multilateralism, as well as working toward real reform of global governance institutions.

The BRICS can be proud of its cooperation achievements which are multi-sectorial and multi-faceted. The progress that has been recorded is due to the collective commitment of all BRICS members to ensure the effective implementation of all its decisions which are based on consensus.

The BRICS now represents about 45 percent of the global population (3.5 billion people) and accounts for 36 percent of the world's GDP, which totals approximately \$29 trillion. The bloc's collective share of global oil production stands at 44 percent, giving it massive leverage in energy security and global economic discussions.

In fact, based on the many achievements

of the BRICS, it goes without saying that the BRICS platform represents one of the most significant developments in global governance. Over the past decade, the BRICS has increasingly demonstrated the ability to embark on innovative measures aimed at addressing the deep imbalances afflicting the world.

In principle, not a single serious global issue can be effectively decided today by a single power, no matter how large or confident it is, especially through the unacceptable infringement on the interests of other countries. That is why the theme for this year's summit is "Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Global Development and Security". Chair Russia and its partners regard the BRICS as a champion for a multipolar world, the development of which all BRICS members are endeavoring to contribute to in the name of a brighter and more harmonious future for all its people.

Furthermore, the BRICS is not guided by the "bloc principle", but on the principles of mutual respect, a sovereign choice of development path and the implementation of the fundamental principle of the UN Charter, among others, the sovereign equality of states.

The upcoming BRICS summit is taking place against the backdrop of an increasingly changing and uncertain world with problems and challenges such as weak leadership, inadequate economic growth, unilateralism, protectionism, hegemonism, power politics and the fueling of geopolitical tensions which affect world peace and stability. Although these issues are all interlinked, the responses by the international community to these global challenges have sadly been woefully inadequate and fragmented.

These new realities call for a fundamental reform of the institutions of global governance so that they may be more representative and better able to respond to the challenges the world faces.

The Global South is a major force on the global stage as it represents 85 percent of

the global population; the fastest growing global economies today are also from the Global South. The latest round of BRICS expansion shows the desire of Global South countries to claim their share in economic development and take a leading role in global governance. The BRICS is a force to be reckoned with and is poised to shape the global order. Countries of the political West, in particular the United States and the European Union, will increasingly have to re-evaluate their model for cooperation and development with the Global South to avoid "losing" these countries as crucial partners in a world order that is increasingly marked by fragmentation and competition.

The accession of new countries such as Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, and the interest shown by a growing number of countries to develop ties with the BRICS are strengthening the BRICS' international standing.

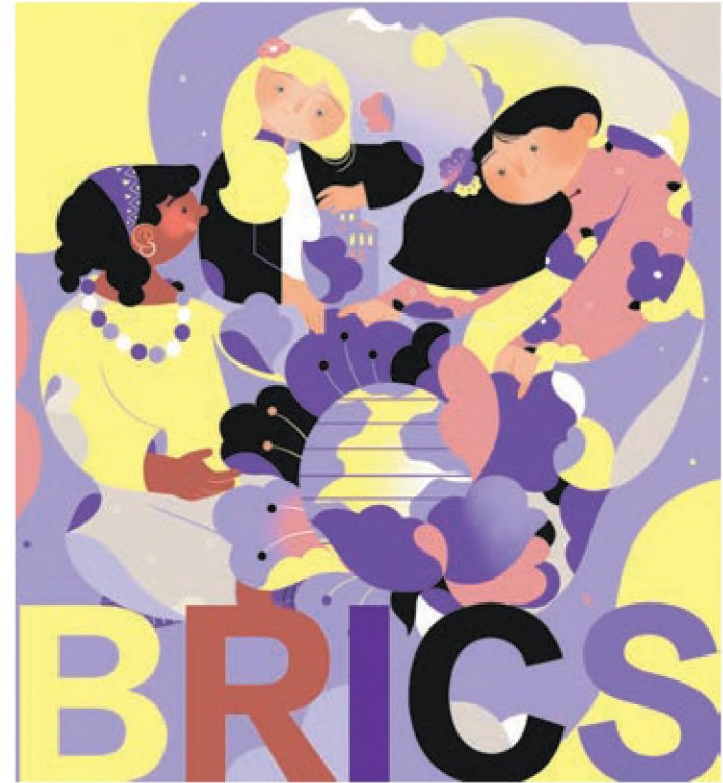
Proposals on how to accommodate new partner countries will therefore be on the agenda of the Kazan summit.

The Global South is increasingly providing leadership and China is working with the African continent and other BRICS members to shape a new world order of hope, inclusivity and the building of a community with a shared future.

BRICS leaders continue to express their support for infrastructure development in Africa and its industrialization. The BRICS has undertaken to support Africa's efforts to accelerate the diversification and modernization of its economies, through infrastructure development, knowledge exchange and support for increased access to technology, enhanced capacity-building and investment in human capital, urban development, green energy, the modernization of agriculture and food security.

The BRICS countries are the largest trading partners of Africa. In fact, the BRICS has nourished Africa's economic emergence and elevated the continent's contemporary global relevance.

Joining the BRICS in 2010 was a mile-



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

stone in South Africa's quest to advance its own national development priorities by forging stronger ties with the important emerging economies of China, Brazil, Russia and India. BRICS is of immense strategic importance to South Africa. In the 14 years since it joined the grouping, South Africa has enhanced its position as an important emerging economy and strengthened its activism on the global stage, particularly around the reform and strengthening of multilateralism.

South Africa's priority in the BRICS remains to ensure the economic growth of the countries in the association, Africa and the Global South.

Since its inception 16 years ago, the BRICS has become a positive, stabilizing and constructive force with rising international influence and appeal on the international stage, and has always been closely linked to the destiny of emerging markets and developing countries.

Contradicting all expectations in the West of the eventual weakening of the

group, BRICS member countries work in a committed fashion toward strengthening cooperation. Critics of the BRICS, who thought the formation would end up being another talk shop, have been proven wrong. The BRICS is a goal-oriented formation with continuity, concrete and tactical actions.

It is anticipated that at its forthcoming summit in Kazan, the BRICS will once again give concrete and practical content to the core principle on which it was founded, namely one of shaping an international order that is more fair, just, inclusive, equitable and representative.

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## A new dimension

Establishment of a Central Asia-China format within the framework of the SCO is of particular significance in the history of relations between Central Asian countries and China

The paradox of globalization lies in the fact that time itself dictates the need to establish a modern system of international relations where issues arising at both the global and regional levels must be resolved collectively. However, with the shift from a bipolar to a multipolar world, which is characteristic of globalization, new challenges are emerging.



Central Asia, consisting of five independent republics, stands out due to its geopolitical and geostrategic significance in today's rapidly changing world. Located at the heart of the Eurasian space and possessing vast reserves of natural resources, the region occupies a special place in the modern global community. One cannot overlook the geopolitical role of the People's Republic of China, which, with its rapidly growing economy and progressive ideas for establishing a fair global order, holds a prominent position in today's world.

In the new historical conditions, many countries including Central Asian states and China, are facing new challenges of the era, where the task of ensuring security and stability triumphs over development and the economy. It should be noted that a key factor in ensuring cooperation among countries across the vast Eurasian space is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Today, the SCO brings together 10 countries with a total population of 3.4 billion people — nearly half the world's population. The total territory of SCO member countries exceeds 34 million square kilometers, which is more than 60 percent of the Eurasian continent.

With its geopolitical and economic significance, the SCO has always advocated for, and continues to promote, a fair world order. It adheres to universally recognized principles of international law and multilateralism, with the United Nations playing the central coordinating role. Regarding cooperation between Central Asia and China, it can be justly stated that it is confidently progressing on an upward trajectory. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, along with China and Russia, as founding members of the SCO, maintain multilateral cooperation at a strategic partnership level within the framework of this organization.

The development of relations with China, both on a bilateral basis and within the SCO, holds particular significance for the



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Central Asian countries and especially for Uzbekistan. This is vividly demonstrated by the fact that by the end of 2023, trade between the two countries reached \$14 billion, and the current portfolio of investment projects exceeded \$50 billion. Since the beginning of 2024, over \$3 billion of Chinese investment has been utilized in Uzbekistan, and more than 500 joint ven-

tures have been created. Additionally, an Uzbek-Chinese technology park has been launched, as well as the first BYD electric vehicle production facility in the Jizzakh region, the first of its kind in Central Asia.

This is just a small example of Uzbekistan's cooperation within the broader context of Central Asia's engagement with China in recent times. In general, Uzbekis-

tan, like other Central Asian countries, views China as a reliable partner within the SCO framework in addressing emerging complex challenges in the modern world order.

A summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in July, amid tectonic shifts in world politics, economics and other areas of international relations, was particularly important. At

the summit, the leaders of SCO member states thoroughly discussed the conditions for future cooperation within the organization. Reaching a consensus on the further development of intergovernmental relations within the SCO, in accordance with the principles of equality, mutual respect, and trust, the Astana Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO was adopted.

Speaking at the summit and assessing the current realities, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev rightly emphasized: "We must strengthen the unity of the 'SCO family', maximize the opportunities that arise, and consistently implement the principle of joint development."

Indeed, over its quarter-century activity, the SCO has demonstrated its resilience and attractiveness to many countries in a rapidly changing global order. Today, it serves as a hub for many nations seeking to build broad cooperation without political and ideological biases.

A notable example of a new form of cooperation among SCO member countries is the "Central Asia-China" format, with its first summit held in May 2023 in Xi'an, Northwest China's Shaanxi province. This summit resulted in the achievement of 54 key points of consensus and cooperation initiatives, including the creation of 19 multilateral cooperation platforms and the signing of nine documents on multilateral cooperation within the summit framework. Additionally, an agreement was reached to use the summit as an opportunity to officially establish a mechanism for regular meetings of the heads of state of Central Asia and China, to be held every two years alternately between Central Asian countries and China.

Thus, the establishment of the "Central Asia-China" format within the framework of the SCO is of particular significance in the history of relations between Central Asian countries and China. Furthermore, it serves as an example of the creation of qualitatively new forms of interaction among states based on the principles of strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness in the context of a multipolar world.

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# CULTURE

Gazing at the paintings of Chang Shuhong (1904-94), founding director of the Dunhuang Academy, people can still feel the fundamental draw of the Mogao Caves that brought him back from France in the 1930s, leaving behind a prospect of an emerging classical oil painter.

The following five decades saw him immerse in the charm of the treasure trove of Buddhist murals and painted sculptures as a wholehearted protector of the grottoes in the Gobi Desert of Northwest China.

His later works, therefore, were largely influenced by murals in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang, Gansu province — a UNESCO World Heritage Site — and a more down-to-earth, local artistic expression of China popular at that time, says Zhang Yiqing, research librarian at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum in Hangzhou, Chang's hometown.

In commemoration of the 120th anniversary of Chang's birth, some of his oil paintings, watercolors and sketches are on show at the museum through to Sunday.

The exhibits also include Chang's copies of the murals in the Mogao Caves, as well as *zhongcai* (heavy-color) paintings, an important genre of Chinese painting with fine, precise delimitation and the layering of pigmented hues.

Through Chang's own depiction, the exhibition gives a display of early conservation efforts of the Dunhuang Academy, while tracing Chang's artistic exploration and achievements before and after he went back from France.

Chang was born in Hangzhou, a warm, wet and picturesque city along the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. In his early 20s, he went to France to study oil painting and fabric pattern design.

His graduation work at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, *Portrait of Madame G*, ranked top among his peer graduates. He later entered the prestigious Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris with a scholarship funded by the city of Lyon.

In France, Chang was active in salons, official art exhibitions sponsored by the French government. Having received several awards, some of his works were included among the collections of French cultural and artistic institutions, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

An encounter on the bank of the Seine changed his life.

From a bookseller Chang got to read French explorer and Sinologist Paul Pelliot's photo catalog, the six-volume *Les Grottes de Touen-Houang* (The Grottoes of Dunhuang). He then visited the Guimet Museum, or the National Museum of Asian Arts, to see the relics of Dunhuang taken by Pelliot.

Chang marveled at the beauty and profoundness of the caves, first built more than 1,600 years ago, while mourning the loss of or damage to the cultural relics.

He then made up his mind to go back to his home country and devote his life to the preservation of the grottoes and the promotion of Dunhuang studies.

Chang came back in 1936. Amid the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45), he managed to arrive in Dunhuang after a month's arduous journey in 1943 and prepared for the establishment of what is known today as the Dunhuang Academy.

This year also marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the academy, which currently oversees the Mogao Caves and several other relics sites in Gansu.

In the late 1990s, Chang's second wife Li Chengxian (1924-2003) and their children donated more than 200 paintings of Chang to the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, a small part of which are displayed at the museum's permanent Chang Shuhong Gallery.

Zhang, who is also curator of the ongoing temporary exhibition, says its more than 80 paintings serve as a larger presentation of Chang's works housed at the museum, alongside the collection of Shanghai-based Long Museum and the private collection of Chang Jiahuang, Chang Shuhong's second son.

## Sincere creativity

With his subtle brush, Chang Shuhong recorded the Mogao Caves and the Dunhuang city in different seasons: the trees and blossoms in spring; the frozen Daquan River in front of the caves during winter; children playing on ice, a white stupa in the distance; and birds in snow against the backdrop of the landmark timber-structured nine-floor building that houses the tallest statue of Maitreya Buddha, or the Buddha of the Future, at the Mogao Caves.

Upon his arrival, Chang Shuhong and colleagues pioneered a systematic conservation of the relics, planting trees and building protective walls, reinforcing the cliffs, constructing pathways, cleaning up the caves buried in sand, investigating and numbering them. Many of his paintings feature these efforts carried out at the windy and sandy Gobi Desert.

He also depicted several times the bustling temple fair in front of the caves, falling annually around the eighth day of the fourth month on the Chinese lunar calendar, in celebration of the birthday of Siddhartha Gautama (better known as the Buddha).

During the nine years in France, Chang Shuhong focused mainly on classical realistic oil painting, constantly exploring what could possibly become a "Chinese style of oil painting" and integrating it with his generation of artists' reflection of life and concern about society.

Hence, the art of Dunhuang particularly resonated with Chang Shuhong, as it was, in his own words, "created by ordinary people and for the ordinary people". He saw in it exuberant, sincere creativity that he realized would have a significant impact on the creation of art in the coming decades, Zhang says.

Two paintings of fresh produce Chang Shuhong created in different periods exemplify his transformation in artistic style. One was painted



Clockwise from above left: Visitors at an exhibition on Chang Shuhong, Dunhuang Academy's founding director, at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum. His son Chang Jiahuang (left) and Pan Yunhe, academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, at the exhibition. A file photo featuring Chang Shuhong and colleagues maintaining pathways outside the Mogao Caves in Gansu province.

## Paintings explore odyssey of vision

Exhibition highlights the work of artist who realized the significance of the Mogao Caves, Fang Aiqing reports in Hangzhou.



A painting of the Mogao Caves by Chang Shuhong in 1947.



Paintings depicting fish, in 1933 in Paris (left) and in 1976 back in China, highlight Chang Shuhong's transformation in artistic style. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY AND BY FANG AIQING / CHINA DAILY



Top: A copy of a Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) mural at Cave 428 in the Mogao Caves by Chang Shuhong. Above: A facsimile by Chang Shuhong of murals at Cave 257 of the Mogao Caves.

in 1933 in Paris, displayed at the Chang Shuhong Gallery, and the other in 1976, on show at the temporary exhibition.

The earlier painting, conforming to the classical style, is overall of a gray tone with low saturation, whereas in the latter one, the painter used bold and clear lines, large red and green blocks to create striking contrast, though like before, the fish glisten in subtle light.

Zhang adds that such transformation reflects the influence of the art of Dunhuang.

Highlights of the exhibition also include one of Chang Shuhong's facsimiles of a mural from Cave 254, dating back to the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), depicting a well-known piece of the Jataka tales, narratives of former incarnations of the Buddha. In his lifetime, Chang Shuhong copied this mural many times.

He once wrote, the creators of this mural, featuring Prince Sattva sacrificing himself to feed a hungry tigress, so cleverly and skillfully combined different scenes of different times in the space of a single picture — his trip to the jungles, his offering of his own blood and flesh to the tigress, as well as his two brothers' discovery of his remains, their grief, and how they bury their sibling and build a stupa for him.

A solemn and heavy atmosphere is strengthened with the lines and colors, the contours and content, as well as the deep brown hue, he added.

Chang Shuhong wrote in 1948 that conservation of the caves required detailed, accurate and systematic facsimile of the murals with a faithful attitude, which is a matter of patience and sacrifice of one's own style and personality. His devotion to protecting the Mogao Caves largely cut down the time and effort paid to his own painting.

In 1951, staff members of the academy co-authored an article introducing their facsimile project, which said that over the past four decades, many of the murals presented in Pelliot's photo catalog had been destroyed or faded. With limited scientific knowledge and facilities, facsimile had become their priority and urgency.

According to Chang Jiahuang, since the 1950s, his father had been frequently inviting art majors from across the country to copy the murals and sculptures of the Mogao Caves, while learning the traditional arts of Dunhuang.

In 1979, he also replicated the mural featuring Prince Sattva of Cave 254, when he and a dozen classmates at the Lanzhou-based Academy of Fine Art and Design of Northwest Normal University joined this program under the strict supervision of his father, who, nevertheless, would sometimes visit them without notice late at night in the caves where they were working, bringing bears he himself grew.

Chang Jiahuang says: "It was only after a long time that I learned from my father's memoir why he had such an attachment to this mural and why he wanted me to copy it."

"During his most difficult times, this painting inspired him, generating courage for him to persevere. In those three months, I deeply felt the dedication of ancient painters of Dunhuang and my own parents."

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of his mother's birth, who joined in the research and conservation of the Mogao Caves in 1947. In April, the son donated their family's 1,500 boxes of belongings to Zhejiang University, his father's alma mater, for research and digitalization.

## Embracing technology

As early as in the 1980s, Chang Shuhong had foreseen the potential of digitalization in cultural relics conservation.

Pan Yunhe, academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering and former principal of Zhejiang University, who joined the initial digitalization exploration of the Mogao Caves, recalls his first meeting with Chang Shuhong in 1982.

At that time, Chang Shuhong was among the jury of Pan's first academic program, which pioneered in generating patterns with artificial intelligence. Chang Shuhong expressed interest in preserving the murals of Dunhuang with a digital approach, visiting Pan's laboratory and discussing the feasibility.

"He was open-minded and very sensitive to new things. Ahead of his time, he could always absorb new things into his own creation," Pan says, adding that Chang Shuhong was very kind and gentle to young people like him, who was at that time in his 30s.

In 1998, the Dunhuang Academy and Zhejiang University launched an academic program led by Pan and sponsored by the National Natural Science Foundation of China to explore preservation, research and utilization of the Mogao Caves on a digital basis.

Pan says, the launch of the program resulted from years of endeavor with the Chang family — the parents, firstborn daughter Chang Shana, who was director of what is now Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, and Chang Jiahuang — as well as Fan Jinshi, who took charge as director of the Dunhuang Academy that year.

"Chang Shuhong was well-established in oil painting. It's a pity he painted so little in the latter part of his life," Pan said while visiting the exhibition at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum on Sept 29.

That day, Chang Jiahuang said at the exhibition's opening ceremony that as his parents' student, secretary and assistant, he witnessed their twists and turns, their creation and research, and experienced their art and spirits, following which he grew to become introspective, modest and rigorous.

According to him, the ongoing exhibition is the largest display of Chang Shuhong's paintings since 1990 and a good presentation of the master's spirits conveyed through his works.

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## CULTURE

## Art crosses boundaries to exciting era

Exhibition gives panoramic view of intricate skill and design in China, offering vivid portrayal of ordinary people, **Lin Qi** reports.

The elliptical Hall No 1 on the ground floor of the National Art Museum of China in Beijing is normally saved for events of great importance, often exhibitions by historical artists of luminosity.

Entering the expansive room today, you will find a painting hung in the center created by Shen Xiaoming, an ink artist from Zhejiang province who is pursuing a doctoral degree in classical Chinese painting at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

In his piece titled *Golden Land*, Shen, 38, depicts and speaks for his peers — people whom he has come across on the streets, construction sites, factories and restaurants, and those hoping for a better life in big cities.

"They come from rural places. Their grandfathers and fathers, back in the villages, have devoted their lives to farming. My peers are 'farming' on a different kind of land in the cities," Shen says.

"The figures in the painting are real people I met when preparing the work. I talked to them for a long time and felt that, although they moved to cities, they are emotionally attached to the land their families have worked hard on for generations," he adds.

Thus in the painting, he positions the people not against the background of urban landscapes but an extensive field of agricultural harvest and portrays them as if monuments rising from the field.

"Young people have a new attitude, a temperament their predecessors do not possess. They are more confident and active in embracing changes and facing challenges," Shen says.

His fine brushwork reflecting the emotions of the migrant generation reached the hearts of the juries of the 14th National Exhibition of Fine Arts, organized by the China Artists Association, who awarded the piece a gold prize.

Held every five years since 1949, the National Exhibition of Fine Arts gives a panoramic view of fine art and design in the country.

This year, it returned to the National Art Museum of China and National Museum of China, where prizewinning works such as Shen's *Golden Land* and various other entries are on display until Oct 24.

Works displayed include paintings, sculptures, prints, installations, animations, mixed-media and graphic and industrial designs to show an intensified integration of art and technology.

They exhibit how art has been applied to transform people's lives, such as uniforms for Chinese astronauts and the visual designs — graphics and color systems — for the 19th Asian Games held in Hangzhou in 2022.

Depicting the greatness of ordinary people and hailing their spirit is at the core of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, says Fan Di'an, chairman of the China Artists Association.

He says that focusing on people offers a vivid life portrayal in the works selected for the exhibition —



**Clockwise from top:** Award-winning works and entries at the 14th National Exhibition of Fine Arts are on show at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing. BY ZHENG BINBIN / FOR CHINA DAILY The exhibition includes works as *Beautiful Xinjiang*, by Li Dan, Liu Zihan, Liu Rui and Liu Lijuan; *Golden Land*, by Shen Xiaoming; and *Through Thick and Thin*, by Luo Yuxin. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

those who engage in poverty alleviation, rural vitalization, environmental protection and major national construction projects.

Fan adds that on a microcosmic level, people can reflect on the past five years' historic moments, such as the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, to feel the spirit

of China and the country's empowered people.

Liu Wanming, an ink artist who heads the China National Academy of Painting, says he is surprised that "many painters insist on exploring creation in large format, a challenging undertaking to blend techniques and content well".

An example at the exhibition is *Through Thick and Thin*, 2.4 meters in height and 2 meters in length,

which won Luo Yuxin, an ink painter from Guangdong province, a gold prize at the exhibition.

On a technical level, she presents the brilliance of the minimalist style of classic Chinese painting in which a painter utilizes varying shades of black and white, and a serene mood accentuated by the *lubai* technique — applying white to create areas of "blankness".

Luo created the work out of con-

cern over the years for endangered species and biodiversity and to raise awareness for the biology of the polar regions. It depicts a peaceful scene in which a family of polar bears enjoy a moment on the ice and below the water with fish swimming joyfully.

The composition is employed from the flower and bird genre of classic Chinese painting, which Luo specializes in, while reminding peo-

ple of a pressing environmental problem that "can take a toll on the future of humanity", Luo says.

She adds that she seeks to enrich naturalism in traditional ink art by addressing the coexistence of people and other life and the construction of an ecological civilization.

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## Classical pianist hits new notes online and onstage

By CHEN NAN  
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Tony Ann's music journey began at 11 years old when his schoolteacher showed his class a documentary about German composer Beethoven and his life. That inspired the boy who was born in Beijing and had moved to Toronto, Canada, with his family when he was 6 years old.

Watching Beethoven grapple with gradual hearing loss and how he communicated his struggles and suffering through his music resonated with Ann and made him want to write music.

Ann asked his parents for piano lessons not because he was particularly interested in the instrument but because he wanted to use it as a tool to write songs.

Classically trained, the pianist studied at two music schools in the United States — Berklee College of

Music for composition and production and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied classical piano. However, he is part of a rising number of global young musicians with classical training who also possess modern sensibilities that appeal to the masses and see social media as a tool to get their talent noticed.

The pianist was 14 when he started his YouTube channel and uploaded short clips of his live performances and piano covers of popular pop songs.

His most popular content series "#PlayThatWord" was launched in 2023. In the series, he writes the 26 letters of the alphabet on his keyboard, with one letter on each key. Then he asks his followers to suggest a word for him to play and composes a piece based on that word.

This year, Ann completed his first European tour and is touring world-

wide until early 2025. On Sept 4, he made his debut at Beijing's Blue Note as part of his ongoing world tour, where the pianist also played the game with the audience. Ann also performed in Shanghai on Sept 5.

Ann notes that the show in Beijing was special to him because it's the city where he was born.

"I really enjoyed the concert and talking with the fans. Speaking Mandarin onstage was a first for me and definitely a highlight," he says.

During an interview that day, the pianist says that the idea for "#PlayThatWord" came from his father, who suggested he do a video for International Pi Day on March 14, dedicated to the famous mathematical constant.

"I had the idea to write out the numbers on the piano keys and create a melody using the digits of Pi (3.14...). After that, I moved on to the

alphabet and the series took off from there," says Ann, who has more than 6 million followers on social media.

"Classical music has made a huge impact on me. It shaped a lot of my techniques and my musical thinking. I try to be as authentic and original as possible online — whether it's in the way I caption, message or interact during livestreams," he says. "Being genuine is really important to me. My fans inspire me with their messages and stories, especially during concerts.

"I think the key to grabbing attention online is presenting content that's both familiar and unique, something that resonates but also sparks curiosity," he adds.

During the shows in Beijing and Shanghai, he performed his original pieces in the trilogy of EPs released last year under Decca Records: *Emotionally Blue*, *Emotionally Red*

and *Emotionally Orange*, which were created in a similar way to *Lost*, *Time*, *Anxiety*, and *Love* — exploring diverse human emotions.

Ann often takes his keyboard to landmarks and natural scenes around the world. During his trip to China last month, he played it on the Great Wall in Beijing, filmed himself playing at the historic landmark and shared the videos online.

Besides landmarks, the pianist often performs in public spaces, such as airports. Whether it be the setting or the people watching, he becomes inspired by the locations.

Now, he is working on a project titled *360°* where he creates a song for each star sign. The 12-song album focuses on the 12 horoscope signs with themes relating the emotions and personalities of each star sign set to music.

"I've tried to make each piece unique, reflecting the distinct quali-



Pianist Tony Ann performed at Blue Note Beijing on Sept 5 as part of his ongoing global tour. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ties of each sign. All 12 pieces are finished and will be released during the corresponding zodiac months. The full project will be out by February next year," he says.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE



# First emperor still fascinates with his treasures

The exhibition *Buried History and Mystery of China's First Emperor*.

Exhibition showcases priceless artifacts from mausoleum of Qinshihuang, report **Wang Ru** in Beijing and **Qin Feng** in Xi'an.

Knowing death was an inevitable issue that he had to face one day, Emperor Qinshihuang, who ended the long-term fighting and chaos among vassal states during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) and established the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), the first central united dynasty, paid close attention to two important considerations during his lifetime: seeking an elixir to extend his life and building an underground realm.

The former seems to have been in vain, but the latter has left an incredible mausoleum complex where he has rested in peace for more than 2,000 years.

While the greatness of the first emperor of Chinese history is widely known, many may not have truly grasped the national strength of the Qin Dynasty solely through history books. This changed five decades ago in 1974 with the discovery and excavations of the Terracotta Warriors. These underground armies safeguarded the emperor's posthumous peacefulness and their discovery offered modern people a real sense of the prosperity of the dynasty.

Over the past 50 years, archaeologists' efforts have increased understanding of the emperor and that era, step by step.

To mark the occasion, a permanent exhibition to showcase archaeological discoveries at the mausoleum, titled *Buried History and Mystery of China's First Emperor*, kicked off in September at Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum, which oversees the mausoleum in Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

According to Ye Ye, deputy director of the exhibition department of the museum and curator of the exhibition, a total of 230 artifacts — among them, the most emblematic cultural relics found in the mausoleum — are on display. Notably, one-third of these artifacts are being exhibited for the first time.

"The opulent burial site of Emperor Qinshihuang's underground world reflects the material culture and spiritual ideology of Qin, with a single imperial mausoleum bearing witness to a great era," says Ye.

## Grand scale

Entering the exhibition hall, visitors view a giant bronze *ding* caldron on their left.

Weighing 212 kilograms, this is the largest *ding* caldron ever discovered in the mausoleum area with complicated and exquisite patterns on its body.

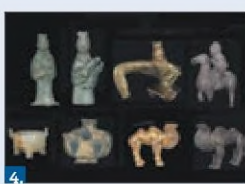
"This is regarded as 'the No 1 *ding* of the Qin mausoleum'. Since a *ding* caldron symbolizes political power, we put it at the entrance to showcase the strong national strength of the Qin Dynasty," says Zhang Sheng, a researcher at the museum.

Opposite to this *ding* is the sand table model of the entire mausoleum site and its neighboring environment, symbolizing the region of the mausoleum, which also imitates the layout of Xianyang, the Qin capital. "In this way we show Qin's political power and its corresponding region," he adds.

Over the years, archaeologists have defined the layout of the mausoleum, which covers a stunning area of 56.25 square kilometers.

Archaeologists have discovered more than 10 aboveground building remains, found more than 500 satellite pits and tombs and unearthed more than 50,000 cultural relics, according to Ye.

"Historical literature records that the construction of the mausoleum spanned 38 years and involved the participation of 700,000 people. The grand scale and rich



## Key archaeological findings over five decades

Since the discovery of the Terracotta Warriors in 1974, archaeological work on Emperor Qinshihuang's mausoleum in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has continued for five decades, yielding many important findings and enhancing understanding of the emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) and his era. Presented below are key discoveries made over the past 50 years.

**1. Terracotta Warriors No 1, 2 and 3 pits:** The No 1 Pit was discovered in 1974 when local farmers were drilling wells. Then archaeologists discovered No 2 and No 3 pits to the north of it in 1976, which join to constitute a group of satellite pits, about 1.5 kilometers from Emperor Qinshihuang's main grave. The three pits cover an area of 14,260, 6,000 and 520 square meters and have yielded about 8,000 Terracotta Warriors and horses, over 100 model chariots and more than 40,000 bronze weapons.

The Terracotta army is arranged in a military formation, with three divisions and a command center. They symbolize the garrison guarding Qin's capital, Xianyang, during

the reign of Emperor Qinshihuang. The discovery of the Terracotta Warriors pits has provided various research topics of the Qin Dynasty, such as the types of troops, equipment, organization, formation of the army, manufacturing techniques of Terracotta Warriors, and the production techniques of the weapons.

**2. Bronze chariots and horses:** In 1978, archaeologists found two large-scale painted bronze model chariots and horses to the west of the giant mound above the main grave of the emperor. They were put in a wooden coffin but crushed into pieces when discovered. Luckily, their components are still complete which took scholars eight years to restore. The bronze chariots and horses are modeled after the actual shape of real chariots. Although the size is half of the real, it meticulously simulates the intricate details of the original. Previously discovered chariots were made of wood and had decayed by the time of excavation. The discovery of the bronze chariots allows people to see a replica of ancient imperial chariots.

They are one of the earliest, largest and best preserved bronze

chariots and horses ever discovered in China, providing an important reference for scholars when studying metallurgical operations and bronze manufacturing technology of Qin's time.

**3. Bronze waterfowl pit:** In 2000, a satellite pit located outside the outer wall of the mausoleum yielded 46 bronze waterfowl, including swans, red-crowned cranes and swan geese, as well as 15 pottery figurines.

The waterfowl are depicted in dynamic poses, some foraging, and some resting. Some cranes have an insect-like object in their mouths, which seems like the moment when their sharp beaks leave the water after catching prey. The whole scene resembles a water body, where waterfowl have fun and prey on insects on the river banks.

Some archaeologists infer that the pottery figurines embody musicians who play instruments and the waterfowl are domesticated to dance along with the music. As funeral objects accompanying the emperor after death, they may embody entertainment for the emperor and show the diversified

cultural atmosphere of the Qin Dynasty.

**4. A large-scale tomb located to the west of the emperor's grave:** Since 2013, excavations have taken place on a tomb to the west of the emperor's main grave, as a satellite tomb in the mausoleum complex. For years, archaeologists have excavated tomb passages, a burial room and three chariot burial pits and found a precious four-wheeled carriage, the first of its kind found in China.

The tomb covers an area of 1,900 square meters. It has yielded a large amount of pottery, bronze vessels, jade, iron, gold and silver artifacts. Gold and silver camels found in the burial room are the earliest of their kind ever found in China.

Archaeologists say although the tomb owner remains a mystery, the tomb is currently one of the largest and highest-ranking Qin noble tombs to be discovered and excavated, and one of the best preserved. It may provide valuable information about the burial practices of Qin aristocracy.

WANG RU

that visitors can get a comprehensive understanding of where exactly the sites were discovered and their importance, says Zhang.

## Unity drive

One of the biggest contributions of Emperor Qinshihuang, people generally believe, is that he established a central dynasty that united China and implemented a series of policies to consolidate unification, like the unity of words, currency and measurements according to historical literature, which then has a long-lasting influence on later dynasties in China. That can be evidenced by some unearthed artifacts.

A bronze bobweight on display has two engraved edicts of unifying measurements — one from 221 BC, the year Emperor Qinshihuang established the Qin Dynasty, and the other from 209 BC, the first year of his son's reign.

"The bobweight is about 256 grams. It was unearthed from the Siguan Site between the inner and outer walls in the west of the mausoleum. We believe it was a standard measurement to be promoted across the dynasty," says Ye.

"Unification of such things actually laid a solid foundation for the unification of China since the Qin Dynasty."

Qin implemented a rigorous management system inherited from the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC). This system mandated that craftspeople engrave their names on the artifacts they produced, holding them accountable for the quality throughout their lifetimes.

Concrete evidence of the system is a bronze halberd from Terracotta Warrior No 1 Pit, which bears inscriptions confirming it was made in 242 BC by craftsman Cheng, Official Zhe and his assistant Yi from Sigong, an institute that governed weapon-making, were responsible for its quality and the production was supervised by counselor-in-chief Lyu Buwei (292-235 BC).

"Emperor Qinshihuang established a united dynasty with multiple ethnic groups and consolidated his unification with a series of political systems. Such a great cause required efficient management. This system just reflects the accuracy and efficiency of his governing," says Ye.

Two ceramic acrobatic figurines just restored by experts debut at this time. One is a rare example of the acrobatic figurines found from the mausoleum with a complete head. These special figurines were unearthed from an 800-square-meter satellite pit between the inner and outer walls in the southeastern part of the mausoleum with 37 other figurines. Archaeologists believe they embody entertainment providers who performed for the emperor in his palaces.

Apart from the exhibition, an international conference was also held in September to mark the occasion, during which Li summarized the achievements of archaeologists and heritage protectors over the past decades.

"As of now, the mausoleum has received over 160 million visits from home and abroad, making it a globally renowned cultural tourist destination and a model for the protection, research and revitalization of cultural heritage," says Li.

"The precious relics and artifacts bear witness to the material culture, technological achievements and civilization before and after Qin unified China. The archaeological work has played an important role in tracing the development of Chinese civilization and showcasing its brilliant achievements."

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Various types of Terracotta Warriors and figurine heads are on display at Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum in Xi'an, Shaanxi province. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

buried artifacts are rare across the world," says Li Gang, director of the museum.

Ye highlights the layout of the mausoleum which is designed with the mound covering the main grave at the center. It can be divided into three levels from the inside out with two city walls. The inner level covers the area within the inner city walls; the middle level lies between the inner and outer city walls; and the outer level is the area outside the outer city walls.

The inner level is the central area, containing the underground palace of the emperor, the carriages used by him and the mausoleum buildings, symbolizing the imperial palaces where the emperor lived.

The middle level includes underground counterparts of government offices, armories, imperial stables, and places for entertainment providers, as well as administrative offices for gardens and temples.

The outer level includes Terracotta Warriors representing the imperial guards, ponds for waterfowl and a city to safeguard the mausoleum.

"The overall layout of the mausoleum embodies the ancient concept of serving the dead as if they were living and the design idea of creating a replica of the capital city. It is a representation of the supreme power of Emperor Qinshihuang," says Ye.

The complete layout and locations of sites excavated within the mausoleum can be seen on the sand table at the exhibition, so



**Top:** Visitors attentively listen to a tour guide as she introduces a selection of pottery figurines being exhibited. **Above:** The largest bronze *ding* caldron unearthed from the mausoleum.

## LIFE

# Blogging taxi driver takes road to fame

The *Hutong Cowboy* depicts the emergence of a hero and the charm of capital's distinct residential areas, **Xu Fan** reports.

Donning a cowboy hat, Ge You, one of the most renowned actors in the country, takes on the role of an ambassador of justice in his latest film, *The Hutong Cowboy*.

However, unlike the typical cowboy archetype, the "weapon" of Ge's character, Zhang Beijing, isn't a six-gun holstered at his side. Instead, it's the essential tools of the digital age — a smartphone and a selfie stick.

In the movie, Zhang, a Beijing taxi driver in his 50s, unexpectedly becomes an internet sensation after a video capturing his moment of anger goes viral online. He seizes this newfound fame to start his own video blog, where he helps everyday individuals defend their rights.

The footage shows the irate protagonist riding a sightseeing mini-train, chasing a soap seller dressed as a Transformers-like robot portrayed by actress Li Xueqin. The protagonist is triggered by the seller's violation of his image rights. Earlier, the "robot" claw snags his wig, revealing his bald head, and this embarrassing moment is subsequently showcased on a large screen aimed at attracting more passersby to buy her soaps.

As the latest directorial effort of veteran director Ning Hao and emerging talent Xu Lei, the 113-minute comedy was released across domestic theaters on Oct 1.

Starring actress Gong Beibi as Zhang's former wife and actor Wu Lei as his son, the movie unfolds with Zhang's determination to deliver a parental speech at the upcoming wedding, rather than allowing his son's wealthy entrepreneur stepfather to do so.

Despite his efforts, including trying to rent luxury cars for the wedding and purchasing an expensive wig, Zhang eventually conceives a plan to become an internet influencer, aiming to demonstrate that he too can achieve success after the incident. However, the situation takes an unexpected turn.

Director Ning, one of the most renowned figures among China's "sixth-generation directors", tells *China Daily* that he has been considering shooting a feature-length film centered on Zhang, a chatty yet warmhearted taxi driver representing the Chinese capital's unique *hutong* culture, since 2019.

Zhang's character was initially introduced in Ning's *Nihao Beijing* (Hello Beijing), one of the six standalone short stories featured in the 2019 anthology blockbuster *My People, My Country*. The narrative of Zhang was revisited in *Beijing Hao-ren* (A Kind-hearted Beijing Native), also directed by Ning, and one of the five separate stories of the 2020 anthology *My People, My Homeland*, a sequel to the 2019 film.

Ning unveils that the inspiration for Zhang stems from the uncle of Wang Ang, the film's scriptwriter.



"We had interviewed his uncle before developing the storyline for the 2019 film," recalls Ning.

The archetype individual, characterized by his helpful, hospitable, and talkative nature, embodies a

subset of native Beijing taxi drivers, who enjoy exchanging perspectives on international and domestic affairs with passengers and typically possess a broad spectrum of knowledge, Ning says.



Clockwise from top: A promotional event for *The Hutong Cowboy*, the new comedy film of actor Ge You (fourth from right), was held in Beijing on Sept 26; Ge, starring as a Beijing taxi driver, with his romantic interest played by actress Liu Mintao; the protagonist and his son, acted by Wu Lei; and a scene showcasing friends gathering in downtown Beijing.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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ing locations in Beijing's *hutong* areas.

Living in a community near the East Fifth Ring Road, Xu shares that the journey has helped him realize the unique charm of Beijing — from

its labyrinthine alleyways to the close-knit relationships among neighbors and the picturesque courtyards adorned with gray tiles, gray walls and red doors.

"The preservation of *hutong* houses within the Second Ring Road represents a preservation of traditional and classical ways of living," Ning adds.

A native of Taiyuan, Shanxi province, Ning says that he believes Beijing locals, especially those residing in *hutong*, are renowned across the country for their wit and convivial dispositions, shaped by their distinctive living environment.

"For many families, they share one courtyard with neighbors and have to go out to use communal toilets. Residents frequently run into each other. If nobody speaks, it can create pressure and lead to anxiety. Therefore, they rely on conversations and jokes to navigate life more smoothly," Ning explains.

Moreover, the film aims to capture how everyday individuals navigate the challenges of embracing a modern era dominated by livestreams, short videos and online commerce.

Ning, seeking insights through his observations of daily life, recalls several instances that shed light on this dynamic. Intrigued by late-night livestreamed plant sales, Ning watched sellers diligently maneuvering electric bikes across fields to fulfill customers' requests for close-ups of saplings. Similarly, he observed a grill restaurant owner fervently promoting her dishes to just a few online viewers. Even Ning's shy and introverted nephew, who is recruited as a livestreamer to sell vehicles, found his primary audience to be Ning's own relatives, who needed to support the young man as he struggled to attract enough customers.

"Though the internet has reshaped our lives, it's heartening to witness the resilience and fervor of ordinary individuals in the face of difficulties and challenges. Every single one of them is working hard to keep pace with the changes of the era," reflects Ning.

Interestingly, the courtyard of Zhang, the protagonist, was filmed within a *hutong* near Zhihua Temple, a Buddhist temple constructed during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The backdrop of the sweeping and fluid Galaxy SOHO complex, designed by the late Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid, adds a metaphorical depth to the film.

Director Xu explains that this deliberate contrast aims to convey a message about the potential for harmonious coexistence between tradition and modernity in a vibrant metropolis like Beijing.

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## Leading US glaciologist returns to Xizang and reflects on progress made

LHASA — Describing his relationship with Chinese scientists as "like brothers", Lonnie Thompson, a member of the American Academy of Sciences and a foreign academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, has returned to the highest county in China 24 years after his last visit.

In Shuanghu county of Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, where the average altitude exceeds 5,000 meters, he is working with Chinese scientists to uncover the secrets of the planet.

Located roughly 90 kilometers northeast of the county seat, the Purog Kangri Glacier stands as the largest accumulation of ice outside the polar regions. In September, Thompson and fellow academician Yao Tandong of the Chinese Academy of Sciences arrived there to conduct the second scientific expedition on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Their research primarily focused on crucial ice core drilling.

"It's really striking to go back and see these places that we drilled early in my career. I want to continue documenting the changes we observe in these glaciers," says Thompson.

At 76 and having undergone heart transplant surgery, Thomp-

son expresses his excitement despite facing harsh environmental conditions and physical discomfort.

This visit is part of a scientific expedition to investigate the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, known as Asia's "water tower". The target region encompasses "one glacier, two lakes and three rivers" and is part of the second scientific expedition and research of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, which was initiated by China in August 2017. The goal is to understand the mechanism of environmental change and provide scientific support for the ecological security of the plateau.

The region is home to the Purog Kangri Glacier, as well as Siling Lake and Namtso Lake, the largest and second-largest lakes in Xizang. It is also the birthplace of three big rivers in China — the Yangtze, Nuijiang and Yarlung Zangbo rivers.

Noting that this expedition is significantly larger scale and more comprehensive, Thompson reflected on his first visit to Purog Kangri in September 2000.

"Getting here was not easy back then. The road was muddy. Because the trucks were heavily laden with gear, we actually had to lay road cushions, so that the vehicles wouldn't sink in the mud," he recalls. "We worked hard to push



Left: A bird's-eye view of part of the Purog Kangri Glacier. Right: US glaciologist Lonnie Thompson (right) and his Chinese fellow academician Yao Tandong discuss ice core drilling at their camp after returning from the glacier. PHOTOS BY LIU SHIPING / XINHUA

and pull, trying to just get to the site. But this year's experience is totally different. Paved road all the way here, brand-new hotel and the research base is fully equipped."

In October that year, the research team successfully drilled its first ice core, reaching a depth of 118.55 meters, followed by two additional cores at the depths of 213 meters and 154 meters.

"Ice cores are crucial for understanding climate and environmental changes. Glaciers worldwide are retreating, and once they melt, the historical records they hold will disappear. Therefore, preserving these

ice cores is vital. They serve as archives, allowing us to extract historical information even as new technologies emerge," Thompson emphasizes, hoping this drilling will yield the longest and oldest ice cores from mid-latitude regions.

The Purog Kangri Glacier occupies a unique position in glaciology. "The conditions of these glaciers are much different from those we find in the polar regions or deeper in the tropics, and they are so important for the water resources, for the people who live downstream," he says. "Understanding what the climate history was in this region and then

how it fits into the global picture is extremely important. I think the international collaboration is the only way we can do this."

Thompson first visited China in 1984, when he began a scientific collaboration with Yao and other Chinese scholars. Over the past four decades, they have drilled ice cores in various glaciers across China and published their findings in prestigious journals like *Science*, while also advancing the Third Pole Environment program.

"We have built a solid scientific foundation over our 40 years of collaboration, establishing trust and

viewing each other as brothers. This relationship is our most valuable asset in scientific research and cooperation," Thompson says.

He also expressed optimism about the future of glaciology in China. He recalls that 40 years ago when he first arrived in China, there was only one glacial station, and the quality, the level of scientific research were very low. "But over the last 40 years, the investments that the Chinese authorities made into glaciology have been tremendous.

"The achievements of the past 40 years in China are remarkable," he continues. "For me, the best scenario is when the world achieves a win-win situation, where we all benefit from cooperation, explore new fields, and deepen our understanding of climate science. This is how we make progress."

"China plays a very important role in the future. And I really appreciate the amount of investment the authorities made in science here in China over the last 40 years. I wish I saw that in every country around the world," he says. "In the future, I want to continue documenting the changes we observe in these glaciers."

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