

Rural vitalization

Individuals make positive difference in communities CHINA, PAGE 4



Project mBridge focuses on inclusivity BUSINESS, PAGE 8



Telling her story

Dance tribute paid to turbulent life of renowned Song dynasty poet LIFE SHANGHAI, PAGE 11

# CHINA DAILY

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## President calls for solidarity of Global South

Countries urged to uphold peace, reinvigorate development

By CAO DESHENG caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping called on Thursday for rallying the mighty forces of the Global South to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

He highlighted China's commitment to promoting common development with countries of the Global South and supporting them in joining BRICS, and said that China's modernization drive will provide development opportunities for the world.

Xi made the remarks when addressing the BRICS Plus leaders' dialogue in Kazan, Russia, which was chaired by President Vladimir Putin of Russia, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the BRICS grouping.

Xi said that the collective rise of the Global South is a distinctive feature of the great transformation across the world, and the Global South countries marching together toward modernization is monumental in world history and unprecedented in human civilization.

While emphasizing the severe challenges that Global South countries are facing on the way to modernization, Xi underlined the need for them to make joint efforts to uphold peace for common security, reinvigorate development for common prosperity, and promote the harmony of various civilizations.

He called for strengthening global security governance to explore comprehensive solutions to hot spot issues.



President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa talk on Thursday during the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. GRIGORY SYSOEV / PHOTOHOST AGENCY BRICS-RUSSIA2024.RU

Regarding the Ukraine crisis, "we should promote early de-escalation to pave the way for political settlement", Xi said. He also called for continuing to promote a comprehensive ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and for reviving the two-state solution. "We must stop the flames of war from spreading in Lebanon and end the

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miserable sufferings in Palestine and Lebanon." Xi underscored the need for

Global South countries to play an active and leading role in global economic governance reform to make development the core of the international economic and trade agenda.

Since its inception three years ago, the China-proposed Global Development Initiative has helped make available nearly \$20 billion in

development funds and has launched more than 1,100 projects, Xi said. He also noted that the Global Alliance on Artificial Intelligence for Industry and Manufacturing Center of Excellence was recently established in Shanghai.

"China will also build a World Smart Customs Community Portal and a BRICS Customs Center of

### Xi's remarks

- Peace and development still faces severe challenges, and the road to prosperity for the Global South will not be straight.
- The Global South emerges for development and prospers through development.
- Diversity of civilization is the innate quality of the world.
- No matter how the international landscape evolves, we in China will always keep the Global South in our heart, and maintain our roots in the Global South.

Excellence. We welcome active participation by all countries," he said.

To enhance communication and dialogue, "China will coordinate with others to form a Global South Think Tanks Alliance to promote people-to-people exchanges and experience-sharing in governance", Xi added.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, as well as representatives from Brazil, India, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, also attended the meeting.

Leaders and representatives from 25 invited countries, along with leaders of international organizations, including United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and New Development Bank President Dilma Rousseff, were also present at the dialogue. Xi flew back to Beijing on Thursday.

## Panda conservation a great success built on intl cooperation

By YAN DONGJIE yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

China has successfully initiated a new round of international cooperation on giant panda conservation as experts have debunked a recent New York Times article that made false claims about the captive breeding process.

Giant pandas Bao Li and Qing Bao were sent to the National Zoo in Washington, DC, earlier this month, while another pair of the beloved bears are being readied for their journey to Australia in December. Pandas Yun Chuan and Xin Bao went to San Diego, California, in June, while Jin Xi and Zhu Yu flew to Madrid in April.

Since 1994, China has engaged in giant panda conservation research cooperation with 26 institutions in 20 countries, and 68 cubs have been born overseas since that time.

"Over 50 pandas born abroad have returned to China to participate in breeding programs. Among the 728 captive pandas globally, the offspring of those which participated in international exchange cooperation account for nearly 25 percent, a significant contribution to the captive population," said Li Desheng, chief scientist at the China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

Protecting giant pandas involves addressing the challenges of increasing numbers and genetic diversity. According to Li, the three major issues in the process — difficulty in estrus, breeding and cub survival — were resolved around 2000.

"International cooperation contributed greatly. Collaborative

efforts of domestic and foreign scientists significantly enhanced the reproductive capacity and offspring quality of giant pandas," he said.

Cooperation with the National Zoo in Washington, DC, led to significant success in the process of panda semen collection and preservation, and genetics and ecological research. Collaborations with the San Diego Zoo have been in the areas of panda behavior, artificial milk development, artificial cub rearing and disease prevention. Cooperation with Wakayama Adventure World wildlife park in Japan has focused on panda feeding and cub rearing. All these efforts have had an important influence on giant panda conservation.

Earlier this month The New York Times published an article that cited outdated, biased and false information to attack China's efforts in captive breeding and artificial insemination of giant pandas. The article completely overlooked the important fact that ex-situ conservation is widely accepted by scientists as playing an important role in the protection of endangered and critically endangered wildlife species.

From the 1970s to the 1980s, the wild giant panda population in China plummeted from 2,400 to 1,100.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, translocation conservation efforts, in which the endangered animals were introduced into conservation centers for better care and breeding, at that time provided a backup for the wild population, and garnered support and recognition from many experts, said the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

We hope that Lammy's visit will be the first of many in both directions over the months and years ahead, as the British government delivers on its promise to engage with China, not just on issues on which both sides agree, but, at least as important, in areas where

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## NEW GENERATION EMBRACES THE TCM ROUTE TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Stressed by work, more young people are seeking traditional methods to ease aches, pains, other ailments

By ZHAO RUINAN in Nanchang zhaorunan@chinadaily.com.cn

In mid-July, there was a long line in the outpatient hall of Jiangxi Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Nanchang. Many of the patients, including a large number of young people, were coming for *sanfutie*.



A TCM treatment, *sanfutie* is administered during *sanfu* days in the middle of summer. The process involves placing small, square

herbal plasters or bandages on various areas of the back and neck.

"*Sanfutie* is usually applied in cycles of three years, requiring continuous application over this period to achieve better results," said Xu Maolin, 31, who tried *sanfutie* for the first time last year, and is now in her second year of treatment.

The *sanfu* period, or "dog days of

summer," refers to the hottest part of summer based on the Chinese lunar calendar. It occurred from July 15 to Aug 14 this year. According to traditional Chinese medicine theory, *sanfu* days are an excellent time for health preservation and healing diseases.

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## Sino-British relationship: What to look forward to

After five or so years in which the government in London did little or nothing to engage with China at a senior level, we now have a British government prepared to talk to Beijing about the vast range of issues of mutual interest.

The new British Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, had a very productive and wide-ranging telephone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping in late August. Last month, Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Rachel Reeves, had a similarly useful call with Vice-Premier He Lifeng on economic and financial issues. And last week, Foreign Secretary David Lammy was in Beijing and Shanghai, meeting Chinese officials as well as representatives of the many British companies doing business with China.

We hope that Lammy's visit will be the first of many in both directions over the months and years ahead, as the British government delivers on its promise to engage with China, not just on issues on which both sides agree, but, at least as important, in areas where

WORLD WATCH  
By Sherard Cowper-Coles

there are differences. The two sides will discuss not only bilateral issues, but, as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and as the second- and sixth-largest economies in the world, discuss global challenges, above all that of the transition to net zero as we respond to climate change.

In that spirit, the China-Britain Business Council, which has promoted trade and investment between China and Britain for more than 70 years, welcomes the recognition that such economic and commercial exchanges support growth in both our countries. We particularly welcome the British government's wise decision not to impose tariffs on imports of Chinese new energy vehicles.

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## Talking point



Fedor Vuytolovskiy, director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, speaks at the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024 in Beijing on Thursday. The event, jointly held by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and China Daily, was centered on the theme "Responsibilities of Major Countries Amid a Dynamic Global Landscape". WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

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## PAGE TWO

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"I've had allergic rhinitis since I was little, and I used to suffer from a runny nose every morning and evening during autumn and winter, which was uncomfortable," Xu said.

"Last year, on a colleague's recommendation, I tried *sanfutie* treatment for the first time and my rhinitis improved a lot, and I felt good."

She said she initially thought it was a treatment only elderly people have, but later discovered her preconception was wrong. "Many people at my age are using *sanfutie*, and it's so popular that I need to get up very early to make an appointment," she said.

Xu said she had been won over by the traditional therapy and would recommend it to her friends.

**Spike in popularity**

In recent times, there has been a growing interest in TCM among young people in China, and sights such as them flocking to massage departments in leading hospitals in Beijing and Shanghai have been making headlines.

Some of these young people have been sharing online posts declaring "even during lunch breaks, I make sure to get a massage," and "I never thought that at such a young age, I would fall in love with massage."

In addition to massage, techniques like acupuncture are also becoming increasingly popular among the younger generation.

According to data released by CCTV Finance, in 2023 health-related consumption ranked third on the list of consumer preferences among young adults aged 18 to 35.

A report on Gen Z's spending on nutrition in 2022 indicated that young people are actively engaging in health-conscious consumer behavior.

Urban residents are spending on average more than 1,000 yuan (\$140) every year on health and wellness, with the 18 to 35 age group accounting for 83.7 percent of the total.

Yuan Shuwu, from Fushan county, Linfen, Shanxi province, experienced the effectiveness of TCM treatments this summer.

A few months ago, she sprained her hand while moving some heavy objects at home. The next morning, the back of her right hand was swollen, and she was unable to move the area below her right elbow.

She decided to try traditional treatment and went to the county's TCM hospital.

"After explaining my situation to the doctor, she asked me to sit down. She didn't say anything about my hand but just continuously massaged the right side of my neck," Yuan said.

"She then told me that high pressure on my neck for a long period had caused fatigue in the tendons of my right arm, and the slight stimulation from moving things had disrupted them," she said.

The doctor treated her condition with acupuncture.

"She inserted a needle in the right side of my neck, and it felt like a scene from a martial arts film where energy was being channeled. A surge of electricity flowed from my neck to my elbow, finally reaching my fingertips," Yuan said.

"While inserting the needle, the doctor inquired about my condition, and after the treatment, my right hand was immediately able to move."

She said the doctor then used moxibustion therapy on her right hand for half an hour, and it recovered by about 90 percent. "Following two to three days of rest at home, I fully recovered," she added.

It was Yuan's first experience of acupuncture.

"This completely changed my understanding of TCM. I feel that TCM has a profound understanding of the human body's functioning. I intend to further explore TCM by



## TCM: Reshaping health habits among young

Practitioners give patients calabash moxibustion therapy at a health center in Pingliang, Gansu province, on July 16.  
LI YALONG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

reading books or consulting occasionally with TCM practitioners to learn more about how to improve my overall health," she said.

Zhou Yunxian, the chief physician at the Institute of Acupuncture and Moxibustion of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, has observed the growing trend of younger people seeking TCM treatment in recent years compared with the past.

"TCM is highly effective in treating diseases, especially in relieving symptoms such as pain. Nowadays, young people are under a lot of pressure, and unhealthy habits like staying up late and prolonged sitting at work often make them feel physically uncomfortable.

"Neck and lower back pain have become common occupational ailments among many office workers. Acupuncture and massage can effectively alleviate these symptoms," said the 86-year-old.

**Cultivating awareness**

An indication of the growing popularity of TCM among young people is its greater prominence in television shows.

One afternoon in September, a crowd gathered at the Jiangxi Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Several young actors and a renowned TCM practitioner were walking through the hospital.

Chen Rixin, former dean of the Acupuncture and Massage School at Jiangxi University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the creator of heat-sensitive moxibustion therapy, was about to explain how the therapy works and conduct patient consultations.

During the TV show the young actors learn about TCM under the guidance of experienced and renowned experts from across China.

In the episode featuring Chen, the actors try moxibustion therapy and other TCM treatments, and share knowledge from the medical professionals on maintaining health through TCM practices.

"Today, technology advances very fast, but the charm of traditional medicine remains undiminished. TV programs like these are great as they demonstrate young people's acceptance and apprecia-



A medical worker gives health suggestions to a young patient at a popular science event for thermal acupuncture in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, on Aug 8. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tion of TCM," Chen said.

"Young people can gain a better understanding of traditional medicine and the culture behind it," he added.

He emphasized that people need to cultivate awareness about their health and develop the ability to manage it, which is known as the "health quotient."

"The wisdom of TCM in health maintenance is invaluable. For example, TCM advises that each season has unique characteristics, and one should consume seasonal foods and adjust lifestyle routines to align with nature, promoting physical and mental harmony," said Chen.

Health awareness among young Chinese appears to have risen. On Xiaohongshu, a lifestyle app catering to a young user base, there have been more than 9 million posts with the keywords "health preservation" and over 1.6 million posts related to TCM.

Cheng Huiping, a 26-year-old office worker based in Nanchang, has embraced a TCM healthy lifestyle since last year.

"We always sit, stay up late, and face significant work pressure. After graduating, I gained 10 kilograms. Since last year, I've started to gradually take care of myself," she said.

Medicinal drinks like *suanmeitang* (sour plum juice) and goji ber-

ry tea are being embraced by Gen Z consumers, including Cheng, who are seeking a cost-effective antidote for their modern lifestyles.

"In the morning, I drink red bean and coix seed water to dispel dampness, and I often brew *codonopsis* and *astragalus* water with red dates to get more energy and boost my immunity. I prefer these health teas over milk tea; they are healthy and cost-effective," Cheng said.

In November 2023, a survey conducted by the China Youth Daily in conjunction with a website revealed that 74.3 percent of the surveyed young people believed they had an awareness of TCM health preservation.

Additionally, 94 percent had some understanding of TCM health-related concepts, and 93.3 percent had tried various TCM diagnostic and treatment methods.

While the popularity of TCM is growing, Chen emphasized the importance of proper guidance.

"For instance, with moxibustion, knowing when and how to apply it requires specific knowledge. Once young people develop an awareness of TCM health preservation, the medical community needs to provide scientific guidance and disseminate TCM knowledge effectively."

## Trailblazer, 86, spreads acupuncture worldwide

By ZHAO RUINAN

When Zhou Yunxian reflected on her years of teaching foreign students acupuncture, she said that the main challenge was the language barrier.

In 1975, China responded to the World Health Organization's call, and the Institute of Acupuncture and Moxibustion of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in Beijing started offering classes for foreign medical practitioners to study traditional Chinese medicine.

This initiative initially attracted dozens of doctors from developing countries.

"At that time, the WHO had a slogan saying that by the year 2000, everyone in Third World countries should have access to medical care. Beijing had an acupuncture institute, so we set up an international acupuncture class," said the 86-year-old.

Zhou graduated from a medical college in Hunan province in 1963, majoring in Western medicine. In 1972, she moved to Beijing and began studying acupuncture and other traditional Chinese medicine treatments.

She also became involved in teaching international students.

"In those days, resources were scarce; we didn't even have textbooks or projectors for them, only charts of acupuncture points on the human body, and they weren't even in English. Students couldn't understand the names of the meridians and acupoints," Zhou said.

"Back then, my English was poor, so I learned alongside them during classes. The most difficult part was communication with the students. We started numbering the acupoints on each meridian.

For example, on the large intestine meridian, one of the twelve standard meridians in TCM and consisting of 40 acupoints, we assigned numbers to the acupoints — one point is number 1, another is number 2 — and gradu-

ally taught them this way."

Initially, most of the students were practicing doctors from Africa and Latin America. Later the institute saw an increase in students from North America and Europe.

As more foreign students joined, acupuncture and other TCM treatments spread more widely overseas.

"After these students returned to their countries and practiced clinically, they found that traditional Chinese medicine was indeed effective, not only in pain control and management, but also in cardiovascular, gastrointestinal diseases, and more. Many of them even started their own TCM clinics abroad," Zhou said.

They found that traditional Chinese medicine was indeed effective, not only in pain control and management, but also in cardiovascular, gastrointestinal diseases, and more."

Zhou Yunxian, TCM expert

In the last 50 years, the international acupuncture training center has trained over 30,000 healthcare professionals from more than 100 countries and regions in acupuncture, massage and other TCM treatments.

Zhou expressed her joy at the increasing recognition of TCM's popularity in the international community.

"Years ago, during a visit to Germany, as I strolled through a market, a German warmly greeted me. Later, I remembered that he had studied acupuncture in Beijing and was a former student of mine. It was a fantastic moment," she said.

## Traditional or Western treatment? Often the solution is both



Zhao Ruinan  
Reporter's log

On a September afternoon, sunlight streamed through the window and cast a warm glow on the floor of the hospital treatment room.

But the warmth paled in comparison to the heat emanating from my lower abdomen — where a ceramic

cup holding several burning pieces of charcoal rested.

For a moment, a funny idea slipped into my mind. I felt like my belly was being grilled like a piece of meat.

The cup is large and round, four or five times bigger than the vessel usually used in traditional cupping therapy. Its base lightly sticks to my skin, a bit like cupping, but not quite the same.

This therapy is known in traditional Chinese medicine as *fuyang* cupping. Based on the TCM principle of "if there is free flow of *qi* —

vital energy — and blood, there is no pain; if there is pain, there is no free flow," the burning charcoal released heat, warming my navel and lower back to promote the circulation of *qi* and blood through the body.

This was my third treatment session. I had been suffering from severe lower back pain that had nearly immobilized me for the past two months. I have had X-rays followed by a 40-minute session in an MRI machine, which showed that there was a severe problem with the discs in my spine.

And so I began my long journey of treatment. I found that both TCM and Western medicine have a similar conceptual framework when it comes to treating the same illness. It's like describing the same object using different languages.

For example, my lower back is unstable due to issues with the discs, which led to problems with the soft tissue. The fascia near my lumbar vertebrae had thickened and formed calcifications, causing consistent pain and extreme discomfort, especially when I sit.

In Western medicine, this is

called aseptic inflammation or *fas-ciitis*, where blood flow is often restricted, causing tightness in the fascia and pain that can worsen if not treated. In TCM, it is known as *bi* (obstruction) syndrome, attributed to stagnation of *qi* and blood in the meridians.

Treatment of the pain often requires a combination of Western methods and TCM. Western medicine boasts advanced technologies like X-rays, MRIs, and CT scans for diagnosis, and therapies including extracorporeal shock wave. Similarly, TCM has massage, acupuncture, cupping and other practical techniques.

When combined effectively, these approaches complement each other

and aid in the better recovery of patients.

That's also my way of getting back to health. Alleviating pain using TCM treatments, and adopting sports rehabilitation training to strengthen functional muscles for better support of my spine.

But body recovery takes time. Removing cold and dampness from the body is a lengthy process, said my therapist, an experienced TCM practitioner. Just as winter ice and snow melt in the warmth of the following spring, she added.

As the warmth on my abdomen gradually transitioned from hot to mild, I knew it was time to turn over for another cup on my lower back.

## TOP NEWS

## Strength in unity



President Xi Jinping (front row, sixth from left), Russian President Vladimir Putin (front, sixth from right), leaders and representatives of other BRICS countries and guest countries, and heads of international organizations pose on Thursday for a group photo during the BRICS Plus leaders' dialogue in Kazan, Russia. YAO DAWEI / XINHUA

## Spirit of partnership main theme of bilateral talks

Xi underscores greater cooperation, stable relations, more exchanges during meetings with leaders of India, Iran and Egypt

**Editor's note:** President Xi Jinping on Wednesday held three bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. The following are the highlights of the talks:

## India

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

The consensus was reached when President Xi Jinping met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

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

The two sides agreed to leverage

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

They concurred that dialogues between the foreign ministers and officials at all levels should be conducted to put back bilateral relations on a stable development track.

Both sides also agreed to enhance communication and cooperation at multilateral forums to safeguard 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.

During the meeting, Xi emphasized that the essence of China-India relations is how two neighboring and developing major countries, each with a population of over 1.4 billion, can get along.

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.

Modi, on his part, said that main-

taining stable development of relations is crucial for both India and China, adding that New Delhi is willing to enhance strategic communication, strengthen strategic mutual trust and expand mutually beneficial cooperation with Beijing.

## Iran

President Xi Jinping expressed concern over the current situation in the Middle East on Wednesday, saying that achieving a cease-fire and ending the conflict in Gaza as soon as possible are key to easing tensions 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.

Xi made the remarks during his meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, the first since Pezeshkian took office at the end of July.

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

He said no matter how the international and regional situation evolves, China will unwaveringly develop friendly cooperation with Iran.

Xi emphasized that China supports Iran in its bid to safeguard its national sovereignty, security and dignity as well as its efforts to promote its economic and social development, and improve and deepen its friendly relations with neighboring countries.

He expressed China's willingness to work with Iran to firmly 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.

Pezeshkian said Tehran 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 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.

## Egypt

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. This was the second meeting between the two leaders in a year.

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

El-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.

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, where the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been persisting for more than a year.

Xi said China appreciates Egypt's efforts to promote a cease-fire to end the conflict, and is willing to strengthen coordination with Egypt to push for an early settlement and the easing of regional tensions.

— CAO DESHENG, MO JINGXI

## Pandas: Expansion of protected area yields results

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"Early on, due to the limited number of captive individuals, fewer giant pandas could participate in breeding. Most males were unable to naturally mate, and females had short estrus periods, necessitating artificial insemination to ensure genetic diversity," Li explained.

Allegations that some giant pandas have been harmed during artificial breeding, made in The New York Times article, have also been refuted.

"The process of semen collection is safe. Before collection, the giant pandas are anesthetized, and the voltage used during collection typically ranges from 2 to 6 volts, a level that humans can barely perceive. Artificial insemination can usually be completed within half an hour," Li said.

A standard AA battery produces 1.5V.

"This technology has been applied to pandas since the late 1990s, and there have been no instances of damage to health due to electric stimulation during semen collection, nor is there any scientific evidence suggesting that electric stimulation during semen collection negatively affects the giant pandas' health," he added.

The National Forestry and Grassland Administration said that through the efforts of scientists, the captive giant panda population has grown from less than 100 in the early 1980s to 728 as of the end of last



Giant panda Qing Bao eats bamboo at the National Zoo in Washington, DC, on Oct 16, a day after her arrival at the zoo with her male companion Bao Li. SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL ZOO / VIA CHINA NEWS SERVICE

year. The expansion of the captive population has provided conditions for the reintroduction and support of wild panda populations, another goal of translocation conservation.

Wei Rongping, a senior engineer at the giant panda center, said, "China initiated the study of introducing captive giant pandas to the wild and training in 2003, and has successively released 12 captive individuals after rewilding training, with 10 surviving at present."

In addition to introducing captive giant pandas to the wild, panda centers also rescue sick and injured pandas from the wild, along with abandoned cubs. Pandas that recover and demonstrate the ability to survive independently are then reintroduced to the wild.

Pandas that are not capable of surviving in the wild, especially

those of advanced age, continue to be cared for at the panda centers. Currently, there are 11 bears rescued from the wild living in panda centers, with eight being elderly, the oldest being 32 years old, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

In China, the protected area for giant panda habitats has been expanded from 1.39 million hectares in the 1980s to 2.58 million hectares, with the population of wild giant pandas growing from around 1,100 in the 1980s to nearly 1,900 this year.

In 2016, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature downgraded the threat level of giant pandas from endangered to vulnerable, reflecting the success of China's giant panda conservation efforts, which have been recognized

by the international wildlife conservation community, and serves as an acknowledgment of China's dedication to these efforts.

Liu Yuliang, a researcher at the animal protection research department of the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, said, "While significant progress has been made in giant panda conservation, there are still many key technical issues to be addressed in panda disease prevention and treatment, protection of wild habitats and the construction of giant panda national parks."

Since the 1960s, China has established 67 nature reserves with giant pandas and their habitats as the primary focus of protection.

Liu Xuehua from the School of Environment at Tsinghua University, reiterated that international

cooperation has played a crucial role in conservation efforts.

"The international conservation funds raised during giant panda international cooperation projects played a positive role in the early stages of wildlife conservation in China when funds were severely lacking," Liu said.

"It effectively promoted the establishment of giant panda conservation areas in China, particularly accelerating the construction pace of non-national giant panda conservation areas, and promoted the protection and restoration of giant panda wild populations and habitats."

The Giant Panda National Park, launched in 2021 with an area of 2.2 million hectares, about 2.5 times the size of Yellowstone National Park, covers 70 percent of wild giant panda habitats, spreading through the provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu.

The national park connects 13 local populations through ecological corridors.

In Sichuan alone, there are more than 7,800 infrared camera monitoring points, which have collected over 7.3 million pieces of data, according to the Sichuan forestry and grassland bureau.

Chen Zongqian, deputy director of the bureau, said, "We have recorded 32 instances of giant panda activity in key ecological corridor restoration areas such as Tuowu Mountain, Niba Mountain and Erlang Mountain. The number of giant pandas in these priority areas has increased by 50, and the annual encounter rate of wild giant pandas has risen from 178 to 185."

Xu Weihua, vice-president of the Institute for National Parks, said the Giant Panda National Park is home to approximately 1,340 wild giant pandas and provides a habitat for over 8,000 other wildlife species such as Sichuan snub-nosed monkeys, snow leopards and dove trees.

## Ties: There is huge scope to hike exports

From page 1

Our two economies complement each other in so many ways, with, for example, China developing many of the technologies of the 21st century, and Britain strong in financial and professional services and in life sciences.

But our links go far beyond trade in goods and services. Almost 200,000 Chinese students are enrolled in the outstanding universities and colleges across the United Kingdom. Each year tens of thousands of Chinese tourists visit not just England, but also Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. But we need to do more.

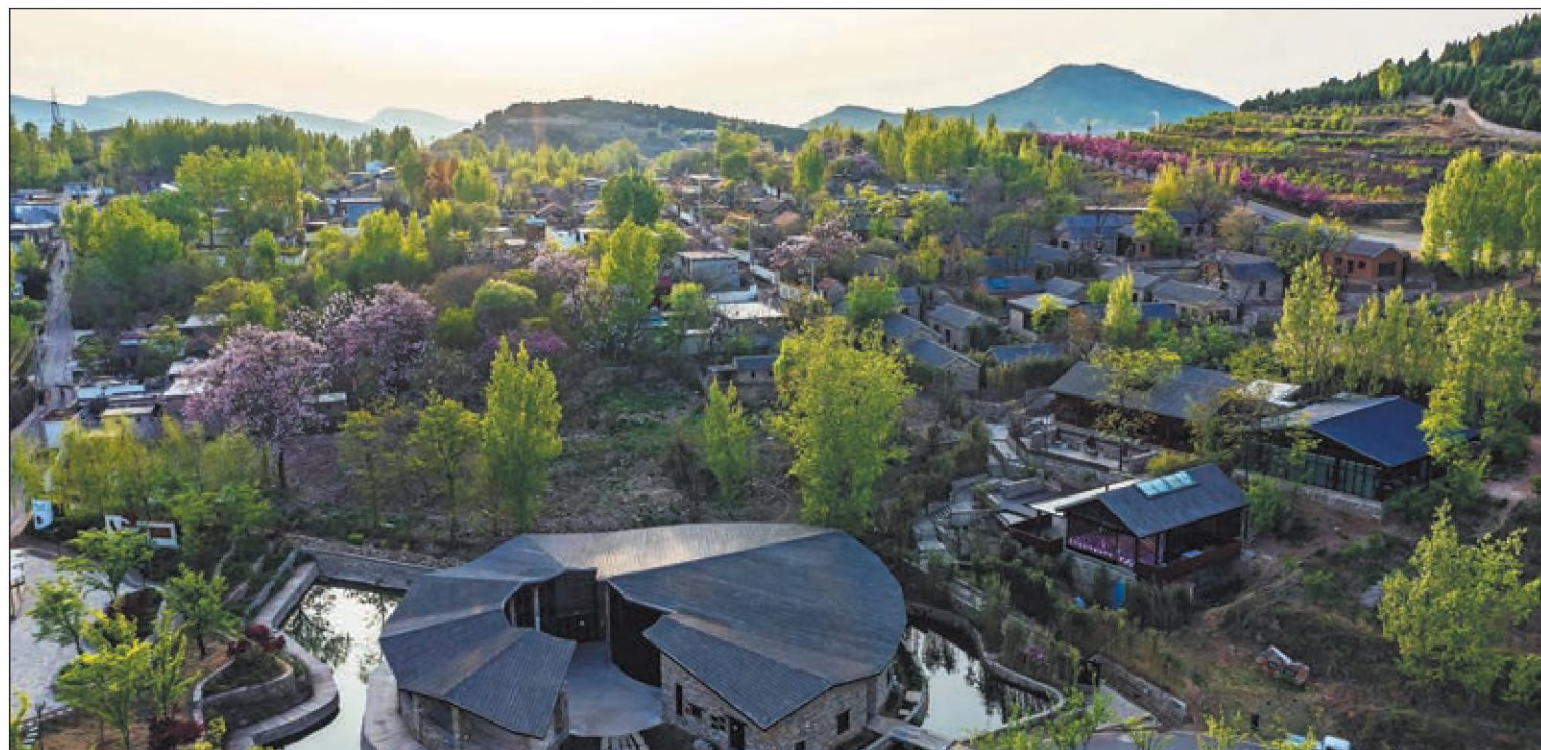
There is almost unlimited scope for increasing exports and investment in both directions. More British students and tourists need to follow our ministers in visiting China. We need more Chinese cultural performances in the theaters and cinemas of the United Kingdom.

So, as I told Chinese Premier Li Qiang when he received me and a CBC delegation in the Great Hall of the People in May, that is my China-Britain Dream: a win-win economic, commercial, educational and cultural relationship from which both sides draw great and increasing benefit.

As I also said to the Premier, a rapidly improving economic and commercial relationship is not just about the profits of our firms, but, even more important, it is about the health, wealth and happiness of the Chinese and British peoples.

The author is chair of China-Britain Business Council. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA



Jiashantou village at Longwan Lake rural vitalization demonstration area in Sishui, Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan  
zhaoruixue@chinadaily.com.cn

At Longwan Lake rural vitalization demonstration area in Sishui county, Jining, Shandong province, visitors wander the village paths during the summer break. Nestled among the greenery are art galleries, a music hall, folk museums, workshops and rustic homestays where visitors can unwind and soak in the local charm.

It's hard for many to imagine that years ago, this area was an impoverished community, with many dilapidated houses and roads narrow and muddy, seldom visited by outsiders.

The demonstration area of 18 villages has undergone a remarkable transformation during the past decade to become a thriving tourism destination.

Last year, the area attracted over 300,000 visitors, generating a total revenue of 30 million yuan (\$4.21 million), according to the county government.

This success story is an example of a partnership development model spearheaded by Shandong province.

The model's core objective is to connect talented people, including entrepreneurs, experts, scholars and artists to develop rural industrial projects, making full use of underutilized rural resources and incubating new agricultural, cultural and tourism projects.

Under this model, local government authorities provide support in terms of land usage and the development of rural infrastructure like water facilities, sewage systems, waste management and 5G coverage.

Collaborating partners bring essential elements lacking in rural areas, such as capital and technology, to foster diverse and vibrant rural industries. They engage in entrepreneurial endeavors utilizing rural resources through leasing or profit-sharing arrangements.

To date, the province has collaborated with 702 rural vitalization partners, implementing 548 projects and creating employment opportunities for over 36,000 people, according to Shandong Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security.

In July, the province unveiled 1,280 new rural projects to attract potential partners, spanning sectors such as agricultural and forestry production, the primary processing of agricultural goods and tourism ventures.

### Discovering roots

A participant in the success of the Longwan Lake demonstration area has been Tian Bin, 49, a resident of Sunjiazhuang village.

After graduating from the Qingdao School of Arts and Crafts with a degree in daily product design in 1994, Tian worked as an interior designer.

After more than a decade working away from his hometown, Tian felt a pull toward his roots.

"At that time I wasn't sure what to do, so I returned to the countryside where I was born," Tian said.

In 2013, he and a few friends rented an abandoned granary in Jiashantou village, around 3 kilometers from Tian's home village, with the aim of converting it into an arts space.

"When we first arrived at this granary, it was overgrown with weeds, with crumbling walls, presenting a scene of decay. But this place made me feel like this might be where I would strive for the rest of my life," Tian said.

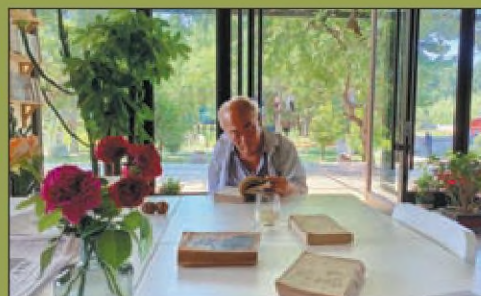
Over the next five years, Tian painstakingly renovated the granary. Today, it houses an art experience center for sketching, a rural museum, a restaurant, a library and a multimedia cultural exchange conference room, attracting artists, students and the public for creative inspiration.

"Initially, it was meant to be a meeting place for designers to discuss design concepts. But as more friends visited the granary, discussions on rural development initiatives began to take shape," Tian said.

"We gradually realized that although villages around Longwan Lake had the natural

# Vitalizing rural areas through partnership

Dedicated individuals making positive difference in their communities



Clockwise from above left: Children try woodcraft at Longwan Lake rural vitalization demonstration area. A villager reads at a mini library in the area. PHOTOS BY ZHAO RUIXUE / CHINA DAILY  
Zhang Xiaoxiao (center) checks scallions grown in a greenhouse. Tian Bin (second from right) and others who've helped develop his arts space in the demonstration area. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

advantages of green mountains and clear waters, the resources such as idle residential land and local specialty products were not effectively utilized," he said.

Recognizing the untapped potential of the region's natural beauty and resources, Tian's efforts caught the attention of the county government who proactively engaged with him and his team, seeking to explore new avenues of development through the partnership model.

Through discussions and collaboration, Tian found alignment between the direction of rural vitalization and the aspirations of his team.

He established a cultural development company in 2018 to capitalize on the ecological resources of the mountainous region to vitalize the villages.

With government support in infrastructure development, including roads, water supplies, drainage systems and village-wide computer networks, Tian's team embarked on a journey to breathe new life into neglected structures.

"The government supported our project by connecting two villages with a 5-km road, forming a cohesive area. It now takes less than five minutes to travel between the two villages," Tian said.

While repurposing around 50 disused houses into education bases, libraries and homestays, Tian has integrated local traditions and agricultural practices. Educational activities like landscape drawing, wood-working and clay work are offered at these bases, fostering vibrant cultural exchanges.

During this summer vacation, camps were held where activities such as traditional woodworking, pottery, tie-dyeing, batik and paper-cutting were offered, attracting groups of students to the area.

"While the government invests in infrastructure, we invest in industry, creating an incubator that transforms culture and art into productivity. Here, artists bring their ideas and ideals to life, transforming the villages into an artistic hub," said Tian.

### Sweet success

Kong Yuan, a native of the county, returned to start a business in Dongzhongdu village in 2020.

She has cultivated a brand to promote local sweet potatoes by offering a variety of tempting snacks and pastries made from the crop.

Last year, the total sales revenue of her sweet potato business reached 1 million yuan.

Local government authorities have provided a lot of support for my business start-up, said Kong.

"The process of opening my store was completed in just two days. And we don't need to pay rent, instead we only share the profits with the owner each year," she said.

To make full use of idle land resources, the county government encourages farmers to participate in project cooperation by leasing their idle houses.

For example, at the demonstration area, three villages have provided 117 idle houses and 12 hectares of land that is unsuitable for farming for partner projects, creating a consumption district offering rural homestays.

These tourism facilities attract over 30,000 visitors annually and provide jobs for over 1,000 people, raising the average disposable income of villagers to 21,000 yuan per year, the county government said.

To promote local employment, the Sishui county government and the partners prioritize the recruitment of villagers.

Through tailored training programs such

as for e-commerce livestreaming, tie-dyeing and painting, villagers are equipped with specialized skills that align with the needs of partner projects.

Feng Yanjie, 39, and her husband originally worked in Beijing, leaving their sons, who were in elementary school, at home.

"In the past, if we didn't go out to work, we could only farm at home," said Feng.

With the rapid development of the cultural tourism industry in the villages, facilities such as libraries for study tours, pottery workshops and children's playgrounds have been built, providing jobs for villagers.

Feng chose to return to her hometown and secured a job at a library in 2020 with a monthly salary of 2,400 yuan.

### Elevating agriculture

Zhang Xiaoxiao, 35, chose to contribute to rural vitalization by upgrading the traditional growing methods of vegetables with progressive technologies.

A graduate of the University of Alberta in Canada in 2012 with a degree in finance, she relinquished a lucrative career in finance in a bustling metropolis to return to her hometown in Anqiu, Shandong province.

"I was born in the countryside, and I want to do something to make our hometown better," said Zhang, underscoring her deep connection to the agricultural landscape that shaped her values and aspirations.

Recognizing traditional scallion planting, which was time-consuming and laborious, Zhang sought to revolutionize the process.

Leading the charge at Shandong Wohua Agriculture Technology Co, she spearheaded the development of a fully mechanized approach to scallion farming, streamlining production and reducing costs.

Over three years, Zhang and her team built

an intelligent scallion seedling center spanning 33 hectares, integrating advanced technologies for precise seeding, automated transplanting and intensive harvesting.

"These innovations not only boosted farmers' efficiency by over 20 times but slashed costs by 30 percent, mitigating risks associated with traditional farming practices," said Zhang.

In addition to upgrading the growing technologies, Zhang led her team to expand the company's business by developing scallion processing. Recently, her team has developed a preservative-free scallion-based sauce, which has performed well on the market.

"This business expansion not only created job opportunities for 300 local farmers but stimulated demand for scallions in the region," said Zhang.

### Healthy living for tomorrow

Cao Xiushuai, 31, had the idea of venturing into rural business in 2020 after searching for organic vegetables for his son. At that time, Cao, a graduate in business administration from Wuhan University, worked in the real estate industry in Jinan, Shandong province, earning a monthly salary of 15,000 yuan.

"People are paying more and more attention to healthy food. So I thought why not develop a shared farm through which urban residents can choose a piece of land they like and entrust us to grow healthy vegetables for them, or they can grow the vegetables themselves," said Cao.

"Our customers can not only harvest the produce they grow but experience firsthand the growth process of crops," he added.

Encouraged by local policies on inviting partners to jointly develop rural areas, Cao directed his focus toward harnessing rural resources.

After six months of research, he identified Gongcun village in Jinan's Shizhong district as an ideal location for his project. Nestled in the mountains, the village lacked extensive arable land suitable for large-scale mechanized farming.

"The land that locals were reluctant to cultivate presented an excellent opportunity for urban residents seeking a rural farming experience," said Cao.

He then leased parcels of land from the village and established Chuhe Farm.

One day while setting up fencing for the farm, he noticed a person who was foraging for wild vegetables nearby. After a brief 30-minute conversation, the person signed up for a 60-square-meter plot, becoming Cao's first customer.

Within a week, he had 10 more customers.

During a hiking trip with his customers at a village adjacent to the farm, the stark contrast in scenery caught Cao's attention.

"There were lush mountains in the distance and neglected old houses up close," said Cao. He decided to expand the farm's development path and venture into the homestay industry.

Partnering with three villages, Cao renovated several idle houses and leased them to people wanting to experience rural life.

Besides paying rent to village homeowners, for each successful deal, the company contributes 10,000 yuan to the village collective entity and pays an annual property service fee of 800 yuan.

"This model not only provides urban customers with scenic retreats but also generates income for villagers from idle properties," said Cao.

Currently, the farm distributes 70,000 yuan in dividends annually to the Guangcun village collective entity, pays 70,000 yuan for land-use fees, and pays over 200,000 yuan in paying for employed village residents.

Zhang Tao, head of the Shandong Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security, said during a news conference last year: "Talented people are crucial in vitalizing rural areas. We will improve policies to support them so that they can go on to achieve success, and so that this endeavor can become a model for others to follow throughout the province!"

# GLOBAL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

## Global development relies on cooperation

Communication and unity are essential for securing future stability, prosperity

By SONG PING and ZHANG ZHOXIANG

"Our world is at a crossroads. We must decide whether to maintain the status quo and face potential self-destruction or chart a new course toward global unity by making significant changes to save our civilization."

Above are the words of Essam Sharaf, former prime minister of Egypt, who delivered a speech at the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024: Responsibilities of Major Countries Amid a Dynamic Global Landscape, jointly hosted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and China Daily in Beijing on Thursday.

Sharaf stressed that in today's highly interconnected world, "a collapse of a country or a region may lead to a global collapse." Unfortunately, developed nations seldom consider this, he said, nor do they care much about the developing ones.

"It's time to emphasize that the challenges we encounter as a global community require global cooperation without any exclusions," he said.

Sharaf spoke highly of China's initiative to build a community with a shared future for humanity and insisted that global diversity is key to the advancement of the

world's civilizations.

The former prime minister talked about the path of Chinese modernization, raising key points such as connectivity, trust, peace, development and prosperity and showcased how these values have helped China turn dreams into reality.

"What applies in China could be transferred to the world," he said.

Gao Xiang, president of the CASS, said developed nations need to take an active role in fostering global relations.

"Major powers should enhance communication and collaboration, respect interests and major concerns, effectively manage control and actively build a new type of international relationship characterized by non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation," Gao said. "And the international community should strengthen unity and cooperation, adhere to the principle that all countries — big or small — are equal, practice genuine multilateralism and promote the development of an international order that is more just and reasonable."

Qu Yingpu, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily, stressed the need for international cooperation to address problems.

"Faced with the myriad of



From left: Gao Xiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Qu Yingpu, publisher and editor-in-chief of China Daily; and Essam Sharaf, former prime minister of Egypt, give speeches at the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024 in Beijing on Thursday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

emerging risks and challenges, how to adapt to situations, promote peace and seek development are common concerns for the international community," he said in his keynote speech. "This requires not only major countries to play a leading role, but also cooperation among all nations."

Qu also called for global media and think tanks to join hands to deepen understanding and cooperation among countries, stand on the right side of history, support the progress of human civilization and promote the construction of a community with a shared future for humanity.

Still, conflicts may arise among world powers, said Fedor Voytlovskiy, director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in his speech.

He called for an emerging polycentric world order, saying it could serve as a new model of globalization based on the rise of new centers of global value chains, FDI and international trade, and the emergence of China as a global economic and technological power. It could also further strengthen global and regional governance institutions such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the G20.

Domenico Lombardi, professor and director of the Policy Observatory at LUISS University in Italy, also stressed the importance of a new major-power relationship, saying that the concept of economic decoupling, particularly between the United States and China, presents a significant risk that could reverberate through all sectors of the global economy.

"Such a shift could lead to inefficiencies and increased costs, impacting global growth negatively that no one can simply afford," he said.

He cited the trade relationships between European Union countries

and China as an example, which have strengthened lately despite appearances to the contrary, including disputes over China's exportation of its electric vehicles.

Sharaf said he doesn't believe that China is looking to engage in any conflicts with other nations. He said he was talking with a Chinese friend recently about how China is a peaceful country.

"Don't expect that China will go to war," Sharaf said. "He (the friend) assured that China will provide all assistance for peacekeeping."

Amitav Acharya, distinguished professor of international relations with the School of International Service at American University, said developed nations would do well to remember that their success is due in part to the knowledge they've learned from their lesser-developed counterparts.

"The West should accept that its rise to global dominance would not have been possible without borrowing from the ideas and approaches of other civilizations," he said in his speech. "Both the West and the rest have learned from each other, and this mutual learning among civilizations is a far more persistent feature of world history than the 'clash of civilizations'."

Contact the writers at zhangzhoxiang@chinadaily.com.cn



Guest speakers share their insights during the session themed "Major Country Relations and the Future of the World" at the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024 in Beijing on Thursday.

WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

## Scholars call for inclusive growth

By ZHAO JIA zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

As the world is confronted with a myriad of risks and challenges, scholars from home and abroad called for joint efforts from various countries to promote inclusive and mutually beneficial sustainable development.

Amitav Acharya, a distinguished professor of international relations with the School of International Service at American University, stressed the significance of what he called the emerging world order, a Global Multiplex.

He said the Global Multiplex will be a more inclusive order where civilizations, ideas and the rules of all countries will be taken into account. The West should get over the "very arrogant and racist" idea that "the West is superior and the rest are basically following them," he added.

He called on the West to heed the voices of the vast majority of countries in the Global South that are yearning for peace and declining to pick a side in international affairs.

Domenico Lombardi, professor and director of the Policy Observatory at LUISS University in Italy, urged countries to maintain dialogue and build trust to avoid strategic competition "undermining the very fabric of international cooperation that supports the world's economic architecture."

He described the European Union, the United States and China as the world's three major econom-

ic powerhouses, saying in recent years they have seen fluctuations and have even witnessed "escalating tensions" in their economic interactions, especially in areas of technological innovation and national security.

"The concept of economic decoupling, particularly between the US and China, presents a significant risk that could reverberate through all sectors of the global economy. Such a shift could lead to inefficiencies and increased costs, impacting global growth negatively that no one can simply afford."

He stressed the importance of pursuing a "win-win" attitude based on reciprocity while calling on countries to keep engaging in open and cooperative interactions.

"Our interconnectedness, while occasionally a source of friction, is also our greatest strength, offering resilience against economic shocks and fostering shared progress that individual country efforts cannot match," he added.

Zhao Jinping, former director of the department of foreign economic relations of the development research center of the State Council, said countries should reach a common understanding on the harm of protectionist measures and create an inclusive environment for the global economy.

He expressed concerns over trade protectionist measures that are likely to be introduced by some countries against the backdrop of

slow world economic recovery, saying they will "create troubles for enterprises and stifle global trade and investment growth."

Robert Walker, a professor at Jingshi Academy of Beijing Normal University, said wealthy countries should accept and facilitate the right to development, and work with others to revitalize global partnerships for sustainable growth.

He quoted Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres as saying that "systemic deficiencies and inequities in the global economic and financial system leave developing countries to tackle enormous and growing challenges with only a fraction of the international support they need and deserve."

Walker cautioned that today, among 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015, there is only one goal, ending extreme poverty, where across-the-board progress has been made.

According to Walker, China succeeded in eliminating rural extreme poverty in 2020, accounting for 20 percent of the global reduction in poverty achieved between 2015 and 2022.

He hailed China for seeking to "make real the right to development" through ventures such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Silk Road Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, creating shared prosperity for all.

## Session highlights harmful impact of the weaponization of finance

By CHENG YU chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

More efforts should be made from emerging economies to drive a more equitable, multilateral global order to navigate rising disruptions such as geopolitical tensions and sanctions from some Western countries, leading economists and industry experts said on Thursday.

They made the comments at a session of the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024: Responsibilities of Major Countries Amid a Dynamic Global Landscape that was jointly held by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and China Daily on Thursday.

Fedor Voytlovskiy, director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said, "Globalization will be more and more deformed by the practices of economic warfare and attempts to weaponize interdependence. Attempts of the United States and European Union to use economic and technological interdependence as a weapon will be continued."

The US will try to continue these practices, Voytlovskiy said, adding that they will have "very negative" effects for the whole global economy.

He said, the world is heading toward a polycentric system, where a balance of power is essential to global stability. However, he was skeptical of the likelihood that such a balance could be achieved in the next five to 10 years, warning that continued efforts by the US to maintain its dominance could further destabilize the global economy.

The shifting economic dynamic was echoed by Yu Yongding, an academic member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who said that the US is weaponizing the international financial system — for instance, freezing \$300 billion worth of Russian Central Bank reserves.

China has been open in terms of trade for low-income countries, and it meant that once China develops, it will bring benefits for countries around the world."

Bert Hofman, former director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore

"Who can still be confident that the US will not freeze the foreign exchange reserves of other countries in the future?" he asked, raising concerns that the weaponization of finance could lead to the fragmentation of the global monetary system.

Yu said, "The trade war has led to decoupling and reshaping of global production chains against the principle of comparative advantage, a situation that will ultimately harm all countries involved ... It is not to the benefit of anybody to achieve a Pyrrhic victory in a trade war."

He noted that despite geopolitical tensions, China cannot afford to fully disengage from global supply chains.

"The same applies to the West, which suffers risks from decoupling from China," he said. "However, China will continue to support multilateral institutions, urge countries to eliminate the influence of geopolitical tensions and work toward restarting regional financial cooperation."

China's stance was also echoed by Ukeru Magosaki, director of the East Asian Community Institute and a former professor at Japan's

National Defense Academy, saying that China's economic rise has surpassed that of the US in terms of real GDP measured by purchasing power parity.

He also noted the growing influence of non-G7 economies such as India, Russia, Brazil and Turkey, whose combined GDP now eclipses that of the G7 economies.

"The more time passes, the bigger the gap of economic power moves in favor of China," Magosaki said. He said he expected non-G7 countries to increasingly assert their influence on the global stage, provided they adopt China's principles of peace.

He said the future of economic development depends largely on the research and development of each country, noting that China surpassed the US in the number of top 10 natural science research papers published in 2020 and 2022.

"This shows the likelihood of China's potential development in the future," Magosaki said.

Citing China's Belt and Road Initiative, Bert Hofman, senior fellow and former director of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore, said the project was a good example of how a major power should behave.

"China has been open in terms of trade for low-income countries, and it means that once China develops, it will bring benefits for countries around the world," he said.

To navigate the current global landscape, Mwangi Wachira, a former World Bank economist and adviser to the Kenyan government, said that Africa should have more than a token role in the ongoing drive for an equitable multilateral global order.

"To support either the reform of the current global order or the creation of a new truly equitable and multilateral global order, Africa must not allow itself to become a theater for contests between unilateralism and multilateralism," he added.



## Knowledge sharing

Guests exchange ideas before the opening of the Global Strategic Dialogue 2024: Responsibilities of Major Countries Amid a Dynamic Global Landscape in Beijing on Thursday. The event is jointly organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and China Daily.

WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

VISUAL



Editor's Note: Using a blend of words and visuals, this series explores unique communities and reveals the heart of China through food, architecture, craftsmanship, landscapes and traditions.

# BEHIND THE GUIZHOU LEAF-VEIN EMBROIDERY KEEPING OLD STYLE ALIVE

Technique blends traditional aesthetics and contemporary craftsmanship. **Yang Jun** reports in Guiyang.

**1. Source of materials**  
Broad leaves with intact veins are used, collected from the Wuling Mountains, typically Bodhi and Magnolia leaves.

**2. Soaking**  
After being cleaned, the leaves are naturally soaked in mountain spring water for half a month, during which time they are heated multiple times to promote decomposition.

**3. Defibering**  
Using a brush made from palm tree bark, the surface of the leaves are tapped gently to remove the leaf pulp.

**4. Vinegar steaming**  
The defibered leaves are placed in a steamer and repeatedly steamed with boiling water mixed with white vinegar.

**5. Shaping**  
After steaming, paper is used to absorb the surface moisture. The leaves are then pressed with a heavy object to flatten them.

**6. Smoking**  
Mugwort is burned along with Sichuan pepper leaves, Sichuan pepper and other materials to smoke the leaves.

**7. Sizing**  
The paste made from glutinous rice is mixed with gelatin boiled from pork skin, and then used for the coating process.

**8. Embroidery**  
After sketching on the leaf, a fine needle and thread are used to create embroidery art on the finished leaf.

**LOCATION**  
Map showing Guizhou province with Guiyang and Tongren highlighted.

**COMMON STITCHES**

The exquisite craftsmanship of leaf-vein embroidery in Tongren city, Guizhou province, has made Guizhou embroidery one of the major styles of embroidery in China. Leaf-vein embroidery first appeared in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), and has been used to transmit information by several ethnic groups in the southwestern region. Yang Li, an inheritor of this technique, has incorporated the traditional embroidery of the Miao, Tujia and Dong ethnic groups into the leaves, showcasing the blending of traditional aesthetics and contemporary craftsmanship. Leaf-vein embroidery artwork boasts a highly collectible and artistic value due to its complex production process. The keys steps include selecting and drying the leaves, then designing and embroidering the pattern. Sourced from rare plants in the primitive forests of the Fanjing Mountain scenic area in Tongren, the leaves with harder veins that are about to fall in autumn serve as the best raw material.

After the leaves naturally soften over the next 20 days, they are warmed and fumigated to preserve them. When soft, the leaves are also extremely fragile. Patterns inspired by ancient stories and nature are drawn on the processed veins. Yang says that in the last decade there have been barely 20 people in Tongren who can independently complete the whole leaf-embroidery process. In 2011, Yang's leaf-vein embroidery work won the special "Guizhou artisan" award, and in 2012 she won several further awards including the gold prize at the First China Silver Embroidery Exhibition. Her works have won her fame and overseas orders, with the most precious pieces reaching as much as 7,000 yuan (\$990). Due to the laborious process and low yield of high-quality products, passing down the traditional skill faces challenges. "I have introduced this technique to universities, communities, villages and even selected skilled embroiderers to learn leaf-vein embroidery skills, but very few have

been able to persevere," Yang said. In 2011, she opened a processing factory and offered jobs to more than 500 female workers, rural women and people with disabilities. As a result, almost every embroiderer has a collection of handicrafts in their home that could fill a museum. "I have a sense of mission and urgency. In my generation, I must do it better and pass on this craft," she said. In 2022, Yang established the Guizhou embroidery intangible cultural heritage industry base, and has since utilized social media to showcase the traditional techniques of leaf-vein embroidery through short videos with her apprentice Yang Xinyu. "Leaf-vein embroidery is a treasure. As a young person influenced by Teacher Yang Li, I am determined to inherit this craft and hope that more young people will return to their hometowns to inherit it," Yang Xinyu said. Luo Siyang contributed to this story. Contact the writer at yangjun@chinadaily.com.cn

**Satin stitch embroidery**  
Its smooth, tightly packed stitches cover the fabric surface entirely, creating a solid, glossy effect ideal for filling shapes with even color.

**Long and short stitch embroidery**  
Characterized by its use of alternating stitch lengths to create smooth transitions, gradients and realistic shading, allowing for detailed, three-dimensional designs.

**The backstitch embroidery**  
Characterized by creating solid, continuous lines by stitching backwards on the fabric, making it ideal for outlining and adding fine details to designs.

## ACROSS ASIA

## Editor's note:

In this weekly feature China Daily gives voice to Asia and its people. The stories presented come mainly from the Asia News Network (ANN), of which China Daily is among its 20 leading titles.



A woman poses in front of signage at a digital industry forum in Jakarta on June 15, 2023. BAY ISMOYO / AFP

## DIGITAL DRIVE

Southeast Asia becomes global data center hot spot as AI usage rises

The world's largest technology firms are flocking to Southeast Asia to build data centers at a time when demand for infrastructure and computing power to enable artificial intelligence is rapidly rising, according to latest industry figures.

The new investments are expected to contribute to regional economies by creating skilled jobs in data center construction, engineering and maintenance, while also developing specialized talent in AI, cybersecurity, and data science and management.

The investments are also expected to improve the region's digital infrastructure, allowing small businesses and large institutions to store their data locally, significantly reducing downtime while increasing data sovereignty.

Data centers are large facilities built to accommodate servers, data storage systems and networking equipment that support better internet services and telecommunications.

This, in turn, enables popular online activities such as gaming, livestreaming and investing, as well as more advanced technologies like cloud computing and AI.

Thanks to its lower costs, power availability and other advantages, Southeast Asia is emerging as an ideal region for tech operators to establish a data center base, with the top five countries being Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam.

While Singapore is the preferred destination for hosting data centers due to superior infrastructure and a stable regulatory regime, the republic had imposed a three-year halt on data center construction between 2019 and 2022 to assess its impact on the environment.

Malaysia seized the bulk of new data center investments entering the region during that period, and

“The industry does not have a clear picture of what's next after the additional capacity was announced in May, or when we can bid or how. We haven't seen this information coming, and that has created uncertainty.”

Dedi Iskandar,

head of data center solutions at property investment adviser CBRE

now expects facilities with around 1 gigawatt of power capacity to come online over the next two years.

That is double the data center capacity it currently has.

Another 3 GW has also been announced and, if approved, will be gradually rolled out in the next three to five years, according to RHB Bank.

In comparison, Singapore's data center capacity currently stands at around 1.4 GW.

Among those channeling capital into Malaysia are tech titans like Microsoft,

which said in May it will invest \$2.2 billion over the next four years to build cloud and AI infrastructure.

Amazon Web Services (AWS) in August announced plans to invest an estimated \$6.2 billion to set up a data center and cloud region in Malaysia.

The cloud service provider is also developing a similar region in Thailand. It revealed plans in 2024 to invest \$5 billion in data centers in the country over the next few years, making Thailand its fourth AWS region in ASEAN after Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.

In September, Google said it would invest \$1 billion to build a data center and cloud region in

“

biggest indirect carbon emitter.

He added that existing data centers contribute to 82 percent of the information and communications sector's carbon emissions, and 7 percent of the country's total electricity consumption.

However, Janil said Singapore may still award an additional 200 MW of capacity to operators that are able to tap green sources of energy to run the facilities, and will provide schemes and incentives to support such investments.

Dedi Iskandar, head of data center solutions at property investment adviser CBRE, asked that the authorities provide more clarity on this front.

“The industry does not have a clear picture of what's next after the additional capacity was announced in May, or when we can bid or how. We haven't seen this information coming, and that has created uncertainty,” he said.

“When data center operators have no line of sight, they cannot make plans to invest in Singapore.”

Dedi said that while Singapore is still the preferred destination for hosting mission-critical computing applications, Johor, which still struggles with issues like talent and water shortages, is improving quickly.

The highest risk for Singapore arises when the price gap for building and operating a data center compared with Johor becomes too significant, and when the quality of data center services between the two markets narrows, he said.

CBRE data showed the average construction cost for a data center in Singapore now stands at around \$11.40 per watt, the highest among nine cities in Asia.

“This will naturally spur more enterprises to move their data center operations from Singapore to Malaysia,” Dedi said.

THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE

## More terminally ill South Korean patients choosing to end life with dignity

The number of terminally ill patients in South Korea choosing to discontinue life-sustaining medical treatment has been steadily rising, surpassing 70,000 cases last year alone.

According to data provided by Kim Mi-ae, representative of the South Korean National Assembly's Health and Welfare Committee, 77,720 patients chose to withdraw from life-prolonging medical interventions in 2023, reflecting a significant increase over the past five years.

The trend has shown consistent growth, with the number of patients opting out of treatment rising from 48,238 in 2019 to 54,942 in 2020, followed by 57,511 in 2021, and 63,921 in 2022.

The figures also reveal a shift toward patient self-determination. In 2023, 45 percent of patients made the decision themselves, compared to 35.6 percent five years ago.

Under South Korean law, specific steps are required for discontinuing life-sustaining treatment. A physician must first confirm that the patient is at the end of life, and either the patient or family members must express a desire to stop treatment.

The decision can be formalized through several means: an advance directive completed by the patient, a care plan prepared by the physician per the patient's wishes, a statement from two or more family members, or a consensus reached by all family members.

## Legislative issue

Lee Myung-shik, 63, is paralyzed from the waist down as a result of acute myelitis, a condition he developed after retiring from his public service job in 2019.

Unable to perform basic bodily functions independently, he requires the constant use of a urinary catheter and the assistance of his daughter to manually remove stool from his rectum.

“Some nerves remain intact, causing me to continually experience excruciating pain. Painkillers don't help. I just have to endure it,” he said.

What frustrated him most was that his life was not going to fade away anytime soon. He is not “terminally ill” so it is illegal for doctors and relatives to assist him to die with dignity.

In December 2023, Lee set out to challenge the local laws that do not

allow for assisted death. He filed a petition to the Constitutional Court of South Korea to review the constitutionality of the laws that limit one's right to die with dignity and penalize all forms of assisted suicide.

Prior to a milestone ruling in May 2009, South Korea compelled doctors to persist in treating patients who have entered the dying process, regardless of the futility of the effort or prolongation of suffering. The removal of life-sustaining devices could lead to criminal charges against those involved.

The 2009 decision by the Supreme Court of South Korea to allow the removal of life-sustaining devices from an elderly patient in a vegetative state led to years of discussions around the concept of a “well-dying bill”.

In February 2018, these efforts culminated in the implementation of the Act On Hospice And Palliative Care And Decisions On Life-Sustaining Treatment For Patients At The End Of Life, which allows individuals to refuse or discontinue treatments when “death is imminent”.

As of 2024, South Korea's position on end-of-life choices remains unchanged, with no further advancements beyond the 2018 legislation.

In 2022, an opposition lawmaker campaigned for an amendment of that law to allow “medically assisted” deaths.

The bill, drafted and submitted by Ahn Gyu-back of the Democratic Party of Korea, was shelved and has not made any progress in the legislative process.

Lee, the myelitis patient, had taken the strongest painkiller available to be able to speak, in his interview with The Korea Herald, for his right to live and die in dignity.

He expressed mixed feelings concerning his daughter, who has put her social life and career on hold to care for him.

But the more overwhelming feeling, he said, is misery stemming from his inability to control his life and the uncertainty of when his suffering will end.

“Advocates of life's sanctity say life is precious and that I must endure the pain until I die,” he said. “But enduring not knowing when this will end is painful.”

THE KOREA HERALD, SOUTH KOREA

## Flying high



Hot air balloons are seen over Cappadocia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Nevsehir, Turkey, on Oct 14. The number of participants in the balloon tour hit a record, with more than 583,000 people between January and October. BEHCET ALKAN VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Hanoi cafe workers with hearing disabilities make impact

From the outside, Flow-ee may seem like any other cafe in downtown Hanoi.

But visitors may notice something special once they step inside. Staff members, affectionately called “Flowers”, all with hearing disabilities, take orders by exchanging written notes with customers.

Communication between employees is done entirely through sign language, creating an unusually quiet atmosphere that patrons appreciate.

“I find this cafe ideal for working,” regular customer Tran Phuong Uyen told the Viet Nam News. “It's so quiet here. I enjoy

coming to work and enjoy a drink.”

Another patron, Hoang Minh Chau, frequents Flow-ee for a different reason. “I want to support the disabled in their jobs to help boost their confidence,” she said. “The drinks here are as good as other cafes, and the staff are always enthusiastic and friendly.”

Among the staff members is Vu The Duong, the youngest at the cafe, who has had hearing disabilities since childhood. His job at Flow-ee has greatly increased his confidence.

“I faced many challenges finding a job before,” he said. “Then I came across this opportunity online and

applied. Initially, it was difficult to adjust, but over time I've improved my skills.”

Duong noted that communicating with customers has not been a significant challenge, thanks to sign language and his ability to make quality drinks. “Customers enjoy their time here,” he said.

“I'm confident in my role at Flow-ee. Many hearing-impaired people struggle to find jobs, and I hope society offers more opportunities for us to showcase our abilities.”

Another employee, Nguyen Thai Ha, also highlighted how he interacts with customers using sign language and writing.

“I often smile at them,” said the 23-year-old. “I observe customers closely and serve them with care. Working here is wonderful because the customers are happy, and the staff are cheerful.”

Flow-ee cafe was established to support people with disabilities by providing them with meaningful employment. The cafe's co-founder, Hoang Thu Thuy, said people with hearing disabilities are particularly well-suited for this environment.

“We don't face significant challenges communicating with our staff,” Thuy said. “The operation runs smoothly because they're skilled in sign language.”

The employees at Flow-ee are given considerable autonomy.

“Our disabled employees have the highest level of self-management,” Thuy said. “They run the cafe independently, handling all tasks without oversight. Over time, they've become more adept at managing situations and communicating with customers.”

Thuy expressed hope that more people will support the business model, allowing it to thrive and create more opportunities for those with disabilities to demonstrate what they can do.

Customers not only return but also spread the word about the unique cafe. Visitors range from family and friends of the staff members to foreign tourists, children, and other people with hearing disa-

bilities. Many young people and children even visit to learn basic sign language from the staff to thank the “Flowers” for their delicious drinks.

“This is a great business model for creating jobs for disabled people,” cafe customer Uyen said. “I'll definitely come back and encourage my friends to visit as well.”

Cafe customer Chau echoed the sentiment, noting that the business can help integrate those with disabilities fully into society.

Flow-ee also hosts sign language classes every Wednesday and Saturday night, fostering a stronger connection between those with hearing disabilities in the community and the broader public.

VIET NAM NEWS, VIETNAM

## BUSINESS

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# Platform focuses on inclusivity

Project mBridge open to traditional infrastructures, greenback usage

By ZHOU LANXU  
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Project mBridge — a platform for experimenting with central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) including the e-CNY for cross-border payments — is open to cooperation with traditional payment infrastructure and any US dollar usage, said officials and experts close to the matter.

They said mBridge primarily focuses on small-value transactions under the current account that have been underserved by banks, aiming at improving the efficiency and inclusiveness of global monetary and payment systems while facilitating cross-border trade and investment, especially among Asia's emerging economies.

Lu Lei, deputy governor of the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, said that a CBDC system should not only be interoperable with other CBDC systems, but also with traditional payment systems and other financial market infrastructure modalities, and both are achievable by mBridge.

"We must avoid new cross-border payment frictions while removing existing ones," Lu said while addressing a Financial Street Forum event on Wednesday, titled Project mBridge: Bridging Global Economies with CBDCs.

Lu said that mBridge should step up addressing urgent pain points regarding cross-border payments that are undersupplied by banks — in particular payments in cross-border e-commerce and remittances — due to their small values and high costs.

Project mBridge resulted from collaboration beginning in 2021 between the Bank for International Settlements' innovation arm, the Bank of Thailand, the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates, the Digital Currency Institute of the PBOC and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. The project aims to tackle inefficiencies in cross-border payments with new technologies.

Echoing Lu's remarks, an expert who requested anonymity told China Daily that mBridge is "compatible and inclusive" and is open to be connected with traditional payment systems, including large-value, small-value and rapid payment systems, as well as existing international payment infrastructures.

"Project mBridge represents a new technological approach. It is inclusive and does not rule out cooperation with anyone," the expert said.

The project reached the mini-

mum viable product (MVP) stage in June, inviting private sector firms to propose new solutions and use cases that help develop the platform. The Saudi Central Bank joined mBridge as a participant of the MVP platform in June.

Among the mBridge participating economies, China, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are also BRICS members.

Lu said the transaction value of mBridge has been growing steadily over the past few months, a telling sign of market confidence in the platform, without giving specific figures.

In terms of geographical coverage, Lu said mBridge may deepen collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Belt and Road economies, as these economies have close trade ties and stable geopolitical conditions, while cross-border payments and currency services may be underserved.

"Project mBridge, as a public good, may have a role to play in strengthening collaboration among them and thus facilitate the sound development of the international monetary and payment system," Lu said.

Citing the views that mBridge may impede the reputation and usage of the US dollars, Zhou Xiaochuan, vice-chairman of Boao Forum for Asia and a former governor of the PBOC, said that mBridge is primarily aimed at filling in gaps in the international payment system.

Project mBridge does not exclude US dollar usage, Zhou said at the same event as Lu, adding that relevant developments would depend on efficiency, cost, security and user choice.

The greenback and other "hard currencies" have been traditionally used in cross-border payments, which cannot fully satisfy demand in Asia in recent years amid the region's fast development of interconnections, giving rise to the growth of mBridge and other platforms to facilitate cross-border payments within the region, according to Zhou.

Zhou said that mBridge should first facilitate the payments and settlements of current account transactions, especially small-amount ones, aligning with the demand of Asian economies in terms of economic, trade and travel development.

As for some opinions that mBridge might have a substitutional relationship with financial telecommunication infrastructure Swift, Zhou said he deems mBridge more as a cross-border payment system.



Employees work at Flextronics International Ltd's China unit in Suzhou, Jiangsu province.

ZHU GUIGEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Growing export opportunities to BRICS member countries

By ZHU WENQIAN in Beijing  
and GUO JUN in Nanjing

Local enterprises in East China's Jiangsu province have leveraged the opportunities created through BRICS and expanded their export businesses with related member countries.

With BRICS expanding its membership earlier this year, the mechanism has increasingly become an important platform for developing countries to strengthen their cooperation.

Jiangsu has continued to export various high-end equipment manufacturing products to other BRICS countries. In the first three quarters of this year, the export value from Jiangsu to BRICS member countries reached 322.69 billion yuan (\$45.3 billion), up 12.3 percent year-on-year, said the Customs of Nanjing, Jiangsu province.

Over the same period, the import value amounted to 145.97 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 3 percent, data of Nanjing Customs showed.

Nantong, a city in Jiangsu, stands as an important base for high-end equipment manufacturing in the province. Sany Palfinger SPV Equipment Co Ltd, a manufacturer of truck-mounted cranes and other equipment for special vehicles, has

seen growing export volumes to related BRICS members.

"Our truck-mounted crane, a type of construction machinery equipment with a lightweight and flexible design, is highly favored by BRICS countries such as India and Saudi Arabia," said Zhou Chen, director of Customs affairs at the company.

The China unit of Trane Technologies, a US climate control solutions provider, designs and produces central air-conditioning systems for commercial and residential use.

For many years, the company has had close trade relations with BRICS countries such as Brazil and South Africa, and the export value to those countries accounted for 90 percent of the total.

The offering of tailored air-conditioning products with higher adaptability has been the key factor for manufacturers to consolidate their presence in the BRICS market, the company said.

"Our air-conditioning products exported to South Africa in October are equipped with the cooling function only. It has been a cost-effective product designed for hotter regions like Africa, and it has been quite popular locally," said Zhang Junxin, general manager of the company.

Meanwhile, BRICS members

have constantly strengthened their cooperation in the new energy sector, and have thus effectively promoted the growth of their emerging industries.

US-headquartered firm Flextronics International Ltd's China unit in Suzhou, Jiangsu has been manufacturing self-powered control systems. On Oct 14, the company exported a batch of products worth \$188,000 to Saudi Arabia that will mainly be used for solar energy projects.

In the past few years, Saudi Arabia has launched a large number of renewable energy grid connection projects, as the country aims to achieve energy transformation, and it has huge demand for solar energy equipment.

"This year, Saudi Arabia joined the BRICS family. The vibes of economic and trade cooperation had been good, providing us with favorable business opportunities for exporting some intermediate products for the new energy sector there," said Zhao Zhijun, manager of Customs affairs at the company.

From January to September, the export value of products from the company to Saudi Arabia reached \$3.77 million, a jump of 128 percent year-on-year, it said.

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### Briefly

#### China raises retail gasoline, diesel prices

China raised the retail prices of gasoline and diesel on Thursday, based on recent changes in international oil prices. Gasoline and diesel prices increased by 90 yuan (\$12.6) and 85 yuan per metric ton, respectively, said the National Development and Reform Commission. China's three biggest oil companies — China National Petroleum Corp, China Petrochemical Corp and China National Offshore Oil Corp — along with downstream oil refineries, have

been directed to maintain oil production and facilitate transportation to ensure stable supplies.

#### Commercial insurance annuities get support

China will vigorously promote the development of commercial insurance annuities, the National Financial Regulatory Administration said in a circular on Wednesday. The circular specified the concept of commercial insurance annuities as products developed by commercial insurance companies with functions

such as pension risk management and stable accumulation of long-term funds, which includes qualified annuity insurance, endowment insurance and commercial pensions. The circular called for efforts to develop various kinds of pension annuity and insurance products, and said insurance companies should continue to improve the efficacy of pension risk assessment, pension planning and management throughout the entire life cycle of clients.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## Green action plan for BREP members

By LIU YUKUN  
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Energy ministers from across the world spoke highly of China's role in promoting global energy transition and helping developing countries access more affordable clean energies at the Third Belt and Road Energy Ministerial Conference which concluded on Thursday in Qingdao, Shandong province.

"Creative cooperation with China and initiatives like the Belt and Road Energy Partnership will help us boost our drive toward energy transition across the world," said Phiona Nyamutoro, minister of state for mineral development in Uganda. "We hope that we get to tap into many opportunities from China, like technological transfer, research and also green financing."

BREP was initiated by China's National Energy Administration and currently has 34 members. It supports countries in formulating more ambitious green energy development plans based on their own energy endowments and development needs, to continuously enhance the reliability and resilience of green energy supplies.

Iran became a new member this year and in an interview with China Daily, Iranian Minister of Energy Abbas Aliabadi expressed expectations for BREP to have a positive impact on global energy cooperation and promote global development through innovative approaches.

"Such a collaborative platform to promote cooperation among different countries is beneficial to all parties. I am very pleased with initiatives like those from China,

where different countries can raise their issues on this platform and work together to address them," he said. "China serves as a great example in energy transition, with significant developments in renewable energy that have made substantial contributions to global carbon reduction efforts."

Keo Rottanak, Cambodia's minister of mines and energy, said "Cambodia and China have forged a very strong bilateral relationship, especially through the Belt and Road Initiative which has given benefits to countries around the world, especially developing countries."

The Belt and Road Green Energy Cooperation Action Plan (2024-29), released on Wednesday at the conference, advocated that BREP members will carry out no less than five joint research and development projects and no less than five collaborations in areas such as



A view of a Chinese-invested power project in South Africa.

PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

hydrogen energy, new types of energy storage, advanced nuclear power, carbon capture, utilization and storage.

In the next five years, BREP members will carry out no less

than 25 capacity-building projects in the energy sector, and explore the establishment of an international cooperative research platform for clean energy, the action plan noted.

## China willing to share BDS expertise with nations

By ZOU SHUO in Zhuzhou, Hunan  
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China is willing to partner with other countries in sharing the development results of the Beidou navigation satellite system, or BDS, especially in exploring its potential in regional short message communication, services and international rescue efforts, a senior official of the National Development and Reform Commission said on Thursday.

Xiang Libin, deputy minister of the NDRC, said Beidou has been recognized by the International Civil Aviation Organization of the United Nations as a global standard, and that cooperation between China and the African Union as well as the League of Arab States in BDS is intensifying.

Cooperation agreements have also been signed between China and South Africa as well as Egypt in Beidou applications, he said at the Third International Summit on BDS Applications, which is being held in Zhuzhou, Hunan province from Thursday to Friday to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of BDS.

The applications of Beidou in key industries have expanded, with its coverage in transport, energy, natural resources and emergency exceeding 90 percent, he said.

Beidou has been widely installed in applications for the general public, with 98 percent of smartphones and shared bikes equipped with it.

Meanwhile, high-accuracy maps based on Beidou have covered the whole country, with daily usage exceeding hundreds of billions of times, he said.

The country will continue to support the large-scale application of Beidou, push for deep integration of Beidou with intelligent cars, smart agriculture and the low-altitude economy, and empower sectors such as delivery services, low-altitude tourism and emergency rescue, Xiang added.

Wang Jiangping, deputy minister of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, said Beidou has developed into a world-class navigation satellite system and its high-accuracy regional short message communication service has been fully proven to have the ability to serve the whole globe.

Beidou has been widely used in communication, transport, agriculture, forestry and public security and is serving important infrastructure while also generating significant economic and social benefits, he said.

By the end of last year, the total output of the country's satellite navigation and location services industry had exceeded 530 billion yuan (\$74.5 billion), while homegrown Beidou chips and modules have exceeded 400 billion pieces and there are a total of 1.4 billion pieces of equipment using the Beidou system, he said.

The MIIT will continue to accelerate Beidou applications, push for market, industrial and international development of Beidou and enable it to better serve the whole world and bring benefits to all, he added.

Aarti Holla-Maini, director at the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, said China is a central member of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems and the Beidou navigation satellite system is expanding its applications and services to make it available to both industry and public sector users.

Space has a crucial role to play in achieving social and economic development, she said via a video link.

Modern society depends on satellites and data and the many services they provide and enable; this reliance is only going to grow in the future, she said.

## CULTURE



*Artistic Splendours*, an ongoing exhibition that looks back on 30 years of contemporary art from China and Singapore, at Suzhou Museum of Contemporary Art in Jiangsu province. The exhibits include installations (left), paintings (right), and *Background Story: Admonition to a Farmer*, a video piece (middle) by artist Xu Bing, which was inspired by a landscape painting by Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) painter Tang Yin.

# Art show displays creative exchange

Exhibition examines 30 years since China and Singapore established the Suzhou Industrial Park in Jiangsu province, a thriving commercial hub, **Lin Qi** reports.

Suzhou, in East China's Jiangsu province, is well-known for its picturesque scenery and serenity. Its rich cultural and artistic accumulations since ancient times are vividly presented in these well-built, classic private garden residences.

Suzhou also boasts modern charm, with the Suzhou Museum, which blends tradition and modernism in its architectural features. It is a building of brilliance designed by I.M. Pei, the late architect whose family hailed from Suzhou.

In the city where the past meets the present and the East meets the West, residents witnessed a transformation of Suzhou in 1994 when Suzhou Industrial Park, a government-to-government project between China and Singapore, was established to enable the city, a commercial hub since ancient times, become a more prosperous center of trade.

An exhibition of paintings from Singapore was opened in Suzhou that same year to boost cultural exchanges between the two countries.

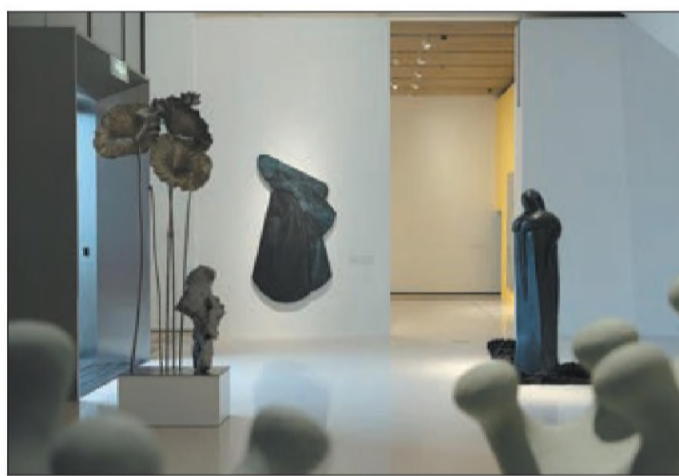
Three decades have since passed. To mark the historical moment, an exhibition, *Artistic Splendours*, looks back on 30 years of contemporary art from China and Singapore. It is held at the Suzhou Museum of Contemporary Art, which runs until Wednesday. The exhibition celebrates the 30th anniversary of Suzhou Industrial Park, which has become a model of international cooperation that shows the accomplishments and innovations of China's reform and opening-up since the late 1970s.

Xu Jiang, one of the exhibition's chief curators, an artist and vice-chairperson of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, says that the exhibition initiates an intensified cultural dialogue. "It dwells on people's emotional attachment of their homeland, urban construction, concerns with environmental protection, and hope for the future," Xu says. "It is sharing our feelings. It is like taking turns singing and ultimately joining in the same melody."

The exhibition also features the works of Wu Guanzhong (1919-2010), a key persona in the cultural exchanges between China and Singapore.

Wu was trained in China and France. Standing at the crossroads of the East and the West, he left an oeuvre that integrates the aesthetics and intellectual temperament of Chinese culture with the abstract tendency of Western art.

Wu traveled to Singapore several times, where he painted and exhibited. His works gained popularity among local art lovers, and a gallery at the National Gallery Singapore was named after him,



**Top and above left:** A corner of the exhibition that shows sculptures, such as lotus flowers and statues. **Above right:** *Travels Among the Fuchun Mountains*, a painting by artist Xu Jiang, one of the exhibition's chief curators and vice-chairperson of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

displaying his donated works.

Xu also brings to the exhibition an oil landscape depicting a lush view of the upper stream of the Fuchun River flowing through Zhejiang province. He says that the work continues his exploration of the mountain-and-water style of classic Chinese painting, although not created with traditional ink and water.

Some of the works on display are from the collection of the Singapore Art Museum, which opened in 1996 as the first art museum in Singapore and presents contemporary art from a Southeast Asian perspective.

Two sculptures are made by Han Sai Por, born in 1943, who pioneered modern sculpture in Singapore.

Han says that rapid urban development makes people feel proud, while in this process, some things have gradually disappeared in people's lives.

Her works exhibit how swift city transformations can be achieved while maintaining harmony between nature and the ecosystem.

She says, as an artist, she seeks the motivation to create, and hopes to facilitate connections built between cultures through the language of art.

Urbanization is also examined in *Background Story: Admonition to a Farmer*, a video installation by Chinese artist Xu Bing.

*Admonition to a Farmer* is a classic landscape painting by Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) artist Tang Yin, now in the Suzhou Museum collection.

Xu Bing's work renders a digital transformation of Tang's painting, in which the mountains, trees and waters transform into the high-rise buildings and parks of a modern urban landscape.

Eugene Tan, chief executive officer and director of the Singapore Art Museum,

said at a roundtable forum before the exhibition opening on Aug 18 that the museum is pleased to share its diverse collection of contemporary art.

He said that it reflects how the collection has linked art and artists, the public and future generations through exhibitions and events, to fulfill the museum's commitment to boosting exchanges in the region and contributing diverse perspectives on the global narratives of contemporary art.

Contact the writer at [linqi@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:linqi@chinadaily.com.cn)

## What's on



### Style accumulation

The ongoing exhibition *Accumulation* at the Art Museum of Central Academy of Fine Arts gathers 10 leading artists in the field of contemporary art, whose explorations over time and distinctive styles helped shape the creation of prints.

Some artists on display majored in print while attending art academies and later shifted to work with other materials while others draw, paint and sculpt, bringing new ideas and perspectives to printmaking.

Their cross-disciplinary approaches have enriched the presentation and expanded the frontiers of print, an art form popular throughout centuries worldwide. The exhibition runs until Nov 24.

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

### Lifelong passion

In the 1930s, a unique Western-style building featuring the Ionic order — one of the three orders of ancient Greek architecture — rose alongside classical Chinese garden residences in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. The Suzhou School of Fine Arts was established by Yan Wenliang (1893-1988), a native of Suzhou, and several other like-minded personas committed to modern art education.

Yan was a self-taught painter who later trained in France and was devoted to the creation and education of art. His accomplishments are

on display in the exhibition, *Life Elapses, Art Endures*, running at the Art Museum of Beijing Fine Art Academy until Nov 10.

On show are dozens of oil works, watercolors and pastels from the National Art Museum of China collection and the Suzhou Municipal Center of Public Culture in which Yan utilizes the richness and diversity of colors to represent his country and people.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays. 12 Chaoyang Gongyuan (Park) Nanlu, Chaoyang district, Beijing. 010-6502-5171.



### A rediscovery

Artists of the early 20th century found inspiration in traditional African arts and crafts, the forms, elements and motifs of which led them to build avant-garde styles in the development of modern art — the most famous include Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

The exhibition, *African Art: A New Rediscovery*, at Tsinghua University Art Museum until Dec 15 embarks on a time travel expedition to 18th and 19th century Africa, to see why objects of daily life back then attracted the foremost figures of modern art in Europe.

More than 200 works are on display to introduce the messages embodied in these objects and how people at the time interpreted the rules of the world, divinity and humanity. The aesthetics appropriated in the work of modern artists have continued to impress people today.

9 am-5 pm, closed on Mondays.

Tsinghua University, 30 Shuangqing Lu, Haidian district, Beijing. 010-6278-1012.



### Interwoven visions

The works of nine French and Chinese academicians of the Academie des Beaux-Arts are now on display at Chengdu Museum in the provincial capital city of Sichuan province to trace the exchanges between the two cultures since the 20th century.

Paintings, sculptures, drawings and watercolors are on show at *Interwoven Visions*, an exhibition

running through Dec 15, which displays the diversity of the creation of artists in China and France and the breadth and scope of their minds that have built a bridge linking the people of the two countries.

The early 20th century saw young Chinese people going to France to study art who later returned home to contribute to the cultural development of their country. That close relationship between the two countries continues today.

9 am-5 pm, Tuesdays to Thursdays, 9 am-8:30 pm, Fridays and Saturdays. 1 Xiaohu Jie, Qingyang district, Chengdu, Sichuan province. 028-6827-7011.

CHINA DAILY



# LIFE



**Above:** A visitor walks past an artifact on display at *Notre-Dame de Paris, the Augmented Exhibition* at the National Museum of China in Beijing. **Top:** The show integrates the use of augmented reality and display of artifacts (right). Highlights include a 19th-century chimera sculpture (left) and an early 13th-century Gothic capital (center). PHOTOS BY JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Rising from the ashes

Immersive digital experience offers Beijing audience a glimpse of the history of Notre-Dame, **Lin Qi** reports.

One of the touching moments at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 was a performance on the Notre-Dame Cathedral scaffolding to music mixed with the sound of construction tools, at the end of which an actor portraying Quasimodo, the central character in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, also appeared.

It was a tribute to this Gothic architectural masterpiece, and to those involved in the restoration work so that the church can be able to reopen in December.

On April 15, 2019, people on the Parisian streets watched, in disbelief, shock and grief, smoke and fire engulfing the Notre-Dame. A nine-hour blaze destroyed most of the roof.

That mixed feeling was felt by the rest of the world as photos and live footage of the massive fire circulated in news reports and on social media.

The tribute to the Notre-Dame at the Paris Olympics' opening ceremony raised people's anticipation of the reopening.

As people await the arrival of that exciting moment, it would be worthwhile to spend some time at *Notre-Dame de Paris, the Augmented Exhibition*, a digital show which offers people a virtual dive into the history of the architecture through an immersive and interactive journey.

Developed by the French startup HistoPad, the project premiered at the France

Pavilion of the Dubai World Expo in 2021 and has since toured cities around the world. Now, it has come to the National Museum of China in Beijing, running until Sunday.

Surrounded by floor-to-ceiling screens with photos and re-created images of the Notre-Dame over its 850 years, people will be traveling back in time, to different periods of the architecture.

It is made possible by a HistoPad, a new digital tool that takes visitors back to the past with its augmented reality reconstructions, and that the audience can hold while at the exhibition. The equipment ushers them into a trove of texts, drawings, images and digital reconstructions, about its birth, architectural complexity, aesthetic brilliance and the scars that time and social transformations have left on it, as well as the restoration now underway.

Zhu Xiaoyun, the exhibition's co-curator from the National Museum of China, says: "We hope to offer people, especially the young ones who grow up with the advancement of digital technology, this immersive experience — a way they are familiar with and favor — to feel the charm of Notre-Dame, to listen to its stories passed on for centuries, and to understand the importance of cultural heritage and its conservation and protection."

She says the experience is unique on a new level, for it is based on an integration of the use of augmented reality and the dis-



Floor-to-ceiling screens display photos and re-created images of the Notre-Dame over its 850 years of history. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

play of four artifacts that once adorned the cathedral, which have been brought to China for the first time, thanks to the cooperation between the two countries.

The objects are an early 13th-century Gothic capital — the uppermost part of a column — and three sculptures from the 19th century, a chimera, a foliate head and a gargoyle, which witnessed the church's history through thick and thin.

The exhibition is due to the exclusive sponsorship of the L'Oréal group, in collaboration with the Public Institution in charge of the conservation and the restoration of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Lan Zhenzhen, president of public affairs for L'Oréal North Asia and China, says as a French company, they have hoped to celebrate the 60th anniversary

of the diplomatic relation between China and France by organizing a series of events including *Notre-Dame de Paris, the Augmented Exhibition*.

She says the exhibition shows the group's concern for young people, the seeds of hope to make the world better, and offers an opportunity for them to understand the past and present of the Notre-Dame, and the art of China and France.

Zhu, the curator, says the exhibition sheds light on what else people can do when cultural heritage suffers from severe calamities like a fire, and how museums can contribute to the conservation and restoration work, by utilizing technology to make attempts creative and innovative.

"It would take as long as four hours to tour the exhibition and read through all the contents on the tablet. It will offer people a moment of quietness and peace, and help to create an intimate space for themselves alone to listen to the cathedral, to build a link with it, being undisturbed," she says.

"And by doing so, people can find the differences and similarities in our cultures, and the younger generation, in particular, will be touched and find the impetus to anticipate a shared future."

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By YANG FEIYUE  
[yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn)

In September, Prince Kung's Palace Museum launched a plan to promote the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture in Beijing and Macao.

It centers on traditional culture with a contemporary expression, and aims to integrate traditional cultural elements with modern life through innovative contemporary design, fostering public interest and recognition of traditional culture.

The museum will draw on the successful redesign of its Anshantang Hall to create two interconnected cultural spaces — one in the museum itself, and the other in Macao's Ma Kok district.

Last year, cultural elements related to blessings and the 24 solar terms were added to the hall to convey the harmony between heaven, earth, and humanity, and to showcase distinctive cultural and creative products from the museum's collection.

Feng Nai'en, director of the museum, says that they are working to create a platform to bring traditional Chinese culture to a wider audience through exchange, mutual learning, and innovation.

The two spaces will be rooted in the historical and cultural heritage of both the palace and Macao.

The initiative seeks to promote the transmission and development of Chinese culture, enhance cultural exchanges between the mainland and Macao, and support the

## Traditional culture on Macao's menu



Performances of lion dance and folk music are staged at the Prince Kung's Palace Museum in Beijing to mark its cooperation plan with Macao. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Pansy Ho Chiu-king, entrepreneur from Macao.

dissemination of Chinese culture, according to the authorities.

Additionally, both sides will promote intangible cultural heritage by organizing a variety of traditional cultural experience activities, such as intangible cultural heritage workshops, lectures, forums, and salons. The initiatives

are designed to enhance the public's understanding and engagement with traditional Chinese culture.

Pansy Ho Chiu-king, global ambassador for the promotion of the Qiangongnan Miao embroidery industry and a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, says that the cultural promotion plan emphasizes innovation as its guiding principle, leveraging the century-old heritage and rich cultural legacy of Prince Kung's Palace Museum.

She says the goal is to help lend traditional Chinese culture a more international, lifestyle-oriented, and fashionable form, while boosting its influence.

Yet, it's not the first cooperative effort between Macao and the mainland to promote intangible cultural heritage.

Ho says that *MGM 2049*, the resident show at Macao's MGM Theater, which features intangible cultural heritage, will debut in December. The show has been created in collaboration with renowned director

Zhang Yimou. The performers are currently in intense rehearsals, and hope to present a stunning spectacle, she says.

*MGM 2049* consists of eight segments, each focusing on a form of intangible cultural heritage item, from Mongolian throat singing and northern Shaanxi storytelling, to Miao songs and *yangko* dance.

She says that some modifications have been made to the theater's stage to meet Zhang's needs, and that a full-scale stage was built in Beijing's Huairou district for rehearsals.

The premiere will be a tribute to the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and to the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland.

Using new technology and innovative methods, the show brings together intangible cultural heritage inheritors from around the country to showcase their stories through performances of music and dance, Ho adds.

She says that by exploring the cultural significance and values of different forms of heritage, Macao can inject vitality into its local performing arts industry, while also promoting Chinese culture to a wider audience.

Feng expresses his hope that the promotion plan will pay tribute to traditional Chinese culture with a more open and innovative approach.

By integrating traditional culture with modern technology and elements of fashion, both sides aim to make Chinese culture shine more brightly on the global stage, Feng adds.

## LIFESHANGHAI



## Dancing tribute to poet's turbulent time

Story of Li Qingzhao's life tiptoes into her world of loss, struggle, resilience and memories, **Zhang Kun** reports.

**A**mong China's renowned ancient poets, Li Qingzhao (1084-1155) is remarkable for her literary creation and life story. Both were presented in dance theater for the first time at the 23rd China Shanghai International Arts Festival.

The production *Azure After the Rain* premiered on Oct 17 at Shanghai Culture Square and was produced by the Shanghai Dance Theatre as the festival's opening show.

The festival is hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China and organized by the Shanghai Municipality as an annual carnival of art since 1999. Running from Oct 18 to Nov 17, it features more than 300 performances and exhibitions presented by 2,000 artists from 80 countries and regions.

Directed by Zhang Disha and Liu Xiaohu, *Azure After the Rain* is the latest creation by the Shanghai Dance Theatre following the success of *The Crested Ibises* and *The Eternal Wave*, both of which have performed hundreds of shows at home and abroad in the past few years.

"Li Qingzhao is the most talented female poet in China in the past millennia and we tell her story through classical Chinese dance, presenting the ups and downs of her life in social turbulence and digging into her inner world," says Yu Rongjun, the playwright for the show. "We want to highlight her

great literary achievements and contributions to the inheritance of Chinese literary classics.

"It is essential that we present key moments in her life through dance, integrating the imagery and artistic expressions of her poems," he says.

Zhou Xiaohui, who performed the heroine on premiere night, says: "I have loved Li's poetry since I was a schoolgirl. Only in my portrayal of the character, I managed to walk in her world and see her growth from a carefree, innocent girl to a strong, resilient woman."

Zhou says Li experienced social disturbance at the overturn of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), fell from a prestigious family into poverty, lost her beloved husband,

and most of their cherished collection. After all the misfortune and suffering, she continued her literary work. "Li was never defeated, neither by fate nor time," she says.

The poet was born in Jinan, Shandong province, to an esteemed family of academic professors and high-ranking officials. Her early-age creations were about happy memories, innocent observations and a love of nature. She was married at age 18 to Zhao Mingcheng, who shared her love of poetry, literature and art. The two lived happily and enjoyed collecting books, calligraphy and inscriptions on ancient bronze and rock artifacts.

When the Jin people from the north attacked the Song and took

over the Song capital in 1127, Li and Zhao fled to the south of the Yangtze River. Zhao died two years later on his way to an official post, leaving the widowed Li in aimless flights of turmoil. Later she settled in Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, where she went on to create poems, writing about memories of her husband, her past life and their hometown.

She also completed a collaborative book with her husband, the *Catalogue of Inscriptions on Metal and Stone*, which documented the calligraphy on bronze and stones that the couple collected.

In her later years, Li briefly married Zhang Ruzhou, who treated her poorly. She sued him to get a divorce and exposed his intentions to take

her treasured art collection. She survived harsh criticism of this failed relationship before dying at 71.

Although many of her poems disappeared in the turbulent years after her death, about 100 have survived, which made her a master of the subtle, concise style of Chinese poetry.

To realize the visual expression of Li's poems, Hu Yanjun, the designer for the show, created a stage based on the aesthetics of the Song Dynasty, which is characterized by minimalist lines and light colors.

"I didn't want to change the set between each scene, which would interrupt the storytelling, so I borrowed the form of ancient Chinese long scrolls," Hu says. She had

three long screens made with their length stretching more than 100 meters, which are rolled on the side of the stage.

As the show opens, the long screens roll open from one side to the other, gradually revealing different backgrounds featuring visual elements of traditional Chinese art, following the smooth flow of the narrative and dance moves.

"We hope the show will resonate with today's audiences and inspire the younger generation to love her talent, creation and resilience," says Wang Yan, producer of the show and head of the Shanghai Dance Theatre.

Wang Jiajun, who portrays husband Zhao in the production, is a veteran artist with the Shanghai Dance Theatre, playing both protagonists in *The Crested Ibises* and *The Eternal Wave*.

"I am extremely fortunate as a dancer," he tells China Daily after the premiere. "Usually a dancer only has a few golden years on the stage. I have not only come across some quality productions and suitable characters but worked in a great time when audiences love the art and dance theater."

"We are seeing many new dancers in the company; and I hope to pass on my experience to them and they can take up major roles when the time comes."



Scenes from the dance production *Azure After the Rain* by the Shanghai Dance Theatre, depicting poet Li Qingzhao's troubled but creative life. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



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## French masterpieces frame the modern era

By ZHANG KUN

The ongoing exhibition *Picasso, Modigliani & Modern Art: Masterpieces from LaM Museum* at the Bund One Art Museum in Shanghai marks one of the largest showcase of Italian modern artist Amedeo Modigliani in China, "a rare opportunity" for locals, according to Xie Dingwei, founding director of the museum.

Modigliani, who passed away at age 36, left behind about 300 paintings scattered around the world. The Shanghai exhibition features six paintings and three works on paper, which makes this the first time Modigliani's art has been exhibited on a large scale in China.

The exhibition is jointly presented by the Bund One Art Museum and the French institution Lille Museum of Modern, Contemporary and Outsider Art, and is open to the public through Feb 9.

It presents 61 paintings from 18 avant-garde artists, led by five paintings by Pablo Picasso and six by Modigliani. According to the exhibition's curator, Jeanne-Bathilde Lacourt from LaM, the French museum was founded in 1983 at the bequest of French collector Jean Masurel. Masurel was the nephew of entrepreneur and art connoisseur Roger Dutilleul, one of the important collectors of Modigliani's works.

Dutilleul and his nephew Masurel built an exceptional body of work, both very personal and representative of the greatest artistic movements of the modern period in France, Lacourt says.

This is the first time LaM has presented an exhibition in China.



### If you go

*Picasso, Modigliani & Modern Art: Masterpieces from LaM Museum*  
10 am-6 pm (last entry by 5:30 pm), till Feb 9.  
Bund One Art Museum,  
1 Zhongshan No 1 Road East,  
Huangpu district, Shanghai.



Clockwise from above left: Curator of the exhibition Jeanne-Bathilde Lacourt from the Lille Museum of Modern, Contemporary and Outsider Art, introduces the artworks to visitors. A viewer enjoys the *Picasso, Modigliani & Modern Art: Masterpieces from LaM Museum* exhibition. *Woman with a Hat* by Pablo Picasso and *Motherhood* by Amedeo Modigliani. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Lacourt says: "We want to show our best masterpieces and also show something representative of the story of the collection."

"We picked Cubist paintings, Fernand Leger and Modigliani. We also wanted to show less famous artists who didn't get as much fame as Modigliani and Picasso and the collectors' interest in self-taught artists and more abstract painters such as Andre Lansky."

The Italian painter and sculptor Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) is widely recognized as one of the most important portrait artists of the 20th century.

His portraits and nudes are characterized by asymmetric compositions, elongated forms and contours

that are simple, yet powerful.

In the past few years, Modigliani's paintings made the news for their record-breaking auction sales, drawing public attention to the artist who lived a troubled life, didn't get much public recognition during his life and died of tubercular meningitis in 1920.

LaM is temporarily closed for renovations, which allows the museum to lend its six original Modigliani paintings to the Shanghai exhibition. LaM collaborated with other European museums to hold the exhibition *Modigliani's Secrets* from 2021-22, which later toured Helsinki and Budapest.

The exhibition in Shanghai marks the first time LaM's collection is

shown in Asia, Xie says.

These artworks from LaM will not be able to travel to other parts of China, Lacourt says, "because we wish to have them back before the reopening (of LaM)."

The LaM collection of modern art features the connection between three series — modern and contemporary art and Art Brut, or Raw Art, and a French school that produced art in the early 20th century that is crude, childlike and primitive.

The exhibition at Bund One Art Museum is designed in chronological order, arranged in four sections — Cubism, Amedeo Modigliani, Dream Paintings and Expressive Color — to show the short history of France's modern art through the

eyes of LaM's founding collectors.

While Cubism was a revolutionary new style reflecting the rupture between the artistic world and authority, the works of Modigliani, an artist of Ecole de Paris, present a personal style questioning the canon of art history, Lacourt says.

Upstairs at the Bund One Art Museum, another French exhibition is being held till Jan 5. *The Journey of Ink: Modern and Contemporary Chinese Paintings from the Musée Cernuschi* and the LaM exhibition are projects celebrating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and France. These two exhibitions create an interesting cultural dialogue between French and Chinese arts, Xie says.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Call for BRICS to be the champion of fairness, justice and inclusiveness

The 16th meeting of BRICS leaders, from Tuesday to Thursday, coincided with the International Monetary Fund's and World Bank's annual meetings held on Monday through Saturday.

The IMF and World Bank meetings convened in Washington, while the BRICS leaders gathered in Kazan, Russia, a target of sanctions and isolation by the United States-led West. Both the timing and venue of this year's BRICS summit may cement the impression of it being a counterweight to the US-led world order.

But as the summit's all-encompassing, 43-page final communique shows it is reform and overthrowing of the global system that the BRICS countries desire. The document includes such objectives as developing an alternative international payment system to SWIFT, from which Russia has been effectively cut off since 2022. That was among many proposals intended to consolidate BRICS' role as a truly multilateral platform for international cooperation.

Some in the West certainly feel concerned about such optics in Kazan as the leaders of China and Russia congratulating each other for the thriving bilateral collaboration. But inside BRICS, peacefully ending the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East were topics of universal concern.

And never forget that for all the Western chatter about the Chinese and Russian leaders wanting to challenge the global order, their vision of a fairer and more just world order that has appealed to the Global South is not one of confrontation. Dissatisfaction with the international political status quo — a post-World War II world order shaped by the US-led West in which developing and emerging economies are significantly disadvantaged — is a key reason for the appeal of BRICS. To their credit, the IMF and World Bank have been instrumental in facilitating global development for decades. But the institutionalized Western monopoly of such traditional global development aid mechanisms and their traditional neglect of the needs of developing countries have helped rally the latter around the BRICS banner of a more equitable new order. New in the sense that it features greater say for developing and emerging economies in global governance, not that these countries are joining hands to overthrow the existing world order and build a brand-new one.

For those suspicious of the orientation of the BRICS grouping, it helps to heed what Chinese President Xi Jinping had to say about it. The Chinese leader expressed worries about the chaotic state of world affairs, and wished for what he and his Russian counterpart envision as a fair, just and multipolar world. But at the end of the day, his aim is to unite the broad Global South for common prosperity and security, rather than creating a tool of "bloc confrontation". Running through such recent Chinese proposals as a community with a shared future for mankind and the initiatives for global development, civilization and security is an emphasis on "inclusiveness".

And Xi underlined that same message in Kazan. Praising the expansion of BRICS as a hallmark of a changing international geopolitical landscape, and warning about the danger of a "new Cold War", he called on BRICS members and partners to uphold a new concept of security featuring dialogue instead of confrontation, partnership instead of alliance, as well as universally-benefiting, inclusive economic globalization. His proposals echoed the summit's theme of "Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security".

It is the Global South countries' common aspiration for a more equitable global order that has enabled BRICS' expansion from the original five members to its current size, and counting. According to the Russian president, dozens of more countries have already put themselves on the waiting list to join the grouping. BRICS may or may not be what Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro called "the epicenter of the new multipolar world". But it does have the potential to give the Global South greater influence on the world stage, as it now accounts for 45 percent of the world's population and 35 percent of its economy.

What it now needs to demonstrate is "the audacity to pioneer and the wisdom to adapt".

## Onus on EU to prevent tariff war

With less than one week to go before the European Union carries out its decision to impose so-called anti-subsidy duty of up to 35.3 percent on Chinese-made electric vehicles on top of the 10 percent duty it already imposes on imported cars, the two sides should continue their negotiations to address each other's concerns and prevent a tariff war.

The European Commission's proposal on imposing extra tariffs on Chinese-made EVs was adopted by the European Council after a vote on Oct 4 in which 10 EU member states backed it, while 12 abstained and five, including Germany and Hungary, voted against. With 17 of the 27 EU members not supporting the commission's move, the logical decision would have been to abandon it.

While negotiating with the European Commission, Beijing, following established practice, has been trying to persuade individual EU member states, particularly major players such as Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, to rethink their stance on the issue because the European Council can block the move only if the majority of members oppose it.

On the other hand, the European Commission, while officially negotiating with the Chinese government, is also holding separate talks with some individual Chinese EV makers to negotiate the price and volume of their products to be exported to the EU, which is a blow to Sino-EU mutual trust.

As the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products said in a statement, all the Chinese EV companies the European Commission is negotiating separately with are part of a group of 12 major Chinese EV makers that has authorized the chamber to represent them in the Chinese government's team that is negotiating with the European Commission.

The European Commission should be reminded that the investigations launched in October last year were politically motivated and constitute protectionist practices, which China has not accepted from day one. In fact, the United States egged the EU to launch the investigations to form a "united front" against China, especially its EV and other green products' sectors.

During the investigations, the Chinese government and Chinese EV industry provided tens of thousands of pages of legal documents and other materials to prove the EU was engaging in unreasonable and unethical practices by leveling false charges against China.

But the European Commission continued its political machinations, distorted the results of the investigations and decided to impose extra tariffs on Chinese-made EVs. The commission's final ruling was based on "facts" unilaterally identified by the European side, rather than facts recognized by both sides. The investigations presupposed that the source of Chinese EV makers' advantages were government subsidies, thus violating the principles of "objectivity, fairness, nondiscrimination and transparency", and flouting the rules of the World Trade Organization.

The competitive advantages the Chinese EV industry enjoys do not come from subsidies, but the intensive research and development in EV technology and battery. They originate from innovation, and China's commitment to transition to clean energy and fight climate change.

The US has been targeting China's EV industry as part of its broader China-containment strategy, and the EU has been blindly following the US. In doing so, the EU is not only hindering China-EU trade and investment cooperation and delaying its own green transformation, but also undermining the international community's efforts to combat climate change.

China has shown utmost sincerity and flexibility in the negotiations with the EU without a similar response from the EU. The European Commission therefore should conduct further consultations with China on the pricing mechanism for Chinese-made EVs, and then negotiate a solution acceptable to all parties as soon as possible, in order to prevent a trade war, which will leave no side unscathed.

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Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## Higher-level opening-up turning market into magnet for investors

During his meeting with Minister of Industry and Information Technology Jin Zhuanglong on Wednesday, Apple CEO Tim Cook said Apple is keen to seize the opportunities presented by China's opening-up and will continue to increase investment in China.

This is Cook's second trip to the Chinese mainland this year. In his visit to Shanghai in March, Cook reiterated the company's long-term commitment to the Chinese market, saying "There's no supply chain in the world that's more critical to us than China".

Apple's Chief Operating Officer Jeff Williams also visited its production bases and automated equipment suppliers in the cities of Suzhou and Changsha on Tuesday and Wednesday. That Cook and Williams were in China at the same time shows the importance the US tech giant attaches to the Chinese market.

China's intensified efforts to promote higher-level opening-up and optimize the domestic business environment are making it a preferred investment desti-

nation and an important research and development base for multinational enterprises. This refutes the claim that foreign investors are withdrawing from the Chinese market.

Statistics show that the willingness of foreign capital to hold assets in renminbi has increased further, with total foreign holdings of domestic renminbi bonds hitting an all-time high of \$640 billion. Also, in the first eight months of this year, nearly 37,000 new foreign-funded enterprises were established in China, up 11.5 percent year-on-year, with the actual use of foreign investment exceeding 580 billion yuan (\$81.43 billion).

Behind foreign investors' rising enthusiasm in the Chinese market are China's improving economic conditions and continuous introduction of favorable policies.

The steady improvements in China's economic fundamentals have provided a sound macro environment for foreign investment. At the same time, since September, China has

accelerated the introduction of a package of incremental policies, which has greatly boosted market confidence and stimulated market vitality. China's intensified efforts in the past years to open its financial market to the outside world — such as the launch of the Shanghai Stock Connect and Shenzhen Stock Connect and other institutional arrangements to create diversified investment channels for foreign investment — and its continuous efforts to increase access to foreign investment, expand the list of industries and projects for foreign investment, and implement tax support policies for foreign enterprises have created a broader market space and a better business environment for foreign enterprises.

The introduction of a series of policy measures to promote higher-level opening-up is translating into China's stronger attractiveness to foreign investors, making its market a magnet to many multinationals like Apple.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

## Tianlai's entry can draw more 'pathfinders'

China's Tianlai Experiment, a scientific project aimed at detecting dark energy using a radio telescope array, has been granted the "pathfinder" status by the Square Kilometer Array Observatory, an intergovernmental radio telescope project. The move enhances the whole organization's ability to further uncover the secrets of the universe and create more opportunities for researchers.

When completed, the SKA will be the largest radio telescope array in the world, with its official members spread across China, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia and six other nations. While its goal is to explore the universe, its different members have different advantages. There's the Australian Square Kilometre Array Path-

finder, which is a synthesis array consisting of 36 dish antennae, each 12 meters in diameter, spread out in two dimensions with baselines up to 6 km long that make it highly sensitive to radio waves with frequencies in the range of 700-1,800 MHz.

The Murchison Widefield Array also in Australia, made of 4,096 spider-like antennae, is tuned to receive signals of frequencies ranging from 70 MHz to 300 MHz, ideal for discovering the formation of galaxies and nebulae.

Tianlai, which means "heavenly sounds", adds a new dimension as it is good at searching for the 21-centimeter signals emitted by hydrogen atoms, which have gradually shifted to longer wavelengths, in a process called "redshift", with the expansion of the uni-

verse. By observing how the expansion rate of the universe changes over time, scientists will further analyze the abundance and dark energy properties, which, believably, make up 70 percent of the universe and drive its expansion but cannot be observed directly.

Besides, China also has the Wukong dark matter explorer satellite, which together with Tianlai grants the nation leadership in dark matter detection.

That shows the significance of SKA, which allows different participants to unleash their potential to deepen knowledge about everything. With Tianlai being granted the status of "pathfinder", more observatories the world over will hopefully join the family of "pathfinders" in the future.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## Proposed naval drill sign of change in Middle East

Saudi Arabia has reportedly proposed a combined naval drill with Iran in the Red Sea. It is widely taken as a positive sign indicating the continuation of the improvement of relations between the two major countries in the Middle East, carrying positive significance to the region.

"Saudi Arabia has asked that we organize joint exercises in the Red Sea," the commander of Iran's navy, Shahram Irani, was quoted as saying by the Iranian news agency ISNA.

"Coordination is underway and delegations from both countries will hold the necessary consultations on how to conduct the exercise," he added, without providing details, including any timeline.

In April 2024, the two countries announced the resumption of diplomatic ties in

Beijing shortly after the first formal meeting between the two countries' top diplomats in more than seven years thanks to China's mediation.

The rising tensions between Israel and Iran have prompted the latter to take the initiative to reach out to all regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, to persuade them to not allow the United States to take advantage of their land and airspace for anti-Iran military activities.

Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have also taken the initiative to strengthen their contacts with Iran to avoid a wider war. That explains why Saudi Arabia has invited Iran to participate in the Red Sea military exercise.

Were it not for Beijing's earlier mediation efforts, a joint military exercise between Iran and Saudi Arabia would have been inconceivable one year back. China's pro-peace, pro-reconciliation and pro-development policy in the

Middle East is in stark contrast to the United States' "America-first" policy in the region.

The Gaza conflict and its spillover effects are causing profound changes in the Middle East situation, as the US' regional allies become increasingly dismayed by Washington's one-sided pro-Israel stance, realizing that the US is by no means a reliable guarantee of regional security but rather a selfish troublemaker.

The continuous improvement of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia should remind Washington that it's time it reexamined its Middle East policy and practices. Otherwise, more and more US regional allies will try to gain more strategic autonomy as they come to fully realize that the US does not sincerely regard them as allies, whether in regional development or regional security issues.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

## COMMENT

Sahar Albazar

The BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, this week is a pivotal event that holds immense promise for the future of developing countries. BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has been a formidable force in reshaping the global economic landscape. This year's BRICS Summit is particularly significant because it welcomes new members, thus expanding its influence.

The summit is a beacon of hope for developing nations, offering a platform for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The inclusion of new members from diverse regions underscores the grouping's commitment to foster a more representative and equitable world order. This expansion is not merely symbolic; it is a testament to the shared aspirations of emerging economies to challenge the status quo and advocate for a fairer distribution of global resources and opportunities.

One of the most significant benefits of BRICS for developing countries is the potential for economic empowerment through collaboration. The BRICS member states cumulatively account for more than 46 percent of the world's population, about 35 percent of global economic output. By pooling together their resources, sharing expertise and coordinating policies, these countries can create a robust economic bloc capable of negotiating better terms in international trade and investment.

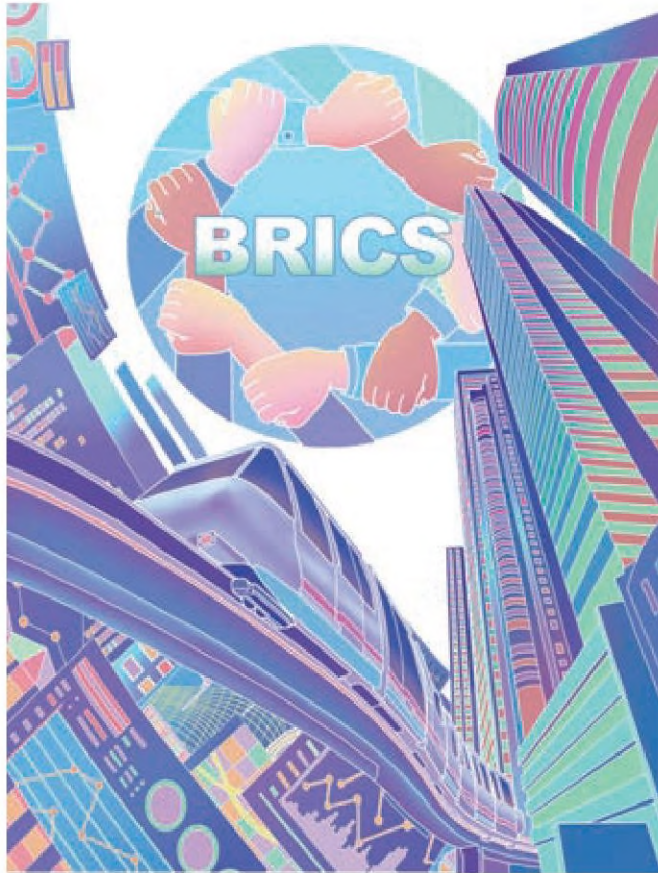
For Egypt, joining BRICS opens new avenues for economic cooperation and investment. The group's focus on infrastructure development, technology transfer and industrialization aligns with Egypt's national development goals. By leveraging the collective strength of BRICS, Egypt can boost its economic growth, create more jobs, and improve the living standards of its people.

BRICS member states have committed more than \$100 billion to the New Development Bank, which has been funding infrastructure and sustainable development projects. Another critical aspect of BRICS is its efforts to establish a new, fairer global financial architecture in order to reduce the developing world's dependence on traditional Western-dominated financial institutions.

The establishment of the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement are steps in this direction, because these institutions provide alternative sources of funding for infrastructure and development projects on more favorable terms and conditions compared with traditional, Western lenders.

For developing countries, access to

# BRICS a beacon of hope for Global South



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

such financial resources is crucial for addressing infrastructure deficits, enhancing connectivity, and promoting sustainable development. The NDB has already approved \$35 billion in loans for various projects, with a significant portion dedicated to green and sustainable initiatives. The focus on environmentally-friendly projects ensures that development is not

achieved at the expense of the environment.

The Kazan summit will also help strengthen multilateralism and inspire the BRICS members to build a more balanced and fairer global governance structure. In a world increasingly characterized by geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainties, the need for cooperative and inclusive multilateral-

By advocating for a multipolar world order, BRICS seeks to reduce the dominance of a single power in global affairs and promote a more balanced and just world order.

ism has never been greater, and BRICS, by providing a platform for dialogue and cooperation among emerging market economies and developing countries, not only helps them voice their concerns but also firmly upholds multilateralism.

For Egypt and other developing countries, this multilateral approach is essential for overcoming common challenges such as unemployment, lack of modern infrastructure and climate change. By working together under the BRICS framework, the member states can promote reforms in global institutions, and ensure their voices are heard and their interests protected. In fact, BRICS members have been instrumental in pushing for reforms in the International Monetary Fund to better reflect the economic realities of the 21st century.

Apart from economic and financial cooperation, BRICS also plays a vital role in promoting peace and stability. The group's commitment to uphold international law, respect the sovereignty of countries and foster peaceful coexistence is crucial in today's volatile geopolitical landscape. By advocating for a multipolar world order, BRICS seeks to reduce the dominance of a single power in global affairs and promote a more balanced and just world order.

For Egypt, its participation in BRICS offers it a good opportunity to contribute to global peace and security efforts. As a country with a rich history and strategic location, Egypt can play a pivotal role in bridging regional divides and fostering dialogue among countries.

As an Egyptian member of parliament, I am optimistic about the opportunities that BRICS presents for economic empowerment, financial independence and multilateral cooperation. By working together, the BRICS members can create a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable world where the aspirations of all nations, big and small, are realized.

As we look to the future, let us embrace the spirit of BRICS and work together to build a better world for all.

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



Chen Weihua

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## US attempt to wage a new 'Cold War' a massive assault on human rights

I was in Berlin on Tuesday for the 2024 China-Europe Seminar on Human Rights, an event that was first held in 2015, and has been hosted every year by European and Chinese cities since then.

While this year's theme was "new and emerging rights in the age of digital technology, artificial intelligence, environmental degradation and climate change", many experts voiced their concerns over the ongoing conflicts that are a threat to humankind, especially the people in the countries directly affected and their human rights.

The conflicts include those between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Palestine. Some say there is a new "Cold War" the United States is trying to wage against China. Many are worried that these hot and cold wars, if left unchecked, could potentially trigger a nuclear war.

Despite US President Joe Biden's public statement that Washington does not seek a new "Cold War", what his administration has been doing against China over the past years constitute a new "Cold War". That was the view of some of the experts who spoke at Tuesday's seminar.

He said he expected more such discussions and exchanges to be held so that the two sides can learn more about human rights from each other.

True, the new "Cold War" Washington is attempting to wage is not the same as the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, when the two sides had almost no trade relations and very limited people-to-people exchanges. But the US has been moving in that direction since former US president Donald Trump reversed decades of US policy on China. Worse, the Biden administration has doubled down the China-containment policy of the previous administration in a bid to curtail China's rise.

Such Cold War mentality has made everyone worse off. Trump's tariffs on Chinese exports, which Biden vowed to revoke during the 2020 presidential campaign but broke his promise after assuming office, have increased the prices of commodities for US consumers, according to various US studies.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics on Monday warned that if Trump wins the presidential election and carries out his latest threat to impose 10 percent tariffs on foreign goods and 60 percent on Chinese goods, the US economy would suffer the most, with its GDP sinking to 2.82 or 9.65 percent lower than the baseline by 2028, based on two scenarios of whether foreign countries retaliate or not.

In contrast, China's GDP would slide by only 0.5 to 0.74 percent below the baseline by 2028 and Mexico's GDP by 0.03 to 0.56 percent.

Similarly, the US tech war against China is set to backfire because it deprives US tech companies of their biggest customer, and encourages China to invest and innovate more aggressively to catch up with the West and become self-reliant in advanced technology.

The notorious Wolf Amendment, a law passed by US Congress in 2011 to prohibit US government cooperation with China in space science has failed to halt China's space mission. Instead, it has prompted China to make a giant step forward in space exploration.

China has been following a win-win policy since the launch of reform and opening-up in 1978, by welcoming more foreign investment. It's hard to figure out why the US, still a superpower in many aspects, has become so narrow-minded and so obsessed with lose-lose games with the sole aim of hurting the Chinese economy, which has been a major engine for global economic growth for years.

Axel Hegwein, chairman of the supervisory board of the German-Chinese Culture Foundation, reminded people at Tuesday's seminar that Berlin is a place of historic significance, a place that connects the East and the West. He said he expected more such discussions and exchanges to be held so that the two sides can learn more about human rights from each other.

He was clearly referring to the fact that Berlin, in fact Germany, was divided into two parts during the Cold War. The same was true for Europe.

There is no better place to oppose the new Cold War than in Berlin. I am writing this column in my hotel, just 350 meters from Checkpoint Charlie, which witnessed the untold sufferings of the German people during the Cold War. But it's doubtful whether the US will understand the message.

Busani Ngcaweni

## China-Africa ties flourish across diverse forums

China's engagement with African countries has transitioned from an aid-focused approach to a more collaborative partnership aimed at achieving common development, with their partnerships growing from strength to strength under the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation framework. The FOCAC Summit in Beijing last month elevated China-Africa relations to an all-weather cooperative partnership based on shared political trust, broad collaboration across multiple sectors, and mutual support.

Sino-African cooperation is shaped by a shared past against colonialism and hegemony, and is driven by a shared future of humankind. In the current geopolitical climate characterized by rising tensions, poverty and backward development, mostly affecting the Global South and especially Africa as a continent with the largest number of developing countries, China-Africa engagement under the FOCAC and BRICS frameworks hold great hope for the development of not only China and Africa but also the rest of the world, the Global South in particular.

Global development and prosperity is directly linked to the Global South's development and prosperity, and China-Africa cooperation gives impetus to Africa's aspirations as stated in the African Union Agenda 2063 and its global commitment to end poverty and realize the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The decisions made at the FOCAC Summit in Beijing can help African countries meet their development goals provided other external forces do not interfere in their internal affairs.

China-Africa relations, unlike the colonial ones, are not extractive and have great potential for improvement. The

This approach underscores China's commitment to building a multipolar world where development is inclusive and sustainable.

commitments made at the Beijing FOCAC Summit on infrastructure development seek to build new or improve existing infrastructure, enabling Africa to more conveniently interact with the world and seize more opportunities to boost trade and development.

China, as a key partner in Africa's development, has been collaborating with the African countries, the African Union, its associated bodies, and regional organizations to implement Africa's infrastructure development plans and help expedite African countries' economic integration. China also seeks to align those plans with the Belt and Road Initiative, in order to improve logistics connectivity and expand trade between China, Africa and the rest of the world.

Unlike the extractive colonial infrastructure development policy in Africa, Belt and Road projects facilitate the free movement of goods and people, and thus boost economic growth. The FOCAC Summit also vowed to promote industrialization in Africa, which will not only create new jobs but also reduce African

countries' trade deficits.

Africa has the world's largest deposits of cobalt, diamond, platinum and uranium, among other natural resources, which form the backbone of many advanced technologies and are essential to the growth of many economies. The continent also contains 65 percent of the world's arable land, supplying food to many countries, and has 10 percent of the world's renewable freshwater sources.

In many African countries, natural resources constitute between 30 percent and 50 percent of their total wealth. These resources, if used based on a win-win approach, can benefit Africa and the rest of the world. But if the resources are exploited by neglecting Africa's development, it will increase internal conflicts on the continent, and disrupt global trade by significantly impacting the economies that are reliant on Africa's resources.

In order to ensure Africa's rich natural resources benefit the people of Africa by creating new jobs and attracting more foreign investments, African governments have to promote peace and development, eradicate corruption and block the illicit flow of capital. And it is to address these challenges that President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, which are aimed at helping countries better safeguard their national security by pursuing sustainable development. They are also aimed at ensuring that countries respect the diversity of civilizations and the common values of humanity.

By having the highest regard for the diversity of civilizations, pursuit of common development, promotion of peace and stability, and upholding of multilateralism, China seeks to create a frame-

work under which different countries can collaborate, by respecting each other's sovereignty, in order to realize common goals. This approach underscores China's commitment to building a multipolar world where development is inclusive and sustainable.

The BRICS member states account for more than 46 percent of the world's population and 35 percent of the global economic output. As such, they have the collective strength to develop a fairer world order and promote global peace in order to ensure BRICS members, in fact, all the countries of the Global South, can pursue sustainable development and lift their people out of poverty.

The expansion of BRICS holds great potential for the Global South, as it represents a push for reforming the existing global governance system. It reflects the grouping's goal of building a world where countries with different political systems can coexist harmoniously. BRICS' expansion represents the yearning of the member countries, indeed the whole of the Global South, for a multipolar world devoid of the hegemony.

The expansion of BRICS, therefore, is not just about increasing the number of members; it is also about building a platform that values diversity and peace, and prioritizes cooperation. Its expansion means BRICS now has members from diverse regions and a larger geographical area, boasts greater economic heft and higher trade potential, making it an even more powerful and influential grouping driving global growth and endeavoring to build a fairer and more just world.

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

## GLOBAL VIEWS



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

ROBERT WALKER

# Standing for sustainable development

China seeks to make the right to development real through ventures such as the BRI, Global Development Initiative, the Silk Road Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

In 2015, the world, with cautious optimism, adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with national governments agreeing to work together to end poverty by 2030, to combat inequalities and to create conditions for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all.

Today, there is only one goal where across-the-board progress has been made: SDG 1, ending extreme poverty. China succeeded in eliminating rural extreme poverty in 2020, accounting for 20 percent of the global reduction in poverty achieved between 2015 and 2022.

However, because China has already eradicated poverty, it can no longer exert a downward influence on the global number. Hence, the latest predictions indicate that extreme poverty will still afflict 590 million people in 2030 rather than being eliminated as intended.

Taking the SDGs as a whole and the 135 targets that can be quantitatively assessed, just 17 percent look likely to be attained by 2030. Only marginal progress has been made with respect to 30 percent of the targets, and for 18 percent no improvement at all has been registered. The world is even going backwards in relation to 23 of the targets.

What explains the lack of progress? Antonio Guterres, secretary general of the United Nations, has pointed to the scarring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts, geopolitical tensions and growing climate chaos.

However, Guterres also identifies the core problem — necessarily using diplomatic language — “systemic deficiencies and inequities in the global economic and financial system [that] leave developing countries to tackle enormous and growing challenges with only a fraction of the international support they need and deserve”.

Repeated in less diplomatic language, the already rich world is determined to remain rich and to use the global institutions which it has created to ensure that others get rich less quickly, if at all.

If this formulation sounds

extreme, evidence is on hand to support it. In the 40 years to 2023, real daily per capita GDP — a measure of average incomes — increased by \$54.91 in high-income countries, while in countries that were in 1984 defined as low-income by the World Bank, incomes rose only \$12.91 — or by just \$4.89 if China is excluded.

The global financial institutions and organizations controlled by rich countries all extol the virtues of world trade and the rule-based world order. In 2023, for example, the World Bank claimed that “trade has generated unprecedented prosperity, helping to lift some 1 billion people out of poverty in recent decades”.

In fact, almost 75 percent of the reduction of global poverty was solely due to China, the growth of its economy and its policies to eradicate rural poverty.

While China has benefited from its trade expansion since joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, most other developing countries have not. As already observed, their incomes increased at only a tenth of the rate of those in the already developed world.

Negotiations that ran from 2001 to 2015, which were called the Doha Round, were intended to overcome the discriminatory nature of WTO trade rules. There was a recognized need to reduce tariffs on agricultural imports from developing countries, to provide equal access to global markets and to enhance technical and financial assistance. The Doha Round ended in failure because the United States and Europe refused to make the necessary concessions.

The WTO embodies a set of principles derived from US-style liberal economics that encapsulate the Anglo-Saxon and continental European varieties of capitalism. These principles have been externalized as rules — the right way of doing trade — to be imposed on others. WTO negotiators were so convinced of the universality of these Western values that they predicted that China would become a liberal market economy by 2015.

China, of course, remains a socialist market economy. When it joined the WTO in 2001, its GDP was only 13

percent that of the US. Now, with an economy challenging that of the US in size, China is being accused of seeking to disrupt the WTO. Joint statements from the US, the European Union and Japan are demanding that China effectively abandons its socialist market economy to “address nonmarket orientated policies” that allegedly create “unfair competitive conditions”.

The US has stated blatantly that it cannot “accept China’s State-led, non-market approach to the economy and trade” and has sought “solutions independent of the WTO”. The heavy import tariffs imposed on China under US domestic law are likely incompatible with WTO rules. However, the WTO Appellate Body is now defunct because the US is refusing to approve new members. The US, it seems, is the one country not deemed to be bound by the rule-based world order.

Further evidence of the unwillingness of governments in the developed world to work with others to achieve sustained development is provided by SDG 17. This goal was intended to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development and to strengthen implementation. Yet, alone among the SDGs, it includes just one measurable target. The target, for rich OECD countries to devote 0.7 percent of their gross national income to development assistance, was first agreed in 1970. It has never been achieved.

Without measurable targets, rich governments avoid being held accountable for their abject failure to engage in meaningful partnership to create inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Indeed, rich countries refuse to facilitate, or even to accept, the right to development. Responding to calls by the G77 of developing countries, the UN General Assembly approved a Declaration on the Right to Development in 1986. Although only the US voted against, eight developed countries, including Germany, Japan, Sweden and the United Kingdom, abstained.

Subsequent attempts to give the declaration legal force have been rejected. In 2023, all high-income countries other than Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates voted against drafting a development covenant equal in status to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

How strikingly different, then, is China. Now as the second-largest economy, it still negotiates alongside the G77 developing countries.

Moreover, it seeks to make real the right to development through ventures such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Silk Road Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank creating shared prosperity for all.

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WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

KONSTANTINOS GRIVAS

# United Europe, interrupted

A continent closed to Russia, suspicious of the US and negative toward China because of a Manichaean attitude risks becoming an isolated zone on a path toward self-destruction

The economic and trade relations between Europe and China and the identification of synergies and competitions between them should be examined in a broader geopolitical context. Additionally, the relations between Europe and China

and the way Europe “reads” China are not autonomous factors but are significantly influenced by how Western Europe currently handles Russia and the United States.

Today, Europe is experiencing an extremely challenging period. The prolonged crisis in Ukraine has created a persistent sense of threat from Russia among Europeans. More importantly, it has caused an unprecedented rift with Russia, one not seen even during the Cold War. There was always a dominant feeling of unity among European nations, of a “united Europe”, despite differences in political systems, geopolitical rivalries and wars. Today, this is not the case. A sense of deep alienation has developed between Russia and Western Europe (which includes the old Central Europe and most Balkan states). Furthermore, the process of European integration has made European peoples equate the concept of Europe with the European Union. Consequently, there has emerged a notion of a “small Europe”, perceived as being under threat from an alien and hostile Russia. Simultaneously, the EU has not achieved a unified identity, nor does it seem close to doing so. Instead, hostilities and suspicions have been amplified internally, especially following the way Germany, the dominant economic power in the EU, dealt with Greece during the economic crisis there a few years ago. The manner was perceived by Greeks (and not only) as the way a hostile power treats a conquered country. Thus, the “united” Europe is cohesive enough to monopolize the term “Europe” and imaginatively exclude Russia, but it is also a suspicious Europe with a shallow, superficial and artificial “unity.” It is a small, truncated

and unfinished Europe.

Simultaneously, Europe’s relations with Washington are also in an odd state. On the one hand, the crisis in Ukraine has reinforced the sense of dependency on US military power, yet on the other hand, concerns have grown that Washington is using Europe to advance its own geopolitical agenda and to reassert its hegemony over Europe, stripping it of the already limited independence it enjoyed until now.

Moreover, the crisis in Ukraine and the prolonged instability in the Middle East have caused serious problems for the European economy, mainly due to issues with Europe’s energy supply. This also raises another issue. The Europeans’ obsession with the so-called Green Development and their aversion to nuclear energy have created an unprecedented gap in Europe’s energy infrastructure. Coal has been demonized, nuclear fission energy has been demonized, nuclear fusion is still far from realization, the flow of hydrocarbons from Russia and the Middle East has been cut off or is extremely fragile, and there is an almost metaphysical faith in renewable energy sources, which, of course, cannot meet Europe’s energy needs.

As a result of all the above, Europe’s sense of identity and cohesion is in crisis, and the EU is trapped in a sense of siege from multiple directions, with its economy facing serious problems.

This “besieged” Europe also faces the “challenge” of China. China’s economic and technological rise has, inevitably, turned it into both an economic and industrial competitor and a partner of Europe. International relations have always been a mixture of competitions and synergies among actors, something the old multipolar Europe, which emerged after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, knew very well. Relations among European states were always a mixture of synergies and competitions that continuously changed. However, today’s “united” Europe seems to have forgotten this. Additionally, an element of European culture, which serves as one of the hidden foundations on which

Europe’s geopolitical behavior is built, is Manichaeanism. Western culture is Christian-born, and a fundamental element of Western Christianity is a Manichaean reading of the world. Thus, relations with other countries are viewed as zero-sum relationships, of full rivalry or alliance, with a tendency to demonize the opponent.

Therefore, contemporary Europe struggles to perceive its relations with China within a realistic and rational framework. A partially and tenuously “united” Europe, which is simultaneously a “small” Europe cut off from Russia and suspicious of Washington and suspicious internally, is naturally and consequently suspicious of China as well. This suspicion is intensified by Europe’s tendency to perceive international relations within a Manichaean framework of absolute competition or alignment.

As long as the conflict continues in Ukraine and the Middle East, this paranoid insecurity and suspicion in Europe will persist and grow. Establishing even a fragile and unstable peace in these regions is crucial.

However, what is more important is the creation of a “perception of cooperation” between China and Europe. The beginning of this effort can be made by realizing that Europe cannot afford to be trapped in a competitive relationship with China. A Europe closed to Russia, suspicious of the US, suspicious internally, and negative toward China risks becoming an isolated zone on a path toward self-destruction.

And cooperative structures with China can mainly emerge through collaborations at the national level with political forces that understand the deadlock of the crisis in Ukraine and the need to adopt independent national policies for foreign policy and economic development.

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MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

## WORLD

## Strike kills Lebanese soldiers

World powers rally behind Beirut at Paris meet amid escalating conflict

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM — An Israeli strike killed three Lebanese troops in southern Lebanon on Thursday as France hosted a conference to rally support for Lebanese state forces that are seen as vital to any diplomatic resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

The Lebanese soldiers were killed by an Israeli strike as they were evacuating wounded people on the outskirts of the southern village of Yater, the Lebanese army said.

There was no immediate comment on the strike from the Israeli military, which has previously said it is not operating against the Lebanese army.

The area is part of the border region pounded by Israel during its monthlong offensive against Hezbollah, in a conflict that spiraled out of the Gaza Strip.

With more than 2,500 people killed in Lebanon and more than 1 million forced from their homes, according to Lebanese authorities, the Paris conference aims to mobilize both humanitarian aid and support for the Lebanese military.

Its deployment into the south is a key part of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 that ended a 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. The Paris meeting is set to reiterate that Resolution 1701 should be the basis for a cessation to the current hostilities.

At the conference, French President Emmanuel Macron said his country would support Lebanon with 100 million euros (\$108 million).

"The war must end as soon as possible; there must be a cease-fire in Lebanon," Macron said sitting alongside Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

Mikati, in turn, called on "the international community to hold together and support efforts ... to implement an immediate cease-fire".

Some 70 government delegations and 15 international organizations met in Paris aiming to raise at least 500 million euros in humanitarian aid and push for a cease-fire.



Smoke rises from destroyed buildings from the site of an Israeli airstrike on the neighborhood of Mreijeh in Beirut's southern suburbs on Wednesday. AFP

"The storm we are currently witnessing is unlike any other because it carries the seeds of total destruction, not only for our country but for all human values as well," Mikati told delegates.

He said international support would be needed to shore up the army, including new recruits and to rebuild the country's destroyed infrastructure.

The conference has raised about \$800 million for humanitarian aid and a further \$200 million to support the country's armed forces, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said.

"We have risen to the occasion," Barrot told participants as the conference closed, adding that "we cannot limit ourselves to a humanitarian and security response ... we have to bring about a diplomatic solution" as fighting between Israel and Hezbollah continues.

Meanwhile, the United States is making a final major push for peace between Israel and Hezbollah and Hamas before the Nov 5 presidential election that could alter US policy.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said after talks in Qatar on Thurs-

day that he anticipates negotiators will get together in the coming days for discussions on a cease-fire deal to end Israel's military assault in Gaza.

Blinken is paying his 11th trip to the region since the Oct 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, after repeated disappointments in his quest to end the Israeli retaliatory campaign in the Gaza Strip.

#### School targeted

Gaza's civil defense agency said on Thursday an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter killed at least 17 people in the central Nuseirat camp, killing 17 people and wounding dozens more, Mahmud Bassal, a spokesman for the agency, told AFP.

The toll was confirmed by Al-Awda hospital, which said the school had been hit by an airstrike.

"Thousands of displaced people were sheltering in the school, most of them children and women," a statement issued by the Hamas government media office said.

In addition, the civil defense said

on Thursday more than 770 Palestinians have been killed in the north of the territory since Israel launched an assault aimed at preventing Hamas militants from regrouping.

"Since the start of the military operation in northern Gaza more than 770 people have been killed," said Bassal, adding that the toll could rise as there were people buried under the rubble.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Thursday that Israel aims to "empty" the Gaza Strip of Palestinians, especially in the northern part where it launched a sweeping assault this month.

"It has been a full year since the greatest catastrophe that the Palestinian people experienced after the Nakba of 1948, which is the Israeli war in which crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing are being committed in the Gaza Strip," Abbas said in a speech to members of the BRICS group.

"This is part of a plan to empty the territory of its people, especially now in northern Gaza where the occupation forces are resorting to starving the population there."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Kenyans harvest hope with Chinese technology

By RADING GERRO  
in Nakuru, Kenya  
For China Daily

A new tomato grafting technology from China has significantly boosted tomato production on pilot farms in Kenya, offering local farmers a more sustainable and productive method to grow this essential crop.

As demand for tomatoes rises and challenges from pests, diseases and climate change intensify, grafting is emerging as an innovative solution that enhances yields and improves livelihoods.

Tomato grafting involves attaching the shoot of a high-yielding but disease-sensitive tomato variety (scion) to the rootstock of a hardy, disease-resistant variety, explained Liu Yutao, the Chinese director of the Confucius Institute at Egerton University in Nakuru County, Kenya.

This technology results in high-quality tomato fruit production of the scion and the resilience of the rootstock, said Liu, who is from China's Nanjing Agricultural University.

"The grafted seedlings have the advantage of better growth, higher yield, mature early and have a long duration of tomato fruit production. It helps farmers realize a 50 percent increase in their yields, something they could not achieve previously when they were using the traditional farming systems."

This technology was introduced to local small-scale farmers through a partnership between Nanjing Agricultural University and Egerton University, as part of a project funded by the China-International Fund for Agricultural Development South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility.

The one-year project, titled Empowering Rural Youth through Innovative Horticultural Solutions in Tomato Value Chain, is being carried out in Nakuru city, about 160 kilometers from Kenya's capital Nairobi.

Since its launch earlier this year, the project has trained more than 1,000 small-scale farmers in modern agricultural techniques.

Liu said that last year, 290,000 hectares of tomatoes were planted in Kenya, yielding a total production of 681,000 metric tons.

Late last year, the Confucius Institute of Egerton University invited the first batch of agricultural experts from Nanjing Agricultural University to Kenya to provide training on tomato grafting technology.

Stephen Githengu, a horticultural lecturer at Egerton, said the project has 15 greenhouses owned by small-scale farmers in Nakuru

County who were recruited and trained in the new technology.

"This partnership has seen more than 1,000 small-scale farmers and over 100 technicians trained in the grafting technology, made possible by a combination of modern Chinese equipment," Githengu said.

The first grafted tomatoes ripened late last month, with initial assessments conducted in pilot areas such as Molo, Naivasha and Bahati subcounties.

Githengu said the yields have shown that the technology is 99 percent accurate in addressing the challenges facing small-scale farmers.

Esther Wanja, one of the local farmers benefiting from this grafting technology, owns a 50-by-80-meter greenhouse with 400 tomato plants in Naivasha.

"This is the solution we've been waiting for. I'm just harvesting my tomatoes and already I have customers at our local market," she said.

Wanja, a tomato farmer for more than 20 years, said she expects to make a profit of \$500 this year. "This kind of profit was impossible with our traditional farming practices since we were faced with bacterial wilt diseases that affected our yields' quality and we were always making losses. But now, the future of tomato farming looks brighter."

#### Demonstration farms

Another farmer benefiting from the grafting technology is Willy Gitonga from Bahati. His two greenhouses were selected as demonstration farms for the new technique.

He was assigned a technician to ensure compliance with the training instructions.

"We are all familiar with the fact that tomato fruits are incredibly seasonal, and with traditional farming we could only harvest twice per year. But now, with grafting technology, we can plant and harvest throughout the year due to its ability to resist seasonal diseases," he said.

Gitonga also mentioned that the technology helps reduce reliance on costly chemical pesticides and fertilizers, which always eat up farmers' profits.

Liu from Egerton University said there are plans to expand the technology to other regions in Kenya to improve food security.

"We will demonstrate the technology to more local farmers and extend it to other parts of Kenya. We are also eyeing innovations in the tomato value chain to empower more rural youth and women as a way of creating a decent income," he said.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

## Forum urges recognition of Filipina 'comfort women'

By PRIME SARMIENTO  
in Hong Kong  
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The Filipina "comfort women" sexually exploited by the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II deserve a place in the Philippines' history, a forum in Manila heard on Thursday.

Such recognition must go beyond financial reparations and a formal apology from the Japanese government for their suffering, attendees at the hybrid forum added.

Leaders of groups defending the cause of comfort women also urged the Philippine government to implement the resolution passed by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

The resolution calls for the authorities to provide full reparation and an official apology to the survivors, who have suffered decades of physical, psychological and other consequences.

"For how else do you quantify our comfort women's pain and suffering?" asked Virginia Lacsa-Suarez, a lawyer for Malaya Lolos (Free

Grandmothers), an organization of Filipina comfort women.

Lacsa-Suarez said this is why, on top of reparations and an apology, the story of Filipina comfort women must be included in Philippine history books, commemorated in a museum and integrated into the national curriculum.

Only that way will young Filipinos know more about the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the war, she said.

Most of the surviving comfort women have died without finding justice, with only 25 members of the Malaya Lolos still living, she added.

"We always say history repeats itself. History repeats itself only when we forget the history," she said. Otherwise, the world will create another generation of comfort women, she said, citing current conflicts happening globally.

Arlene Brosas, a party-list representative, urged the passage of a bill introduced last year that seeks to include the stories of comfort women in the national educational curriculum.

The bill, which remains pending in Manila's lower house of Congress,

"seeks to recognize the suffering, sexual slavery and heroic participation in the resistance by Filipina comfort women under Japanese occupation", Brosas said.

"The harrowing accounts of comfort women have been neglected in Philippine history books and curricula, contributing to historical injustice," she said, noting this is why many students are not aware of the struggles of Filipina comfort women.

#### Courageous struggles

The bill aims to amplify the voices and acknowledge the courageous struggles of these women, aligning with the UN's recommendation for the Philippines to include the history of the country's wartime sexual slavery survivors in the educational curriculum, she said.

Teresita Ang See, convener of Flowers for Lolos, a coalition of organizations supporting the cause of comfort women, said, "Like a million flowers, let our voices be heard."

She urged more people to join the coalition and called for the establishment of a public monument to commemorate comfort women. She also asked for support for surviving com-

fort women, who are now advanced in age and require financial help and medical care.

The story of comfort women shows that "war is never a solution to anything", she said.

She also urged the Philippine government to resist any pressure from the Japanese government to stop the country from recognizing the suffering of comfort women.

Sharon Cabusao-Silva, executive director of Lila Pilipina, an organization helping Filipina comfort women, said that even after all the remaining comfort women have passed on, their stories will endure.

The history of comfort women is well-documented, not only in the Philippines but also in the UN, she said.

Her organization has documented the testimonies of comfort women, she said, adding the fight for their cause will continue.

She also called on Philippine youth to learn more about Philippine history and understand that a "colonial war" launched by Japan's invasion of the Philippines led to sexual slavery.

"Our youth, especially the young women, need to take a stand so that this colonial war won't happen again."



Armed attackers appear on security camera footage approaching a Turkish aviation company building in Ankara on Wednesday, in this still image from social media video. VIA REUTERS

## After attack, Turkiye retaliates, hits Kurdish militants

ISTANBUL/UNITED NATIONS — The first Ankara attack victims were buried on Thursday, hours after Turkiye struck PKK militants in Iraq after blaming them for the assault on a defense company that killed five people.

As the dust settled after Wednesday's deadly attack on the state-run Turkish Aerospace Industries that also left 22 injured, Turkiye pointed the finger at Kurdish militants as "very likely" responsible.

Turkish investigators had identified one of the attackers as a "PKK terrorist" code-named "Rojger" but were still working to identify his

female accomplice, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya wrote on X.

Both appeared in CCTV images posted on X in which they are seen emerging from a taxi holding assault rifles and firing their weapons before entering the building.

The taxi driver, who was killed by the attackers, was buried on Thursday at a funeral attended by Parliament Speaker Numan Kurtulmus.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is in Russia attending the BRICS summit, was to return to Ankara later in the day, his office told AFP.

In a speech to delegates, he thanked those who had shown support, say-

ing, "This cowardly attack has further strengthened Turkiye's determination and resolve to eliminate terrorism."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the terrorist attack, his spokesman Farhan Haq said on Wednesday.

Guterres expressed his deepest condolences to the victims and their families, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those injured, Haq said, adding the United Nations stands in solidarity with the people and government of the Republic of Turkiye.

Istanbul's two main airports have stepped up security in the wake of the attack, the DHA news agency

and private NTV channel reported.

Sabiha Gokcen Airport issued a statement telling passengers to arrive "at least three hours" early to avoid delays because of increased security.

Overnight, the Turkish military struck dozens of Kurdish militant positions in Syria and northern Iraq, hitting "47 terrorist targets, 29 in Iraq and 18 in northern Syria", the Defense Ministry said, indicating the raids would continue.

Kurdish sources in northern Syria said the strikes had killed 12 civilians and wounded 25 others.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

## WORLD

# IMF unveils tool to tackle debt concerns

Framework will help policymakers take steps to avoid adverse outcomes: official

By YIFAN XU in Washington  
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In its latest Fiscal Monitor released on Wednesday, the International Monetary Fund unveiled a novel approach called the "debt-at-risk" framework to address concerns brought about by global public debt, which is at a very high level and expected to continue rising.

In its monitor, the IMF said the global public debt in 2024 is expected to be \$100 trillion, accounting for 93 percent of global GDP, and to keep rising through the end of the decade, approaching 100 percent of GDP by 2030.

A day earlier, the IMF's World Economic Outlook had raised the alarm over global public debt, warning that "risks to the debt outlook are heavily tilted to the upside".

Vitor Gaspar, head of the IMF's fiscal affairs department, highlighted the "debt-at-risk" framework and how it helps policymakers determine the risk of high levels of debt.

"Assessing and managing public debt risks is a major task for policymakers. The Fiscal Monitor makes a major contribution — the 'debt-at-risk' framework. It considers the distribution of outcomes around the most likely scenario. The analysis in the Fiscal Monitor shows that debt risks are substantially worse than they look from the baseline alone," said Gaspar during the 2024 Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank Group, which are being held from Monday to Saturday in Washington, bringing together finance ministers and central bankers from nearly 200 countries and regions.

## Preemptive action

"The framework should help policymakers take preemptive action to avoid the most adverse outcomes."

According to Gaspar and the monitor report, there are three main drivers of debt risks. First, spending pressures from long-term underlying trends, but also challenging politics at national, continental and global levels. Second, optimistic bias in debt projections. Third, increasing

uncertainty is associated with economic, financial and political developments.

Gaspar said the key is to take action to control debt and keep it at it. "Waiting is risky. The longer you wait, the greater the risk. The debt becomes unsustainable," he said.

"At the same time, countries that can afford it should avoid cutting too much, too fast. That would hurt growth and jobs. That is why, in many cases, we recommend an enduring but gradual fiscal adjustment," said Gaspar.

Gaspar said China "has ample policy space" and the means to keep public debt under control.

Among his suggestions, Gaspar noted it's "very important that fiscal policy and structural policy promote the transition to a new growth model in China," based on a technological innovation model that supports the structural transformation toward a green economy.

"My understanding is that this fourth element has been emphasized by the political authorities in China at the highest level," Gaspar added.

In an interview with AFP on Monday, Gaspar said "China is in the process of a major transition".

"Fiscal capacity can help China reach a different plateau in terms of its economic ambition, in terms of its economic prosperity," he said, referring to China's "very strong fiscal capacity to act".

Gaspar also said China should be looking to implement fiscal policies to boost its growth. "For a continental economy like China, the main driver of growth and development has to be domestic."

Murtaza Syed, head of ecosystem at the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, who is also a former acting governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, said that "there are certain buffers that China has". Syed said China's debt is basically domestic.

"It's almost one part of the State balance sheet owing the other part of the State balance sheet because you've got a lot of State-owned commercial banks, you've got local governments, and you've got a central government that actually has a lot of space to do things," he said.



## Robotic rescue

An autonomous firefighting robot works during a fire drill at Vucevica near Split, Croatia, on Wednesday. The robot is designed to combat fires in hazardous or hard-to-reach areas and can operate in extreme conditions where human firefighters would be at significant risk.

ZVONIMIR BARISIN / NEWS.COM

# IMF chief: Domestic consumption 'reliable source of growth' for China

By YIFAN XU in Washington

China has faced "a fork in the road" for quite some time: continue with its export-led growth policies or boost domestic consumption and shift the growth engine to the Chinese consumer.

According to Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, the way ahead is to shift to domestic consumption-led growth.

The IMF projected China's GDP to grow by 4.8 percent in 2024 — down 0.2 percentage points from its July forecast — and then 4.5 percent in 2025, the same as its July forecast, according to the latest World Economic Outlook released on Tuesday. One of the major reasons for the decrease was weak consumer confidence, the report said.

"We are of the view that as the Chinese economy has grown so big, it is the latter, domestic consumption, that is the reliable source of growth. We also have been keen to see China recognize that in the short term, one big obstacle to consumer confidence is in the property sector, and a decisive action to resolve that would help lift up consumer confidence," Georgieva

said while briefing the media on the IMF's Global Policy Agenda on Thursday.

Ramping up consumption to propel growth has recently been increasingly highlighted by many Chinese economists.

For example, Chen Wenling, chief economist at the Beijing-based China Center for International Economic Exchanges, told China Daily earlier that compared with other drivers of China's economic growth like investment and exports, consumer spending is well positioned to be the fastest-moving engine in the long run, and stronger steps should be taken to further stimulate consumption.

At the media briefing, Georgieva also said China's social security and pension reform would have the potential to boost domestic consumption. It "gives people confidence that they don't need to save excessively".

"They can rely on the system. That would mean that they spend more, taking the sectors of the economy that are somewhat less developed from a consumer standpoint, like healthcare, education, elderly care, and making services

more of a driver for growth," she said.

She also said the IMF would "carefully assess" the stimulus measures that China implemented recently "to determine what exactly their likely impact is".

"There are measures that go in the right direction," Georgieva said.

This briefing is part of the 2024 annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank Group, which is being held from Monday to Saturday in Washington, bringing together finance ministers and central bankers from nearly 200 countries and regions.

Krishna Srinivasan, director of the IMF Asia Pacific department, spoke about the tension between the US and China regarding Asian economies on Thursday at the media briefing for the release of the report Asia Pacific Department Regional Economic Outlook October 2024.

Srinivasan said that many Asian economies, notably some in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "increased their market shares of both Chinese and US imports in both gross and value-added terms".

"Now we also find that these third-party countries' exports of targeted goods, of the goods which are targeted for tariffs by US and China, they've also increased," he said.

However, Srinivasan said only time could tell whether those changing trade patterns would be permanent or temporary. "But our analysis has shown that in the long run, everyone hurts from trade fragmentation. And that's because global demand comes down. When global demand comes down, everyone hurts," he said.

"And so, we all have to collectively fight against these forces of fragmentation," Srinivasan added.

Gita Gopinath, deputy managing director of the IMF, said in an interview one day earlier that the escalation of trade and tariff tensions between the US and China would have economic consequences around the world.

"Output is going to be much lower than what we are projecting for all countries in the world. There's going to be pressure on inflation, so that's not the direction in which we should be going," she said, pointing out that tariffs would be "costly for everybody".

IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas wrote in his blog about the just-released World Economic Outlook that some industrial and trade policy measures "often lead to retaliation and fail to deliver sustained improvements in standards of living".

# Nearly 25 million votes cast as Harris, Trump hit battlegrounds

PHILADELPHIA/DULUTH, Georgia — US Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris told a town hall in Pennsylvania on Wednesday her administration would be different from that of President Joe Biden's, as Republican Donald Trump campaigned in Georgia, another battleground state.

Nearly 25 million voters have already cast ballots, either through in-person early voting or mail-in ballots, according to tracking data from the Election Lab at the University of Florida.

Several states, including the battlegrounds of North Carolina and Georgia, set records on their respective first day of early voting last week.

Harris' attempt to distance herself from Biden comes as several polls show the president is a drag on her candidacy and that voters are eager for a new direction with less than two weeks to go until the Nov 5 election.

Harris has mostly brushed off questions on the campaign trail over how — and to what extent — she would break from Biden on policy.

"My administration will not be a continuation of the Biden administration," Harris said during a tele-

vised CNN town hall. "I bring to this role my own ideas and my own experience. I represent a new generation of leadership on a number of issues and believe that we have to actually take new approaches."

Harris' town hall in Chester Township was an attempt to persuade the dwindling number of undecided voters to support her in a closely divided race where even a small percentage of votes could be critical.

Fielding several questions from attendees, Harris vowed to tackle high grocery prices, said it was time to end the conflict in the Middle East and called Trump a "danger to the well-being and safety of America".

Trump, who made campaign rallies a staple of his political career starting back in 2015, said in Zebulon that "in many ways, it's sad" that his time as a political candidate is coming to a close. If he wins on Nov 5, he will serve his second and final term.

"We've been doing this for nine years, and it's down to 12 days," he said.

After Zebulon, Trump was speaking in Duluth, Georgia, for a rally with former Fox News star Tucker Carlson and former independent presidential



People vote at a polling station in the first round of early voting in the US presidential election, in DeLand, Florida, on Monday.  
MIGUEL J. RODRIGUEZ CARRILLO / AFP

candidate Robert F Kennedy Jr. Also present was country music star Jason Aldean, who encouraged attendees to vote early, a message that Trump is slowly embracing after denouncing the practice for years.

Pennsylvania and Georgia are among the seven battleground states that will decide who wins the

presidency, and both candidates are likely to spend much of the rest of their campaigns visiting them.

Harris held a marginal 46 percent to 43 percent lead nationally over the former president in the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll.

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# Europe's two biggest defense spenders sign pact

By JULIAN SHEA in London  
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The governments of Europe's two biggest defense spenders, the United Kingdom and Germany, have agreed on a bilateral defense pact which is being seen as a sign of commitment to the NATO military alliance.

The United States presidential election at the beginning of November could have a major impact on the solidity of NATO, with British Defense Secretary John Healey saying the deal, known as the Trinity House Agreement, was looking to increase Europe's self-reliance. His German counterpart, Boris Pistorius, added that the agreement would

"strengthen ... the European pillar of NATO".

Regardless of the outcome of the US election, said Pistorius, Europe needed to be able to look after and protect itself better.

Under the terms of the deal, German submarine-hunter aircraft are expected to be allowed to use a Scottish military base to carry out

patrols in the North Atlantic. The two countries will also collaborate more closely on developing new weapons systems, and German armament manufacturers will use British steel.

The pact also has a diplomatic element, being a sign of the new British government's desire to have better relations with its European

neighbors in the aftermath of the country's exit from the European Union.

The other biggest military power and arms manufacturer in Europe is France, with which Britain has had a similar arrangement, known as the Lancaster House Treaties, dating back to 2010.

Germany also has a deal with France, so with all three countries now having comparable security arrangements, there is the potential for greater three-way cooperation.

"In a more dangerous world, allies are our strategic strength, and we must do more together," said Healey, adding it was "a significant day for UK and German relations and in the history of our two countries".

"(The agreement) secures unprecedented levels of new cooperation with the German Armed Forces and industry, bringing benefits to our shared security and prosperity, protecting our shared values and boosting our defense industrial bases," he said.