

Big breakthrough

Nation's first homegrown operating system unveiled BUSINESS, PAGE 8



Robotic dogs clear the trash from Taishan mountain CHINA, PAGE 6



Growing appeal

Products inspired by intangible heritage find wide acceptance LIFE, PAGE 11

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President Xi Jinping and other leaders of BRICS member countries pose for a group photo on Wednesday before a plenary session of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. LI XUEREN / XINHUA

Xi: Advance greater BRICS cooperation

President calls on nations to remain committed to peace and innovation, and to 'forge ahead with one heart and one mind'

By XU WEI and REN QI in Kazan, Russia

President Xi Jinping presented a broad vision on Wednesday for BRICS countries to stay committed to peace, innovation, green development, justice and closer people-to-people exchanges, saying that the grouping should serve as a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

Speaking to other leaders attending the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, the Chinese president called for shared efforts to develop the grouping into "a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations".

Russian President Vladimir Putin presided over the event at the Kazan Expo. The leaders at the summit

adopted the Kazan Declaration and outlined the criteria for the category of a BRICS partner country.

"The enlargement of BRICS is a major milestone in its history, and a landmark event in the evolution of the international situation. At this summit, we have decided to invite many countries to become partner countries, which is another major progress in the development of BRICS," Xi told the summit's open plenary session. "We must build on this milestone summit to set off anew and forge ahead with one heart and one mind."

He said that BRICS countries must all act as defenders of common security. "Only by embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security can we pave the way for universal security."

As for the Ukraine crisis, Xi reiterated the need to uphold the three key

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principles of no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities and no fanning of flames, as well as the need to strive for swift de-escalation of the situation.

Noting the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and the flames of war in Lebanon, Xi made an appeal for promoting an immediate ceasefire and ending the killing in the conflicts.

"We must make unremitting efforts toward a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question," he emphasized.

Xi also announced a set of measures to boost the innovation drive

among BRICS countries, including steps to establish a BRICS Deep-Sea Resources International Research Center, a China Center for Cooperation on Development of Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries, a China Center for BRICS Industrial Competencies and a BRICS Digital Ecosystem Cooperation Network.

China is willing to expand cooperation with BRICS countries in green industries, clean energy and green mining, and to promote green development through the entire industrial chain, he stressed.

President Xi said that BRICS countries should act as forerunners in reforming global governance.

International power dynamics are undergoing profound changes, but global governance reform has lagged behind for a long time, he said.

"In light of the rise of the Global

South, we should respond favorably to the calls from various countries to join BRICS. We should advance the process of expanding BRICS membership and establishing a partner country mechanism, and enhance the representation and voice of developing nations in global governance," he said.

Xi also stressed the need to deepen fiscal and financial cooperation among BRICS countries. "The New Development Bank should be expanded and strengthened," he said. "We must ensure that the international financial system more effectively reflects the changes in the global economic landscape."

Xi announced that China will implement a capacity-building program for BRICS digital education, open 10 learning centers in BRICS countries in the next five years, and

provide training opportunities for 1,000 local education administrators, teachers and students.

Putin highlighted the need for the BRICS countries to strengthen cooperation in areas such as technology, education, efficient resource development, trade and logistics, finance and insurance. "Additionally, we must significantly increase the scale of investments," he said.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa told the gathering that the Kazan summit "serves as an opportunity to harness our collective strength to build a safer, more prosperous and equitable world".

Before the open plenary session, Xi and other BRICS leaders also engaged in small-group deliberations.

Contact the writers at xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn



President Xi Jinping meets with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday in Kazan, Russia. SHEN HONG / XINHUA

Strategic, long-term view taken for China-India ties

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

China and India agreed on Wednesday to view and handle bilateral ties from a strategic and long-term perspective, and not allow their differences to affect the overall development of their relationship.

The consensus was reached when President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kazan, Russia, on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit.

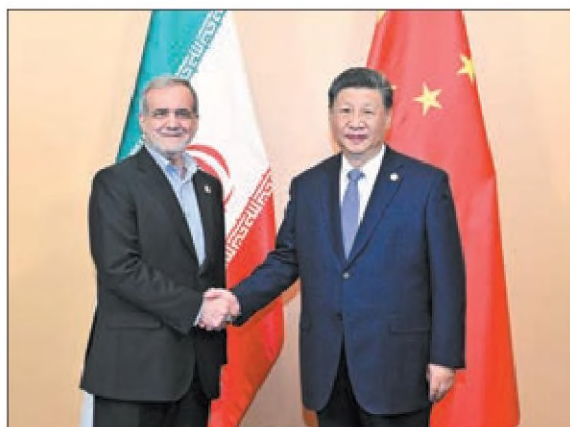
The meeting came days after China and India reached an accord on border issues following close com-

munication through diplomatic and military channels.

Both leaders spoke positively about the recent significant communication on resolving issues along the border. Modi made suggestions for improving and developing bilateral relations, which Xi endorsed in principle.

The two sides agreed to leverage the role of the mechanism of special representatives' meeting on border issues to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in border areas and seek a fair and reasonable solution.

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President Xi Jinping meets with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Wednesday in Kazan, Russia. YUE YUEWEI / XINHUA

Iran's important regional and global role highlighted

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping expressed concerns about the current situation in the Middle East on Wednesday, saying that achieving a ceasefire and ending the conflict in Gaza as soon as possible is key to easing tension in the region.

He called on the international community to work together to urge all parties concerned to effectively implement the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and prevent further turmoil in the region.

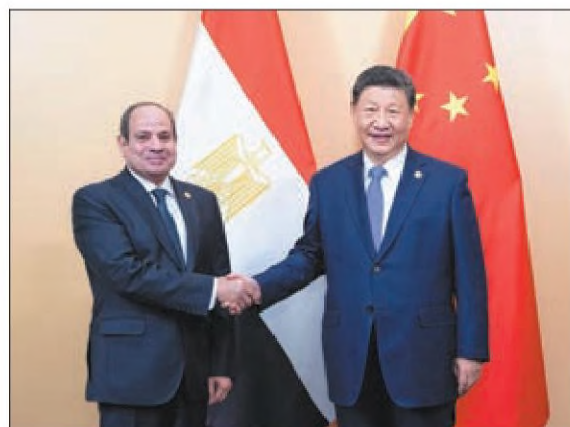
Xi made the remarks during his

meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in Kazan, Russia, on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit, the first one since Pezeshkian took office at the end of July.

During the meeting, both leaders pledged to promote the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Iran, and they expressed the countries' commitment to supporting each other on issues concerning their core interests.

Xi pointed out that Iran is a country with important regional and global influence, and is a good friend and partner of China.

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President Xi Jinping meets with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on Wednesday in Kazan, Russia. ZHAI JIANLAN / XINHUA

Coordination with Egypt to be further strengthened

By MO JINGXI mojingxi@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that China will strengthen coordination with Egypt to further enhance the influence and voice of the Global South and safeguard the common interests of developing countries.

He made the remarks when meeting with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, the grouping's first gathering since its expansion of membership on Jan 1 that includes Egypt.

This was the second meeting

between the two leaders in a year. Sisi paid a state visit to China in May.

Xi congratulated and welcomed Egypt for participating in the summit for the first time as a full member of BRICS, saying that Beijing will work with Cairo to promote steady and sustained "Greater BRICS Cooperation".

As this year marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Egypt comprehensive strategic partnership, Xi said that the two countries should continue to firmly support each other, consolidate political mutual trust, deepen

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XI'S VISIT

Fuchun River sparks impromptu poetry on shared human emotions

By DENG ZHANGYU
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For centuries, Chinese poets have captured the stunning beauty of the Fuchun River in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in simple yet poetic words. This July, poets from the BRICS countries stepped into the same river, drifting along the same route, and engaged in an impromptu poetry session inspired by the Fuchun River.

The poems, they created on the river during their six-day trip to China, and on a series of cultural activities they took part in have been recorded in the book *Messengers from the Vernal Wood*, which was released on Oct 18 at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany.

The book compiled by the Poetry Periodical also features poems written by 72 poets who took part in the First International Youth Poetry Festival: Special Session for BRICS Countries in July. It includes works from 49 poets from nine countries — Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia, with each poem featured in both the poet's native language and Chinese. It also includes poems from 23 Chinese poets, with each poem in Chinese and its English translation.

Li Shaojun, editor of the book, said that poetry is a universal language of humanity, expressing shared human emotions. "The BRICS countries all have rich history, and through the universal language of poetry, we can greatly enhance communication and exchange, connecting more poets from the BRICS nations," said Li.

Speaking about his journey to the poetry festival held in China in July, Brazilian poet Thiago Moraes said he was still excited about his first trip to a country that is totally different from his own. "It took me two days to arrive in China. Very hard. But I was so happy to be in China to know new people, new cultures, new perspectives and new ways of living," said Moraes, who teaches Brazilian literature at a university in Rio de Janeiro.

In mid-July, aboard a cruise on the picturesque Fuchun River in Hangzhou, Moraes joined poets from China, Ethiopia and Iran for an impromptu poetry session. Each participant crafted a short, simple poem inspired by the beauty of the Fuchun River. This kind of poetry gathering was popular among ancient Chinese scholars.

The Brazilian poet was deeply impressed by the enthusiasm of the group and the crystal clear green waters of the Fuchun River. He learned about the ancient Chinese poets Bai Juyi and Su Shi, both of whom created many well-known verses. To his surprise, Moraes found some similarities with the Chinese counterparts: they all share a love of nature and a fondness for expressing their inner worlds through landscapes.

He said poetry makes people stay humble, open and diversified. "We poets should gather our efforts to make a better world instead of fighting all the time," he added.

Poet Shaikha Almtairi from the United Arab Emirates said she never imagined that one day she would set foot in China. She was

excited about everything she encountered, including the people, the food, the museums, the ancient villages, the Great Wall and the Forbidden City.

She was often asked with questions like what are poets in the UAE writing about? What commonalities exist between UAE poetry and poetry from other countries?

"At the poetry festival in China, we find that no matter which country we come from, we are all creating with the same voice, the same heart and the same human spirit. We are all writing about the world of humanity, using the language of humanity. For example, we depict beautiful childhoods and the small flowers adorning braids," she said.



At the poetry festival in China, we find that no matter which country we come from, we are all creating with the same voice, the same heart and the same human spirit."

Shaikha Almtairi, poet from the United Arab Emirates



Almtairi enjoyed the poetry festival and said that such kind of gatherings and exchanges among poets might be the very catalysts for their innovation. She also expected for a future trip to China again.

For Ethiopian poet Seife Temam, the poetry trip to China made him fall in love with the country's ancient culture, especially the Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai. This was also his first visit to China. Previously, he admired Chinese philosopher Laozi and considered him a great Chinese poet as well.

After visiting several museums, he became enamored with the clothing style and poetry of the Tang dynasty, which he found to be romantic, passionate and unrestrained.

While cruising on Fuchun River in July, he wrote a romantic verse: "I am a child of the Nile, yet I am captivated by the Fuchun River."

Li, the book editor, said that it was the first time for China to hold such kind of international poetry festival of BRICS countries. He hoped that through the book's publication, the influence of poetry events will grow among poets from BRICS countries, enabling more poets to communicate and exchange ideas with each other.



Poets from Ethiopia learn dance moves after watching a traditional Chinese opera performance aboard a cruise during the poetry festival in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, on July 21. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

News focus



Journalists work at media center of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, on Tuesday. The center allows registered journalists access to services such as news releases, technical support and information consultation, among others. CAO YANG / XINHUA

Mechanism paves way for economic recovery globally

BRICS expansion spurs economic growth, boosts trade and innovation

By ZHONG NAN
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Greater collaboration and stronger coordination among BRICS countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, as well as other new members — will greatly enhance their economic growth and fortify the multilateral trading system, according to market watchers and business leaders.

Established in 2006 as BRIC (South Africa was added in 2011), the group has become a key platform for countries of the Global South to get united and strengthen themselves through cooperation in fields such as security, economy, finance and agriculture.

The BRICS mechanism expanded with new members in January this year, marking the further internationalization and diversification of the cooperation mechanism, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Analysts said that by capitalizing on their shared strengths, these influential emerging economies have the potential to lead a more dynamic global economic recovery. Through expanded trade, investment and technological innovation, BRICS countries can fuel growth not only domestically but also on a global scale.

Following its expansion earlier

this year, BRICS is becoming increasingly attractive to developing nations, as the platform promotes cooperation in areas such as international production capacity, trade in goods and services, and cross-border investment, said Jiang Shixue, vice-president of the Beijing-based China Society of Emerging Economies.

Sharing similar views, Rasigan Maharajh, chief director of the Institute for Economic Research on Innovation at Tshwane University of Technology in South Africa, said BRICS supports these countries in enhancing their industrial capabilities, developing digital economies and fostering innovation.

Highlighting that BRICS countries have vast markets and diverse economies, providing opportunities for increased trade between member nations, Xu Xiujun, a senior research fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics of the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that by reducing trade barriers and promoting intra-BRICS trade deals, more members could access new markets and boost exports of goods and services in the coming years.

China's foreign trade with the other BRICS countries reached 4.62 trillion yuan (\$652.47 billion)

in the first three quarters of 2024, an increase of 5.1 percent year-on-year, data from the General Administration of Customs showed.

China exports mainly construction machinery, trains, building materials, manufacturing equipment, electronics, textiles, garments and household appliances to other BRICS markets.

Chinese-made passenger vehicles and solar cells have also become popular in countries like Brazil, South Africa, the UAE and Egypt in recent years, according to customs statistics.

In addition to metal, crude oil, natural gas and grains, other BRICS countries' shipments to China include passenger aircraft, timber, agricultural products, steel, cotton, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis, noted that goods trade among BRICS countries makes up only about 10 percent of their total foreign trade, indicating significant growth potential.

"As cooperation within the BRICS family deepens and extends into new areas, both bilateral and multilateral economic and trade exchanges are expected to see significant positive progress," he said.

The emphasis on trading, investing in each other's markets and collaborating on technological innovations, industrial transformation and the digital economy

has become a driving force for growth within the BRICS countries, said Egyptian Ambassador to China Assem Hanafi.

Echoing that sentiment, Chen Jianwei, a researcher at the Beijing-based University of International Business and Economics' Academy of China Open Economy Studies, said that by collectively leveraging the power of the digital era, BRICS nations can successfully navigate the complexities of modern manufacturing transformation.

Chen said that these initiatives will not only enhance the bloc's internal trade volume but also strengthen their trade relationships with the rest of the world.

Encouraged by these factors, Dong Wei, vice-chairman and CEO of COFCO International, a subsidiary of Beijing-based COFCO Corp, said the group will deploy more resources in BRICS countries like Brazil and South Africa to purchase agricultural products, carry out technology transfers and invest in agriculture and transportation-related infrastructure facilities in the years ahead.

COFCO International, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, currently conducts agricultural trade with more than 10 African countries and is one of the largest integrated grain traders in South Africa. "We will expand our agricultural product operations in other BRICS countries," said Dong.

Growing appeal shows relevance of group, expert says

CAPE TOWN — As its influence expands, BRICS has gained appeal among many countries, particularly in the Global South, by offering them concrete advantages, said a South African expert.

Zukiswa Roboji, a researcher at Walter Sisulu University in South Africa, made the remarks during an interview with Xinhua News Agency ahead of the BRICS summit being held in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24.

"BRICS has undoubtedly made notable strides in recent years," said Roboji. "One of the most significant achievements is expanding the group to include more nations, showcasing its growing appeal and relevance in a shifting geopolitical landscape."

Roboji said the BRICS mechanism offers emerging economies easier access to financial resources and better opportunities for trade,

investment and development.

The expert noted that the New Development Bank has funded critical infrastructure projects in Global South countries, helping them address pressing development challenges. She said this has empowered those countries by gaining access to much-needed funding while allowing them to maintain greater independence over their own development paths.

BRICS represents a shift toward multipolarity, appealing to nations seeking to diversify relations and reduce reliance on Western powers, according to Roboji.

Its commitment to multilateralism and global governance reform "aligns with the interests of emerging economies aiming to have a stronger voice in international decision-making," said Roboji.

"Additionally, BRICS focuses on cooperation in technology, energy

and climate change, making it an attractive partner for countries seeking sustainable growth while addressing global challenges," she said.

As the group expands, she added its potential to reshape global economic and political dynamics continues to draw interest from nations looking for strategic alignment beyond the traditional power centers.

In this context, Roboji explained, BRICS has become an increasingly important platform for Global South countries.

BRICS has increasingly extended its outreach to African nations, facilitating investments and partnerships in sectors like energy, infrastructure and technology, she said.

"For instance, the Belt and Road Initiative, supported by BRICS cooperation, has led to significant

infrastructure development in African countries," said Roboji. "This partnership boosts Africa's economic growth and reduces its dependency on Western aid and investment, allowing African nations to negotiate more equitable terms and foster South-South cooperation."

The expert said that BRICS has provided concrete benefits to Global South countries by fostering unity, enhancing their representation in global governance, and promoting more just and sustainable development pathways.

"Through economic initiatives, advocacy for institutional reform and principled stands on sovereignty and noninterference, BRICS has become an essential platform for addressing the aspirations and challenges of the Global South," Roboji said.

XINHUA



XI'S VISIT

Editor's note: President Xi Jinping on Wednesday delivered an important speech at the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. The following is the full text of the speech:

Embracing a Broader View and Cutting Through the Fog of Challenges to Advance High-Quality Development of Greater BRICS Cooperation

Your Excellency President Vladimir Putin,
Colleagues,

First of all, I wish to extend my warm congratulations on the successful opening of this summit. I also wish to thank President Putin and our host Russia for the thoughtful arrangements and warm hospitality.

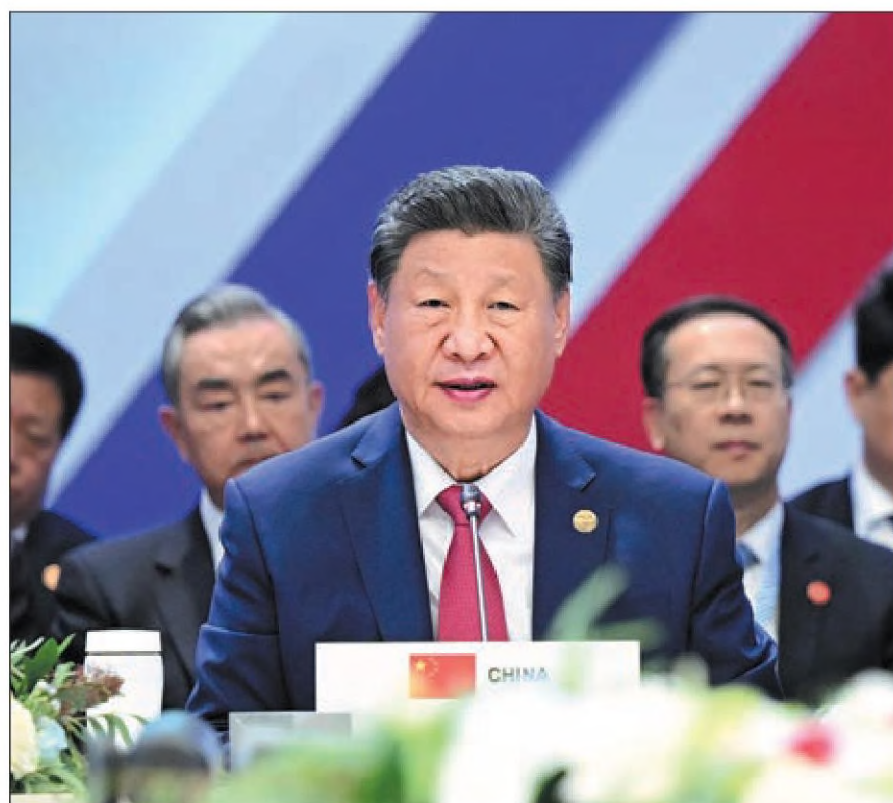
I would like to take this opportunity to once again welcome new members to our BRICS family. The enlargement of BRICS is a major milestone in its history, and a landmark event in the evolution of the international situation. At this summit, we have decided to invite many countries to become partner countries, which is another major progress in the development of BRICS. As we Chinese often say, "A man of virtue regards righteousness as the greatest interest." It is for our shared pursuit and for the overarching trend of peace and development that we BRICS countries have come together. We must make full use of this summit, maintain the momentum of BRICS, and consider and devise our strategy to address issues that have a global impact, determine our future direction, and possess strategic significance. We must build on this milestone summit to set off anew and forge ahead with one heart and one mind.

As the world enters a new period defined by turbulence and transformation, we are confronted with pivotal choices that will shape our future. Should we allow the world to descend into the abyss of disorder and chaos, or should we strive to steer it back on the path of peace and development? This reminds me of a novel by Nikolay Chernyshevsky entitled *What Is to Be Done?* The protagonist's unwavering determination and passionate drive are exactly the kind of willpower we need today. The more tumultuous our times become, the more we must stand firm at the forefront, exhibiting tenacity, demonstrating the audacity to pioneer and displaying the wisdom to adapt. We must work together to build BRICS into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and coop-

eration among Global South nations and a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

- We should build a BRICS committed to peace, and we must all act as defenders of common security. We humans are an indivisible community of security. Only by embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security can we pave the way for universal security. The Ukraine crisis still persists. China and Brazil, in collaboration with other countries from the Global South, initiated a group of Friends for Peace to address the crisis. The aim is to gather more voices advocating peace. We must uphold the three key principles: no expansion of the battlefields, no escalation of hostilities, and no fanning flames, and strive for swift deescalation of the situation. While the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, the flames of war have once again been rekindled in Lebanon, and conflicts are escalating among the parties. We must promote an immediate ceasefire and an end to the killing. We must make unremitting efforts toward a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question.

- We should build a BRICS committed to innovation, and we must all act as pioneers of high-quality development. As the latest round of technological revolution and industrial transformation is advancing at an accelerated speed, we must keep pace with the times and foster new quality productive forces. China has recently launched a China-BRICS Artificial Intelligence Development and Cooperation Center. We are ready to deepen cooperation on innovation with all BRICS countries to unleash the dividends of AI development. China will establish a BRICS Deep-Sea Resources International Research Center, a China Center for Cooperation on Development of Special Economic Zones in BRICS Countries, a China Center for BRICS Industrial Competencies, and a BRICS Digital Ecosystem Cooperation Network. We welcome active participation from all interested par-



President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech on Wednesday during the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

ties to promote the high-quality upgrading of BRICS cooperation.

- We should build a BRICS committed to green development, and we must all act as promoters of sustainable development. Green is the defining color of our times. It is important that all BRICS countries proactively embrace the global trend of green and low-carbon transformation. China's high-quality production capacity, as exemplified by its manufacturing of electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products, provides a significant boost to global green development. China is willing to leverage its

strengths to expand cooperation with BRICS countries in green industries, clean energy and green mining, and promote green development through the entire industrial chain, so as to increase the "green quotient" of our cooperation and upgrade the quality of our development.

- We should build a BRICS committed to justice, and we must all act as forerunners in reforming global governance. The international power dynamics is undergoing profound changes, but global governance reform has lagged behind for a long time. We should champion true mul-

tilateralism and adhere to the vision of global governance characterized by extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits. We must ensure that global governance reform is guided by the principles of fairness, justice, openness and inclusiveness. In light of the rise of the Global South, we should respond favorably to the calls from various countries to join BRICS. We should advance the process of expanding BRICS membership and establishing a partner country mechanism, and enhance the representation and voice of developing nations in global governance.

The current developments make the reform of the international financial architecture all the more pressing. BRICS countries should play a leading role in the reform. We should deepen fiscal and financial cooperation, promote the connectivity of our financial infrastructure, and apply high standards of financial security. The New Development Bank should be expanded and strengthened. We must ensure that the international financial system more effectively reflects the changes in the global economic landscape.

- We should build a BRICS committed to closer people-to-people exchanges, and we must all act as advocates for harmonious coexistence among all civilizations. BRICS countries boast a profound and illustrious historical and cultural heritage. It is important that we promote the spirit of inclusiveness and harmonious coexistence among civilizations. We should enhance the exchange of governance experiences among BRICS countries, and fully harness the untapped potential for cooperation in areas such as education, sports, and the arts so that our diverse cultures can inspire one another and illuminate the path forward for BRICS. Last year, I proposed an initiative for BRICS digital education cooperation, and I am delighted to see that it has become a reality. China will implement a capacity-building program for BRICS digital education. We will open 10 learning centers in BRICS countries in the next five years, and provide training opportunities for 1,000 local education administrators, teachers and students. This will be a tangible step to deepen and strengthen people-to-people exchanges among BRICS countries.

Colleagues,

China is willing to work with all BRICS countries to open a new horizon in the high-quality development of greater BRICS cooperation, and join hands with Global South countries in building a community with a shared future for mankind.

Thank you.

UN chief receives a warm welcome

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres receives a traditional Russian welcome at an airport as he arrives to attend the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, on Wednesday.

ALEXEY FILIPPOV / BRICS-RUSSIA2024.RU



Neighbors: Modi stresses relations' stable development

From page 1

They concurred that dialogues between the foreign ministers and officials at all levels should be conducted to facilitate the early return of bilateral relations to a stable development track.

Both sides also agreed to enhance communication and cooperation in multilateral forums to safeguard the common interests of developing countries. They expressed their readiness to contribute to promoting regional and global peace and prosperity as well as to advancing global multipolarity.

The last official meeting between Xi and Modi took place in 2019, on the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Summit in Brasilia, Brazil. Last year, the two leaders had a brief chat when they attended the 15th BRICS Sum-

mit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

During Wednesday's meeting, which both sides called "constructive and significant", Xi emphasized that the essence of China-India relations is how two neighboring developing major countries, each with over 1.4 billion people, can get along.

Noting development is the biggest "common denominator" between China and India, Xi called on the two nations to strengthen communication and cooperation, properly manage their differences and disagreements, and facilitate each other's pursuit of development aspirations.

The two countries should continue to adhere to the important consensus of "seeing each other as development opportunities, instead of threats" and "treating each other as partners, instead of competitors", Xi said.

Both sides should maintain correct strategic understanding and seek the bright path of peaceful coexistence and common development between neighboring major countries, he added.

Modi said that maintaining the stable development of relations is crucial for both India and China, because it concerns the future and well-being of 2.8 billion people, as well as regional and global peace and stability.

Amid the current complex international situation, cooperation between India and China is beneficial for promoting economic recovery and global multipolarity, he said, adding that New Delhi is willing to enhance strategic communication with Beijing, strengthen strategic mutual trust, and expand mutually beneficial cooperation.

Modi expressed India's support for China's role as the rotating chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and said his country is committed to strengthening communication and cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as BRICS.

Mideast: Efforts for ceasefire appreciated

From page 1

practical cooperation, promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation and enhance people-to-people exchanges.

China firmly supports Egypt in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and development interests, and is willing to be a sincere friend and close partner of Egypt to jointly pursue development, he said.

Sixty-eight years ago, Egypt was the first Arab and African state to establish diplomatic relations with China. And the past decade has seen significant achievements in various aspects of bilateral cooperation.

Sisi, for his part, lauded China as the most sincere friend of Egypt and

Africa and expressed gratitude to China for providing his country with valuable assistance in various forms.

He said that the Egyptian side firmly adheres to the one-China principle and fully understands the extreme importance of the Taiwan question to China.

Egypt is ready to strengthen multilateral collaboration with China to promote the building of a more just and equitable global governance system, he said.

The two leaders also exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East, as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has prolonged for more than a year.

Xi told his Egyptian counterpart that China appreciates Egypt's efforts to promote a ceasefire to end

the conflict, and is willing to strengthen coordination with Egypt to push for an early settlement and the easing of regional tensions.

He expressed China's deep concern over the current situation, saying that instability and conflict in the region serve the interests of no one.

Noting that the Palestinian question is at the heart of the Middle East issue, Xi said that the pressing task now is to fully implement relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and reach an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Only the implementation of the two-state solution can help promote an early, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question, he said.

Partner: Teheran emphasizes core interests

From page 1

He said that against the backdrop of the changing international landscape, the strategic significance of China-Iran relations is becoming more pronounced. No matter how the international and regional situation evolves, China will unwaveringly develop friendly cooperation with Iran, he added.

Xi emphasized that China supports Iran in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and dignity as well as its efforts in promoting its economic and social development, and improving and deepening its friendly relations with neighboring countries.

He expressed China's willingness to work with Iran to support each other, uphold basic norms governing international relations, such as noninterference in internal affairs,

and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of both countries.

China is ready to enhance exchanges and cooperation in various fields with Iran, promote the healthy and stable development of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, and better benefit the peoples of both nations, he added.

Xi congratulated and welcomed Iran's participation for the first time as a full member of the grouping in the BRICS Summit, saying that China is willing to strengthen cooperation with Iran within multilateral frameworks such as BRICS, further enhance the influence and voices of the Global South, and promote the development of the international order toward a more just and equitable direction.

Pezeshkian described China as Iran's most important partner.

Teheran wants to work with Beijing to implement the comprehensive cooperation plan between the two countries and deepen cooperation in areas such as mutual connectivity, infrastructure and clean energy, he said, adding that the countries' partnership will not only help Iran's national development but also contribute to promoting regional peace and stability.

Iran is willing to work with China to continue supporting each other on issues concerning their core interests and jointly oppose hegemony and bullying, Pezeshkian said.

He expressed appreciation for China's support for its formal participation in the BRICS cooperation mechanism, saying that Iran looks forward to close cooperation with China on multilateral platforms including BRICS.

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XI'S VISIT

Arab nations
hopeful about
BRICS' futureMultilateral organization positioned to play
central role in rebalancing of world influence

A grand rebalancing is taking place in the world. The relative influence of BRICS is rising while the relative clout of the old guards of the old world is in decline.

BRICS was born when the world was still reeling from and struggling with the financial and economic crisis, and when the voice of the emerging economies was still not given enough consideration commensurate to their rapidly rising economic power. Since then, BRICS has been organically maturing and morphing into one of the most important groupings of the 21st century.

With the addition of new members and considering the huge global challenges such as trade fragmentation, instability in various regions and the decaying international governance structure, there are high expectations from BRICS to play a more active role in safeguarding multilateralism and refining the world system.

Just like any other organization, the importance and effectiveness of BRICS will depend on its members and their vision. The 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, is a unique opportunity for BRICS members to unequivocally demonstrate that multipolarity is now an unavoidable reality and that the global majority must have a say in the future direction of the world. They should send clear signals that unilateralism is not acceptable and that no one single country or one bloc of countries can dictate world affairs.

As there is a genuine demand for it and because many countries want to be part of the future envisioned by BRICS, the organization is gaining momentum with more and more countries expressing interest in joining.

Current BRICS members account for about 45 percent of the world's population, about 30 percent of the landmass, around 40 percent of oil production and oil proven reserves, and 20 percent of global trade. The group includes the largest electricity producer, the largest clean energy generator, the largest goods trader, the largest manufacturer, the largest gas exporter (as of 2021) and the largest wheat exporter (as of 2021).

BRICS is a non-ideological and pragmatic organization that attracts countries from various regions and different political systems. The members are driven primarily by their own national priorities, while sharing mutual and common interests with other BRICS countries.

Their common interests include safeguarding multilateralism and preventing further trade fragmentation; collaborating in areas of energy and food supply, innovation, technology development and industrialization; de-risking the international financial system; enhancing the trade system and ensuring resilience against disruptions, especially in global supply chains; and implementing necessary reforms at international organizations.

Many Arabs believe that a change in the world order is inevitable. The long-term mega trends will continue to push world evolution forward and external forces cannot change the dynamics or put artificial hurdles in the path of the ongoing global transformation.

Arabs are interested in diversifying their partnerships and partners in a wide range of areas including but

WORLD WATCH
By Ebrahim Hashem

not limited to economics, technology, security, investment, trade and defense.

BRICS provides a platform where Arab states can have close policy coordination with new strategic partners to boost trade, economic and technological ties. Some of the Arab states' largest trading partners are BRICS members.

For example, the United Arab Emirates' two largest trading partners are China and India, with yearly trade value of more than \$90 billion and \$80 billion, respectively. Being BRICS members will help further deepen the Arab trade relations with BRICS partners, especially when the intra-BRICS payment system is established, allowing for easier and more efficient trade flows among the BRICS members.

Although Arabs are focused on geo-economics rather than on geopolitics, they are increasingly concerned about the regional security trends, especially in Palestine and Lebanon. They seek BRICS support to bring stability and security in the Arab world, which has been ravaged by conflicts since 2001.

As has been revealed during the current conflict in Gaza and Lebanon, the United States has not played a constructive role in reining in Israel to end the atrocities it is committing against Palestinian and Lebanese people. The US is no longer a neutral mediator in regional conflicts. The Arab people increasingly view the US as a belligerent and active participant in regional instability. The US has been providing diplomatic cover and financial and military support to Israel to continue its atrocities in both Palestine and Lebanon. Consequently, it has lost credibility and legitimacy as a peace broker. The Europeans have been by and large passive and not effective.

On the other hand, as China and India continue to grow economically and as Russia resumes to reassert its role in the world, these three countries, backed by the increasing weight of BRICS in global economics and politics, can help bring the warring parties to the negotiating table to end regional conflicts.

Therefore, there is hope in the region that as the global rebalancing continues and as BRICS becomes more influential in regional and global affairs, it can play a constructive role in de-escalating tensions and eliminating conflicts, paving the way for economic development and prosperity.

The expectations and stakes are high for BRICS. The current turbulent political and economic global climate is well-suited for the bloc to make its mark on world affairs and define the future direction of the world. It is gathering critical mass and gaining enough heft to help lead the world out of the current chaotic transition period and into the next phase of development.

The author is former adviser to the chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Office and an Asia Global fellow at the Asia Global Institute of the University of Hong Kong. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



People pass a statue decorated with bougainvillea in Xiamen, Fujian province, in March last year. A plant indigenous to South America, it was made the city flower of Xiamen in 1986. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

‘Twin cities’ diversify collaborations across sectors

By HU MEIDONG in Fuzhou and LI LEI in Beijing

The coastal city of Xiamen in East China's Fujian province will continue sharing expertise in health and governance with its sister city of Fortaleza, Brazil, following the establishment of a friendly city relationship in May last year, local authorities said.

This alliance has been dubbed the “BRICS Twin Cities” because both locations have hosted summits of BRICS, the emerging market group.

In a written response to China Daily's inquiries, the Xiamen government said that both cities will intensify cooperation, particularly in sharing medical expertise between Xiamen Cardiovascular Hospital, an affiliate of Xiamen University, and Hospital de Messejana, a leading cardiovascular institution in northeastern Brazil.

Additionally, “Xiamen officials will continue to invite their Fortaleza counterparts to participate in training sessions at an innovation center for BRICS partners in Fujian,” it said.

In March, their collaboration to combat cardiovascular disease — the world's leading cause of death — intensified with Hospital de Messejana sending a doctor to Xiamen Cardiovascular Hospital for a six-month research and study program.

The following month, the two hospitals formalized their partnership by signing an agreement to cooperate in areas such as cardiovascular diagnosis, talent training and health information technologies.

The signing ceremony, attended by Cui Yonghui, Party secretary of Xiamen, and Elmano de Freitas, governor of Ceara, where Fortaleza is located, witnessed the duo pledging to bolster collaboration in health, port and logistics, education, culture and talent training. This commitment aligns with the celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil this year.

In September, the two hospitals convened a virtual forum on cardiovascular health, part of an effort by China to enhance cardiovascular exchanges and cooperation within BRICS nations that is aimed at reduc-

ing cardiovascular mortality rates.

Since the inception of their friendly city relationship, four officials from Fortaleza have participated in training programs organized in Xiamen as part of the initiative of building an innovation base for BRICS partnership on the new industrial revolution.

The innovation center was proposed during the 12th BRICS Summit in November 2020, and inaugurated in Xiamen in September 2021, providing a foothold for BRICS countries to make use of technological innovation and digital transformation brought by the new industrial revolution.

Among the officials are representatives from Fortaleza's municipal government, economic sector and port authorities, who, in July last year, participated in training sessions focusing on the high-quality development of the marine economy in Xiamen.

Upon their return to Brazil, one of the officials shared with Xinhua News Agency his aspirations for further collaborative advancements in the marine economy alongside Xiamen, emphasizing the potential

for a partnership in maritime hydrogen energy.

In 1986, bougainvillea, a plant indigenous to South America, was adopted as Xiamen's city flower following its introduction to the region, symbolizing the cultural connections between the two cities.

Building on their newfound partnership last year, Xiamen and Fortaleza are collaborating across diverse sectors, including healthcare education, biopharmaceuticals, clean energy and innovative technologies. This pragmatic cooperation is designed to drive mutual progress and development in these critical areas, fostering shared growth for both cities.

During his visit to Fortaleza in April, Cui, Party chief of Xiamen, participated in a photography exhibition centered around the theme of the BRICS twin cities converging in goodwill. He also donated over 200 books to Fortaleza's library showcasing China's modernization endeavors, Chinese culture and the traditions of Xiamen.

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Members, partners urged to flex tech muscles

By WANG QINGYUN
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BRICS countries should work together to seize the opportunities delivered by new rounds of industrialization featuring the latest technologies such as artificial intelligence, in order to improve the resilience of their economies, according to an official of a BRICS institution.

Huang Feng, executive deputy director of the Office of the Xiamen Leading Group for the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution Innovation Center, also known as BRICS PartNIR Innovation Center or BPIC, said that BRICS should respond to global economic uncertainty by vigorously promoting collaboration on technological innovation and its commercialization.

Emerging and strategic sectors such as telecommunications, digital services and renewable energy are important areas in which BRICS countries can work together,



Huang Feng

er, Huang said. They could cooperate to develop projects on intelligent manufacturing, the industrial internet, industrial design and green industries, he said.

The BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution is an initiative that President Xi Jinping proposed at the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, in July 2018 to speed up efforts to introduce new impetus for emerging economies and upgrade their economic structures.

Two years later, at the 12th BRICS Summit held via videoconference in November 2020, Xi said China would establish the BPIC in Xiamen, Fujian province, to facilitate policy coordination, personnel training and project development.

At the 15th BRICS Summit, held in Johannesburg in August last

year, Xi said that China would set up the China-BRICS Science and Innovation Incubation Park for the New Era to support the implementation of innovation results.

The park, which was launched in December last year in Xiamen, has attracted eight projects so far. It will “incubate a group of deep-tech companies that can be replicated in other BRICS countries”, Huang said.

The BRICS PartNIR Innovation Center has also offered in-person and online training courses to more than 3 million people in 114 countries, covering subjects such as the industrial internet, how to enter the Chinese market, and the technologies and governance of the new industrial revolution, he said.

“Through these measures, the BPIC has created a good environment, nurtured talent and provided resources for the BRICS countries’ drive for industrial innovation,” Huang added.

Huang also said that BRICS countries have seen their mechanisms for cooperation on techno-

logical innovation gradually mature. “They have been steadily developing platforms for technological innovation cooperation and have established robust technological financial support.”

Frequent exchanges in youth technological innovation have also been fostered, he said, adding that “the new industrial revolution has provided the BRICS countries with opportunities for industrial upgrading.”

However, BRICS countries face challenges, including the overall low level of innovation, cooperation models and supporting structures that are rudimentary, and persistent obstacles in the broader environment for technological innovation, Huang said.

The BRICS PartNIR Innovation Center will step up efforts to make the most of what all BRICS members have in common, and of how they complement one another to boost economic and industrial cooperation for the expanded BRICS, he added.



The headquarters building of the New Development Bank in Shanghai. FANG ZHE / XINHUA

Egyptian official: China a ‘driving force’ for BRICS cooperation

CAIRO — China has been a driving force behind promoting the BRICS cooperation mechanism, according to Ezzat Saad, director of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs.

In a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency, Saad said that China's proposal in 2017 to create a BRICS Plus platform, which was aimed at enhancing cooperation with other emerging markets and developing countries, has opened “new space for new countries to join the bloc”.

The benefits of China's proposal became evident when new coun-

tries joined BRICS, while more than 30 other countries have either formally applied for or expressed interest in its membership, he added.

The Egyptian official attributed the mechanism's success to the reliability of the leading BRICS members, especially China.

He noted that the values upheld by BRICS resonate with countries in the Global South, emphasizing China's leadership in areas such as economy and finance, and multilateralism characterized by equity and justice. “China is believed to be the true

and trusted voice of developing countries and emerging markets,” he said.

Among other achievements, BRICS has established two important cooperation mechanisms: the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement. The latter provides support for countries facing financial emergencies.

“All these arrangements, meetings and summits provide an institutional framework for member states to promote coordination and interaction,” Saad said. Saad cited Egypt as an example of

the countries that benefited from their interaction with BRICS before officially joining it. He stressed Egypt's participation in BRICS summits since 2017, its membership in the New Development Bank, and its enhanced cooperation with China, Russia and India in several sectors.

He said the BRICS spirit reflects the principles that China and other founding countries have long championed, adding that the group was established in a world marked by unfairness and contradictions. XINHUA

CHINA

Universities change courses to better reflect nation's needs

Some majors disappear, others added as education aligns with development

By ZHAO YIMENG in Beijing and LI YINGQING in Kunming

At the beginning of the fall semester last month, Yunnan Agricultural University held an unusual introductory class on coffee for students enrolled in a new program.

Freshmen in the Coffee Science and Engineering program learned roasting techniques, how to identify different coffee varieties and grade green coffee beans, as well as extraction and brewing methods.

As China's coffee industry thrives, the demand for highly skilled professionals in the industry is growing. In response, the university launched the country's first coffee-related undergraduate program this year.

The first group of 100 students from 11 provinces and regions has begun studies at the university's Tropical Crops College, which is located in Pu'er — a region in Southwest China's Yunnan province renowned for growing high-quality tea and *Coffea arabica* plants.

Yang Xuehu, dean of the college, said the program's comprehensive curriculum includes foundational courses in food science and engineering, along with specialized subjects such as coffee flavor chemistry and coffee processing.

The coffee flavor chemistry course teaches students how to address common issues like caffeine sensitivity. By studying the use of solvents such as acetic acid and ethyl acetate in the decaffeination process, students learn how to reduce the caffeine content, enabling drinkers to enjoy a coffee without losing sleep.

The program emphasizes hands-on learning with courses in engineering and professional skills development. "It not only cultivates talent in certain subjects, but also nurtures students to meet the needs of the entire coffee industrial chain, ensuring them a promising career," Yang said.

In recent years, the demand for high-quality specialty beans from Yunnan has grown steadily, however, the industry has faced a shortage of skilled workers and a lack of planning.

Zhang Jing, general manager of Nuijiang Yunli Agriculture Corporation in Nuijiang Lisu autonomous prefecture, said the new program is expected to address these problems by training students in coffee cultivation, processing, and marketing.

"Currently, there is a great shortage of experienced professionals, especially those who have been engaged in the coffee industry for more than a decade," Zhang said.

Development needs

Coffee Science and Engineering is one of 24 new undergraduate majors approved by the Ministry of Education this year. Many of the new majors cover fields at the forefront of China's technological advancement and are intended to boost national economic development.

A resolution adopted in July by the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China stipulated that "extraordinary moves" will be made to improve or introduce disciplines that are in urgent demand.

The structure of talent cultivation in China needs to be optimized, Cao Weixing, a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, said.

Some universities are excessively enrolling students for popular majors, resulting in the irrational allocation of educational resources and a structural imbalance in discipline layout, Cao added.

Lu Shuohua this year enrolled in one of the new majors at South China University of Technology in Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

The top candidate from Zhejiang province to the university, he was admitted to the pioneering Soft Matter Science and Engineering program, which aims to develop students' ability to solve technological and engineering problems in interdisciplinary frontiers.

"I hope to conduct in-depth research on advanced soft materials to enhance people's quality of life,"



Top left and above: Teachers give coffee-themed lectures at the College of Tropical Crops of Yunnan Agricultural University in Pu'er, Yunnan province, on Sept 10. Top right: A student practices coffee cupping at the university. PHOTOS BY HU CHAO / XINHUA



Currently, there is a great shortage of experienced professionals, especially those who have been engaged in the coffee industry for more than a decade."

Zhang Jing, general manager of Nuijiang Yunli Agriculture Corporation

Lu said, adding he wants to obtain a master's degree and PhD in the field to lay a solid foundation for his future career.

The university is also offering a new program in Intelligent Ocean Equipment. Both the new majors focus on cultivating high-level talent to support national industrial upgrading strategies and address the urgent demand for skilled professionals in high-tech industries in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, according to the university.

Other new programs include Beijing University of Agriculture's Biological Breeding Technology major and Guangzhou Sport University's Sports Health Care program.

Major adjustments

China currently has 1,308 undergraduate tertiary institutions that offer 816 programs across 12 disciplines and 93 categories, and cover 62,000 locations nationwide, according to the Ministry of Education.

Wu Yan, vice minister of education, said the quality of these programs is crucial to China's goal of becoming a leading nation in education, with undergraduates making up 80 percent of students in higher education.

"Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, there has been a significant restructuring of the academic program," Wu said at a news conference last month.

Over the past 12 years, 21,000 new program locations were added,

while 12,000 program locations were either discontinued or suspended due to their lack of relevance to economic and societal need, he said.

This year, 1,673 new program locations were added to meet national strategic needs, while 1,670 were removed for being misaligned with economic and social developments, he added.

Sichuan University canceled 31 undergraduate programs earlier this year, including broadcast journalism due to the major's unsatisfactory admission conditions.

Huang Ziqing, a 21-year-old broadcast journalism student at the Communication University of China (CUC) in Beijing, said the discontinuation of the major at Sichuan University may be the result of insufficient resources and industry integration.

"The broader decline of traditional broadcast media in favor of digital platforms also led to the adjustment. It might also be a historical trend, where a discipline is either retired or rebranded to adapt to the times," Huang said.

Xiong Bingqi, director of the 21st Century Education Research Institute, said the adjustments are not necessarily an indication of the popularity of a particular major.

Some universities are introducing majors that other institutions have chosen to discontinue, highlighting that the establishment or cancellation of a major is not the sole criteria for determining its quality or value, he said.

"When considering newly added majors, students and parents must carefully evaluate the school's edu-

cational mission and resources. It is essential to conduct a thorough analysis rather than making assumptions based on the name of the program," Xiong said.

Changes underway

The key to determining whether an academic program should be restructured or discontinued lies in its contribution to national strategies and its relevance to solving real-world problems while staying in tune with future developments, Liao Xiangzhong, Party Secretary of CUC, said in an interview last month.

Since 2018, the university has phased out over a dozen programs. However, rather than simply cutting programs, Liao has encouraged faculties to update courses and be innovative in their relevant fields.

CUC's School of Science, for example, underwent a reorganization. Originally focusing on applied mathematics, a discipline not strongly aligned with the university's strengths in media and communications, the school was transformed into the School of Data Science and Intelligent Media.

"Initially, some faculty members resisted the decision. But now the school is thriving, and teachers have successfully adapted," Liao said, calling it a prime example of academic transformation.

The university also added new academic programs to meet national strategic needs, Liao said. In 2019, the university leveraged its strengths in media and governance studies to establish the School of Government and Public Affairs.

In addition, CUC has also introduced "AI+" and "+AI" initiatives to integrate artificial intelligence into various disciplines to remain at the forefront of technological advancements, Liao said.

Huang, who is doing studies at the university's Advertising Institute, said the faculty had invited AI experts to discuss how to upgrade the courses.

Wu, vice minister of education, emphasized the importance of aligning academic programs with students' holistic development, which includes the integration of AI to enhance curriculum content and optimize talent development.

Wu said the country will keep supporting the development of new engineering, new medicine, new agriculture, and new liberal arts, and the expansion of programs in emerging fields and critical strategic areas.

"The goal is to ensure that undergraduate programs are responsive to national needs, cultivating talent in key areas that contribute to China's growth," he said.

Earlier this year, the ministry evaluated the relevance of academic programs in provinces such as Heilongjiang, Zhejiang, Henan, and Shaanxi, with plans to expand the evaluation in 2025.

"Clusters of specialized academic programs are expected to be formed, which are linked to local industry clusters to ensure that regional development is supported by educational programs and talent pipelines," Wu said.

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Left: A professor gives a wine-themed lecture to students majoring in viticulture and enology at Shenyang Pharmaceutical University. Right: Students attend a wine-tasting class at the university. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Journalism studies rally to stay on front line of relevance

By ZHAO YIMENG

Broadcast journalism student Huang Ziqing, 21, is well aware the career she is studying for is at the crossroads.

However, she believes the intrinsic worth of broadcast journalism is still intact, and the major at the Communication University of China in Beijing will not disappear any time soon.

Huang is encouraged by one of her professors Zhang Long, who said that while broadcast media might be in decline, its practice and professionalism are irreplaceable.

"Having hands-on experience in broadcast media is still highly valuable," she said.

For the past three years, Huang has been inspired by professors like Zhang and gained a deeper understanding of journalism and voicing China's perspectives on the global stage.

"Zhang returned from the front line of news production and shared with us fresh insights from his time as a reporter. He also invited veteran journalists to lecture, making the class rich in both theory and practice," Huang said.

For instance, Zhang once told a class an impactful moment of when he accompanied a correspondent to investigate a local water pollution case.

"He told us although the well water in the village was obviously contaminated, the reporter still drank a bit to demonstrate to the audience the severity of the situation in front of the camera," Huang said, adding that such vivid examples left a lasting impression on her.

However, she said practical courses intended to improve the students' video-shooting skills had lost some of their intensity. "We spend more time doing tests and in classrooms looking at PowerPoint slides than using cameras," she said.

Huang also suggested adjustments be made to some outdated content and the teaching material of certain courses.

"Some of our material hasn't been updated in a decade, even in fields like integrated journalism where media is evolving rapidly," she said.

The curriculum should be changed to bridge the gap between academia and the journalism industry, particularly in leveraging the university's rich resources like professional networks and technology, she added.

After studying at CUC for three years, Huang said what she benefited most from was the reshaping of her worldview and changes in her personality and interests.

"We had courses that required us to produce documentaries, which gave me a new perspective on the world," she said.

On the question of what her future career will be, Huang pointed to public relations studies and her active engagement in student organizations, particularly the media operations of the student union.

After graduation, she plans to pursue a master's degree in marketing in her hometown of Guangzhou, Guangdong province.

"Now I realize the most important thing is finding what you truly want to do. Once you figure that out, anxiety and competition become less of an issue because you know what you're striving for," Huang said.

CHINA

Egypt to present Shanghai Award

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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The second Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities, or the Shanghai Award, will be presented abroad for the first time in Alexandria, Egypt, to five international cities on World Cities Day, which falls on Oct 31.

The award aims to further promote the concept that "cities should be built by the people and for the people", which was put forward by President Xi Jinping in 2019, officials from the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Housing, Urban-rural Development and Management said at a news briefing on Tuesday.

Five cities will be recognized for the achievements and innovations they have made while implementing the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, said Liu Qianwei, chief engineer with the commission.

Economic vitality, urban prosperity, ecological construction, green development, urban safety, resilience development and capacity building for sustainable development were among the major criteria considered for prospective winners of the award, jointly presented by the UN Human Settlements Programme, or UN-Habitat, and the Shanghai government.

Last year, Brisbane, Australia; Fuzhou, Fujian province in China; George Town, Malaysia; Kampala, Uganda; and Salvador, Brazil, won the inaugural Shanghai Award.

The English version of the 2024 Shanghai Manual, which aims to provide models of urban development for cities around the world, will also be released at the event in Alexandria.

Eighteen cases from 12 countries and regions, covering urban renewal, biodiversity conservation, low-carbon development, information services, and technology and digital innovation, are outlined in the manual.

One case is Marrakech, Morocco, where residents used to depend heavily on motor vehicles, resulting in severe air pollution.

In 2016, Cantal Bakker, an entrepreneur from the Netherlands, launched the project "Pikala Bikes" in the city, which facilitates

building bike lanes and parking racks to promote bicycle riding, teaches youths about road safety and bicycle mechanics, and improves mobility and the quality of life for women and children by teaching them to ride bikes.

The project has helped create job opportunities, and has contributed to environmental protection and improving people's quality of life. It is being expanded to other cities in the country.

This year's cases also include some from Chinese cities — including Nanning in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, Kunming in Yunnan province and Chengdu in Sichuan province — that have made strides in encouraging local communities to be more inclusive, improve efforts to save energy and reduce emissions, and be more resilient in fighting flooding.

One case is Shanghai's downtown Xuhui district, which solicited and incorporated ideas from the public while building 30 pocket parks — high-quality green, public spaces at residents' doorsteps — in recent years.

Ren Jie, director of the Xuhui district greening management center, said one case was Leshan Park, which received a makeover in 2021 from a green space that had been in disrepair for years. It is located in the middle of a densely populated apartment complex, home to nearly 20,000 residents.

"Through consultations with residents, we learned what they expected most from the park, such as a jogging path and exercise and fun facilities for children and the elderly, and what they least expected, including dog waste and noise from square dancing. We took their advice about the park design," Ren said.

"Also, we paid attention to details to meet the diversified needs of children and the elderly. For example, people of different ages can find seats of different heights and facing different directions, in case some like to stay in the sunshine and some don't," she said, adding that Shanghai had set a target to build 300 pocket parks by the end of 2025.

The manual this year is its 10th edition. Altogether, the books detail 220 cases from more than 50 countries.

Feeding the birds



Residents and tourists feed seagulls at the Zhanqiao scenic area in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Tuesday. Every autumn and winter, large flocks of seagulls arrive at the city coast, engaging with eager visitors. WANG BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Chinese NGOs aim to make bigger intl impact

Nation fosters global collaboration to strengthen its technological prowess

By LI LEI
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China has cultivated thousands of technology-focused nongovernmental organizations in recent years to stimulate innovation and bolster its influence in global research and development governance, a Ministry of Civil Affairs official said on Wednesday.

Zhang Lin, a deputy head of the ministry's bureau of NGO administration, said that by the end of last year, China had over 24,000 such organizations at the forefront of technological innovation, playing a crucial role in advancing the nation's expertise in competitive technologies.

"At the same time, the ministry is fostering national and international social organizations to facilitate engagement in global scientific and technological governance initiatives," she told a news conference in Beijing.

Technology-based organizations have increasingly emerged as a pivotal force propelling China toward technological advancement.

Authorities have recognized their crucial role in uniting and mobilizing technology professionals to serve the national interest, fostering collaboration among industries, academia and researchers, promoting exchanges and showcasing industry expertise.

In a significant move to enhance the global influence of these groups, the ministry introduced rules in 2021 enabling Chinese NGOs to recruit renowned foreign scientists and appoint them to management positions.

While the full text of the rules



The ministry is fostering national and international social organizations to facilitate engagement in global scientific and technological governance initiatives."

Zhang Lin, deputy head of the bureau of NGO administration of the Ministry of Civil Affairs

has not been publicly disclosed, a media release on the ministry's website stated that the regulations mandated these NGOs to improve communication and engagement with foreign technology experts.

The release emphasized that these organizations should establish a robust service system tailored to the needs of foreign technology professionals, fostering a stronger sense of belonging and integration within the community.

The Chinese Institute of Electronics, one of over 200 national-level technology-focused organizations, plays a crucial role in advancing technological development in China.

According to its website, the institute is responsible for a variety of tasks, including organizing international seminars, publishing influential papers and recommending talent to governmental bodies.

With a membership exceeding 170,000 professionals with strong knowledge on subjects such as semiconductors, computer science, communication technologies and radar, the institute also manages the editing and publication of 10 esteemed academic journals covering topics in its members' respective fields. Since 2003, it has honored outstanding scientists with its annual Science and Technology Award.

The institute describes itself as a national academic nonprofit social organization that was voluntarily established by technology workers in the electronic information sector, related enterprises and institutions, and social groups.

"We are an important social force in the development of China's electronic information technology industry," the institute said in its charter.

International NGOs focusing on technology have significantly influenced global science governance by organizing academic conferences, publishing influential works and presenting awards.

Last year, the Chinese government announced the establishment of 17 such NGOs.

One notable organization among them is the Alliance of National and International Science Organizations for the Belt and Road Regions, launched in 2018 with the objective of enhancing cooperation in science, technology and innovation among countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Its membership includes prestigious institutions such as the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

China thwarting satellites used to spy

By ZHAO LEI
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China has been handling threats from foreign intelligence agencies who use satellites to conduct espionage in their attempts to steal the country's secrets, according to the Ministry of State Security.

The ministry said in an article published on its WeChat account on Wednesday that some foreign spy organizations continue to use high-resolution satellites to carry out remote-sensing reconnaissance on China. They also keep trying to infiltrate China's space companies by tempting and intimidating Chinese scientists and engineers to obtain the latest developments in their research.

Some Western countries have been hyping up the arms race in orbit and the contest for "space hegemony", making all-out efforts to hinder China's capability and jeopardize its space operations, it noted.

Space has become a new domain for economic growth, military conflicts and national security work. Protecting space-based systems and orbital operations from threats and infringement is an important part of national security work because space-based assets are significant to a nation's security and development, the ministry said.

In recent years, state security bodies worked with relevant departments to handle cases in which foreign spies tried to steal secrets in China's space sector, effectively suppressing foreign intelligence agencies' espionage attempts, the ministry said.

State security departments will continue to use concrete measures to safeguard China's rights, security and interests in space, it added.

Information previously published by the ministry shows that the space sector is a focal point for Western intelligence agencies that spy on China. Their agents target scientists, designers and technicians working for State-owned contractors and have turned a handful of employees into traitors, including a senior missile designer who was exposed in 2007.

The latest spy case involving China's space industry that has been made public was disclosed in April 2023.

Zhao Xuejun, a researcher at a State-owned institute, was approached by foreign spies while he was studying overseas and then was recruited. After returning to China, he continued to work for the foreign intelligence organization and delivered a large number of classified documents.

He was arrested in June 2019 and was sentenced in August 2022 to seven years in prison.

An industry observer who declined to be named said that foreign spies are keen to obtain information about China's space capability and programs because analyzing such information can help to establish a comprehensive, in-depth picture about China's strategic prowess and its scientific, technological and engineering capacities.

Meeting a star



Track legend Su Bingtian signs autographs for young athletes after an exchange session in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, on Wednesday. A 10-day training camp kicked off in the city, attracting athletes and coaches from across the country. LIU LIXIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Robotic dogs take out trash on Taishan Mountain

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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Robotic dogs are expected to help transport waste at Taishan Mountain in Tai'an, Shandong province, merging cutting-edge technology with environmental conservation to address the growing waste management challenges at this popular tourist destination.

As hikers made their way up the steep slopes of Taishan on Monday, they were captivated by the sight of a robotic dog prototype carrying waste on its back, under the control of staff members.

As it ascended, the robot broadcast messages encouraging visitors to safeguard the mountain's environment, bringing a touch of delight to the weary hikers.

Taishan, a UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage site, welcomed a record-breaking 8.62

million visitors last year, intensifying its waste transportation hurdles due to its intricate terrain.

"After exploring various solutions, we believe that employing robotic assistants for transportation is a viable option," said Zhao Xingzhong, leader of the South Heavenly Gate sanitation team of the Property Management Company at Taishan Cultural Tourism Group.

Over a three-day period from Saturday to Monday, tests were conducted at the base, middle and peak of the mountain. Equipped with a shelf and cargo box capable of carrying 30 to 40 kilograms, the robots underwent assessments for adaptability, climbing prowess, load-bearing capacity, endurance and emergency maneuvering on the mountain's challenging terrain.

Results indicated that they could summit from the base within two hours, while the average time for

adult tourists not carrying loads is around four hours. The robots can operate for four to six hours on a full charge.

An assessment on the Eighteen Bends, a steep section of the mountain with slopes exceeding 45 degrees, scrutinized the robots' performance under extreme conditions.

"The robotic dogs demonstrate superior stability on relatively flat or less steep sections, such as the base and middle parts of the mountain," said Jin Da, market manager at Unitree Robotics in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

"Further enhancements are required on the Eighteen Bends due to the high tourist traffic to ensure visitor safety."

While excelling in most aspects during the tests, the robotic dogs require improvements in design aspects such as raising the height of

the cargo storage box and coming up with better sealing for waste packages, he said.

The robots adapted to over 80 percent of the mountain's terrain during the tests, indicating promising results in waste transportation and making them potentially viable replacements for workers tasked with hauling the trash, the property management company said.

"The robotic dogs' ascent on Taishan Mountain demonstrates their reliability and practicality in challenging conditions, providing valuable insights for future applications in rescue operations, exploration and logistics fields," Jin said.

"We are still in the testing phase and will further refine the design to implement the next round of tests promptly, aiming to successfully deploy the robotic dogs for waste transportation in the Taishan Mountain scenic area," he added.



A robotic dog being tested for garbage transport draws the attention of visitors at Taishan Mountain in Tai'an, Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Throughout the testing period, the robots became a unique attraction, with many tourists pausing to capture moments with these innovative assistants.

"I saw it climbing and even took a

photo with it. It's truly remarkable," said Wang Yang, a tourist from Harbin, Heilongjiang province. "It would be even more incredible if it could carry people up the mountain in the future."

GLOBAL LENS



A student takes notes during a lesson in the classroom of the reconstructed school in Muthanna, Iraq, on Oct 8.



Students at the corridor of the reconstructed school in Muthanna, Iraq, on Oct 8.



Students take lessons at the reconstructed school in Muthanna, Iraq, on Oct 8.

CONFLICT *to* CLASSROOM

Chinese companies help build schools that rekindle war-torn Iraqi education

As the school bell rang, students hurried into their classrooms. The lively courtyard fell silent, allowing the cheerful sounds of reading to stand out.

The scene unfolded at a model school built with the help of Chinese expertise in Muthanna, Iraq.

The school, set up by the Power Construction Corporation of China (PowerChina), spans 3,500 square meters and accommodates about 1,200 students. It features modern facilities designed to enhance the learning environment.

Iraq has completed the construction of 500 new schools nationwide, with an additional 500 set to be finished by the end of the year. The effort is part of a multiphase initiative to improve the country's educational infrastructure, as reported by the Iraqi News, a local online newspaper.

Kareem Al-Sayed, spokesperson for Iraq's Ministry of Education, said that the schools are being constructed under Iraqi-Chinese initiatives. Many provinces are in the advanced stages of school construction, according to the ministry.

In 2021, several Chinese companies signed contracts with Iraq to build 1,000 schools as part of a broader move to construct 8,000 schools across the country. PowerChina is responsible for 679 of these schools across 10 provinces, following the initial tender for 1,000 schools.

Li Chuansong, project manager for PowerChina's model school in Muthanna, said that the company has completed 53 schools in this province, providing educational spaces for over 50,000 local students.

"The local community refers to these well-equipped, high-quality



Students with an engineer of the PowerChina group, which helped rebuild the Muthanna high school, in Iraq on Oct 8. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

schools as 'Chinese schools,' Li said in an interview with Xinhua News Agency.

Educational challenges

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Iraq's once exemplary

education system, which boasted nearly 100 percent primary enrollment in the 1970s, has drastically declined due to wars, violence and political instability.

Assafir Al-Arabi, an independent media platform in the Middle East, said that "following the US invasion

of Iraq in 2003, the collapse in the education sector was clear, both in statistical data and in observable reality".

"Iraq and its education sector were plunged into the Dark Ages. During those years, the infrastructure and overall moral foundation of

the education system were destroyed," it said, adding that the public spending rate, which used to be \$675 a student in 1978, dropped to less than \$29 a student annually during the years of occupation.

School dropout rates have reached 35 percent in elementary

schools and 45 percent in high schools, according to latest figures. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund stated that 3.2 million Iraqi school-age children have dropped out of school.

In December 2022, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani said that Iraq required 8,000 new schools to address significant educational infrastructure deficits.

At the time, over 1.4 million new students were preparing to enter schools, with many — carrying their new backpacks and bidding farewell to their parents — facing the prospect of sitting on the floor in a mud-built classroom that could potentially collapse at any moment.

Saif Farhan, a representative of the Iraqi government overseeing school construction projects, said that decades of conflict have severely damaged the country's educational infrastructure, further exacerbated by insufficient reconstruction efforts, as reported by Xinhua.

"The Iraqi government was eager to contract with accredited international companies, and PowerChina, with its extensive construction experience, was one of the first chosen," Farhan said.

He also highlighted the positive effects of the Belt and Road Initiative, emphasizing Iraq's plans for continued collaboration with reputable Chinese companies to benefit society and secure a brighter future.

"The Iraqi government and people welcome this initiative, and we have witnessed the positive impact of many projects, such as this school-building effort, which serves a large portion of the Iraqi population," Farhan said.

CHINA DAILY

A photo of the school before its reconstruction. Students had to take lessons in the open.



Chinese engineers from the PowerChina company with local personnel at the school on Oct 8.



The school after its reconstruction, which allows it to hold about 1,200 students.



An aerial view of the model school rebuilt with the help of PowerChina on Oct 8.



BUSINESS

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Import expo to boost openness, market access

By WANG KEJU
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The 7th China International Import Expo, which is scheduled to be held in Shanghai from Nov 5 to 10, is a significant effort by the world's second-largest economy to enhance its high-level openness and provide the world with access to its super-sized market, officials and experts said.

The upcoming expo and similar trade exhibitions are poised to serve as crucial gateways for products from the least developed nations to access the vast consumer base in China and beyond, thereby driving inclusive and shared development, they added.

With an exhibition area of more than 360,000 square meters, the expo is set to welcome a total of 3,496 exhibitors from 129 countries and regions, surpassing previous records in both the number of participating countries and businesses, said Tang Wenhong, assistant minister of commerce on Wednesday.

As a platform dedicated to unveiling the latest in innovation, the expo will showcase over 400 groundbreaking new products this year, which will help drive industry upgrades and enrich domestic supply chains, Tang said during a news conference.

These premier products encompass a wide range of technological frontiers such as high-end equipment, new materials, marine engineering equipment, biotechnology, and advanced agricultural technologies, said Wu Zhengping, deputy director-general of the China International Import Expo Bureau.

As a participant in seven consecutive editions of the expo, medical technology company Medtronic will unveil nearly a hundred innovative products and technologies during the expo in the fields of cardiology, vascular health, surgical medicine, neuroscience, and diabetes care.

With China's vast population base, increasing healthcare needs and the government's steadfast commitment to public health, the Chinese market presents immense potential for companies like Medtronic to expand their presence, said Gu Yushao, senior vice-president of Medtronic.

Recognizing the opportunities that abound in China, Medtronic remains bullish on the market's prospects and is keen on deepening its local value chain, Gu added. In a move to fortify the expo as an international public good, China has announced plans to enhance its support for 37 of the world's least developed countries by facilitating their participation at the trade event.

The expo will play a better role in bridging gaps and facilitating opportunities for enterprises from the least developed countries to access the vast Chinese market and participate more actively in the global economic landscape, Tang said. This year's expo will showcase a significant expansion of the African products zone. With a focus on highlighting African specialty agricultural products such as shea butter, coffee, sesame, peanuts and soybeans, the zone aims to promote increased procurement agreements and the establishment of long-term cooperative relationships, Tang said.

China will grant duty-free access to 100 percent of products originating from 33 African countries, the country said during the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing in September.

China's first homegrown and fully autonomous mobile operating system was launched by tech firm Huawei Technologies Co on Tuesday night, breaking the global OS landscape dominated by Google's Android and Apple's iOS systems.

The breakthrough is very likely to "extend beyond smartphones to devices like computers," which once again showed that the United States' suppression of China's tech sector will only fuel domestic drive for independent innovation, industry experts said.

Huawei's latest mobile operating system, HarmonyOS Next, is also dubbed a "pure-blood" version of Harmony, as it does away with roots to the Android system and will no longer support Android-based applications.

Yu Chengdong, executive director of Huawei, said that all of China's top 5,000 apps have developed native applications for the new system, and to date, more than 15,000 native applications have been launched.



Yu Chengdong, executive director of Huawei, at the launch of the company's new mobile operating system on Tuesday in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. BAI YU / XINHUA

Huawei reshaping mobile OS landscape

HarmonyOS Next may 'help China to reduce reliance on certain chips'

By CHENG YU
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China's first homegrown and fully autonomous mobile operating system was launched by tech firm Huawei Technologies Co on Tuesday night, breaking the global OS landscape dominated by Google's Android and Apple's iOS systems.

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travel the path that foreign companies have been doing for a decade," Yu said, emphasizing that the number of devices supporting HarmonyOS has exceeded 1 billion, with 6.75 million registered developers.

According to him, the number of native applications is 10 times higher than in June, when Huawei released a beta version of HarmonyOS Next.

Han Juke, deputy head of the China Communications Industry Association, said that for the first time, China has achieved independent controllability of a domestic operating system, in terms of underlying architecture, connections and a more secure information protection mechanism.

"Huawei broke out of its cocoon and became a butterfly," Han said. "Such efforts not only demonstrate the country's determination in key technological breakthroughs, but also lay a solid foundation for the country's telecommunications industry in the future."

More than that, Xiang Ligang, director-general of the Information Consumption Alliance, said that "it is very likely that the system could extend beyond smartphones to devices like computers, there-

fore helping China to reduce reliance on certain chips".

"US' suppression of China's tech industry is counterproductive to global supply chains and will only cause harm to the US itself," Xiang emphasized. "Instead, these pressures will only fuel China's drive for more homegrown and independent technological breakthroughs."

Currently, HarmonyOS Next is available on a number of devices including Huawei's Mate 60 and Huawei Pura 70 series, among others, and will be available on more handsets next year, including its latest trifold Mate XT smartphone and mid-range Nova models, the company said.

However, industry experts also pointed out that Huawei's latest operating system still faces several challenges including with ecosystem partners on issues such as commission fees.

Wang Haoyu, CEO of Merit Asset Management, said: "Future success also requires strong ecosystem support and good market strategies. The next few years will be a critical period to test whether HarmonyOS Next can grow into a world-class operating system. Huawei and other ecosystem partners need to work together to ensure that it can stand out in the fierce market competition."

Jan-Sept industrial output proves solid

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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China's industrial economy maintained steady growth in the first three quarters, with more efforts to boost vehicle consumption, said the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

At a news conference on Wednesday, the ministry reported a 5.8 percent year-on-year increase in value added by industrial enterprises above a designated size, with manufacturing rising by 6 percent.

The value added of all industrial enterprises accounted for 31.8 percent of the nation's GDP.

In the January-September period, 38 out of the 41 industries above a designated size witnessed year-on-year growth in value added figures.

Four sectors — electronics, non-ferrous metals, chemicals and autos — contributed to nearly 50 percent of the growth in industrial production.

In the mainland's 31 provincial-level regions, 28 registered year-on-year growth in value added, and nine major industrial provinces grew faster than the national average. Some major industrial cities, such as Shaoying and Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, and Hefei, Anhui province, reached double-digit growth, according to the news conference.

Investments in the industrial sector grew by 12.3 percent, marking eight consecutive months of double-digit expansion, while export delivery value in key industries such as automobiles and aerospace posted strong double-digit growth.

High-tech manufacturing grew 9.1 percent year-on-year. The expansion of 5G infrastructure and intelligent manufacturing also continued.

Zhao Zhiguo, chief engineer of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said at the news conference that the ministry will cultivate and strengthen new industries such as low-altitude economy, commercial aerospace and biological products.

Zhao said the auto sector in particular saw steady growth.

From January to September, the value added of the sector increased 7.9 percent year-on-year. China produced 21.47 million vehicles and sold 21.57 million, marking increases of 1.9 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively.

Exports also surged, with 4.31 million vehicles shipped overseas, up 27.3 percent year-on-year.

New energy vehicles have become a major growth driver. In the first three quarters, NEV production and sales both exceeded 8.3 million units, reflecting increases of more than 30 percent compared to the previous year.

NEVs now make up more than half of all passenger vehicle sales in China. NEV exports also climbed, reaching 928,000 units, a 12.5 percent year-on-year increase.

Despite the strong performance, Zhao said domestic demand remains subdued, and rising uncertainties pose risks to further export growth.

To address these challenges, he said the ministry will launch several measures aimed at boosting automobile consumption.

These include trade-in incentives for old vehicles, tax benefits and continued support for rural NEV initiatives. Additionally, new pilot programs focused on battery-swapping models and electrification of public sector vehicles are expected to further stimulate demand.

"The government will also optimize automobile production policies and encourage innovation," said Zhao. Key areas of focus will be automotive chips, battery materials and development of autonomous driving technologies.

The government is also pushing for integration of intelligent connected vehicles, with pilot programs supporting vehicle, road and cloud technology connectivity.



The first China-Europe freight train carrying exhibits for the 7th China International Import Expo arrives at Minhang Station in Shanghai on Sunday. FANG ZHE / XINHUA

Briefly

Subway boosts presence in China

United States-based sandwich chain Subway on Tuesday announced the opening of its 4,000th store in the Asia-Pacific region. The opening of the new store in Shanghai marks a key step in the brand's accelerated expansion in the Chinese market, the company said. As one of the world's leading fast-food chains, Subway has been increasing its investment in China. Since June 2023, Subway has opened over 250 new stores on the Chinese mainland.

Central SOEs invest in emerging industries

The investment of China's centrally administrated State-owned enterprises in strategic emerging industries reached 1.4 trillion yuan (\$196.6 billion) in the first three quarters, official data showed. The investment during the period jumped 17.6 percent year-on-year, accounting for nearly 40 percent of central SOEs' total investment, said the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Mastercard ramps up payment services in China

By ZHOU LANXU
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Global payments technology company Mastercard has launched more than 50 bankcard programs in China via its new joint venture as the second foreign player in the domestic bankcard clearing sector, further benefiting from the continuous financial opening-up of the nation, said a company executive.

"We will expand the availability of Mastercard-branded products, facilitate the addition of millions of new acceptance locations across the country and deliver seamless and safe payment experiences," Dennis Chang, Mastercard's executive vice-president, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily.

In November last year, Mastercard NetsUnion Information Technology (Beijing) Co Ltd — a joint venture set up by the US-based company and China's payment clearing platform NetsUnion Clearing Corp — received formal approval to begin domestic bankcard clearing activity.

This made Mastercard the second foreign payments network eligible to clear renminbi transactions on the Chinese mainland, meaning that it could authorize banks to issue and accept Mastercard renminbi bank cards in the country,

"We highly recognize the country's continuous opening-up efforts in the financial sector."

Dennis Chang, Mastercard's executive vice-president

following American Express receiving such approval in 2020.

Chang said that Mastercard NetsUnion has launched more than 50 New China Mastercard card programs by partnering with about 20 Chinese banks since its first transactions took place in May, enabling Chinese consumers to make simpler and safer payments at more than 100 million merchant locations worldwide with only one card.

"We highly recognize the country's continuous opening-up efforts in the financial sector. Mastercard has effectively benefited from these initiatives," Chang said, adding that hosting the Sibos 2024 event in Beijing signified a major milestone for China's financial industry, showcasing its achievements, innovation and continuous opening to the outside world.

Sibos 2024, which runs through Thursday in Beijing, is a global

financial services event organized by the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, or Swift.

Addressing the event on its opening day on Monday, Lu Lei, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, said the nation's central bank, after giving approval to Mastercard to conduct local payment processing in China last November, will continue to promote high-quality opening-up of the financial sector.

"In this process, we will work with overseas counterparts in a market-oriented and law-based manner while following international laws," Lu said.

Chang said Mastercard has also benefited from a recovery in outbound travel by Chinese consumers, having observed a continuous recovery in spending and an expanded list of outbound travel destinations, including emerging markets in Africa.

Data from the company showed that the total spending volume of Mastercard-branded cards issued in China exceeded pre-COVID levels in the first quarter of this year.

Interestingly, compared to 2023, spending by cardholders in sectors such as transportation, travel agencies, and car rentals has significantly increased this year, reflecting consumers' growing preference for personalized choices and spending

on experience while traveling.

"Mastercard is well-positioned to seize these opportunities by offering tailored payment data insights and diversified payment options," Chang said.

In terms of payments by inbound travelers to China, Chang underlined that while in China, the dominant option of digital payments is through QR code scanning, in other places, people are more familiar with card-based payments, especially contactless payments.

To help address any inconvenience induced by this difference, Mastercard has partnered with Weixin Pay and Alipay to enable overseas-issued bank cards to be linked to these two digital wallets. The company has also continuously accelerated the expansion of its card-based payment acceptance network.

As of May 2024, the number of active Mastercard cardholder accounts on Alipay and Weixin Pay had increased nearly 10-fold compared to January 2023, while the number of Mastercard offline inbound transactions has more than doubled year-on-year.

"We are excited to work with local partners to usher in a 'higher-quality development' era and play our role as the bridge to better connect China and the world," Chang added.

BUSINESS

Opening-up of energy sector to expand further

China willing to work with partners on more green energy development plans

By LIU YUKUN
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China will further expand its opening-up in the energy sector, engage in extensive international cooperation and contribute to a more stable global energy supply, said Zhang Jianhua, head of the National Energy Administration, on Wednesday.

Zhang said China has made significant contributions to stabilize the global energy market and its green transformation by providing affordable electricity worldwide. Over the past decade, average power costs per kilowatt-hour of wind and solar power projects have fallen by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

Globally, the country has to date contributed over 80 percent of photovoltaic modules and 70 percent of wind power equipment. Its products have been exported to over 200 countries and regions, Zhang said.

"Building a diversified, clean and stable energy supply system is an important path for developing countries to enhance their energy security capabilities. We are willing to work with other countries around the world to develop more ambitious green energy development plans

based on each country's endowments and development needs."

Zhang's remarks were made during the Third Belt and Road Energy Ministerial Conference held in Qingdao, Shandong province.

During the conference, Zhang said the NEA is promoting the expansion of the Belt and Road Energy Partnership, which is joined by 34 countries, with Iran being a new partner this year.

The NEA also released the Belt and Road Green Energy Cooperation Action Plan at the conference, calling for participating countries to collectively enhance their capabilities for green energy security, strengthen green energy policy and institutional innovation, collaborate on green energy technological innovation and build a strong Belt and Road Energy Partnership.

Hu Ming, head of the China Electric Power Planning and Engineering Institute (EPPEI), said that developing countries' combined installed capacity of power generating units will exceed 10 billion kilowatts by 2030, indicating huge demand for power infrastructure.

"Renewable energy will become the primary source of electricity generation in developing countries, accounting for over 70 percent by

2030 and over 80 percent by 2040. Prospects for the photovoltaic power market are broad, and offshore wind power is expected to become a new growth point," Hu said.

According to a blue book released at the conference by the EPPEI, over the past five years, power consumption in developing countries has been steadily increasing at an annual rate of about 4.4 percent. By 2023, it reached 17.7 trillion kilowatt-hours, representing 65.2 percent of the global total.

Over the same period, the installed capacity of power generating units in developing countries has grown at an annual rate exceeding 6 percent, reaching 5.65 billion kilowatts in 2023, which accounts for 63.2 percent of the global total, the blue book said.

Last year, the installed capacity of renewable power generating units in developing countries reached 2.6 billion kW, up nearly 20 percent year-on-year. Solar and wind capacities increased to 1 billion kW and 589 million kW, respectively. These countries have significantly expanded their power transmission and distribution networks, achieving 90.3 percent grid coverage, it said.

The energy storage industry in developing countries is rapidly developing, with newly added installed capacity reaching 53.5 million kWh in 2023, a 324.6 percent increase from the previous year.

ABB to ramp up R&D investment in nation

By ZHU WENQIAN
and ZHONG NAN

Swiss technology company ABB Ltd said it will continue to increase investment and strengthen research and development efforts in China, its second-largest market, especially in smart buildings and industrial sectors.

The company's new smart buildings technology center opened in Beijing on Tuesday, and the R&D center is forecast to play a key role in its global innovation system.

The center will focus on global R&D tasks including digitalization, artificial intelligence, smart energy, smart cities, and smart buildings and homes.

In the meantime, its factory's laboratory center has also opened in Beijing. With 220 sets of equipment, the center's testing scope covers terminal power distribution products and building automation products, the company said.

"We have developed products based on demand in China, and we will continue to invest in China, as we believe in the market. It's very important," said Mike Mustapha, president of ABB's smart buildings division.

"We have invested significantly in R&D and taken a local-for-local strategy in China. Besides the Beijing R&D team, we have set up an R&D center in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, which has developed some cybersecurity products," Mustapha said.

ABB signed an agreement to acquire Siemens' wiring accessories business in China in May, indicating its commitment and confidence in the country. The acquisition is expected to close in the first half of 2025.

"As urbanization, electrification, digitalization and sustainability reshape our industry, we must support the market evolution. The acquisition will enable us to offer a full range of building automation and energy distribution solutions in China," Mustapha added.

In 2011, power generation capacity in China became the largest globally, providing huge business opportunities for global industrial players.

Currently, the power generation capacity of the Chinese mainland accounts for 30 percent of the total globally, followed by the United States and Russia, accounting for 16 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

The proportions of other regions

are below 5 percent, according to data from the Shenzhen, Guangdong province-based Qianzhan Industrial Research Institute.

ABB said it is bullish on its business growth potential in the next few years in China, a huge market.

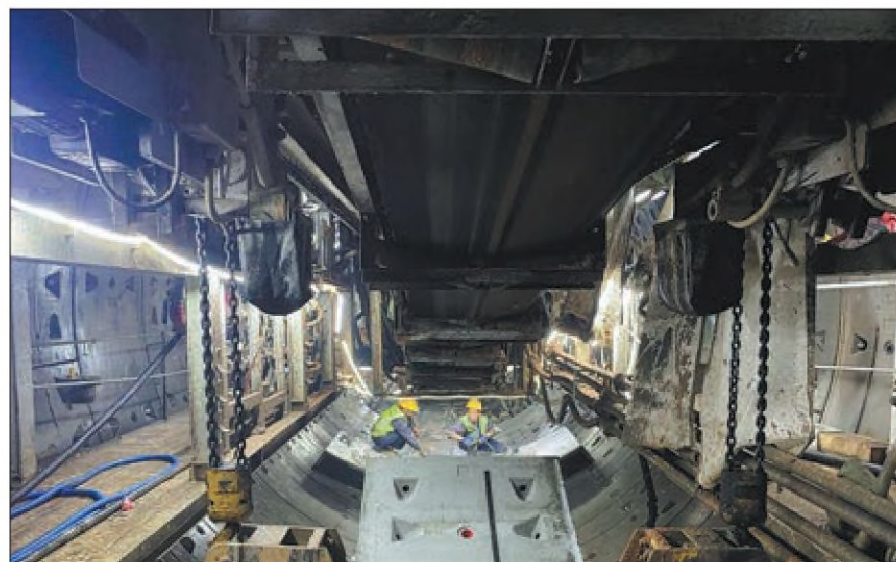
The company said smart building is the largest market segment of the power industry, including businesses such as the lighting control of buildings. In addition, demand for electricity in the industrial sector is also high.

Compared with several other countries, China has a stable political, economic and social environment, which helps attract foreign investments, said Fu Yifu, a researcher at the Star Atlas Institute of Finance.

"Against the backdrop of increasing downward pressure of the global economy, the Chinese economy has maintained steady growth, indicating its resilience. China has spared no effort to promote high-standard opening-up and optimize its business environment, reflecting its sincerity in actively attracting foreign investments," Fu said.

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Building with a giant



Builders of China Railway 24th Bureau Group work beside a tunnel boring machine on a project in Jinan, Shandong province. The work is part of the construction taking place on Jinan Metro Line 4, which spans east-west across the provincial capital. Amid the nation's firm push for infrastructure building, the city is expanding its rail transit system to further facilitate urban transport and address the burden on road traffic. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Dubai Chambers sees opportunities for mutual Sino-Middle Eastern growth

By LI JIAYING
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Chinese companies have made significant economic contributions to the Middle East region's economy across a variety of sectors and are believed to continue to play an essential role in the region's future development, said Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, president and CEO of Dubai Chambers.

"The increasing two-way investments between the two markets reflect the synergies created by China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33), which unlock significant opportunities for mutual growth," said Lootah in an interview with China Daily.

Lootah added that both markets emphasize building a knowledge-based economy and that key areas such as technology, renewable energy, logistics, healthcare and infrastructure are poised for steady growth and will serve as important areas for mutual development and cooperation.

According to Dubai Chambers' data, China has emerged as Dubai's biggest trading partner, with non-oil trade between the two sides reaching \$67.8 billion in 2023.

In addition, the total number of Chinese companies registered as active members of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce stood at 5,480 at the end of August, which increased 41 percent between 2022 and 2023, the chamber's data said.

"These companies have played a significant role in industries such as technology, real estate, manufacturing, and logistics, driving local job

creation and economic diversification," Lootah said.

He made the remarks during the just-concluded SuperBridge Summit 2024 in Dubai this month, which taps the increasingly important Middle East market to emerge as a new economic powerhouse.

"China and the Middle East, both as developing economies, have a deep understanding of each other's economic development situations and have accumulated extensive experience across various industries, which can be mutually beneficial and help businesses to grow more effectively on both sides," said Vanessa Xu, co-founder of SuperBridge Council, the event's organizer.

"The rapid development and substantial demand in the Middle East for emerging sectors, such as the digital economy, e-commerce, new energy, aerospace and biomedicine, also present broad opportunities for Chinese companies," Xu said.

Lootah also said he believes one of the most important cooperation sectors for Dubai and China is digital transformation.

"China has emerged as a leader in advanced technologies, and we share its strong commitment to innovation. We are keen to deepen cooperation in sectors including artificial intelligence, the internet of things and blockchain," he said.

Lootah added that collaboration between the two sides will create opportunities for partnerships in digital infrastructure and smart city projects, as well as bring Dubai closer to achieving the D33 agenda target of generating an

annual economic contribution of 100 billion UAE dirhams (\$27.2 billion) from digital transformation projects.

The Middle East market also boasts other advantages such as its geographic position linking global markets, and the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries have some of the highest per capita GDPs in the world, reflecting a high level of economic development and a promising consumer market, Xu said.

For example, with its Saudi Vision 2030 initiative, Saudi Arabia presents significant market potential, but entering the market comes with high barriers, favoring companies that have already established business models and strong localization capabilities, Xu said.

"While the economy is largely driven by oil, the private sector remains relatively underdeveloped, so the landscape especially provides opportunities for foreign companies to engage in partnerships with local governments, state-owned enterprises and banks," she added.

In contrast, the UAE has made greater strides in terms of business environment and openness, Xu said. According to the World Bank's 2024 business environment report, the UAE ranks third in the Arab world and 25th globally, underscoring the country's ongoing regulatory improvements and the ease of starting and operating businesses there.

"When considering which market to enter, Chinese companies should assess the different regional development priorities alongside their own core strengths and strategic needs," Xu said.

United, the future is bright!



CULTURAL HERITAGE



From left: A turquoise seal and its stamp from the pre-Qin period (before 221 BC), with two characters *zhong xin* ("loyalty" and "trustworthiness"). A jade stamp and seal, with two characters *xiang liao* (a person's name), from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Ancient stamp gets seal of approval

Cultural icon used to mark identity provides an insight into history and tradition, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.

Kazunori Matsumura, a Japanese researcher specializing in ancient Chinese sealing clay, was excited and felt at home in China with his fellow academics from across East Asia last month.

He was participating in a seminar hosted by the Center for Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Paleography at Fudan University in Shanghai on Sept 28 and 29, where dozens of scholars and collectors from China, Japan and South Korea gathered to share their latest collections and research results on ancient Chinese seals.

Archaeological excavations have shown that seals have been used in China since the later period of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) and were commonly used in many ancient civilizations in Eurasia.

Over the 3,000 years since then, seals have continuously transformed into unique forms with special functions, as they evidenced social, political, economic and cultural activities in ancient East Asia.

Currently, seals as a credential tool are still widely used in daily life and play an important role in East Asian countries and regions.

For researchers and collectors, ancient seals generally refer to official and private seals in daily use. But the research examines not just seals but also sealing clay and pottery inscriptions.

Specifically, the seal refers to the original seal, while sealing clay refers to the clay used to cover the sealed property, just like stamped wax on an envelope, while pottery texts refer in many cases to the pottery imprinted with seals.

All of them are of significant value in paleographic and philological researches.

Moreover, as seals usually recorded various historical information, such as personal names, clan emblems, and names of officials and places, they are also particularly valued as important sources for research on history, geography, ethnicity, ideology and cultures.

In addition to academic values, seals have high artistic value as well.

The seals' knobs come in diverse forms and shapes and are regarded as art, and the character structure, stroke arrangement and layout decoration on the tiny square have often inspired calligraphy and graphic design.

Matsumura, who started studying sealing clay in 1987, was actually first captivated by calligraphy. However, instead of writing calligraphy, he found himself more interested in research on calligraphy, and then became fascinated by ancient Chinese writings, such as *xiaozhuan* (small seal script) and *lishu* (clerical script).

"I learned from my teacher, who was a researcher at the Tokyo National Museum, that few people in Japan were studying sealing clay and pottery texts," Matsumura recalls. "I was interested in the calligraphy and would like to take up the challenge that few people had made before."

He adds that he felt like he was coming back home at the inspiring seminar with many Chinese experts in this field.

Apart from research papers, Matsumura has been making another major contribution to ancient Chinese seal research in East Asia, together with another scholar, Liu Haiyu, from the Institute of Cultural Heritage at Shandong University.

Liu is also a guest professor at Iwate University in Japan, where he has worked since 2012. During his stay in Japan, he started an investigation on the ancient Chinese seals kept in the country, roughly 15,000 pieces.

Liu says that he has a sense of "national sentiment" that has been constantly motivating his investigation.

"Ancient Chinese seals are our cultural treasures. Chinese researchers were not able to see and use these original materials (Chinese seals) in Japan in the past," Liu explains, referring to the Chinese seals traded or brought to Japan, which are now mostly kept



From left: Professors Liu Haiyu, from the Institute of Cultural Heritage at Shandong University, and Chen Jian and Shi Xiejie from the Center for Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Paleography of Fudan University examine ancient seals at the Iwate Prefectural Museum in Japan in 2019.



From top: The book, *Infinite Worlds in a Square Inch*. Pottery texts from the pre-Qin period. Right: Sealing clay from the Han Dynasty.



in private galleries or collectors' homes.

"But with our investigation, we can publish our research content to share with scholars from across the world. Chinese and Japanese cultures have similar roots in many aspects, and seal carving is very popular in Japan," Liu says.

"We researchers, seal engravers, collectors and publishers can join together to make our traditional Chinese culture shine brighter."

This echoes with the theme of the seminar, which aims to bring together various parties in the sector to promote cultural exchanges.

Sun Weizu, a research fellow with Shanghai Museum and vice-president of the Xiling Seal Engravers' Society, was among the representatives at the seminar.

"We used to see high thresholds of the collection and research on ancient seals, but in recent decades, we have witnessed the participation of the wider public in this sector, thanks to the growing economy and people's passion for traditional

Chinese culture," Sun says.

In the last 40 years, there have been more ancient seals discovered and publicized than ever, according to Sun.

"In particular, private collectors have made remarkable contributions to new original materials (seals) publication and further research," he adds.

More such gatherings are needed to push forward the protection of Chinese cultural heritage, Sun says.

During the semi-

nar, a two-volume book of ancient Chinese seals, sealing clay and pottery texts was released.

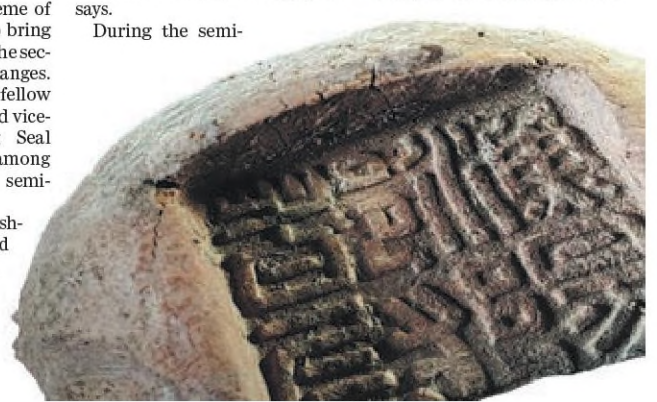
In the two-volume book, *Infinite Worlds in a Square Inch*, a total of 368 pieces of original materials, including seals made of bronze, gold, silver and jade, as well as sealing clays and pottery texts, ranging from the late Shang Dynasty to the time of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-581).

"One highlight of the two-volume book is the unprecedented high-definition and minute details of the ancient seals," says Xu Xiongzi, chief editor of the two-volume book, who's also the director of China Calligraphers Association and deputy secretary-general of the Xiling Seal Engravers' Society.

"It will help the engravers learn more about the techniques and gain wisdom from the ancient Chinese craftsmen," Xu adds.

Liu Zhao, another chief editor of the two-volume book and head of the Center for Research on Chinese Excavated Classics and Paleography of Fudan University, notes that the seminar and the two-volume book will benefit academia, calligraphers and engravers, as well as help promote the research on ancient Chinese seals, cultures and arts regardless of national boundaries.

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Excavation unearths 5,000-year-old royal tomb amid capital speculation

ZHENGZHOU — A tomb dating back approximately 5,000 years, presumed to be the grave of a prehistoric king, has been discovered at a ruins site in Central China's Henan province with more than 350 artifacts unearthed to date.

Located in the Wangzhuang ruins in the city of Yongcheng, the tomb covers more than 17 square meters, a super large size for that period.

The Wangzhuang ruins belong to the middle and late periods of Dawenkou Culture (4000-2600 BC) of the late Neolithic Age. Since 2023, experts from the Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, the Beijing-based Capital Normal University and other institutions have jointly conducted excavations at Wangzhuang.

"The latest discovery indicates that the Wangzhuang ruins are not an ordinary settlement but rather, the capital of a prehistoric kingdom," says Zhu Guanghua, associate professor at Capital Normal University.

The tomb, measuring between 4.52 to 4.8 meters in length and 3.47 to 3.68 meters in width, features

both inner and outer coffins. It contains many burial items, including more than 100 pieces of pottery, nearly 200 small jade ornaments, bone tools and animal remains, such as pig mandibles symbolizing wealth.

According to Zhu, the ancient tomb was once severely damaged. "The tomb owner's remains were removed and many significant artifacts were looted," he says.

"Most of the tomb owner's skeletal remains within the wooden coffin are missing, with only a few toe bones left."

"Small jade ornaments were scattered inside and outside the coffin and many stone ceremonial blades were deliberately broken," the archaeologist adds.

He notes that the findings suggest a deliberate act of tomb destruction shortly after the burial. Further research is underway to determine the reason.

This year, 45 tombs of Dawenkou Culture were discovered at the Wangzhuang ruins, with 27 already excavated. Some of the tombs are of higher status, yielding a wealth of



From left: Section of an excavated tomb dating back about 5,000 years in the Wangzhuang ruins in Yongcheng city, Henan province. A piece of decorated ivory retrieved from the ruins. PHOTOS BY XINHUA

artifacts and many contain pig mandibles, says Liu Haiwang, leader of the joint archaeological team.

More than 1,000 burial artifacts, including pottery and jade items, have been unearthed from the Wangzhuang ruins this year.

"The exquisite pottery, stone tools and jade artifacts vividly demonstrate the division of labor and the

level of productivity at that time," Liu says. "The richness of the burial objects is closely linked to the size of the tombs, indicating that a clear social hierarchy and class stratification had already emerged."

What excites archaeologists even more is that the artifacts unearthed from the latest tomb suggest that the Wangzhuang ruins were a cul-

tural melting pot in prehistoric times, where diverse cultures intersected and exchanged influences.

"The ancient residents were clearly influenced by the cultures of the eastern and the central regions, as well as cultural elements from the Yangtze River Basin," says Li Xinwei, deputy director of the Institute of Ancient History at the Chinese

Academy of Social Sciences.

According to Zhu, customs observed at the tomb, such as the burial of water deer teeth and the deformed occipital bone of the deceased, align closely with those of the eastern Dawenkou Culture.

However, excavations have also unveiled typical artifacts from contemporary Yangshao Culture, such as small-mouthed pointed-bottom jars and small-mouthed shoulder jars, indicating a cultural interplay between the Dawenkou and Yangshao traditions in the region.

Archaeologists highlighted the innovative spirit and artistic prowess of the ancient inhabitants of Wangzhuang, who skillfully blended various cultural influences to create a distinct group of pottery.

"Its discoveries testify to the initial exchanges of early Chinese civilization, providing evidence for its nature of diversity," Li says. "This site offers important examples for studying the cultural fusion across different prehistoric regions."

XINHUA

LIFE

LIVING HERITAGE

Delicate wood-framed wall paintings, refrigerator magnets and small decorative table items bearing elements ranging from ancient gardens and chubby babies to auspicious animals never fail to stop passersby at Wang Yan's stand.

The woman is an inheritor from Tianjin Yangliuqing Fine Arts Press (or Yangliuqing painting society), founded in North China's Tianjin in the 1950s.

Wang presented a few creative cultural products based on the craftsmanship of the traditional woodblock paintings that boasts a history of more than 400 years at the 8th China Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo held in Jinan, East China's Shandong province, from Oct 17 to Monday.

"People showed a lot of interest in our vibrant folk art that is characterized by colorful, lively depictions of festive themes and daily life," she says.

The paintings used to record the most fashionable and popular items of folk society in their time and thus are widely considered a good reflection of the culture and history.

They were named a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006.

"Their subjects were very extensive, covering social life, literature and opera history," Wang explains.

To cater to modern customers, Wang and her team at the painting society have toned down the strong hues and scaled down the size of the traditional paintings while applying the craft to items that enliven tea and study rooms today.

"We have approximately 180 commodities on the market now but our society preserves more than 6,000 ancient woodblocks and more than 20,000 colorful drafts," Wang says, adding that most of them have been in static preservation.

Since 2022, the society has launched a project to make better use of these ancient resources.

"The traditional patterns have proved very popular," Wang says.

Wang's team has also experimented and worked on other materials, such as copper, to create the paintings.

"We draw more inspiration from our reserves and come up with more creative culture products to have the traditional culture better integrated with modern life," she adds.

Yangliuqing art was among more than 200 intangible cultural heritage items on display at the Shandong expo hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and organized by the Shandong culture and tourism department and the Jinan government.

Wang's innovation cause aligns with the theme of the expo that highlighted the integration of intangible cultural heritage with modern life for better protection and inheritance.

The expo aims to fully showcase the achievements of China's intangible cultural heritage protection over the 20 years since it joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, according to the organizers.

Young women and girls gathered at Huang Liyong's booth during the expo as she arranged polychromatic



Girls wear floral headdress that is traditional Xunpu women's attire from Fujian province at the 8th China Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo held in Jinan, Shandong province, from Oct 17 to Monday. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Intangible cultural heritage sees growing consumer appeal

Drawing inspiration from history and tradition, inheritors create contemporary products, **Yang Feiyue** reports in Jinan.



Left: Visitors try distinctive cuisines, vinegar especially, as pictured. The cuisines were a highlight at the expo. **Right:** An inheritor showcases a paper umbrella at the expo.



flowers for a headdress that is part of the women's customs from Xunpu, a coastal village in Quanzhou, Southeast China's Fujian province.

After they got a general idea of how to make them, they wore some readily-made headdresses for photos.

The traditional practices and cultural expressions of the Quanzhou women have been carried forward for more than 800 years and include unique clothing and accessories.

They were collectively named a national intangible cultural heritage in 2008.

"It takes about 10 minutes to pull off a flower headdress the traditional way, using multiple tools and layers of different flowers," Huang says.

The headdress features a base of interwoven greenery or fabric onto which various colorful blossoms, such as chrysanthemums, peonies or lilies, are delicately arranged.

"We also style a hair bun, wear

hairpins and long wigs," she adds.

To satisfy the rising public interest in the flower headdress, Huang brought in many simplified versions suitable for different hairstyles.

She has noticed increasing interest in her traditions at home and abroad.

As an inheritor of the younger generation, she saw how the headdress was liked by international visitors during a Quanzhou cultural and tourism promotion in

Paris earlier this year.

"Although we couldn't understand the language, their surprised expressions and thumbs-up gestures showed they loved our designs," she says.

Huang hopes innovating the traditional art can make things easier for more people to appreciate the local culture.

"It is our way of expressing our love for life and wishes for happiness," she says.

The traditional Chinese medicine session also turned out to be a big magnet, packing in young visitors to have medical practitioners take their pulse, receive massages and try therapeutic food.

"More than 10 doctors took nearly 100 visitors' pulses during the first day of the expo," says Qi Xianghua, an inheritor of the Bian Que pulse diagnosis, a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage in Shandong.

The traditional Chinese medicine diagnostic method is attributed to Bian Que, a legendary physician from ancient China who emphasized the pulse as a vital tool for understanding a patient's health status.

To better serve modern needs, innovations have been made based on traditional pulse diagnosis techniques.

"We combine traditional pulse methods with modern technology, analyzing multiple dimensions such as pulse pressure, speed, texture and weight. By precisely grasping these subtle characteristics, doctors can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the patient's physical condition," Qi says.

Additionally, performances and workshops are arranged for the public to better appreciate the charm of cultural heritage.

Tian Yiming, 8, had an opportunity to get his hands on a loom, which he had only seen on the popular video-sharing platform Bilibili.

Under an inheritor's guidance, he wove threads into a short piece of cloth in a few minutes, which gave him great satisfaction.

His mother, surnamed Zhang, says she didn't know her son could weave and appreciated the rare opportunity.

Zhang hopes the experience can pique her son's interest in more intangible cultural heritage in the future.

During the expo, related brand launches and business matchmaking events were hosted to boost exchange and cooperation. Practitioners, industry associations, experts, scholars, e-commerce platforms, and media exchanged new measures and achievements in the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

The goal is to have intangible cultural heritage better make its way into modern life, according to an official with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

After years of effort, the country has established a four-level intangible cultural heritage inventory system at the national, provincial, municipal and county levels, which has recognized over 100,000 representative items and more than 90,000 inheritors, according to the ministry.

The ministry will work with other related parties to actively promote the integration of intangible cultural heritage with tourism, enriching tourism content and innovating offerings.

By enhancing the travel experience, it also aims to find modern applications for traditional crafts and bring new vitality to them in contemporary life, says the official.

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UN tourism forum attracts visitors to try local handcrafting activities

By YANG FEIYUE

Neeraj Singh Dev made a special souvenir close to his heart during his trip to Guilin in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region in mid-October.

The man, who works for Thomas Cook India, wrote his hometown name on a special stone commonly found on the banks of the Lijiang River.

"My hometown name is very long, so I wrote the short version of it," says the man from India.

He was intrigued to do so after instantly being attracted to Lijiang sand and stone paintings that depict the stunning scenery of Guilin at the 2024 UN Tourism/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook held from Friday to Sunday.

The event was organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association, attracting 120 experts and representatives from 25 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia and Cambodia, who discussed consolidating tourism recovery in Asia.

They also explored cooperation under the application of digital technology and the integration of

tradition and innovation while sharing the latest trends and future developments in the Asia-Pacific tourism industry.

"It uses the sand and stones from the riverbed as materials to construct distant landscapes, creating handcrafted scrolls of nature," says inheritor Luo Qian of the art form, which was named a Guilin municipal-level intangible cultural heritage in 2022.

The painting requires eight major steps and over 20 processes to complete, including sourcing materials, selecting stones, composing the design and assembling, Luo adds.

To endear the art form to more people, Luo developed an easy kit that offers a quick experience for creating the paintings.

Many works on display during the forum were based on the original size of the stones, upon which paintings were made. "We taught visitors how to create their own patterns," Luo says.

In addition to sand and stone paintings, woodcarving and ancient architecture models by local artists also drew attention.

The vivid portrait of a girl from the Yao ethnic group and Buddhist figure carved out of wood and roots by artist Pan Kui impressed participants from home and abroad.



Left: A visitor paints on a stone under instruction from a Lijiang sand and stone painting artist at a tourism forum in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, held from Friday to Sunday. **Right:** A wood carving featuring a girl from the Yao ethnic group is a popular highlight at the forum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Pan says woodcarving explores the relationship between humans and wood and, in some cases, transforms the decayed into the magical.

By using natural materials and blending traditional Chinese ink painting elements with decaying wood from the mountains, the pieces acquire a sense of depth and

evoke the dynamic, expressive effects of ink brushwork, he adds.

"No two handcrafted wooden carvings are the same. Even if carved by the same person from similarly sized pieces of wood, two seemingly identical carvings will have subtle differences," he says.

Junichi Kumada, chief consultant with JTB Tourism Research and

Consulting Co., was impressed by the presentation of cultural heritage elements.

The activities are mostly related to cultural and natural aspects and thus help travelers from outside better understand the region, Kumada says.

He proposes that destinations like Guilin make more efforts to foster



and support local artists through tourism.

"More mini-shows featuring intangible cultural heritage can be performed to address the history and background of Guilin, creating a common understanding between locals and visitors," he says.

Guo Qingyang, who is studying tourism management at Colorado State University in the United States, is also impressed by the presence of intangible cultural heritage at the forum.

"These intangible cultural heritage creative products are especially appealing to young people," says Guo from Hubei province.

"The handcrafted wooden models of ancient architecture are both eco-friendly and cool, while the hand-painted Lijiang stone art interactions are unique and interesting," he adds.

According to the Pacific Asia Travel Association, the number of international tourists to the Asia-Pacific region is expected to increase from 619 million in 2024 to 762 million in 2026, showing strong growth momentum.

Experts at the forum agree that local traditions like intangible cultural heritage can play a positive role in adding to the travel experiences of international visitors.

COMMENT

Editorials

BRICS not anti-West but a facilitator of fairness and justice for Global South

The way some in the West, as indicated by some Western mainstream media's biased reports, see the ongoing BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, explains why the grouping has been gaining in strength, size and significance.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has to some extent reinforced these people's belief that, by hosting leaders from more than 30 Global South countries in the biggest multilateral event it has held in recent years, Russia is trying to show that the West cannot isolate it.

Yet that's the reading of only some in the West.

That the Kazan summit is witnessing the initial four BRIC members in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009 increase more than twofold — not to mention the presence of major countries from all continents barring Oceania — cannot be explained by what some Western politicians interpret as "some developing countries' club" but by the underlying requirements of development and international relations.

The changing nature of economic globalization over the past two decades not only gave birth to the grouping as an economic bloc of emerging market economies in 2006 but also boosted its growth in the following years, because the representation of developing countries in the West-led international organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, was disproportionately low.

No wonder a key subject on the Kazan summit's agenda is to contribute to the formation of truly representational financial, trading and transaction systems that can help the developing countries to reduce their dependence on the US dollar-centered global economic structure in order to promote fair economic globalization.

It is the United States' unilateral and hegemonic moves in almost all fields that have been pushing an increasing number of countries, even its allies, toward BRICS. Those biased Western politicians should be reminded that it is the developed countries that have taken advantage of the Global South by maintaining their privileges in international relations and setting rules for global financial, trade and technology sectors.

The knee-jerk response of some in the West to BRICS' growth has been to cast it in an anti-West light, when the fact is that the grouping, by natural progression, may be non-West, but it is certainly not anti-West. Instead, all platforms, projects and institutions it promotes are open to Western countries.

What the grouping strives for is to help build a fair and just world order, rather than a West-free world, with the aim of improving global governance and boosting global cooperation to address common global challenges such as climate change.

The world is facing more and more grave issues, including the crises in the Middle East, Ukraine, and on the Korean Peninsula, not because of the collective awakening of developing countries but because the Western powers have long deprived them of their rights to decide their own destiny and participate as equals in global decision-making.

The development and expansion of BRICS should not be seen as a challenge by the West, but as the world's organic progress toward multilateralism in the true sense of the term.

The Global South is bound by the shared principle of respect for all countries' sovereignty and right to decide their respective future. It is no longer the "silent majority"; instead, it has become a key force in the transformation of the world order.

So countries that don't seek to maintain the unfair and unjust world order have no reason to worry about the growth of BRICS. Rather they should welcome the changes being brought about by the grouping with its vision, vitality and potential. Also, they should reflect on how they initially responded to the formation of BRICS — as a "talking shop" — without realizing that its members, China in particular, were determined to develop it into the collective voice of the Global South. China has been, is and will be a member of and driving force behind BRICS and the Global South at large, sharing its experiences and development benefits with other developing countries.

Border agreement must now be built upon

Bilateral relations between China and India nose-dived to a low point in June 2020 when a deadly clash in the Galwan Valley happened. Since then, New Delhi has imposed bans on hundreds of Chinese apps including TikTok, and restricted Chinese investments in India.

Yet despite the Indian government curbs targeting Chinese businesses, Sino-Indian trade has continued to grow thanks to the complementary nature of the two economies. China remains India's biggest source of goods and was its largest supplier of industrial products last year. Moreover, Indian imports from China have surged 56 percent since the border clash. All this points to the bright prospects of developing bilateral ties if the potential of the two major emerging economies with a combined population of more than 2.8 billion can be fully unleashed.

Beijing has on many occasions made it clear that China and India, as good friends and partners, should not let their relations be defined by their border disputes. Rather, the two sides should properly manage their differences and handle them through peaceful consultations and by addressing each other's concerns.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, has expressed the wish that China and India need to "urgently address the prolonged situation" on the borders so that the abnormality in bilateral interactions can be put behind them. All this has paved the way for the two sides to open new prospects in China-India relations by seeking to end the border hostilities and tapping into the full potential of business and investment cooperation.

The agreement that China and India have reached on patrolling arrangements along their disputed border marks a major progress made by the two countries in resolving their four-year military standoff so as to restore peace and tranquility on the ground in the border areas.

The deal, which will lead to the "disengagement" of the two countries' troops at the line of actual control, will help transition the border situation into a normalized phase of control and management. It was reportedly reached following close communication between the two sides through diplomatic and military channels over the past few weeks. China views the solution "positively", and will work with India to implement the pact, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Tuesday.

It is noteworthy that the news was released just prior to the opening of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, where the top Chinese and Indian leaders were scheduled to hold talks on the sidelines of the event. This in a way underlines the readiness of the two sides to keep the big picture of their peaceful and stable bilateral relations in mind.

While the two sides work to implement the border deal to the letter, precautions should be taken to prevent it from being derailed. Not only by those in India who always try to use the border issue as a means to fan nationalistic sentiment in pursuit of partisan gains, but also external forces that seek to propel India to act as a regional counterweight to China's influence in the fast-changing geopolitics.

Now that a good starting point has been established with the signing of the latest deal, China and India should take the good momentum it has generated to enhance understanding and mutual trust, while taking other steps needed in the long process of seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement to their border issue.

China's stance on solving the border issues with India has always been clear and consistent, and it has made sincere efforts to maintain stable ties between the two militaries, de-escalate the situation and restore peace and stability in the border areas as soon as possible.

After all, a peaceful, stable and balanced relationship between China and India not only serves their own interests, it also contributes immensely to world peace and stability.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Raising skilled industrial workers will boost manufacturing power

The central authorities recently issued a guideline document, saying China will improve the skills cultivation system for industrial workers, raise their incomes and further enhance the income distribution system by increasing the proportion of labor remuneration in the primary distribution.

With changes in its population structure, China is now transitioning from tapping demographic dividends to talent dividends, and it needs to comprehensively improve its population quality.

Promoting a new type of industrialization and accelerating its development into a manufacturing powerhouse have been listed as important tasks in China's bid to build itself

into a modern socialist country with Chinese characteristics.

At present, a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is developing in an intelligent and green manner, and integrated development has emerged in multiple fields. This not only needs high-tech innovative talents, but also raises higher requirements for industrial workers.

In the global manufacturing industry, automation is replacing a large number of ordinary assembly-line workers, and the high-end, intelligent and green development of manufacturing also requires workers to master multidisciplinary skills and expertise.

The guideline document says China

will increase the training of composite technical and skilled talents, cultivating talents badly needed for new quality productive forces and high-quality development, and comprehensively advancing an education system that can enhance the knowledge of industrial workers.

As the post-1990s become the main body of industrial workers, who pay more attention to the realization of self-value and the pursuit of personal development, more measures must be taken to safeguard industrial workers' economic rights and interests, and enhance their sense of accomplishment, happiness and gain, to attract more young people to engage in manufacturing.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

Research push for national innovation

The central authorities indicated in a recent document the need to accelerate the high-quality development of research for doctoral programs. In July, the State Council announced the addition of 831 new doctorate programs.

Compared to the previous round of additions in 2020, the number of new doctorate programs has significantly increased.

Technological advancements and social development have given rise to numerous fields of studies, leading to increased specialization in higher education. The 2022 version of national

graduation major directory introduced new doctorate programs in fields such as meteorology and cultural heritage, with the number of professional doctorate programs increasing by 177 percent compared with the previous version.

In 2008, China surpassed the United States to become the country with the largest number of successful PhD candidates. However, considering China's large population, the proportion of PhD holders remains relatively low compared with developed countries. In the US, more than 1 percent of the pop-

ulation holds a doctoral degree, whereas according to China's seventh national census, about 946,500 people, or less than 0.7 percent of the population, holds a doctoral degree.

The focus on doctoral research must not overlook quality. Currently, some universities have a low supervisor-to-candidate ratio in doctoral programs.

To promote the high-quality development of doctoral research, a more scientific assessment and evaluation system must be established.

— THE PAPER.CN

What They Say

Long-arm jurisdiction employed with malicious intent

The US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security added six more Chinese entities, along with other 20 entities from Egypt, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, to the Entity List for activities detrimental to US "national security" and foreign policy on Monday.

According to the statement released by BIS announcing the move, these additions are related to alleged violations of export controls, involvement in weapons programs of concern, and evasion of US sanctions and export controls on Russia and Iran.

The bureau claims that the six Chinese entities were added to the list for acquiring US-origin items in support of China's military modernization, dilatory and evasive conduct during end-use checks, and procurement of US-origin items for Iran's "weapons of mass destruction" and unmanned aerial vehicle programs.

Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security Alan Estevez said: "Our actions today send a message to malicious actors that if they violate our controls, they will pay a price."

The additions to the list under the excuse of protecting "national security" represent the latest move the US side has taken to safeguard its hegemony. By resorting to long-arm jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions in this way, the US undermines the international trade order and rules, hinders normal international economic and trade exchanges, and threatens the security and stability of the global industry and supply chains.

Previously, the US had added many Chinese entities to its Entity List for allegedly violating its unilateral sanctions on Russia. It added 42 Chinese entities, along with hundreds of entities from other countries, to the Entity List in late August for that reason.

While the US has introduced a large-scale aid bill for Ukraine and Israel, it has made groundless accusations against the normal Sino-Russian and Sino-Iranian economic and trade exchanges. This practice is extremely hypocritical and irresponsible.

Whether on the Ukraine crisis or the Middle East crisis, China has always maintained an objective and fair position, actively advocated for peace and promoted talks, and facilitated politi-

cal solutions. China is not the creator of or party to the two crises and it has never added fuel to the fire or taken advantage of them to serve its own interests.

It must be pointed out that China's right to conduct normal economic and trade exchanges with countries around the world, including Russia and Iran, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit must not be interfered with or undermined, and China's legitimate rights and interests must not be violated.

More important, the US does not have the legitimacy to try and interfere in China's modernization of its military, which is an important power safeguarding regional and world peace.

On the contrary, it is the US and its allies and proxies that have been continuously provoking China over the Taiwan question and South China Sea issues at the costs of regional peace and stability.

As before, China has every right to take necessary measures to protect Chinese enterprises' legal rights and interests in the face of the US' economic and trade bullying and coercion.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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GLOBAL VIEWS

HANY BESADA AND GEORGE KARARACH

Kazan holds the key

By focusing on reforming the global financial system, building new alliances and tech innovation, BRICS is becoming a critical actor in the emerging multipolar world order

As BRICS is holding its 16th summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24, the global political and economic landscape continues to shift in ways that underscore the

relevance of the BRICS bloc. The group has gradually evolved from an emerging markets acronym to a vital player in reshaping global governance.



Hany Besada



George Kararach

One of the key themes expected at the Kazan summit is the pressing need to reform the global financial architecture. The bloc's dissatisfaction with Western-centric institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank is no secret. BRICS leaders have long argued that these institutions do not adequately reflect the realities of the modern world economy. Despite their growing economic power, BRICS members remain underrepresented in decision-making processes, a structural imbalance that has long been criticized by economists and political leaders alike.

The summit in Kazan presents an opportunity to accelerate discussions on reforming these institutions. In particular, BRICS countries have pushed for changes to the IMF's quota system, which currently favors developed countries in Europe and North America. Reforming this system is not just a question of fairness but of economic stability. As emerging economies continue to grow, their financial needs become more pressing, particularly in times of crisis. Yet the traditional lending mechanisms of



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

the IMF and the World Bank often come with stringent conditions that have been criticized for exacerbating economic inequalities in developing countries. Development finance needs to be brought to scale and with the requisite speed as well as predictability.

Moreover, the New Development Bank that the BRICS established in 2015 has made significant strides, particularly in funding infrastructure projects across member states. However, its global impact remains

limited compared to Western financial institutions. By scaling up its operations and expanding its membership to include other emerging economies, the NDB could become a major player in global finance, providing an alternative to the IMF and the World Bank. A more ambitious NDB could offer loans with fewer conditions, focusing on the long-term development needs of emerging and developing countries.

Another key issue expected to

take center stage in Kazan is BRICS' strategy toward forming new partnerships, particularly with nations in the Global South. As the international order becomes increasingly fragmented, BRICS has positioned itself as a voice for the developing world. This year's summit is expected to further solidify the bloc's outreach efforts.

The potential expansion of BRICS represents an effort to build a coalition of countries that are marginalized by the existing global

governance system. After five new countries formally participated in BRICS cooperation in January, more than 30 countries have expressed interest in joining the bloc. This expansion could provide BRICS with greater geopolitical clout, enabling it to exert more influence on global issues ranging from climate change to international trade.

Furthermore, strategic partnerships with the Global South could enhance South-South cooperation, providing a platform for the exchange of resources, technology and expertise. For many developing countries, BRICS offers an alternative model of development that prioritizes mutual benefit over the "one-directional" donor-recipient dynamic that has characterized North-South relations. The Kazan summit provides a unique opportunity for BRICS to reassert its commitment to promoting a fairer and more inclusive global order.

The role of technology and innovation in bridging the development gap between advanced economies and the Global South is crucial. As digital transformation accelerates, BRICS countries have an opportunity to leverage new technologies to address critical challenges such as poverty and inequality, climate change, education and healthcare.

China and India, in particular, have emerged as leaders in digital innovation, with thriving tech industries that are reshaping the way their citizens interact with government and private services. Russia, too, has made significant advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. By collaborating on technology transfer and innovation-driven development, the BRICS mechanism can help its member states and partners in the Global South leapfrog traditional stages of development and close the digital divide.

Such advances are important to negate the risk perception attached to many countries in the Global South — especially by rating agencies. Moreover, the economic progress in the Global South has given more credence to the calls to reform the global financial architecture.

It is vital to address the need for greater digital infrastructure investment in developing countries. While much of the world has embraced the digital economy, vast parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia remain disconnected from the benefits of technological advancements. The NDB and other BRICS financial institutions could play a key role in financing the development of broadband networks, data centers and digital skills training programs in underserved regions.

The 16th BRICS summit in Kazan represents a strategic turning point for the bloc. As the world grapples with multiple crises — from geopolitical tensions to economic inequality — BRICS is stepping up its efforts to offer alternative solutions that reflect the aspirations of the Global South. By focusing on reforming the global financial system, building new partnerships, and embracing technological innovation, BRICS is positioning itself as a critical actor in the emerging multipolar world order.

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PETE HARRISON

Preserving a vital Earth

Successfully making a green transition in its coal triangle will not only help China to achieve its dual carbon goals, but also serve as a model for other regions to emulate

At the end of COP28 last year, world leaders agreed to take urgent actions to transition away from fossil fuels and triple renewable energy capacity by 2030. China is one of the largest coal producers and consumers in the world, but it also



Pete Harrison

aims to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. The country has set ambitious targets to reduce coal consumption and increase the share of renewable energy sources in its energy mix. This is not an easy task.

During China's energy transformation, the transition of the "coal triangle area", comprising Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces, is among the most important elements for both China and the world to achieve carbon neutrality. This region is not only China's largest coal energy generation area, but also the largest in the world. In 2023, coal production in this region reached 3.45 billion metric tons, accounting for 74 percent of the national coal production, and 40 percent of the global total, making it a key area in the green and low-carbon energy transformation. Meanwhile the area is rich in renewable energy, accounting for around 30 percent of the wind resources of the whole country.

Due to its historical reliance on coal-related industries, the coal triangle area suffers from a significant "carbon lock-in effect" and path dependence. The development of the regional economy is heavily dependent on coal, potentially hindering the innovation of low-carbon and renewable energy

technologies. Breaking this dependence is difficult in the short term, and a rapid transition could lead to structural unemployment and economic and social vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, as a key base for energy production and export, the region also carries a substantial responsibility for ensuring energy supply security. Faced with the dual pressures of cutting emissions and securing supplies, it is imperative for the region to advance the optimization of energy structure and the low-carbon transformation of industries, all while maintaining the safety of energy supply. In this process, there should be a focus on local people's livelihoods and we must consider the issue of equity. Achieving a fair distribution of resources has become one of the major issues facing the low-carbon transition in the area. The transition also has profound impacts on the employment market, resulting in job losses in coal-related industries, especially affecting workers with limited skills who find it hard to adapt to the requirements of new industries. Therefore, ensuring a just transition needs to be considered through policy design.

To identify integrated solutions for the green and low-carbon transition in traditional energy regions such as the coal triangle area, the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development launched a scoping study, which I co-chaired, last year to provide a systematic outlook of the future energy development path of the area. The study has been completed this September and here are three key takeaways from the study.

First, China could establish a national-level coordination mechanism for the low-carbon transition of the coal triangle area. Energy transition involves not only the sub-

stitution and updating of energy sources but also a complex socio-economic process, which needs a more systematic, holistic and synergistic governance approach.

Compared to other regions, the coal triangle area is largely economically underdeveloped. So it is crucial for the nation to accurately and reasonably define the regions' roles in the nation's energy transition process, set science-based renewable energy consumption and integration targets and encourage the establishment of communications channels with coal regions in other countries, which all need coordination at the national level.

Second, China could establish Zero-Carbon Power Special Zone for Industry and Trade. With its advantage in renewable power, the region should be able to transition its existing coal-centered industrial chain to a zero carbon industry. Zero-Carbon Power Special Zones for Industry and Trade could help develop a new type of business model for the area. It could establish a zero-carbon digital certification system, providing full life cycle carbon footprint certification for products to cope with any future carbon restrictions of international trade.

Third, China could establish a low-carbon transition fund for the coal triangle area. Resource reallocation and industrial restructuring both require substantial financial support. Implementing new energy projects, conducting technological research, and constructing infrastructure also need significant investments. Therefore, China could establish a low-carbon transition fund as a driver to attract investments from the private sector. This fund could also support technological breakthroughs in the transition process, such as green hydrogen and energy storage, and



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carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies. At the same time, the fund can support ecological restoration and various compensation mechanisms to establish a fair and equitable compensation system for impacted local communities.

The green transformation of China's traditional energy regions holds immense significance. It

promises environmental preservation, economic revitalization, and social progress. Achieving a successful green transition in this region could not only help China to achieve its dual carbon goals, but also serve as a model for other regions in China and the world. As China continues on this transition journey, it will contribute to a collective effort to combat climate

change, to build a sustainable future, and to preserve a vital Earth for everyone.

The author is executive vice-president of Regions at the Environmental Defense Fund. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

WORLD

Role of BRI in human rights progress hailed

Initiative aims at addressing poverty eradication across globe, expert says

By CHEN WEIHUA in Berlin
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For Stephen Brawer, chairman of the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden, China's Belt and Road Initiative is contributing to human rights development in the world.

He told China Daily on the sidelines of the 2024 China-Europe Seminar on Human Rights held in Berlin on Tuesday that the BRI aims to address global poverty eradication and advance modernization, especially in infrastructure.

He said China's rapid modernization since the late 1970s means that other developing countries could have the same opportunity.

"More and more countries realize this (BRI) has the substance of providing means to raise people's living standards," Brawer said, adding more than 150 countries have joined the BRI.

He said it is absurd to talk about human rights when people's living standards are not raised and their food, healthcare and housing needs are not assured but exposed to starvation or wars.

"There is a very direct relationship between fundamental human rights and accepting and working to cooperate with the Belt and Road Initiative," he said.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and president of the Schiller Institute, a German think tank, echoed his views, citing China's impressive poverty eradication while the United States and Europe have seen rising poverty.

"There is no doubt that poverty is an enormous violation of human rights ... No other country has done as much to combat poverty as China, both in China itself and through the Belt and Road Initiative in some 150 countries," she said.

The daylong seminar in Berlin drew more than 60 mostly Chinese and European experts to discuss a wide range of issues relating to human rights, such as

economic equality, social rights, digital technology and human rights, climate change and human rights. Experts came from countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Switzerland, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic, Turkey, the US and South Africa.

Ma Huaide, vice-president of China Society for Human Rights Studies and president of China University of Political Science and Law, in his address, said how to protect new and emerging rights has become a new subject in the global human rights development.

"Faced with the fresh challenges posed by the new and emerging rights issues, nations should join hands to provide solutions for the global protection of these emerging rights," he said.

Jure Zovko, president of the International Academy for the Philosophy of the Sciences and a professor of philosophy at the University of Zadar, Croatia, called for a "dialogue of different civilizations" on human rights to learn from each other.

Deep concerns

Experts voiced deep concerns over wars and conflicts across the world today.

Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, a former independent expert for the United Nations Human Rights Council, said peace is the foundation for all rights.

"Without peace, there is no chance of achieving sustainable development," he said.

He said that peace does not just mean the end of war, but all countries should work together to ensure a democratic, fair and just international order and uproot the cause of conflicts and ensure human rights for all.

Fabio Marcelli, former director of the Institute of International Legal Studies at the National Research Council, Italy, rejected the argument that war is a means to achieving human rights.

"This is terrible. We must find another path and solution because war cannot be a means to achieving human rights. It is a violation of human rights and destruction of peace, and we must oppose wars," he said.

Michael Borchmann, a former senior official at the German federal state of Hessen, said the wars since the beginning of the century have resulted in countless deaths and led to more than 20 million people fleeing their homes.

"Waging wars is a violation of basic human rights, the right of safety," he said.

Borchmann said China has been mediating in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Palestine conflict, while some other big powers have been adding fuel to the fire.

Axel Hegwein, chairman of the supervisory board of the German and Chinese Culture Foundation, hailed the seminar in his closing remarks.

"Studying human rights and discussing human rights mean exchanges and learning from each other and clashing of various views," he said in German.

He said Berlin is a city of historic significance connecting the East and the West, referring to the repeated calls by experts on Tuesday against a new Cold War. Germany was divided into two parts after World War II.

The China-Europe Seminar on Human Rights was launched in 2015 by the China Society for Human Rights Studies and it has become a platform for human rights dialogue between China and Europe.

The seminar has been held over the years in various European and Chinese cities, from Strasbourg in France, Bruges in Belgium, Amsterdam, Vienna and Rome, to Chongqing in Southwest China.

This year's seminar is hosted by the China Society for Human Rights Studies and Central South University, based in Changsha, capital of Hunan province, with the support of the German and Chinese Culture Foundation, the University of Munster and the International Institute of Philosophy.

Hell on the highway



People gather near the site where a fuel truck exploded next to a highway on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda, on Tuesday. At least 15 people were killed in the explosion, police said on Wednesday. More than 20 people were injured and admitted to hospital. AP

Trump's proposed tariffs could hurt US businesses

By BELINDA ROBINSON
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A new round of tariffs proposed by Donald Trump if he is re-elected president in November could hurt domestic businesses, forcing US firms and Chinese exporters to make difficult decisions like reducing their reliance on each other, warn economists and trade organizations.

"US retailers will have to pay higher wholesale prices for imported consumer goods," Thomas Fullerton, an American economist and economics professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, told China Daily.

"To the extent that those price increases are passed on to consumers, inflation will either be higher or descend more slowly than would otherwise be the case," he said.

Trump, who dubbed himself a "tariff president," has over the past few weeks repeatedly proposed sweeping tariffs of 20 percent on all imported goods and 60 percent on goods from China.

He also wants to add a 100 percent tariff on nations that don't use the US dollar to trade and a 2,000 percent tariff on vehicles built in Mexico.

"The most beautiful word in the dictionary is 'tariff,'" Trump told an audience at the Economic Club of Chicago earlier this month. "It's going to have a massive effect, positive effect. It's going to be a positive effect," Trump added during an interview with Bloomberg's editor John Micklethwait in October.

Fullerton explained that tariffs work as a sales tax on goods produced outside of the boundaries of the countries that import those goods.

Any US company that purchases a product from abroad must pay some of the item's price to the government. Trump believes that this revenue could be used to fund tax cuts and other things.

Companies that face these duties

can either stop importing the goods, find them in another market, or raise their prices, affecting American customers. Many do the latter.

For this reason, Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has branded Trump's proposals "a sales tax on the American people" that would raise costs for households by \$4,000 per year.

Big Lots Stores, a US discount chain with headquarters in Columbus, Ohio has worked with Chinese manufacturers for over 30 years to import goods. Big Lots filed for bankruptcy in September blaming high inflation and interest rates.

Kevin Kuehl, Big Lots' senior vice-president, general merchandise manager of home, apparel and global sourcing, said the company was monitoring any proposals on US-China trade tariffs.

"There's certain categories that China just is very efficient and cost-effective at, that even if we wanted to transition product out of China and into other countries, we're not capable of capacity or quality in those categories," Kuehl told China Daily at the Canton Fair conference in New York in May.

The debate around the effectiveness of tariffs comes after President Joe Biden and Vice-President Harris kept Trump's original tariffs on about \$360 billion worth of Chinese goods and increased tariffs on \$18 billion of Chinese imports in September.

With nearly two weeks left to go before the general election, Harris has not specified whether or not she plans to keep the existing tariffs in place or create new ones.

Trump, however, has doubled down on his stance that tariffs are paid for by foreign countries, not Americans or US firms.

Several economists and trade bodies disagree with Trump's assertion that tariffs only penalize overseas countries like China. Instead, their

analysis suggests it will hurt the domestic market.

"Tariffs are paid by US importers, not the Chinese government," Tiffany Smith, vice-president of global trade policy for the National Foreign Trade Council based in Washington DC, told China Daily.

Meanwhile, some Chinese exporters are worried over how high the new proposed tariffs are.

"If it's 60 percent tariffs, nobody can handle it," Zeng Zhaoliang, the head of Guangzhou Liangsheng, which sells up to 40 percent of its cookers to the US, told Reuters.

The American Apparel & Footwear Association estimates that since 2020, retail prices have risen by up to 10 percent per year, according to AFP.

It said there is no clear evidence that tariffs have brought back jobs to the US as 14 US textile mills have closed in the past few years.

Trump's proposals could, in fact, even hurt some of his own businesses. Trump sells products like "Make America Great Again" red baseball-style hats, T-shirts and mugs at his golden Trump Tower in Manhattan.

Lots of the goods sold in the building and online are made in China, Vietnam and Bangladesh, Newsweek found.

His "God Bless the USA" bibles that cost \$59.99 are made in China for approximately \$3 each, according to The Associated Press.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics said this month that if countries hit back with their own penalties over Trump's tariff proposals, it could knock over 1 percentage point off the US economy by 2026.

It could also make inflation 2 percentage points higher by 2025.

Fullerton noted that some companies may also be affected by possible actions taken in China, which include "different types of retaliatory policies" that may be implemented.



Storm fury

Residents look at a car buried by volcanic ash that cascaded into a village triggered by heavy rains brought about by Tropical Storm Trami in Guinobatan town, Albay Province, the Philippines, on Wednesday. Torrential rains driven by the storm have turned streets into rivers, submerged entire villages and buried some vehicles up to their door handles in volcanic sediment.

CHARISM SAYAT / AFP

Music festival explores AI and Chinese tradition

By MINGMEI LI in New York
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By merging technology with human creativity and blending traditional Chinese instruments with orchestra elements, Eastern and Western musicians have created a harmonious dialogue that has bridged cultures.

The future-focused China Now Music Festival at Carnegie Hall in New York City concluded on Saturday night after two weekends of performances. Composers, conductors and musicians collaborated to highlight the integration of AI technology in music creation and performance, while also showcasing the harmony of sound.

In its seventh consecutive year, the festival, co-founded in 2017 by the US-China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, has drawn over 10,000 attendees and attracted nearly 100,000 online viewers in the previous seasons.

One of the featured performances was AI's *Variation: Opera of the Future* by composer Hao Weiya of the conservatory, performed by the China Now Chamber Orchestra under the direction of conductor Cai Jindong.

Unlike the opening concert on Oct 12, which highlighted the fusion of music and technology, Hao's work confronts the audience with a series of chilling questions regarding the ethics of merging science and technology with human creativity.

Hao's science fiction-themed drama tells the story of a troubled artist who allows his identity to be "enhanced" by AI, only to struggle with the consequences in his personal life.

Through music, the China Now Chamber Orchestra, with Chinese alto Shi Lin, baritone Hong Zhenxiang and US soprano Lucy Fitz Gibbon, explore the artist's questions and visions of the future.

The Bard East/West Ensemble, known for its unique fusion of Chinese and Western instruments, also performed at the festival, seamlessly blending both cultures.

Duo Chinoiserie, a unique pairing of the Chinese *guzheng* and the European classical guitar, performed French composer Mathias Duplessy's *Zhong Kui's Regrets* and *Zhong Kui's Journey*. Zhong Kui is a figure from Chinese mythology known as a demon hunter and the king of ghosts.

"Zhong Kui, with his ungainly and humorous head, his shaggy beard and his charismatic bonhomie, along with the little bat that follows him on his adventures — I had found my inspiration! A musical phrase came to mind to personify Zhong Kui ... All I had to do was develop and weave a musical story around these few notes," Duplessy wrote in his introduction to the composition.

"Adventure, humor, battles, and

heroism! For the slow movement, I imagined Zhong Kui at rest, nostalgic, lost in the reverie of a lost love. Here, my French compositional style is more present, with Ravelian tonalities and Debussy-like chords resonating with Romantic lyricism.

"In the fast movement, the *guzheng* takes the spotlight with its mad virtuosity, contrasting with the slow movement, where the guitar sings from the depths of the Chinese mountains," he added.

Future composers

The festival also focused on future composers.

Yan Yan, 21, from Shanghai, was commissioned as part of the Emerging Composer Discovery Project by the China Now Music Festival. His work *The Painted Skin*, inspired by *Liaozhai Zhiyi* (Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio), written by Pu Songling during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), tells a supernatural story that blends hor-



The 7th China Now Music Festival, themed "Composing the Future", concluded on Saturday evening at Carnegie Hall in New York City with a concert that fused East-West musical traditions and blended human-made music with artificial intelligence. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ror, romance and moral lessons.

"Just as the West has its ghosts, China has its own. This kind of culture is universal. I want to express this shared experience through music," Yan told China Daily.

"We listen to a lot of Beethoven

and Mozart, but in the 21st century, we need more young people to pay attention to contemporary music," conductor Cai Jindong said. Cai said he hoped the world would hear the sound of Chinese music and instruments.

WORLD

Prabowo urges unity in first cabinet meeting

By LEONARDUS JEGHO in Jakarta
For China Daily

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, chairing his first cabinet meeting, emphasized the need for government efficiency and cabinet unity, with a strong focus on food and energy self-sufficiency.

"Food self-sufficiency is a priority considering the global situation. Energy self-sufficiency is absolute," Prabowo was quoted by local media tempo.co as saying.

He urged cabinet members to streamline their operations and cut costs and red tape, while maintaining unity within both the cabinet and the nation.

The president is taking his cabinet to a military academy in Central Java for a retreat aimed at fostering solidarity.

He has promised free, nutritious meals for schoolchildren and special care for pregnant women, a topic that has sparked widespread public discussion.

"Nutritious meals for pregnant women and children is strategic. Anyone who does not support this please get out of my administration," Prabowo said at the meeting.

All 48 ministers and 12 ministerial-level officials attended the meeting, except for Foreign Minister Sugiono, who is attending the three-day BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, as the president's special envoy.

Although Indonesia is not a member of BRICS, its participation in the group's events aims to stress Indonesia's long-standing commitment to strengthening relations with all countries and reinforcing the unity of the Global South, Sugiono's office said in a statement on Tuesday.

Analysts expect Prabowo to continue his predecessor's policy of nonalignment as Indonesia seeks to balance relations with major global powers.

James Chin, a professor of Asian studies at the University of Tasmania in Australia, said Indonesia "has always been the voice of the Third World (and) developing countries".

"So I don't expect (Prabowo's) policy to be very different from former president Joko Widodo,"

Chin said, adding Prabowo will likely maintain Widodo's stance on strengthening economic cooperation with others, including China.

Radityo Dharmaputra, a lecturer on international relations at Airlangga University in East Java, said Prabowo's visits to countries such as China, France, Japan and Russia highlight the importance he places on maintaining balanced relations among major powers.

Rezha Bayu Oktavian Arief, co-founder and CEO of Jakarta-based social enterprise and advisory firm Obviously Sustainable, said Prabowo is expected to continue policies on commitment to non-alignment, promotion of regional stability among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and strengthening Indonesia's role as ASEAN's largest country.

Key source

And Prabowo's campaign promise to boost the downstream industries and achieve an 8 percent GDP growth "will likely lead him to see China as a key source of investment for the large-scale projects he envisions", Arief said.

These include initiatives such as the potential development of a giant seawall from Jakarta to Surabaya, collaborations under the Belt and Road Initiative, and expanding partnerships in the electric vehicle industry, he added.

In his inaugural speech after being sworn in as Indonesia's eighth president on Sunday, Prabowo underscored Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy.

"We do not want to join any military pacts; we choose the path of friendship with all countries," Prabowo said.

He also said Indonesia adheres to the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-oppression and anti-racism, and supports the independence of the Palestinian people, as Indonesia "must defend the oppressed peoples of the world".

Prime Sarmiento in Hong Kong
contributed to this story.

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A smoke cloud erupts after a rocket fired by an Israeli war plane hit a building in Beirut's southern suburb of Shayah on Tuesday. AFP

Arab League seeks action against Israel

Group calls for stronger measures and sanctions as intl appeals grow for truce

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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The Arab League has called for the suspension of Israel's participation in the United Nations General Assembly, demanding more punitive measures as Israeli killings and bombardment continue unabated in Gaza and Lebanon.

In its strongest statement yet, the league members also criticized the United States for its continuous military support to Israel. They also pressed for the enforcement of sanctions against Israel, citing previous summits and ministerial decisions, alongside the genocide lawsuit filed against Israel at the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

The statement followed an emergency session in Cairo on Tuesday, coinciding with the visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region.

Before departing for Saudi Arabia from Israel, Blinken had urged Israel to seize the opportunity to reach a longer-term solution to the conflict and avoid greater escalation after Iran's retaliatory missile strike on Oct 1, following the assassinations of Hezbollah and Hamas leaders.

Belal Alakhras, a political analyst and researcher at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, told China Daily: "Regional governments find themselves under mounting pressure as Israeli officials signal potential wider aggression across the region, with Iran mentioned as a possible next target. These developments threaten

multiple domains, from economic stability to energy security."

As the Israeli siege of northern Gaza enters its third week, Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN Palestine refugee agency, appealed on X for an immediate truce, describing how "three weeks of nonstop bombardments" by Israeli forces have affected the region.

"The smell of death is everywhere as bodies are left lying on the roads or under the rubble. Missions to clear the bodies or provide humanitarian assistance are denied. In northern Gaza, people are just waiting to die. They feel deserted, hopeless and alone. They live from one hour to the next, fearing death at every second," he said.

"On behalf of our staff in northern Gaza, I am calling for an immediate truce, even if for a few hours, to enable safe humanitarian passage for families who wish to leave the area and reach safer places. This is the bare minimum to save the lives of civilians who have nothing to do with this conflict."

Jerusalem-based human rights group B'Tselem called on the world to "stop the ethnic cleansing of northern Gaza".

"Without immediate, decisive action from the international community, without using every tool available — political, legal, economic — the mass killings in the northern Gaza Strip will continue and the suffering of its besieged civilians will grow. All international bodies and institutions must act now to compel Israel to stop the war and end the carnage," it said in a statement.

Alakhras said the intensifying

military operation in northern Gaza, coupled with major aggression in Lebanon, has led regional observers to question the US commitment to de-escalation, particularly given the continued flow of military support to Israel.

A report released on Tuesday by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, titled "Gaza War: Expected Socioeconomic Impacts on the State of Palestine", warned that the "impact of the year-long war in Gaza and escalations in the West Bank" has set the development in the State of Palestine back by about 69 years.

More than 2.6 million people are newly impoverished, it added.

"Our assessments serve to sound the alarm over the millions of lives that are being shattered and the decades of development efforts that are being wiped out," said the commission's Executive Secretary Rola Dashti. "It is high time to end the suffering and bloodshed that have engulfed our region."

In Lebanon, Israel began to bomb the UNESCO-listed port of Tyre roughly three hours after issuing an order online for residents to flee central areas. Huge clouds of thick smoke billowed above residential buildings.

Tens of thousands of people had already fled Tyre in recent weeks as Israel steps up its campaign to destroy Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

Israel's military said on Wednesday it had killed three Hezbollah commanders and some 70 fighters in southern Lebanon in the past 48 hours, a day after confirming it had killed Hashem Safieddine, the militant group's heir apparent leader.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Fears rise over spread of mpox in Europe

By JULIAN SHEA in London
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Concern is growing over the extent of the spread of the mpox virus in Europe after Germany reported its first case of the new 1b variant.

And the head of the drug company Roche said he believes there are more people in Europe with it than has so far been acknowledged.

Mpox is mainly spread through close skin-to-skin or mouth-to-skin contact with someone who has it, according to the World Health Organization. It can cause fever, a painful rash and enlarged lymph nodes. Although most people make a full recovery, in some cases it can be fatal.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there is no specific treatment approved for mpox infection, but a two-dose vaccine has been developed.

After an initial outbreak of the virus spread from the Democratic Republic of Congo to neighboring countries in August, the WHO declared the new virus variant a global health emergency when the first infection was spotted outside Africa in Sweden.

Germany's disease control agency the Robert Koch Institute said the risk to the general public remains low, and the case in Germany, which was detected on Friday, was acquired abroad but it "is monitoring the situation very closely and adjusting its recommendations if necessary".

Norway cases

On Tuesday, two patients in Norway were diagnosed with the clade 2 variety of the mpox virus, which is less severe than the 1b strain. Authorities are looking to see if the two cases are connected.

"It seems like there are more mpox cases already in Europe, maybe not all of them are in the media yet," said Roche CEO Thomas Schinecker, adding there was not yet much demand for test kits, but that his company could up the production tenfold if required.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Ahmed Ogwell, vice-president of global health strategy at the United Nations Foundation, said the interconnectedness of the modern world meant that "an outbreak anywhere is a risk of an outbreak everywhere", but lessons could be taken from previous global disease concerns.

"The risk is still high for spread because of the ease of communication that we have around the world today," said Ogwell, who is also former deputy director-general of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On the specific topic of mpox, he added: "Someone can carry it to another part of the world easily and can transfer it, setting off a chain that results in something bigger than it is right now... we need to put into good use the lessons of COVID, Ebola, cholera."

Pixel paradise



Visitors immerse themselves in a gaming session with "Super Mario" during a media preview at the annual Paris Games Week held at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP

Boeing reports \$6.2b loss after strike, defense woes

NEW YORK — Boeing reported a whopping \$6.2 billion quarterly loss on Wednesday as a nearly six-week labor strike weighed on its commercial plane division and costly problems dragged down its defense and space business.

The embattled aviation giant, which has been under scrutiny from regulators following safety problems, reported a 1 percent decline in revenues to \$17.8 billion.

The results had been telegraphed to the market on Oct 11, when newly installed CEO Kelly Ortberg announced the company was cutting 10 percent of its workforce.

In a message to employees, Ortberg said a turnaround would require a "fundamental culture change", as well as steps to stabilize finances, improve operations and devise a future vision for the company.

"It will take time to return Boeing to its former legacy, but with the right focus and culture, we can be an iconic company and aerospace leader once again," Ortberg said in a news release.

Even before the strike, Boeing had slowed production in its commercial

plane division to ensure greater attention to safety protocols after a 737 MAX flown by Alaska Airlines was forced to make an emergency landing in January when a fuselage panel blew out mid-flight.

The near-catastrophe — coming after two fatal 737 MAX crashes in 2018 and 2019 that claimed 346 lives — put Boeing under greater regulatory scrutiny.

The company's latest results were dented by \$3 billion in one-time cost hits to its 777X and 767 programs, as well as the drag from the continuing strike by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

About 33,000 IAM workers in the Pacific Northwest walked off the job on Sept 13. The union is slated to vote on a new contract that could end the stoppage later on Wednesday.

In its defense and space business, Boeing's results were battered by \$2 billion in costs for a number of programs, including the KC-46A Pegasus Air Force refueling aircraft that has been a problem in prior quarters.

Ortberg was scheduled to face



Boeing machinists cheer during a strike rally at the Seattle Union Hall in Seattle, Washington state, on Oct 15. JASON REDMOND / AFP

Wall Street analysts later on Wednesday in his first conference call since joining the company in early August.

Analyst Peter McNally of Third Bridge predicted Boeing's recovery would not be swift.

"Even if the strike is settled today, Third Bridge experts believe the impact on Boeing will carry through beyond the fourth quarter," McNally

wrote, saying it will take a week to get workers back in place and "at least" another three weeks to return to normal productivity.

Between that and other problems with operations and the Boeing supply chain, "Third Bridge experts see an underwhelming recovery in Boeing deliveries for years to come".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Iraq says top IS figure, 8 other officials killed

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani announced on Tuesday that the Islamic State militant group's leader in Iraq was killed in a military operation along with eight of the group's other senior leaders.

United States officials said two US service members were injured in the joint raid overnight on Monday that was conducted by US and Iraqi forces.

Al-Sudani said Jassim al-Mazroui Abu Abdul Qader was killed in an operation by counterterrorism forces and the national security service under the Joint Operations Command in the Hamrin Mountains in Salahuddin Province.

"There is no place for terrorists in Iraq, and we will pursue them to their hideouts and eliminate them," al-Sudani said in a statement.

The two US troops are in stable condition, said Pentagon spokesman Major General Pat Ryder.

The Joint Operations Command said in a statement the operation

was carried out "with technical support and exchange of accurate intelligence information by the international coalition forces", and that "large quantities of weapons" were seized in the operation, which was "still ongoing".

The IS group overran large swathes of Iraq and neighboring Syria in 2014, proclaiming its "caliphate".

It was defeated in Iraq in 2017 by local forces backed by the international military coalition, and in 2019 lost the last territory it held in Syria to US-backed Kurdish forces.

But remnants of the group remain active in Iraq and continue to launch sporadic attacks.

The US has about 2,500 troops in Iraq and 900 in Syria as part of the coalition, which Washington and Baghdad announced last month will end its decade-long military mission in Iraq within a year.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

WORLD

IMF warns of challenges to global growth

Economist hails stimulus measures taken by China to prop up key sectors

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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The International Monetary Fund has warned about the global economic outlook, downgrading its growth projections and highlighting many challenges, from escalating geopolitical conflicts to the looming threat of increased trade protectionism.

In its updated World Economic Outlook released on Tuesday, the IMF said it expects global growth to ease slightly to 3.2 percent this year and remain at that level in 2025.

"The risks are building up to the downside," said IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas at the news briefing on the report. "There is geopolitical risk, with the potential for escalation of regional conflicts," he added, noting that such conflicts could significantly impact commodity markets.

Gourinchas also pointed to "a rise of protectionism, protectionist policies, disruptions in trade that could also affect global activity."

While the IMF report doesn't explicitly address the upcoming US presidential election, the looming contest casts a long shadow over the 2024 Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank Group, a gathering of finance ministers and central bankers from nearly 200 nations, in Washington. The potential impact of different trade policies on the global economy is a significant concern.

The World Economic Outlook projected China's growth to be 4.8 percent for this year, slightly down from the July forecast of 5 percent. It kept its projection of 4.5 percent for 2025.

The report said the decrease was due to challenges in the real estate sector and weak consumer confidence, which was somewhat compensated for by a boost in China's net exports.

Gourinchas said the IMF has seen "a number of measures that have been announced since the end of last month."

"First measures, monetary and financial measures, announced by the People's Bank of China, and then some fiscal measures that were announced a few weeks ago," he said. "These measures, in general, go in the right direction from our perspective."

Since late September, various departments of the Chinese government have announced a number of incremental measures and taken actions involving monetary and fiscal policy to prop up the property sector, like lowering borrowing rates or trying to improve the balance sheets of property developers, as well as applying a set of fiscal tools, including local government spe-

cial-purpose bonds, special funds and taxation policies.

"We're waiting to see the details," said Gourinchas, mentioning that more recent measures "are not incorporated in our forecast."

According to the report, the growth forecast for developed economies was revised to 1.8 percent, a slight increase of 0.1 percentage point from its July forecast. Among them, the US economy is now expected to grow at 2.8 percent in 2024, an upward revision of 0.2 percent from July.

Positive momentum

However, this positive momentum is tempered by a downward revision for advanced economies in the euro region, which are now projected to grow at a more modest 0.8 percent this year, a downward revision of 0.1 percentage point from July. Emerging markets and developing economies continue to demonstrate resilience, with economic growth forecast at 4.2 percent in 2024, unchanged from the July forecast.

The World Economic Outlook commended central banks for their efforts in curbing inflation without triggering a recession, a feat Gourinchas described at the briefing as "a major accomplishment", saying the battles against inflation were "almost won".

On the other side, the IMF report highlighted the issue of global public debt, which is projected to reach a staggering \$100 trillion by the end of this year, warning that "risks to the debt outlook are heavily tilted to the upside."

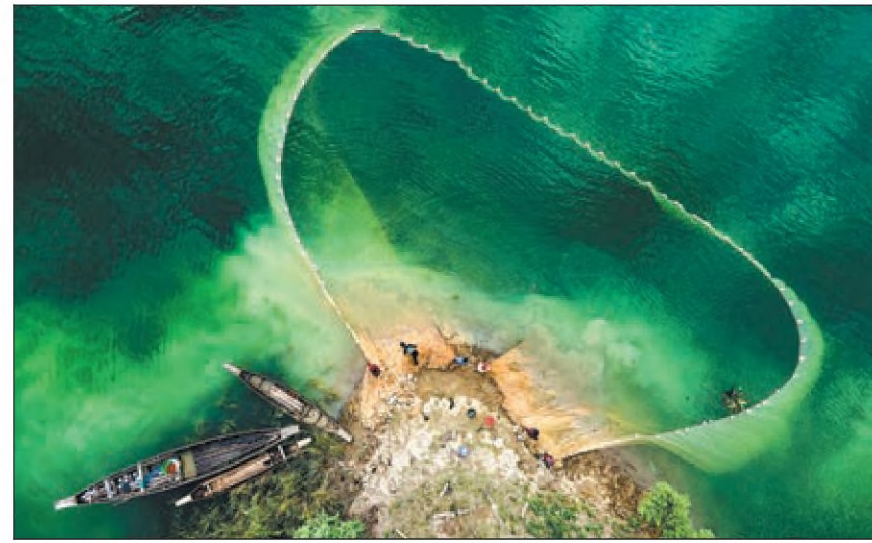
In an IMF blog published after the World Economic Outlook's launch, Gourinchas wrote: "Growth is projected to hold steady, but amid weakening prospects and rising threats, the world needs a shift in policy gears." He suggested "triple policy pivots" on monetary and fiscal policy and the "hardest" pivot toward growth-enhancing reforms.

Gourinchas said some industrial and trade policy measures "often lead to retaliation and fail to deliver sustained improvements in standards of living."

"They should be avoided when not carefully addressing well-identified market failures or narrowly defined national security concerns," he said.

At the end of his blog, Gourinchas added that "building trust" is "an important lesson that should also resonate when thinking about ways to further improve international cooperation and bolster our multilateral efforts to address common challenges."

Casting the net wide



An aerial view shows local tribal people fishing with boats and large colorful nets in Kaptai Lake in Rangamati, Bangladesh, on Tuesday. Kaptai Lake is the largest human-made lake in the country. Though created primarily for hydroelectric power generation, it contributes to producing a significant quantity of freshwater fish, navigation, flood control and agriculture. MUHAMMAD AMDAD HOSSAIN VIA GETTY IMAGES

Center-right given mandate to form govt

VIENNA — Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen on Tuesday tasked incumbent Chancellor Karl Nehammer, leader of the center-right People's Party, with forming a coalition government following September's general election.

Van der Bellen said in an address that he made the decision because the far-right Freedom Party, which came first in the parliamentary election with about 29 percent of the vote, has not been able to find a coalition partner to govern after talks with two other major parties in the National Council, Austria's lower house of parliament, failed.

The People's Party, which led the outgoing government, came second with 26.3 percent of the vote, followed by the Social Democratic Party with 21.1 percent.

Van der Bellen on Tuesday gave Nehammer the mandate to immediately hold coalition talks with the Social Democratic Party.

"The task now is to find another way" to bring about a stable government, the president said, adding he had informed outgoing chancellor Nehammer this morning that he will be mandated to form a government as the "leader of the second-strongest party in parliament."

Following Van der Bellen's announcement, Nehammer said at a news conference that he would start coalition negotiations with the Social Democratic

Party in the coming weeks, and he will look for a third partner to ensure a stable majority in the National Council.

A coalition comprising only the People's Party and the Social Democrats would have a shaky majority of just one seat in the National Council.

Work for stability

Nehammer said he would work hard to form a stable federal government and address the concerns of the Austrian people, such as migration and healthcare.

"I cannot say if the negotiations will lead to the formation of a government," Nehammer said. "But I

will act in the interest of stability and reliability and with a sense of responsibility for our country."

Herbert Kickl, leader of the Freedom Party, criticized Van der Bellen for breaking with the Austrian president's common practice of entrusting the party that wins the general election to form a new government, saying on Facebook that Van der Bellen's decision is "a slap in the face" for Austrian voters.

It is not mandatory under the constitution for Austria's president to task the winning party of a parliamentary election to form a government.

XINHUA—AGENCIES



Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen talks to the reporters after the legislative elections on Sept 29. Van der Bellen on Tuesday tasked incumbent Chancellor Karl Nehammer with forming a coalition government. HE CANLING / XINHUA

Germany's aviation sector calls for cuts in flight taxes

By EARLE GALE in London
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Taxes on air travel are threatening the future of Germany's aviation sector, the president of the German Aviation Association has warned.

Jens Bischof said a 25 percent increase in aviation tax imposed on the industry on May 1 has added between 16 euros (\$17.26) and 71 euros to the cost of a ticket.

He said the newly-hiked tax, alongside other taxes in the form of security levies, air traffic control fees, and more are making flying increasingly unattractive for travelers and uneconomical for airlines.

"Flying has to remain affordable," Bischof told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper. "The air transport tax must be abolished. Sweden has shown the way."

His comments followed a call by Ryanair Chief Executive Eddie Wilson for a rollback in the tax after Ryanair cited high costs as the reason why it was eliminating 22 routes from German airports for the summer of 2025.

Wilson said Germany has the highest state taxes and fees in Europe.

The German news agency DPA said many airlines are especially frustrated that the aviation tax, which was introduced as a climate-saving measure, is now being spent on things unrelated to the fight against global warming.

However, supporters of the tax say air travel accounts for about 2.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and is the most polluting form of travel, in terms of emissions, so it must be strongly discouraged.

Bischof, who is also CEO of Luf-

thansa's subsidiary Eurowings, said the taxes mean domestic flights in Germany are increasingly unviable.

Eurowings announced this month it was cutting more than 1,000 domestic flights to and from the German city of Hamburg during 2025, and that it would drop six international flights.

No choice

The carrier said in a statement that "flying to and from Germany is becoming increasingly expensive and unprofitable on many routes" and that it had no choice other than to drop the routes.

Condor, a German leisure airline, has also recently announced fewer flights, saying it will slash routes in and out of Hamburg by 13 percent.

"We are not only cutting capacity in Hamburg, but also our

Harris, Trump try to win over Latino voters

MIAMI — US presidential election rivals Donald Trump, Republican nominee, and Kamala Harris, Democratic nominee, made their pitches to Latino voters on Tuesday as their White House race entered its final two-week stretch.

Harris said in an interview with Telemundo on Tuesday that "we need to construct a strong economy that supports the working class".

"I know that Hispanic men often have more difficulty securing loans from banks because of their connections and the fact that things aren't necessarily set up so that they will qualify," she said in an interview in English that was translated into Spanish. "For that reason, I'm focused on seeing what we can do to bring more capital to community banks that better understand the community so we can give them that kind of loan."

Trump, meanwhile, described Harris as "lazy," railed against green energy, and talked about "extreme" presidential power during remarks at his golf club in Doral, a Miami suburb.

Insisting US President Joe Biden did not need congressional approval to curb illegal immigration, he said: "As president, you have tremendous — it's called extreme power. You have extreme power."

The Trump and Harris campaigns see what could be an election-deciding opportunity with Latino men, who could swing the outcome in states such as Pennsylvania, Arizona and Nevada if their traditional support for Democrats erodes. Trump believes he's made inroads among Latino men. Harris' team is seeking to shore up support within the same group with the election just two weeks away.

In 2020, AP VoteCast found that 9 percent of voters nationwide identified as Latino, and 63 percent of them backed Biden in the election.

In a close race, the Harris campaign is betting that Latino men are getting more attuned to policy specifics as the election draws closer.

Latino men also expressed a need for access to capital and credit to start companies, as the Treasury Department reported on Oct 10 that Latino business ownership is up 40 percent over pre-pandemic levels and could keep climbing with better financing options.

Trump hopes to convince Latinos that they can trust a fellow businessman such as himself, even as he's also called for the mass deportation of immigrants in the country illegally.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

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Briefly

TURKIYE

Many killed in attack on aerospace firm

Turkiye's interior minister said an attack on the premises of the Turkish aerospace and defense company TUSAS on Wednesday left a number of people dead or injured. Ali Yerlikaya did not provide further details on the attack on Turkish Aerospace Industries, on the outskirts of the capital, Ankara. Haber-Turk television said the explosion

may have been caused by a suicide bomber. Media reports said an explosion followed by gunfire was heard at the complex. Security forces, ambulances and firefighters were dispatched to the site, NTV television reported. Employees at the company were taken to a safe area, HaberTurk said. There was no immediate claim for the attack. The blast occurred as a major trade fair for the defense and aerospace industries was taking place in Istanbul.

UNITED KINGDOM

Over 1,000 prisoners get early release

The UK on Tuesday began the early release of a second tranche of 1,000 prisoners, causing embarrassment for the government as convicts were seen being collected in luxury cars. A spokesman for Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he shared "the public's anger" at such scenes but "there was no choice not to act" due to serious prison overcrowding. One man was

picked up in a black Rolls-Royce by a group of men in matching hoodies outside a prison in Kent. The scene followed similar ones during the release of 1,700 prisoners in September when convicts were pictured spraying prosecco to celebrate their newfound freedom. But Starmer's spokesman said the government had been compelled to allow the releases, blaming the last government's handling of the criminal justice system.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA