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# CHINA DAILY

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Crew members of the Shenzhou XVIII and Shenzhou XIX space missions pose for a group photo on the Tiangong space station on Wednesday. The Shenzhou XVIII crew is scheduled to return to the Dongfeng landing site in North China on Monday. XU BU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Shenzhou XIX crew greeted at 'space home'

By ZHAO LEI  
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The three crew members of Shenzhou XIX entered the Tiangong space station on Wednesday afternoon, as the spaceship successfully completed docking maneuvers after a long-haul flight.

Mission commander Senior Colonel Cai Xuzhe, Lieutenant Colonel Song Lingdong and Lieutenant Colonel Wang Haoze were greeted with hugs at the space station by their Shenzhou XVIII peers, who are scheduled to return to Earth early next week.

Shenzhou XIX, which started its journey into space atop a Long March 2F carrier rocket that blasted off from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China at 4:27 am on Wednesday, docked with the front port of the Tianhe core module — the main body of Tiangong — after a six-and-a-half-hour flight.

Following the docking process, the Shenzhou XIX crew spent nearly two hours on preparatory work to enter the space station, which



The Long March 2F rocket carrying the crew of the Shenzhou XIX space mission sets off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Wednesday.

CHEN KUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

included readying related equipment and changing into intravehic-

ular suits from their pressure suits. Meanwhile, the Shenzhou XVIII astronauts — mission commander Senior Colonel Ye Guangfu and crew members Lieutenant Colonel Li Cong and Lieutenant Colonel Li Guangsu — waited inside the connection cabin.

After all preparations were done, Ye's team opened a hatch in the connection cabin at 12:51 pm to welcome the new team of astronauts. The first to step out of the Shenzhou XIX spaceship was Cai, followed by Song and Wang, who were all welcomed with hugs by the Shenzhou XVIII astronauts.

The six astronauts then exchanged greetings inside the Tianhe module. Ye said he and his team were very happy and excited to see the arrival of Cai's crew, adding that over the next few days, the two teams will work together inside "this space home". Cai responded by saying it feels great to see "there are people waiting here for us", and that he always wished to return to the space station.

"And now I am back, and it feels very good to see all these familiar things inside Tiangong. I am so happy to see that you have run this station very well and done so

many excellent jobs. We will learn from you, and please share with us your valuable experience," he added.

Li Cong and Li Guangsu said they look forward to spending the next few days with the new team, and have prepared the sleeping and sanitary quarters for the team. They said they have also prepared some "surprise gifts" for the new crew to discover and have planned lettuce that they wish to share.

After their chat, the six astronauts posed for group photos amid cheers from ground controllers. They held each other's arms to form a circle, in a spontaneous show of happiness and excitement.

The meeting of the two groups of astronauts marked the beginning of the fifth in-orbit shift inside the Tiangong space station, one of the largest and most advanced structures ever deployed into the Earth's orbit.

The Shenzhou XIX team is the eighth group of inhabitants aboard Tiangong, which was completed in late 2022. The six astronauts will work together for about five days, and the Shenzhou XVIII crew will depart for Earth on Monday.

## Opportunity in striking a strategic, pragmatic balance

Life changed after July 4, when a new government was elected in the United Kingdom. Later that month, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, followed in August with a call between British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chinese President Xi Jinping, which in turn was closely followed by Chancellor of Exchequer Rachel Reeves speaking with Vice-Premier He Lifeng.

More recently, Director General of MI5 Ken McCallum acknowledged that the economic relationship between the United Kingdom and China supports UK's growth, which in turn underpins UK's security. On Oct 14, Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds acknowledged that Britain needs "more engagement with China" and that Britain had been "an absolute outlier compared to other G7 countries".

**WORLD WATCH**  
By John McLean

Finally, on Oct 19, Lammy met in Beijing with Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang followed by a meeting with Wang Yi, where he delivered a message that "the UK is to take a stable, consistent and pragmatic approach to China, with engagement vital between two global players".

The seismic shift in the approach toward China will be welcomed by UK businesses as now, the signals for engagement are strong and clear. This tonal change will encourage British companies to readress the opportunities of China and start a momentum for much needed positive change. Such a change is required as for the 12 months to March 31, value of bilat-

eral trade decreased by £23 billion (\$30 billion) to £86 billion.

However, for British businesses to capitalize on the new bilateral environment, they will need confidence that the relationship is set on a consistent course and will want to see that the new relationship is supported by actions rather than words. A significant action would be holding of the Economic and Financial Dialogue which, according to press reports, is due to be held in Beijing in early 2025 and if it happens, will indicate that true engagement has started.

China is leading the world in its use of renewables and according to a recent report, over 50 percent of all renewable energy will originate in China in 2030. Given this expertise and the UK's goal of net zero by 2050, it needs to work in partnership and collaborate with China for a realistic

probability of success. Fortunately, over the last few years, both countries have forged a strong working relationship by collaborating in areas such as wind power, electric vehicles, sustainable finance and green bonds. With an ever-increasing imperative to do more, an enhanced UK-China partnership can create a model for others to follow.

On Oct 14, the UK Business Secretary and Chancellor announced steps to deliver long-term growth through a modern Industrial Strategy which will create a pro-business environment and play to the UK's strengths, focusing on growth-driving sectors including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, creative industries, digital technologies, financial services, life sciences and professional and business services.

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## EU tariffs on Chinese EVs face backlash

Ministry of Commerce slams trade protectionist measures, advocates dialogue and consultation

By ZHONG NAN in Beijing  
and CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels

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China does not acknowledge or accept the European Union's final ruling to impose additional tariffs on electric vehicles manufactured in the Chinese market, the Ministry of Commerce said on Wednesday, vowing to take all necessary measures to protect the interests of companies.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, announced on Tuesday the conclusion of its anti-subsidy investigation, resulting in the imposition of definitive countervailing duties on EVs produced in China. The measures will expire at the end of a five-year period unless an expiration review is initiated before that date, the commission said in a news release.

In response, China has filed a complaint under the World Trade Organization's dispute settlement mechanism.

China has repeatedly pointed out that the EU's anti-subsidy investigation into EVs manufactured in China is irrational and fraught with numerous noncompliance issues, and is a protectionist move under the guise of "fair competition", the Ministry of Commerce said in an online statement.

Noting that the EU is still willing to continue talks on price commitments for Chinese-made EVs, the

ministry said that China always advocates the resolution of trade disputes through dialogue and consultation.

The EU's new tariffs will range from 7.8 percent for the Chinese output of United States EV maker Tesla Inc, to 18.8 percent for Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, and up to 35.3 percent for Shanghai-based carmaker SAIC Motor Corp, in addition to the EU's existing 10 percent duty on imported cars.

Other Chinese EV manufacturers face an average tariff of 20.7 percent, with rates reaching up to 35.3 percent for those classified as "noncooperative".

SAIC Motor expressed disappointment on Wednesday with the decision and said that it plans to pursue necessary legal action by filing a lawsuit with the Court of Justice of the European Union to ensure its legitimate rights and interests.

The Chinese automaker said that it is implementing a series of measures to strengthen its resilience against the EU's trade barriers.

See *Tariffs*, page 3

## INCREASED FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN HOSPITALS SET TO BOOST HEALTHCARE

Experts believe more funding will advance high-quality treatment to meet growing demand

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai  
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Further opening-up of China's medical sector to foreign investment is expected to promote high-quality services and better meet wider public healthcare needs, experts said.

A circular, jointly issued by the Ministry of Commerce, the National Health Commission and the National Medical Products Administration in September, allows wholly foreign-owned hospitals to operate in eight cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, and

throughout the island of Hainan. Decision-makers intend for public hospitals to guarantee the basics, while foreign-owned ones provide diversified services to meet the rising demand for more personalized, higher-standard medical treatment amid the country's ongoing economic and social development, industry experts said.

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## Flood tragedy



Emergency personnel rescue an elderly resident in Valencia, Spain, on Tuesday, after heavy rain lashed much of eastern and southern Spain, triggering flash floods and killing at least 51 people. VICTOR FERNANDEZ/EUROPA PRESS VIA GETTY IMAGES

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**Mutual economic ties are assets, not liabilities**  
Global Views, page 13

Newstand prices:  
US \$1, Canada C\$1,  
UK £1, EU €1  
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling  
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120  
thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat;  
Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

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## PAGE TWO



New born triplets are successfully delivered at Shanghai Jiahui International Hospital, a hospital owned by Hong Kong investors, on July 12. The premature babies got through infection, respiratory, and nutritional challenges.

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"Accounting for the dominant 80 percent of the country's total medical services, public hospitals stick to their priority of answering the demands of public welfare," said Liao Xinbo, former deputy director of Guangdong's Health Commission. "The spillover functions of public hospitals that are difficult to support through public medical insurance can be met wholly by foreign-funded medical institutions," Liao added.

These other functions include the use of advanced technologies and innovative therapies, and medical treatment usually done overseas, he said.

The market size of Chinese patients who travel overseas for medical treatment exceeded 3 billion yuan (\$420 million) in 2019, and surpassed 4 billion yuan within three years, according to a report released by Insight and Info, a Chinese portal specializing in industry analysis.

Developed countries, such as the United States and Japan, were the main medical travel destinations, the report said.

## Double benefits

Wholly foreign-owned enterprises setting up medical institutions in China will not only contribute to further opening-up, but also test whether this model is suitable for the entire country, experts said. Many top international hospitals are different from their counterparts in China in terms of patient care, technology, management models, and service awareness, they added.

"For example, the service model is one area where gaps are seen between Chinese and foreign medical treatment," said Liu Guoen, dean of the Institute for Global Health and Development at Peking University.

"China's public hospitals, especially the tertiary ones in big cities, are often overcrowded and are not in a position to provide patient-centric medical services.

"When different types of hospitals compete on the same stage, it's expected to have a positive impact on the entire medical service ecology in the country," he said.

Although some public hospitals have provided high-end medical services through their international departments, they are still limited due to the backgrounds and management methods of these hospitals, industry observers said.

However, wholly foreign-owned hospitals are not subject to the same restrictions on public medical insurance, and can set prices independently. This allows them to avoid institutional constraints and introduce industry game-changers, they said.

Shanghai Towako Hospital, China's first wholly foreign-owned hospital, opened in the Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone in 2016. An unnamed senior hospital executive told local media in a recent interview that they were delighted to see the relaxation of the policy again, which is good news for all medical institutions with foreign funding.

The Japan-funded hospital specializes in assisted reproductive services and was profitable within three years of opening. It has had 300,000 patient visits, and provided medical assistance to nearly 2,300 babies delivered there.

In 2021, there were more than 300 joint-venture medical institutions in the country with foreign investment, National Health Commission data showed. Around 38 percent were hospitals, and the rest were clinics or outpatient departments operating under an asset-light business model.

## Policy tweaks

The other five provincial-level regions where foreign entities will be allowed to set up medical institutions are: Tianjin, Nanjing and Suzhou, Jiangsu province, Fuzhou, Fujian province, and Hainan province, according to the new policy jointly released by the Ministry of Commerce, the National Health Commission, and the National Medical Products Administration.

These entities can also apply for market registration and mass production licenses in China for their products, and those that are approved can be used nationwide.

Pilot programs allowing wholly foreign-owned hospitals date back to 2014, when the National Health Commission allowed overseas investors to set up in seven provincial-level regions — including Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai — through the establishment of new ventures and mergers.

After that, the policies varied. In 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce issued a revised catalog to guide foreign investment in industries that placed medical institutions in the restricted category.

Two years later, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a document, which clarified that foreign funds could be invested in domestic medical institutions via joint ventures and cooperation measures. The Government Work Report delivered in March this year proposed that market access for

# Hospitals: Reshaping future of healthcare

A foreign patient from Singapore, the first expat to receive CAR-T therapy for lymphoma, poses with her doctors at Jiahui International Hospital in Shanghai on Sept 13, 2023. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



A patient uses 5.0T ultra-high field MRI imaging system in October at Shanghai Xiehua Brain Hospital, which is the first private medical institution in the country to adopt the system produced by Shanghai United Imaging Healthcare Group.

development of various disciplines and scientific research innovation," said John K. Hsiang, chairman of Jiahui Health executive committee.

The company operates the Hong Kong-owned Jiahui International Hospital in Shanghai, which opened in 2017. It also runs outpatient clinics in Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and Shenzhen, Guangdong.

Fifteen percent of Jiahui's doctors are expats, and the company provides medical services in more than 10 languages. The Shanghai hospital alone has an annual outpatient volume of 600,000 visits, and has provided medical services to over 500,000 families from more than 180 countries.

The differences in expats' medical needs lie not only in languages, but also in factors including diagnosis, the treatment process, and the payment model.

Hsiang said one important service offered at foreign-invested hospitals is connecting patients to medical resources abroad.

"Based on cooperation with more than 30 top-notch medical institutions around the world, including Boston-based Massachusetts General Hospital, Jiahui is able to provide international telemedicine consultations and prioritizes referrals to overseas hospitals for patients," he said.

In 2022, Vicky Lee, an internationally renowned expert in hematology and oncology with more than two decades professional experience in the US, joined Jiahui's international cancer center. Lee quickly introduced cutting-edge therapies to the hospital, which attracted more patients.

Last year, a 40-year-old Singapore woman's lymphoma went into remission after she received CAR-T cell treatment at Jiahui International Hospital. She was the first expat in China to receive the revolutionary lymphoma treatment.

"We once considered returning to the US or Singapore for treatment, but eventually decided that Jiahui Hospital was the best option for us," said Parry Wu, the patient's husband, who is from the US.

"The team and the facilities here are as good as anywhere in the world, and the overall cost effectiveness of the treatment was too good to be ignored."

Lee said the patient has returned to an active life and has embarked on global travel, which included diving. She added that a considerable number of patients with hematological tumors, 80 percent of whom are expats, had completed CAR-T therapy at the hospital.

Jiahui also completed a smooth delivery of triplets in July and performed highly difficult laparoscopic surgery on a pancreatic cancer patient in August.

Shanghai Xiehua Brain Hospital, which has investment of 1.2 billion yuan, boasts state-of-the-art large imaging devices and specialized neurosurgery equipment. It was the first private medical institution in the country to adopt the Shanghai United Imaging Healthcare Group's 5.0T ultra-high field MRI imaging system.

## Winning support

Specific conditions, requirements, and procedures for establishing wholly foreign-invested hospitals will be released later, authorities said.

Meanwhile, more supportive policies to breakdown regional barriers will need to be introduced to allow cutting-edge drugs, devices, and technologies, industry insiders said. Qualified hospitals should also start pilot projects and introduce more new concepts and therapies to China to truly achieve seamless integration with markets worldwide, they added.

Support is also needed to carry out clinical trials and introduce healthcare professionals from overseas.

In 2020, Shanghai Jiahui International Hospital filed a request to conduct drug clinical trials.

"We expect the government to further reduce restrictions on foreign-invested medical institutions in terms of relevant regulatory requirements and policies for clinical trials," said Hsiang. "We also hope that short-term work permits for nurses and medical technicians from overseas can be allowed, and the review process for expat doctors to be recognized and evaluated for professional titles and qualifications will be streamlined," he added.

Including Shanghai Xiehua Brain Hospital, Bain Capital operates 12 hospitals in Beijing, Shanghai, and the Yangtze River Delta region through APMG. "But being foreign-invested hospitals doesn't necessarily mean we are expensive. Hospitals in our group target serving ordinary people in China," said Pan, CEO of APMG, adding that the hospitals have formed a group specializing in neurology, oncology, and rehabilitation.

"Take Xiehua, which is located in Shanghai's Hongqiao area, as an example. It is dedicated to providing patients from the delta region with accessible, affordable, and differentiated high-quality medical services," he said.

"The spillover functions of public hospitals that are difficult to support through public medical insurance can be met wholly by foreign-funded medical institutions."

Liao Xinbo, former deputy director of Guangdong's Health Commission



Shanghai Xiehua Brain Hospital funded by United States' investment firm Bain Capital holds its opening ceremony in Shanghai in July.

medical services be relaxed, along with other areas.

"We feel that such adjustments in the national policy regarding the country's openness to allow wholly foreign-invested hospitals were affected by top-level design," said Pan Jie, CEO of the Asia-Pacific Medical Group.

The United States' investment firm Bain Capital backs APMG, which funded the Shanghai Xiehua Brain Hospital. The hospital opened in July in the Shanghai New Hongqiao International Medical Center and provides high-quality medical services for patients with central nervous system diseases.

"As organizers of such hospitals, we hope that policies and regulations can be stable and consistent for a long time. Meanwhile, we hope to receive more guidance and practical support at the operational level," said Pan.

Industry insiders believe that more wholly foreign-invested hospitals will help normalize relevant rules and regulations.

While unveiling the new policy in September, authorities called for stepping up services for foreign enterprises willing to participate in trial programs.

Government departments were also urged to strengthen coordination and supervision to promptly detect risks.

Experts said both the relaxation and tightening of policies are understandable, as the opening-up of medical care is closely related to people's health and social stability.

"However, I believe the government is more confident and resolute this time, as the need to expand is more than it was a decade ago. The policy will be better implemented than in the past," said Liu.

## Better living standards

Wholly foreign-invested hospitals will help accelerate the introduction of new drugs, medical equipment, and technologies into China, industry insiders said. The move will also create a channel for medical talent from overseas to work in the country.

"With a rising number of such hospitals, it will also further improve social and living security for expats in China, thereby helping the country to attract high-level talents from around the globe, enhancing international academic exchanges and promoting the

## TOP NEWS

## Off the tracks



First responders arrive at the site of a tram derailment in the Norwegian capital of Oslo on Tuesday. The tram crashed into a building, injuring several passengers, emergency services said. The driver of the tram was suspected of speeding. TERJE PEDERSEN VIA REUTERS

## Finnish president raps trade protectionism

Stubb says free trade benefits global good rather than national interest

By ZHOU JIN  
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Additional tariffs and trade protectionism are always short-term measures that are detrimental to both national and global economies, visiting Finnish President Alexander Stubb has said.

He said at a news conference on Tuesday evening in Beijing that the European Union and China need to avoid going into a cycle of raising tariffs and escalating trade conflicts.

The European Commission, the EU's executive body, announced later on Tuesday the imposition of anti-subsidy tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, a decision that sparked strong opposition from some EU member states and key industry stakeholders.

In July and early October, Fin-

land abstained twice in the votes on EU provisional tariffs on EVs made in China, as it said that there was not enough proof of damage caused to the EU by so-called Chinese state support to the EV industry.

Stubb said that "we need to have a level playing field and this is the ongoing negotiation".

Right now, unfortunately, a lot of countries are turning inward and raising barriers, rather than promoting free trade, he added.

"I think the pendulum, if there was one between free trade and protectionism, since 1989, the end of the Cold War, has swung from free trade toward protectionism," Stubb said, emphasizing that free trade benefits the global good rather than just a narrow national interest.

The Finnish president is cur-

rently in China for a four-day state visit, during which he had a three-hour talk with President Xi Jinping on Tuesday, which Stubb said was a "constructive, open and frank" conversation.

"With President Xi, we had a good opportunity to talk about bilateral relations. We are celebrating the 74th anniversary of Finland-China diplomatic relations, and we're moving into our 75th year."

This is the first visit to China by a Finnish president since the European nation became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization last year. Stubb said that Finland's NATO membership does not negatively affect its relations with China.

Finland shares a 1,340-kilometer border with Russia, making the Ukraine conflict an issue of great concern for Helsinki.

As a major agenda item during talks with Xi, Stubb said that both China and Finland are seeking peace in Ukraine.

Peace negotiations are extremely complicated, he said, adding that the two countries agreed to continue to work toward peace in Ukraine and keep dialogue open on both sides.

The Finnish president is one of two leaders from EU member countries to visit China this week. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico will make an official visit starting on Thursday.

Slovakia, which relies heavily on its car industry, was one of the five countries to vote against the EU tariffs on China-produced EVs earlier this month.

When responding to a question on whether China had invited European leaders to visit China in rapid succession to urge them to play a constructive role in relation to the EU's tariff increase on Chinese-made EVs, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said at a news conference on Wednesday that China and Europe have normal exchanges at various levels.

Trade frictions should be dealt with properly through dialogue and consultation based on mutual respect, which is in the interests of both China and the EU, Lin added.

## China, Russia reaffirm their close relations

By ZHANG YUNBI  
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The China-Russia relationship is "not subject to the impact of a flurry of changes in international situations", is not targeting any third party, and is not subject to interference by any third party, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said.

Wang made the remarks during a meeting in Beijing on Wednesday with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko.

Analysts noted that the talks took place shortly after the conclusion of the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, last week. The heads of state of China and Russia also met on the sidelines of the summit, their third meeting this year.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China as well as the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

During the talks on Wednesday, both sides emphasized the need to earnestly implement the latest points of consensus between the two heads of state.

Wang told the Russian diplomat that China and Russia are partners in comprehensive strategic coordination, and the development of their relations is naturally based on the history and enjoys "strong internal impetus".

Wang also mentioned that bilateral relations have "maintained a healthy momentum of development" under the guidance of President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"This is in line with the common interests of the people of the two countries", and both nations have also made their respective contributions to upholding the purposes and

principles of the United Nations Charter, Wang said.

Noting that the two leaders reached new consensus during their meeting in Kazan, Wang said the two sides should make joint efforts to coordinate cooperation in various fields and contacts at various levels, in order to put the consensus into practice.

Rudenko said that Russia-China relations are developing rapidly and are in the best shape of all time, and head-of-state diplomacy has laid a good foundation for the development of the relations.

Moscow is ready to work with Beijing to implement the arrangements made by the two heads of state, and to achieve closer high-level exchanges and strengthened pragmatic cooperation, he added.

Regarding the BRICS summit in Kazan, Wang said the event promoted unity and self-reliance in the Global South and played an important and constructive role in promoting world peace and stability.

Furthermore, Beijing is willing to closely communicate and collaborate with Moscow to jointly drive the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to achieve new development, Wang said.

This year, China assumed the rotating chairmanship of the SCO. Both China and Russia are founding members of the organization.

Rudenko said Russia is also willing to continue to maintain coordination on international and regional affairs and achieve new development in bilateral relations.

Also on Wednesday, the two sides exchanged views on matters including the Ukraine crisis, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

## Glimpse of history



Visitors admire one of the 288 cultural relics returned to Indonesia by the Netherlands at the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta on Tuesday. LI ZHIQUAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Tariffs: Market watchers warn of intensified friction

From page 1

These tariffs on Chinese, European and US EV producers operating in China neither enhance the EU's resilience in EV manufacturing nor promote innovation or job creation. Instead, they represent a politically motivated approach, the Brussels-based China Chamber of Commerce to the EU said on Wednesday.

Market watchers warned that these additional tariffs will likely intensify trade friction between China and the EU, and may trigger a global rise in trade protectionism within the automotive industry.

Zhang Yongjun, secretary-general of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing, said that based on the principle of reciprocity, the EU's decision will inevi-

tably trigger countermeasures, potentially having an impact on competitive EU export industries that trade with China.

"Under such circumstances, European consumers may suffer, facing either increased costs for Chinese EVs or limited options from alternative suppliers," he added.

Wei Jianguo, former vice-minister of commerce, said that the EU's move could weaken Chinese investors' confidence in Europe, especially those in the automobile, power battery, industrial parts and logistics industries.

Erik Solheim, former executive director of the United Nations Environment Program, told China Daily on Wednesday: "Tariffs on superior Chinese electric cars go contrary to all economic wisdom. It will make

us all poorer and slow down the green transformation in Europe.

"Green competition is a race to the top, tariffs and protectionism is a race to the bottom. Europe should invite investments from BYD and all the other Chinese car makers to help share technology and help shape competition so that European car makers can catch up."

Also on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated China's opposition to the EU's tariff measure. The move clearly violates WTO rules and contradicts the principles of free trade, Wang said while meeting in Beijing with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen.

China has always believed that openness leads to progress while protectionism has no future, and universally beneficial and inclusive

economic globalization serves the interests of all parties, Wang added.

Believing that dialogue is the best path forward, Chen Huiqing, head of the legal service branch at the Beijing-based China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, said that talks remain the most effective way to prevent the escalation of bilateral economic and trade tensions.

Currently, technical teams from both sides are engaged in a new phase of consultations, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Zhao Jia and Li Fusheng contributed to this story.

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## Strategy: UK approach needs to be balanced

From page 1

For the UK to adopt and succeed with its new strategy, businesses must have the confidence that trade, collaboration and partnering with the world's second largest trading country is for the long term. If that is not the case, the success of the industrial strategy will be challenged.

It is generally acknowledged that in the past, the UK-China relationship was based on three key centers of engagement: government to government, people to people and business to business. Over the last few years, it has been business that has mainly kept the relationship open, but as we have seen, even the business relationship has suffered as evidenced by a dramatic drop in trade. If we imagine that these three key centers of engagement are legs on a stool, then for the relationship to grow and prosper, there must be stability through a balanced level of engagement, where all the legs support each other.

It is important to note that for any engagement, there will not be agreement on all matters and each country will have its own

approach. It is acceptable to disagree, so long as such matters do not prejudice or adversely impact those areas where agreement does exist. The UK approach will need to be balanced and nuanced between the strategic and the pragmatic in order to determine what is best for itself.

From a practical point of view, the scene is now set for both countries to promote engagement openly with UK businesses visiting China to explore the opportunities, while at the same time, for Chinese companies, the creation of an environment of a healthy and stable UK-China relationship which can offer opportunities for further inward investment and trade.

With a strong focus on growth and a more pragmatic, confident and business engaged approach to China, the scene is now set for the UK economy to accelerate, which in turn will deliver mutual benefits to both countries.

The author is chairman of China UK Business Development Centre, a London-based advisory and service delivery organization. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## Crowning glory

Scouts carry balloons during the 20th anniversary of Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni's coronation in front of the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on Wednesday. The country held a three-day celebration from Monday to Wednesday, with an elaborate religious ceremony, a mass gathering, a king's photograph exhibition, and a three-night fireworks display.

TANG CHHIN SOTHY / AFP



## CHINA

# Fact-distorting internet users face the music

Social media accounts that spread fake military information shut down

By JIANG CHENGLONG  
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Chinese authorities have shut down several social media accounts for spreading false information about the military, including fabricated stories about Chinese warships sinking foreign vessels and prolonged electronic warfare in the South China Sea, according to the Cyberspace Administration of China.

In a news release on Monday, the administration disclosed a series of cases in which some personal media accounts "speculated and fabricated false information, and engaged in speculative hype".

Personal media accounts refer to non-institutional content publishers on social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo or video-sharing platform Douyin. They publish news or information even though they are not operated or approved by the government or any other authoritative entities.

According to the news release, the primary violations made by the owners of these self-media accounts include concocting military rumors, distorting military history, tarnishing the image of the armed forces and misinterpreting military policies.

It said that these accounts "seriously misled public perception and affected the image of the armed forces and military personnel".

The release noted that some social media accounts exploited people's patriotic sentiments by posting fake stories. For instance, two WeChat public accounts spread rumors about Chinese naval vessels sinking four foreign warships, it said.

Some accounts used splicing, editing and other techniques to create sensational military stories, fabricating incidents such as a "12-hour electronic war in the South China Sea" and "border clashes".

Additionally, the news release pointed out that some accounts, under the pretext of uncovering secrets, engaged in "historical nihilism", distorting facts about the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-53).

For example, some accounts on the Quora-like knowledge-sharing platform Zhihu falsely claimed that "only a small portion of Japanese troops were killed by guerrilla warfare in China".

The release said that these "erroneous opinions" distorted historical facts and created misperceptions.

Meanwhile, it also said that some self-media accounts published content that tarnished the image of the military.

A user on video-sharing platform Bilibili "maliciously" posted confidential information such as the names, positions and ID numbers of active-duty military personnel, according to the CAC.

Two Douyin accounts shared a fake story about how "a son joined the army against his family's wishes, only for his mother to receive his ashes a few years later".

Other short-video publishers spread false information, claiming that "graduates from the National University of Defense Technology could not find any employer willing to hire them a year after graduation".

Furthermore, the news release highlighted that some social media accounts distorted and misinterpreted military-related policies, becoming key targets for a crackdown.

Some accounts speculated and spread false information related to the civilian personnel system, and some even cited rumors about "the military's involvement in financial wars". Others incited negative sentiments toward the military among netizens, the release said.

For example, some accounts hyped up rumors that "maintaining an army consumes massive funds", and called for "cutting 200,000 troops to ease fiscal pressure", thereby stirring up conflicts between the military and the public.

It stressed some accounts misled public opinion by making inappropriate comparisons between military and civilian universities during the college entrance examination and recruitment seasons.

The release also revealed several cases involving online shopping platforms.

Some Taobao businesses used specific military-related terms and logos to sell counterfeit products, which were labeled "military-exclusive supplies".

Certain Taobao merchants used military images without authorization to conduct malicious marketing campaigns.

Officials from the military and local authorities said they will continue to resolutely crack down on self-media accounts that engage in illegal activities related to the military, and strictly investigate and punish those who publish false information, according to the release.

They also welcomed participation and reports from relevant departments and netizens to jointly create a positive online environment regarding military affairs.

## Mutual benefits



A farmer drives a large flock of ducks in a harvested rice field in Lujiang county in Hefei, Anhui province, on Tuesday. In recent years, the county has been actively promoting the "rice-duck symbiosis" ecological farming model. This model of raising ducks in rice fields leverages the fowl to control pests and weeds, loosen the soil and fertilize the fields, and ultimately resulting in a plentiful harvest.

ZUO XUEZHANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Be cautious about what you share online, court says as personal data disputes rise

By CAO YIN  
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The Beijing Internet Court has seen a sharp rise in personal information protection cases over the past year, with disputes involving artificial intelligence technology becoming increasingly prominent, officials said on Wednesday.

The court has handled 113 personal data lawsuits since October last year — nearly double the total number of cases from 2018 to last year, which stood at 58, according to data released by the court.

Zhao Ruigang, the court's vice-president, noted this steady increase in data protection disputes, with more than 84 percent of recent cases involving internet companies, particularly in e-commerce, social media and finance. Key data breaches in these cases included names, phone numbers, ID numbers and records related to consumer habits and medical history.

Most plaintiffs pursued legal action after discovering that their personal information had been col-

lected, shared or leaked by internet platforms without their consent, Zhao said.

"We've seen cases where plaintiffs claimed their browsing histories, transaction records and follower lists were compromised or misused," he said, adding that distinguishing what constitutes "personal information" in these cases is a significant legal challenge.

The court has also dealt with disputes centered on emerging AI technologies, such as face-swapping software.

In a case resolved in June, the court fined a face-swapping app provider for misusing the personal data of a popular model who features in videos themed on ancient China. The plaintiff had discovered her likeness was being used without permission as a face-swapping template, which users could use for a fee.

The model, who appeared in traditional Chinese costumes, hairstyles and makeup, argued that the Beijing-based tech company had violated her rights by erasing her

face in the app's templates, allowing users to insert their own likenesses.

After examining the evidence, including the similarities between the plaintiff's videos and the app's templates, the court ruled that the app had infringed upon her personal information, though it did not violate her facial image rights since her face was erased.

Sun Mingxi, the presiding judge, explained that while the app had removed the plaintiff's facial features without altering or defaming them, it had nonetheless unlawfully collected and used her video content, warranting a fine.

With the rapid advancement of internet technology, Zhao advised internet users to exercise caution when sharing personal data online and encouraged timely deletions for underused accounts. He also urged internet platforms to avoid collecting excessive data unrelated to their services and called on government agencies to increase oversight in data handling, especially as they adapt regulations to emerging tech developments.

## Media event highlights role of new technology

By ZHAO YIMENG  
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Chinese journalism faces both unprecedented opportunities and challenges amid the swift development of artificial intelligence, officials and experts said during a conference on Wednesday.

Wang Gang, deputy head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, said journalism, especially traditional Chinese language print media outlets, must embrace emerging technologies such as 5G, cloud computing, big data and generative AI to adapt to technological changes.

He made the remarks during the 57th Annual Conference of the Chinese Language Press Institute in Beijing, which features artificial intelligence and the Chinese language press development.

The technological evolution driven by AI is reshaping how information is produced, disseminated and consumed, presenting both disruption and opportunity for traditional print media.

"As some Chinese-language media outlets face market shrinkage and declining revenues, the need for proactive adaptation to these technological changes has become urgent," Wang said.

A systematic transition is required for traditional Chinese media, including a robust presence on overseas social media platforms, a focus on mobile content and the development of new media formats that align with internet dissemination practices.

"By creating engaging content that resonates with younger audiences online, traditional media can revitalize their narratives and sustain their influence," Wang said.

However, slightly over 50 percent of media is actively embracing generative AI and exploring its application in news, according to a recent survey conducted by the Xinhua Institute, a think tank of Xinhua News Agency.

Liu Gang, head of the institute, said during the conference that only about 10.2 percent of 1,094 surveyed media organizations worldwide are actively embracing generative AI, while 41 percent are exploring its application in news.

"A significant portion of the surveyed media is still hesitating to adopt these technologies," Liu said.

Challenges such as internal resistance to AI-generated content and the need for updated workflows and talent development hinder more widespread adoption, he said, adding that the media industry is barely ready for the current swift development of AI.

For those who have been embracing AI, the report identifies seven primary areas in enhancing media operations, including event monitoring, content verification and language translation.

Furthermore, AI's role in content creation, distribution and audience engagement offers opportunities for innovation and efficiency, Liu said.

However, given concerns such as false information and data privacy, optimism regarding AI's integration into journalism is still limited. The survey shows that only 7.7 percent are highly optimistic about AI, while 9.7 percent are highly pessimistic.

"There is a clear need among respondents for enhanced regulation and cooperation within the media industry and beyond, ensuring that AI technologies serve humanity effectively," Liu said.

The report suggested to "combat technology with technology", encouraging the use of artificial intelligence for discerning truth and preventing information manipulation.

Moreover, establishing international industry standards is crucial to ensure safety and reliability. "In the face of shared global challenges, a fundamental set of technical norms is needed to guarantee the security and authenticity of information," Liu said.

Elevating the level of professionalism within the industry is vital for improving the quality of news reporting, he added.

Held by the Chinese Language Press Institute, the conference gathered over 100 guests, including leaders of Chinese-language media from home and abroad.

## Child trafficking convictions upheld

By CAO YIN  
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The Shandong Provincial High People's Court on Wednesday upheld the convictions and sentences of two child traffickers, dismissing their appeals and affirming the earlier verdicts.

Hu Fujin, 59, and Tang Lixia, 48, were initially convicted of child trafficking by the Liaocheng Intermediate People's Court in December last year.

Hu received a death sentence with a two-year reprieve, while Tang was sentenced to life in prison. Both were also permanently stripped of their political rights, with all personal assets confiscated.

Following the verdict, Hu and Tang filed appeals. After reviewing the case in August, the high court said on Wednesday that it rejected their appeals and upheld the verdicts handed down by the intermediate court.

The case has drawn widespread public attention, as one of the trafficked children was the son of Guo Gangtang, whose two-decade search for his son inspired the 2015 film *Lost and Love*, starring Hong Kong actor Andy Lau.

On Sept 21, 1997, Guo's 2-year-old son was abducted near his home. Subsequently, the father began searching for the child, printing the boy's information on fliers and making them into flags that he would attach to his motorcycle.

Over nearly 24 years of searching, Guo traveled more than 500,000 kilometers, traversing dozens of provinces and going through 10 motorcycles in the process.

With the help of police in 2021,



Guo Gangtang, whose son was abducted in 1997, takes questions from the media in Liaocheng, Shandong province, on Wednesday, after appeals by his son's abductors were rejected by the provincial high court. KONG XIAOZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Guo reunited with his son, who had been found in Henan province. Hu and Tang were captured that year.

In July 2023, the Liaocheng court heard the case, during which it was revealed that Hu and Tang had trafficked four children, including Guo's son, between 1997 and 1998, and that Hu and others had trafficked another child in 2001.

On Dec 27, 2023, the intermediate court handed down the original judgment.

"When the high court informed the two child traffickers of the result of their appeals, they looked indifferent and didn't show any remorse for the families of the abducted children," Guo said, after walking out of the courtroom on Wednesday.

He added that he will continue efforts to help other parents search for their missing children and called on the public to assist as well.

According to the Chinese media, Hu, a native of Henan, had a criminal record that began before his child trafficking case. In 1988, he was sentenced to three years in prison for larceny. And in 1996, he was convicted of blackmail and served eight months.

He also received prison terms for his involvement in two previous child trafficking cases, once in 2009 and again in 2021.

Tang met Hu in 1996 while she was working in Beijing. The pair moved in together and began abducting and trafficking children for financial gain, media reports show.

### Briefly

#### Longest ice core extracted in Xizang

Chinese scientists announced on Tuesday that they have extracted the world's longest ice core in Earth's mid-to-low latitudes. The core was extracted in the Purog Kangri Glacier in Tsonyi county, Xizang autonomous region. Measuring 324 meters in length, the ice core surpasses the previous record held by a core extracted from the Guliya Ice Cap in Xizang's Ngari prefecture. The Purog Kangri Glacier is the thickest glacier on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. By delving into this icy expanse, researchers aim to gain valuable insights into the changing landscape of the region. Through meticulous examinations of ice cores, scientists hope to unravel the transformations occurring within the glacier and shed light on the impact of global climate change on glaciers worldwide. The milestone marks a crucial step forward in the efforts to

understand the effects of warming temperatures on these vital natural formations.

#### Beijing issues alert as air quality deteriorates

Beijing has issued a yellow alert for air pollution, warning of moderate to heavy pollution from Thursday through Saturday due to adverse weather, regional pollutant transmission and local accumulation, according to the China National Environmental Monitoring Center and the Beijing Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center. Officials say air quality could at times deteriorate to moderate or above before improving by Sunday. The alert, which goes into effect at midnight Thursday, was issued under Beijing's updated emergency response plan for heavy air pollution. Authorities are urging residents to take precautions for their health.

CHINA DAILY

## CHINA

# DPP move unrealistic, official says

Mainland warns Taiwan's military plan a threat to cross-strait stability

By ZHANG YI  
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Lai Ching-te and the Democratic Progressive Party authorities in Taiwan are intensifying preparations for war and "independence", posing the greatest threat to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, a Chinese mainland spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

Zhu Fenglian, the spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a news conference in Beijing that if the DPP authorities were allowed to continue such acts, it would only lead to increased risks of conflict and danger for Taiwan.

In a recent announcement in New Taipei City, island leader Lai outlined plans to complete the construction of 11 large ships of over 1,000 metric tons within the next seven years, claiming the leadership aims to provide better equipment for facing various threats and to instill confidence in safeguarding Taiwan's "territory and maritime borders".

Education authorities have recently asked high school students to sign a wartime service agreement with the island's armed forces. Taiwan's "representative" in the United States also mentioned in a recent interview with US media that the Taiwan people are prepared for combat.

"Lai's attempt to seek 'independence' through military means is unrealistic and a path to self-destruction," Zhu said.

The more resources are invested in so-called war preparations, the less attention is given to the welfare of the Taiwan people, ultimately leading to greater turmoil, the US would not only fail to protect Taiwan but may instead abandon or even destroy the island," he added.

pendence," the spokeswoman added. Zhu said a recent poll in Taiwan that indicated record low support for the DPP in the past seven months reflected concerns and dissatisfaction among the Taiwan people regarding the Lai administration's unilateral actions in seeking "independence".

She accused the DPP of continuously hyping up the so-called mainland threat to deceive the Taiwan people and find excuses to prepare for war.

Asked about Republican presidential election candidate Donald Trump's remarks earlier this month on Taiwan having to pay for protection from the US, Zhu said Taiwan people had a clear understanding of US policy.

Earlier this month, the US government approved a \$1.99 billion arms sale package for Taiwan, including delivery of an advanced surface-to-air missile system and radar systems. President Joe Biden's administration has approved 17 arms sales to Taiwan to date.

"Whether the US truly aims to protect or harm Taiwan, I believe that most Taiwan people have made rational judgments and understand that the US prioritizes its own interests," Zhu said. "Taiwan could be a 'card' that could be abandoned by the US at any time."

Zhong Houtao, a Taiwan affairs expert at the University of International Relations, said that history has shown that the US has never sacrificed a single soldier for Taiwan, and it is unlikely to do so in the future.

"If the Taiwan Strait region experienced turmoil, the US would not only fail to protect Taiwan but may instead abandon or even destroy the island," he added.

## Four decades on



People visit an exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of China's polar exploration in Shanghai on Wednesday. The exhibition includes precious historical artifacts, polar biological specimens, photos, videos, and more. ZHANG JIANSONG / XINHUA

## Early education



Students showcase leaf paintings they created to mark World Thrift Day, which falls on Oct 31 every year, in Handan, Hebei province, on Wednesday. Primary schools and kindergartens across the country have launched themed educational activities for students, calling on them to take practical actions to turn waste into treasure and fostering the habit of thrift. HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Concluded intl horticultural event will start offering free admission

By HUANG ZHILING  
and PENG CHAO in Chengdu

If you missed the recently concluded International Horticultural Exhibition in Chengdu, Sichuan province, you'll have a chance to enjoy the myriad flowers and plants from around the world at no cost.

From now on, admission will be free, though bookings are required, according to Chen Tao, an official overseeing the exhibition.

Visitors like 12-year-old Gao Zixun are very happy to know that they still have an opportunity to enjoy and explore the main event site.

Zixun, a flower and plant enthusiast, could not visit the exhibition due to high temperatures during the summer, but now he plans to make the trip.

"I wanted to visit during the summer break, but the heat kept me away," he said.

Held under the theme "park city, beautiful habitat," the International Horticultural Exhibition 2024, which concluded on Monday, showcased a diverse range of flowers, plants and gardening styles from around the world in 113 gardens, which were set up at the main site in the Chengdu Eastern New Area and in four sub-sites. The total number of gardens this year set a record, according to the organizer.

The 186-day exhibition kicked off on April 26, bringing the beauty and wonder of flowers and plants to more than 10 million people. The main site and its four sub-sites received nearly 1.19 million visitors during the weeklong National Day holiday alone.

Over 110 activities, including themed float parades, light shows and shadow performances, were staged at the five sites, Chen said.

"We see that urban planning can be combined with ecological greening, which is also significant for promoting the concept of sustainable development in Sicily."

Pietro Cannella, vice-mayor of Palermo, Italy

In addition, more than 100 international exchange activities were held, and a list of cooperation opportunities was updated and released often, which led to the growth of more than 55,000 flower gardening business entities in Chengdu. As a result, the output value of flower gardening in the city has exceeded 13 billion yuan (\$1.8 billion).

The event's venues will now serve the residents differently. For example, the Jinyun Building will be converted into a museum to showcase the traditional classic gardens in Sichuan, while the main venue will become a cultural and art center.

Leonardo Capitanio, president of the International Association of Horticultural Producers, spoke highly of the event at its opening ceremony, saying the Chengdu exhibition was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Adhering to the philosophy of green and low-carbon environ-

ments, economic and sustainable development, and extensive cooperation, the exhibition promoted exchanges among gardens from 32 countries and regions.

Representatives of Chengdu's 19 sister cities and friendly cooperation cities from 18 countries, including the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Mozambique and Austria, shared their experiences in green development and explored how cities from around the world could cooperate in green development and cultural exchanges.

They celebrated the official opening of the Chengdu International Friendship Pavilion, a core building at the main site covering an exhibition area of 2,000 square meters and featuring a permanent exhibition with the theme of international friendship.

Pietro Cannella, vice-mayor of Palermo, Italy, said the friendly exchanges between cities during the exhibition represent a great opportunity for development.

"We see that urban planning can be combined with ecological greening, which is also significant for promoting the concept of sustainable development in Sicily," he said.

Ernst Woller, first president of the provincial parliament of Vienna, Austria, described the exhibition as a great journey through the world, featuring many cultures and garden designs across the globe.

"It is very important for cities to work together and get to know each other as the world still faces many problems and challenges. The Chengdu exhibition is a good example of how cities should work together," he said.

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## Guangdong expressway cuts down travel time

By ZHENG CALXIONG  
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A new expressway linking three major cities in Guangdong province officially opened on Wednesday afternoon, further promoting the integrated and high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Through the new Nansha-Zhongshan Expressway, vehicles can travel from Guangzhou's Nansha district to the Shenzhen special economic zone in less than 20 minutes and to Zhongshan in about 15 minutes. Connected with the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link that operates across the estuary of the Pearl River, it further advances economic ties between cities in the eastern and western parts of the Pearl River delta.

Previously, it took more than an hour for drivers to complete the journey between Zhongshan and the Shenzhen special economic zone via the Humen or Nansha bridges, which have witnessed heavy traffic jams during peak periods. Now, they can drive between the two areas in about 30 minutes.

The 32.4-kilometer-long, six-lane two-way expressway, with a speed limit of 100 kilometers per hour, consists of the 21.6-kilometer-long main road and the 10.8-kilometer-long Wanqingsha Branch road. It will help Nansha Port improve its gateway function and achieve high-quality development.

The project is also expected to strengthen the direct connection between Nansha, located at the mouth of the Pearl River, and major cities in the GBA, said Guo Sheng, deputy director of Nansha district's housing and urban-rural development bureau.

The expressway will provide huge opportunities for Nansha, a shipping hub in the southern Chinese region, to participate in the construction of the GBA and help the district open up more to the outside world.

The new highway further connects the three pilot free trade zones of Qianhai in Shenzhen, Hengqin in Zhuhai and Nansha together. Together with the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link, people in Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhongshan can reach each city within 30 minutes.

"Nansha already has subways, light railways and intercity railway networks to connect with major cities in the GBA," said Guo.

Li Jing, chief planner with Department of Transport of Guangdong Province, said the province would further accelerate the construction of infrastructure and actively expand effective investment in transportation to further improve the highway network along the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link and surrounding areas.

The move aims to promote high-level connectivity within and outside the GBA, playing a pioneering role in transportation to better serve and support Guangdong's opening-up to the outside world and high-quality development, Li said.

Meanwhile, transportation departments in Guangzhou and Shenzhen have also opened intercity bus routes to link Nansha district to Shenzhen and Nansha to the Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport to strengthen the connection between the two cities on Wednesday.

The Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link, which opened in June, connects the city clusters of Shenzhen, Dongguan and Huizhou in the eastern part of the Pearl River Delta to the prosperous cities of Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Foshan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing in the western part, further enhancing infrastructure connectivity, cooperation and exchanges among the GBA cities.

## Visitors allowed at Beijing's Olympic Park around the clock

By ZHANG WEI and DU JUAN

Beijing's Olympic Park will function around the clock, becoming an always-open public space in the heart of the capital.

The fences were removed, visiting hours eliminated and checkpoints dismantled to create a more accessible green space, according to local officials.

The changes are part of a broader effort to integrate the park seamlessly with surrounding neighborhoods, easing access for residents and enhancing visitor experience.

The removal of six security checkpoints and over 10,000 meters of fencing are key steps in the overhaul, Lu Wenyu, deputy director of the Beijing Olympic central area management committee, said in a recent statement.

The park will now have 24-hour access, and bicycles are also permitted to enter.

"This transformation aims to create a borderless, always-open park in the heart of the capital, offering

"This transformation aims to create a borderless, always-open park in the heart of the capital, offering residents open and shared spaces."

Lu Wenyu, deputy director of the Beijing Olympic central area management committee

residents open and shared spaces," Lu said.

The new design provides direct access from nearby roads, eliminating the need for detours and making it easier for families and others carrying belongings.

"It was inconvenient to navigate the park with children before, especially with the need to go around to checkpoints," said Lu

Xiufang, a local resident. "Now, it's much more accessible."

Visitors on social media have praised the updates, with some noting a brighter, more open environment that lifts the mood.

The changes will enable visitors to better enjoy the 11.59-square-kilometer park, known as the world's first "dual Olympic park" following Beijing's hosting of both the 2008 Summer and 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

The site hosts various sports events, along with science, education and cultural programs.

Cycling is a focal point of the redesign, with a newly added 7.5-kilometer "rainbow" cycling route connecting visitors to prominent landmarks, including the National Stadium and the National Aquatics Center.

"We're aiming to provide open, accessible cycling paths that emphasize safety and enjoyment," Lu said, adding that additional routes are planned.

Improved road connections are



Cycling enthusiasts ride along the "rainbow" cycling route in the Olympic Park in Beijing on Sunday. CHENG GONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

also underway, with Hujing East Road and Tianchen West Road set to link directly to the city's Fourth Ring Road, enhancing convenience for drivers.

The initiative aligns with Beijing's "Garden City" guidelines released in April, which outline long-term goals

for green space integration through 2035. Key elements include promoting open and shared green spaces and encouraging the removal of barriers between parks and urban areas.

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Locals in Zada county hold a folk dance show near the Zada Clay Forest. YESHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Tourists spoiled for choice across plateau region



A ceremony is held near the Padhkud Tso lake in Nyalam county to welcome the tour members. YESHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

Marathon journey takes tour group through patchwork quilt of Xizang's colorful landscapes and cultures



Mount Qomolangma, also known as Everest, the highest mountain in the world, stands on the border between China and Nepal. ZHU GE / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Beginning from Mount Qomolangma, the highest mountain in the world, a group of tourists started a 14-day journey in Southwest China's Xizang autonomous region, telling stories of the spectacular landscapes, brilliant culture and colorful life of this plateau region.

This was a special tour organized by the Publicity Department of the Xizang Committee of the Communist Party of China, China Media Group, the Xizang Department of Culture and Tourism and other organizations. The tour members included socialites and influencers from home and abroad.

The journey was launched on Oct 11 in Pasum village in the city of Shigatse, which is located at the foot of Mount Qomolangma. The launch event was marked by a grand gala called *On the Top of the World*, featuring a show combining poetry recital and concert.

Renowned Chinese alpinist Xia Boyu was at the event, reciting a poem named *Himalaya* with the poet Chen Renjie and other tour members. Xia is a legendary figure in the world's mountaineering sport, who was the first one to climb the peak of Qomolangma with prostheses.

Norodom Jenna, the 13-year-old Cambodian princess, sang a song with a local children's chorus at the event. The song called *Say Hi Together* features greetings in different languages of the world.

On Oct 16, the tour group arrived in Chamdo city in the southeast of Xizang, beginning a four-day trip that covered regions of Markham, Gojo, Kharub and Pashoi. Chamdo is an important hub of the ancient Tea-Horse Road, a trade route that links Xizang with other Southwest China provinces like Sichuan and Yunnan.

The Chamdo trip started with a tour of the ancient salt field in the Naxi ethnic township in Markham county.

Located at the junction of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces and the Xizang autonomous region, Naxi township in Markham is rich in the mineral. Its salt production techniques are one of the oldest in the world and have been well preserved.

The traditional salt production craft was listed as a national intangible cultural heritage item in 2008 and the ancient salt field was listed as a key cultural relic in 2013.

A local official told the tour group that the rough terrain and steep mountains along the Lancang River limited farming. As a result, people in the township, as well as others in the neighborhood, would barter for the necessities of life, using salt as payment.

"Today, the situation is dramatically different, but villagers still produce salt using the ancient methods because it's part of their culture. Many people still want to buy the handmade salt," the official said.

Palden Dondrup, a local musician in Chamdo, volunteered to serve as a tour guide for the group, showing them to sites of salt production and introducing the ancient techniques.

On the following day, tour members visited the county of Gojo, which is renowned for Awang sheep, a variety unique to the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau.



From left: Tour members are treated to a whole roast lamb in Gojo county. A dancing show is held near Ra'og Lake in Pashoi county. PHOTOS BY YESHE / FOR CHINA DAILY

They were then treated to a lamb feast.

On Oct 18, the tour group visited the Karma Valley Scenic Area in Chamdo's Kharub district. The site is viewed by veteran tourists as a "hidden pearl" of Xizang, featuring both colorful ethnic culture and the enticing landscapes of snow mountains, grasslands and highland barley fields.

To the surprise of tour members, the scenic area is also full of artistic goods. They said they were astonished when they saw the stylish artworks produced and exhibited by the studios of traditional arts like *thangka*, lacquerware and bronze ware.

On their last day in Chamdo, the tour members visited the village of Laigu in Pashoi county. The village is surrounded by the picturesque Ra'og Lake, several snow-capped mountains and six glaciers collectively known as the Laigu Glaciers, which are among the world's top three glacier groups.

After touring the glaciers, the members wrapped up the day by visiting Ra'og Lake in the late afternoon. To their delight, they were lucky enough to have a view of the legendary "Sunset on the Golden Mountains" as they saw the snow mountains turn gold against the setting sun.

From Oct 20-23, the tour group returned to the city of Shigatse, exploring the local natural wonders, cultural heritage and characteristic produce over four days.

In Tibetan language, Shigatse means "wish-fulfilling manor". The city is home to five of the world's 14 peaks with altitudes above 8,000 meters, including the highest, Qomolangma. It is also source of the Yarlung Zangbo River — an international river that empties itself into the Bay of Bengal.

The Yarlung Zangbo valley there is called the granary of Xizang as it is the largest production base of highland barley in the world. With five land ports linking

Nepal, Bhutan and India, the city is the foreign trade hub of Xizang. It is also one of cradles of Tibetan culture.

The tour group's first leg in the city was the Mingzhu Lake Park in the city's Samdrubze district, where they watched performances of Tibetan Opera, a UNESCO World Heritage item, and the Cham dance, a national intangible heritage item.

They visited Lhaze county on the second day, where they were treated to a local performance called Duixie. The popular folk art that combines rhythmic folk dance, singing, storytelling and the playing of plucked instruments has been passed down the generations orally for more than 700 years, without any written record until 2008 when Duixie was included on the protection list of China's oral and intangible cultural heritage.

They paid a visit to Nyalam county on the third day, exploring the Mount Qomolangma Natural Reserve. In the village of

Lhapu, they had an encounter with Padhkud Tso, the largest lake in the reserve. There they had an overwhelming view, with the tranquil lake reflecting the snow-covered Shishapangma, a mountain 8,027 meters high.

The township of Gyirong was the tour group's last leg in Shigatse, where members visited two characteristic villages, Gyiphuk and Darman.

Gyiphuk is a village that was destroyed during the 2015 Nepal earthquake. But rapid reconstruction over the past few years have given it a new lease on life. It has emerged as a tourist destination with an idyllic landscape. Nineteen of the total 39 households there are now operating bed-and-breakfast businesses.

Darman is a village mostly dwelt in by the ethnic Darmans. The Darmans said they are the offsprings of the Gurkhas in Nepal. They stayed on the Chinese side of the border for several generations for historical reasons, living an impoverished life until they were offered Chinese citizenship in 2003. The naturalization brought a fundamental change to their lives and the residents now enjoy improved livelihoods and a steady increase in incomes.

Upon their arrival, the tour members found that this village is now an emerging tourist destination, offering them a chance to experience its novel culture while enjoying the imposing views of the Himalayas.

On Oct 21, the tour group arrived in Ngari prefecture, starting a two-day trip that covered Burang and Zada counties.

In Burang, the tour group visited Khorchak, a village that borders India and Nepal. Khorchak was included on the list of China's famous traditional villages in 2019. The village is home to the Khorchak Monastery, a Buddhist temple originally built in the year 996, which is regarded as one of the sources of the Bka-gdam-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

Their Burang trip also included visits to Mount Gang Rinpoche and Mapham Yutso Lake. The two sites, also known as Mount Kailas and Lake Manasarovar, are the revered mountain and lake for believers of a number of religions including Buddhism, Bon, Hinduism and Jainism.

In Zada county, they visited the Guge Kingdom ruins, which are located on a mountain in Zhabran village 19 kilometers west of the county seat of Zada.

The Guge Kingdom was founded in the 10th century and survived for about 700 years before mysteriously disappearing. For decades, the ruins of the Guge Kingdom have attracted numerous tourists, archaeologists, photographers and explorers from around the world. The wall paintings, clay statues and carvings in the ruins are regarded by researchers as valuable material evidence for the study of the culture and arts of that period.

The tour group also visited Xiayigou, the core area of the Zada Clay Forest. The unique landform is a result of the Himalayan orogeny and wind and rain erosion over millions of years. It features piles of clay earth resembling various and vivid shapes like temples, watchtowers, pagodas and castles. The Xiayigou area is the best representative of the landform, in terms of shapes and colors.



Clockwise from left: Tour members visit an ancient salt production site in Markham county. Cambodian Princess Norodom Jenna sings a song at the concert near Mount Qomolangma. A Tibetan Opera show is held in Shigatse's Mingzhu Lake Park. PHOTOS BY YESHE / FOR CHINA DAILY



ADVERTORIAL

## 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.



An elderly woman poses with her dog on the street in Tokyo on Oct 1. Japan is reputed to have one of the world's highest life expectancies but its birth rate is in permanent decline. Official statistics forecast the number of elderly Japanese, those 65 and older, to increase and reach 34.8 percent of the population by 2040. DAVID MAREUIL VIA GETTY IMAGES

## AGING TOGETHER

Single Japanese women help sustain each other as they grow old

In Amagasaki of Japan's Hyogo Prefecture, a group of seven elderly women have been practicing a "Friends Living Nearby" lifestyle — generating much interest in their community and beyond.

The "Koko Seven" or "Individual Seven" group of single women who wanted to maintain their habit of "friends living close to each other" is based in a condominium in the city.

Kiku Taya, 89, the oldest member of the group, lives in the condo and explained their choice: "We're not like a family. We're just close neighbors. We help each other but we are not dependent on each other."

Reiko Ichikawa, 86, who lives near the condo, added: "We spend time alone or get together. We enjoy each other's company while maintaining our self-help life. That's what Individual Seven means."

Yoshie Ichinotsubo, 79, and Kimi Kawana, 77, the youngest member, live in separate units in the building.

It all started about two decades ago. Taya, who was at the time the head of a citizens group that considered matters related to aging, and Ichikawa, who was the chair of a social welfare corporation that runs a nursing home, came up with the idea of "singles living together", along with one other person.

They began asking around, saying that anyone who was seriously interested in the idea could join, including friends of friends. Four more members later joined the group, including Kawana, a journalist, and Ichinotsubo, a copywriter.

Although their backgrounds were different, with some being unmarried and others divorced, all seven members had long careers and were approaching their old age and living alone.

## Knowing neighbors

After their first meeting to introduce themselves, they began to know each other through staying overnight together three times, comparing and adjusting their feelings about what kind of lifestyle they wanted to lead.

"I asked the other members, in the form of a questionnaire, the kind of questions that were difficult to ask, such as how much money they could afford to spend, and then shared the answers with all the members," Taya said.

Various criteria were considered, such as having individual dwellings, each with a kitchen and toilet, and available at an affordable price.

Initially, the group members thought about building a communal house on rented land, but it was not financially feasible.

They also had a hard time searching for a place to live together. But things advanced quickly after they found a



Members of Japanese senior cheerleading squad "Japan Pom Pom" take part in a practice session in Tokyo in 2021, despite the activity traditionally being the preserve of teenage girls. YASUYOSHI CHIBA / AFP

"We spend time alone or get together. We enjoy each other's company while maintaining our self-help life. That's what Individual Seven means."

Reiko Ichikawa, 86-year-old member of the "Individual Seven" group

relatively low-priced, new condo.

In the autumn of 2008, four group members moved into the condo while two others began living in the neighborhood.

At the time, their ages ranged between 61 and 73. They agreed that they would not provide nursing care to each other.

Three of the members signed a voluntary guardianship contract with a lawyer, who would then act as their guardian in the event that a member's judgment became impaired due to dementia. A contract was also signed entrusting the lawyer to take care of their bodies and belongings after they died.

They also decided to avoid keeping relationships solely within the group, with each member contributing to the local community in her own way, thus maintaining their social ties.

In 2009, the group began holding a monthly gathering of local resi-

dents called "salon du samedi" or "Saturday salon". Lectures by guest speakers with topics including music, cooking and international issues were held, with about 30 people attending at a time.

Another member who was living in the condo developed dementia. Other members of the group noticed her change and were able to have her examined by a doctor and get in touch with the lawyer, who took charge of the necessary procedures based on the guardianship contract.

The member moved to a group home in the autumn of 2022. The facility provides care to a small group of people with dementia who live together. Although she lives in the group home, she still goes to the Saturday salon.

One of the members who lived close to the condo and took part in the group's meeting died in June from an illness. The funeral and other postmortem arrangements had been made before her death.

## Sharing time

Ryoko Fukuzawa, a researcher at the Dai-ichi Life Research Institute, noted the appeal of such a way of living as "the comfort of living together with other people, by sharing an enjoyable time and having a spirit of cooperation that would come naturally."

But there are also difficulties such as when people have differing sets of values that were established during their long lives. There are also differences in what people are able to do as they get older, she said.

"Don't always expect everyone to be equal, and don't always rely on others to help you," Fukuzawa

said. "Tolerance is also important."

According to Fukuzawa, groups of singles helping each other is also popular in Denmark. She said there is a long waiting list of people seeking "cohousing", which combines individual dwellings with common facilities.

Fukuzawa explained that when the average age of the residents rises too high, it becomes difficult to maintain this form of communal living, so the management of such facilities will sometimes have relatively younger people on the waiting list move in first. This kind of planning will also become important in maintaining mutual support relationships.

Some group members also have concerns about their health.

"Even if I don't feel like undergoing rehabilitation, others encourage me by saying, 'Keep at it, or 'You'll get more frail.' So, I keep on doing it," Ichinotsubo said.

There are no leaders or factions within the group, and all the members have good relations with each other. But everyone knows that it will not remain that way forever.

The members will grow older, and someone will eventually be the last one in the group. They all expressed the worry: "What if I become the last remaining member?"

"We should all be making our own preparations for the end of our life, so our final days will hopefully be as short as possible," Taya said.

"Until then, let us enjoy our long old age together. That is the lifestyle we have chosen to lead."

YOMIURI SHIMBUN, JAPAN

## Experts target social trend romanticizing mental illness

For 21-year-old Aisha, mental health is a raw, lived experience, etched deeply into her family's story, with her father battling severe obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), mania and bipolar disorder for more than 40 years.

When Aisha's father first showed symptoms, mental health facilities were nonexistent in their village and those suffering from these illnesses were treated like outcasts. Aisha's grandmother told her how villagers would chain him at home. So Aisha would become angry when she heard her classmates in college casually say things like, "I'm so OCD about my room" or "This assignment is making me depressed".

For Aisha, those were not just casual words — they were the very terms that had defined her father's battle for survival.

"It felt like my father's years of suffering were being invalidated," she said. "People don't understand that these terms are tied to real trauma. It's not something you throw around for everyday inconveniences."

She said that while many online posts about mental health may be "portrayed in a very aesthetic way, those actions may also be a cry for help for many." "Aestheticizing mental illness or just using those terms as synonymous to basic human feelings doesn't sit well with me."

As Aisha put it, mental health issues are not just discussed on various social media platforms — they are aestheticized. Depression, anxiety and OCD are being reduced to casual phrases and visually appealing posts.

While the world grapples with mental health issues, many plat-

forms have created a subculture where suffering is portrayed as beautiful, depression as poetic and phrases like "I'm so depressed" or "I'm a little OCD" are thrown around without a second thought.

Experts warned this is not only trivializing mental illness but also creating a dangerously glamorized perception of serious conditions.

Research has indicated a growing trend among Generation Z members to casually tag on labels such as "depressed", "OCD" or "anxiety disorder", often without a clear understanding of their clinical implications.

Among these terms, anxiety and depression rank as the most frequently misused and self-diagnosed, according to the research.

Psychologist Srijana Mukhiya, a mental health professional with 15 years of experience, said that when people start casually labeling themselves as depressed or begin romanticizing mental illness, it dilutes the seriousness of those conditions.

"For those genuinely struggling with mental health, it invalidates their pain," she said. "They might think, 'Maybe I'm just sad like everyone else.' This can prevent them from seeking the treatment they need."

A study from the University of Balamand in Lebanon supported Mukhiya's claim, finding that the romanticization of conditions like depression and anxiety on social media platforms can encourage self-destructive behaviors, including self-harm, which are often portrayed as symbolic or artistic acts rather than cries for help.

The same happened with a 20-year-old student from Bhaktapur, Nepal. For the student, who The Kathmandu Post is identifying only with her initial N for privacy reasons, the aestheticization of mental illness on social media had far-reaching consequences.

Battling severe depression and anxiety for two years, N often found herself scrolling through social media posts online where profiles depicted melancholic

images of fragile girls staring out windows, with poetic captions such as, "Broken but beautiful" and "My sadness is my art".

The profiles glamorized sadness, making it seem like suffering was not just normal but somehow admirable, N said. "At first, it felt comforting ... It made me think that maybe my pain wasn't something to be afraid of — that it was part of who I was."

A 2022 qualitative analysis of videos on a major social media platform showed that young people often use aesthetic elements, such as music and imagery, to make mental illness seem more relatable or even attractive.

The study further found that content creators were rewarded with higher engagement rates for portraying their mental health struggles in a romanticized way.

N's behavior mirrors this, as she began embracing her depression as part of her identity, influenced by the images she viewed online. She started dressing in darker clothes, posting her melancholic pictures with captions like, "There's beauty in the breakdown." "I should have sought help, but I thought that getting better would ruin the image I had built of myself," she said.

Her case is not isolated. Studies indicated that glamorizing mental health conditions can lead to what is known as "identity fusion", in which individuals internalize their struggles as a core part of who they are. This can make recovery more difficult as they fear losing a part of themselves.

"When suicides and self-harm tendencies are glorified on social media and in traditional media, it

can create a 'copycat' syndrome among viewers," said psychiatrist Kedar Marahatta, a mental health expert with the World Health Organization in Nepal who has observed a rising trend in the romanticization of mental illness among youths.

Traditional media often adheres to guidelines when discussing mental health, while social media

There's a fine line between raising awareness and glorifying illness ... We need to emphasize that mental health problems are serious conditions that require proper care — not artistic expressions to be admired."

Kedar Marahatta, a mental health expert with the World Health Organization in Nepal

lacks such regulations. This results in a careless flow of information, in which incidents like youth suicides following breakups or familial rejection are sensationalized, according to experts.

"Linking reasons to suicide can lead vulnerable individuals to consider it as a viable option," Marahatta said. "Discussions surrounding these topics must be approached with caution."

Marahatta added that while social media has the potential to raise awareness, its unregulated nature has allowed the rise of harmful narratives.

"It's essential for individuals to critically evaluate the qualifications of those giving mental health advice online," psychologist Mukhiya said. "Given the difficulty of regulating content on these platforms, users should depend on credible sources from government and specialized institutions."

It is crucial for users to approach the content they engage with critically and for media platforms to follow established guidelines when addressing mental health topics, Mukhiya added.

Mental illness is not beautiful, poetic or fashionable, experts said, it is a condition that demands understanding, respect and above all, proper care.

"There's a fine line between raising awareness and glorifying illness," Marahatta said.

"We need to emphasize that mental health problems are serious conditions that require proper care — not artistic expressions to be admired."

THE KATHMANDU POST, NEPAL

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A bird's-eye view of the Taoyangli historical and cultural district at the heart of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, which is dubbed "China's porcelain capital". This area, featuring ancient kilns, porcelain workshops and trading houses, is a testament to the city's millennium-old history of porcelain making. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Editor's note: An array of Chinese cities have maintained their cultural memories in the form of historical neighborhoods that have only added to their multilayered charm and vigor with the passage of time. China Daily is taking readers on a journey to some of these timeless areas, where President Xi Jinping has left his footsteps and remarked on the preservation and vitalization of heritage. In this installment, we take a walk through the Taoyangli historical and cultural district in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, to examine the time-honored ceramic tradition of the city known as "China's porcelain capital".

# FIRING UP A SHINING PAST FOR PORCELAIN

Kilns ignited again as their storied history returns to life in front of new generation of admirers, **Deng Zhangyu** reports in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi.



In China's porcelain capital of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, ceramics have been woven into the very fabric of the city for centuries. At its core, the Taoyangli historical and cultural district is a beacon of this storied past, a place where kiln fires once blazed through the night, and porcelain was made every day.

This area, comprising the remnants of the Imperial Kiln Factory, the kilns of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, and old workshops used by ceramic artisans, is a testament to Jingdezhen's illustrious heritage.

"The Taoyangli district as a whole is an open and living museum. When visitors come here, they can experience what life was like hundreds of years ago — potters living and making porcelain, and traders from all over the country who shipped the goods worldwide," says Weng Yanjun, director of the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute.

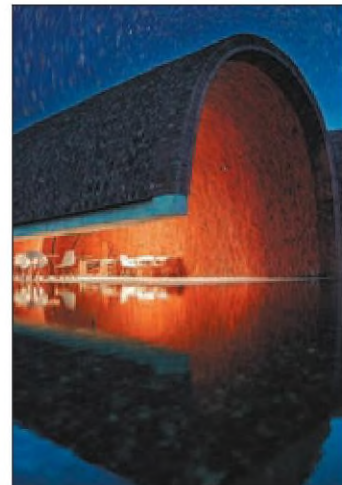
The institute consists of a ceramic archaeology research institute and a kiln museum built on the site of Ming Dynasty imperial kilns. They were once used to produce the finest blue-and-white ceramics for imperial courts.

The elongated structures of the museum are built using a mix of new and recycled bricks from dismantled kilns. Many of the surrounding buildings and houses are also built using kiln bricks, as the kilns had to be rebuilt every two or three years to maintain their thermal performance.

Weng says that the museum's collection includes pieces unearthed at the ancient kilns over the past few decades. The weight of ceramics unearthed reaches dozens of metric tons. The museum opened to the public in 2021 and quickly became a popular destination in Taoyangli.

Over the past millennium, Jingdezhen has developed a rich history and is a rare example of a Chinese city dedicated exclusively to the ceramics industry, says Weng. A variety of porcelain products were discovered at the Imperial Kiln Factory, now the kiln museum, and are on display, giving visitors a glimpse into the area's bustling past.

"I grew up here and I've seen how the district has been restored to its former state," says Weng. The restoration of Taoyangli began over a decade ago with the repair of the late Ming Dynasty Xujia Kiln. It's the largest wood-fired kiln still in existence, and was used to produce household porcelain.



From left: The Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Museum at the Taoyangli historical and cultural district in Jiangxi is reminiscent of ancient kiln designs. Visitors take photos of the Xujia Kiln at Taoyangli. The district attracts young tourists. The museum displays porcelain antiques unearthed at imperial kilns. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



When President Xi Jinping visited Taoyangli last October, he encouraged the inheritors to pursue their craftsmanship with dedication, and devote themselves to passing down their craft and to making innovations.

He said the principle of protecting first and like-for-like renovation has been followed in the protection of Taoyangli, facilitating a mutually reinforcing interaction between ceramic cultural protection and the development of cultural and tourism industry.

Xu recalls working at a ceramics factory in the area when she was in her 20s. Present-day Taoyangli brings back memories of the way it looked in the last century.

In the distance, the towering chimney of the ceramics factory where she worked retains its original appearance. Xu's current workshop, where she demonstrates porcelain-making skills, has been restored to its former glory, with each brick, beam and pillar reflecting its original state.

The Xujia Kiln, which represents the ancient kiln clusters of the Ming and Qing dynasties, is surrounded by more than 100 narrow alleys. Lined with brick-paved pathways, these alleys are flanked by porcelain workshops made out of kiln bricks. For centuries, generations of artisans thrived here, passing down their craft through the ages.

"The names of these alleys have remained unchanged for hundreds of years," Xu says.

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## Taoyangli's rich culture gets a refreshing look

BY DENG ZHANGYU  
in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi

Zheng Dazhe never imagined he would end up spending an entire afternoon touring porcelain workshops, engaging with craftsmen, and becoming captivated by their stories and creations, but when he visited the Taoyangli historical and cultural district in Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, that's exactly what happened.

Zheng visited the popular tourist destination in September to learn about porcelain. After exploring the Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Museum, he found himself fascinated by the area's many porcelain workshops in their centuries-old courtyards, and had engaging conversations with the craftsmen, learning about the intricate process of making porcelain, from the initial shaping of the clay, to the hand-painting of the designs.

"It's like being in a movie. The porcelain artisans have lived and worked here for centuries. The buildings are old, and the city's glorious history of porcelain making comes vividly alive," says Zheng.

The Taoyangli historical and cultural district at the heart of Jingdezhen, which is known as the "porcelain capital of China," consists of significant remains and ruins that bear witness to its millennium-old porcelain industry. This includes imperial and ordinary kilns dating back to the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, as well as workshops and trading houses once inhabited by ceramics makers and business owners.

Restored in 2016, the area has since become a popular destination for tourists like Zheng, who are interested in porcelain. According to Liu Zili, president of the Jingdezhen Ceramic Culture Tourism Group, which oversees the district's operation and restoration, Taoyangli received more than 3.7 million visits last year. During the National Day holiday earlier this month, daily visits peaked at 80,000.

Liu says that Taoyangli owes its birth to ceramics, and went on to develop a rich culture. The group aims to revitalize the historical district, and entice more young people

to engage with its deeply rooted ceramic traditions.

Some 40 ceramic artisans and 300 apprentices are currently working in the historical workshops, mainly to demonstrate the intricacy of making porcelain and share their stories with visitors — tales of tradition, innovation, and the pursuit of beauty.

Sun Lixin, a fourth-generation inheritor of blue-and-white porcelain craftsmanship, continues the family legacy at his Taoyangli workshop. Growing up immersed in ceramic culture, he learned the craft from his grandfather, who also worked there.

The 57-year-old makes porcelain every day and enjoys engaging with the visitors who enter his courtyard. He has 60 apprentices, some of whom practice alongside him in the workshop.

"The way of the tourists coming here are young people. The district is a good window onto our porcelain culture. I believe as long as it interests young people, ceramic culture will continue to thrive and remain vibrant," he says.

As artisans deftly continue age-old traditions, visitors are invited to step back in time and experience the enduring legacy of this unique cultural enclave.

Taoyangli hosts numerous ceramic culture-related events each year to attract visitors. In addition to trying their hands at ceramics and exploring shops, tourists can visit the archaeological sites of the kilns that used to produce porcelain for the imperial families, participate in ceremonies held to mark the removal of freshly fired porcelain from the kilns, visit immersive ceramics exhibitions at the museum, and even do some role-playing.

An artisan uses a knife to trim the clay surface and edges of a vessel. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



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"We will continue to explore cultural resources as a driving force for the integrated development of culture and tourism in Taoyangli," says Liu.

In recent years, the group has been reaching out to former residents and craftsmen who moved out of Taoyangli, inviting them to return for a visit, and to record oral history videos.

"Their stories are an inseparable part of the culture and history of the old neighborhood."



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LIFE

# Boom time in the borderlands

Ethnic culture, frontier spirit and natural bounty all part of remote village's growing touristic appeal, **Xu Lin** and **Mao Weihua** report in Bortala, Xinjiang.

Two and a half centuries ago, their ancestors held fort at the border, ordered by their emperor to do so. Now, the residents of Bogdal, in traditional costumes, welcome visitors to their village for a glimpse of their remarkable history.

To solemn background music, a group of soldiers in historical costumes slowly approach on horseback, evoking the village's heritage.

During the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), several thousand Mongolian soldiers and their families were ordered to migrate westward to Xinjiang to garrison the border.

They endured hardships and only reached their destination after a long and arduous journey. Nowadays, their descendants form the majority of Bogdal's population.

Located in the Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Bogdal village is inhabited by the Mongolian, Kazak, Uygur and Han ethnic groups.

Originally a pastoral community, it has become an emerging tourist destination in recent years.

In summer, visitors enjoy the massive fields of fragrant clary; in winter, they soak in nearby hot springs and go skiing.

The major draws include experiencing ethnic culture and sampling delicious food in Mongolian or Kazak-style yurts.

They can practice archery and watch a village gate-opening ceremony in the daytime, enjoy a bonfire party and delight in cultural performances at night.

Bogdal is about 60 kilometers from Sayram Lake, the largest alpine lake in Xinjiang, which is known for its stunning views and rich biodiversity. The village also attracts tourists who opt for short trips to both destinations due to their proximity.

The village's face-lift is all due to a rural vitalization project that started in 2021.

Infrastructure has been fully developed, including sewage systems, roads and walls, all renovated with government funding. The village committee encourages residents to convert idle houses into homestays, and organizes activities to attract tourists.

"In the past, we used to wait for visitors; now they actively seek us out," says 50-year-old homestay owner Zhu Shengjuan.

She previously ran a beauty parlor in Wenquan county but in 2021, she decided to return and turned a backyard warehouse into three guesthouses. Confident in the village's tourism potential, Zhu invested over 1 million yuan (\$140,311) last year to expand her homestay. The county is known for its pro-



**Top:** Residents of Bogdal village in the Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, enact a traditional Mongolian wedding ceremony for visitors.

**Above:** Villagers dance during a gate-opening ceremony to welcome visitors.

**Left:** A young village woman of the Kazak ethnic group.

**Right:** Bogdal village is decorated with distinctive murals that display its wealth of ethnic culture. XU LIN / CHINA DAILY

duce, including beef, mutton, cold-water fish and wild mushrooms. In the 38 homestays run by villagers, visitors can enjoy healthy and affordable food, including vegetables freshly picked from the garden.

Zhu says that the rural vitalization project includes professionals who design the interiors of homestays free of charge, with owners covering only the renovation.

"The biggest change is that our homestay has upgraded in scale, with chefs serving food, while in the past, we cooked for the tourists ourselves."

In peak summer season, the village welcomes about 2,500 to 3,000 tourists per day on average. Visitors have to book restaurants and lodgings in advance, and Zhu employs several local residents to help out.

The village's homestay and restaurant owners are working with travel agencies to attract more tourists during autumn and winter as well, in the hopes that their reputation will bring in more visitors.

"The happiness index of villagers is increasing. Also, more talented people are returning to start businesses in their hometowns," says Aygul Jumata, Party secretary of the village.

"Through the development of tourism, people of all ethnic groups have been able to enjoy the dividends of rural vitalization," she adds.

According to Wu Liyun, a professor at the Beijing International Studies University's China Academy of Culture and Tourism, developing culture and tourism is an effective way of boosting rural vitalization and it is crucial to integrate multiple industries based on local cultural resources to create competitive tourism offerings.

She attributes Bogdal village's success to the combination of its historical frontier legacy with rural tourism.

She believes that the key to rural tourism development is a variety of offerings based on the thorough research of local culture and history, which makes a destination stand out. Infrastructure, public services and accessibility are also important, including accommodation and catering.

"Promotion through new media also counts, and has become a norm for the tourism industry, even for destinations with high-quality offerings. Over the past year, destinations that gained sudden popularity online have largely been propelled by new media," she says.

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## Introducing France to China, word by word

By YANG YANG  
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The 16th edition of the Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Prize will be held on Nov 30 and Dec 1 in Beijing. The event is part of the cultural activities commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France, Nicolas Pillerel, minister counselor for culture, education and scientific affairs at the French embassy in China, announced during a news conference on Oct 24.

Established in 2009 by the French Embassy in China and French-speaking Chinese intellectuals, including Dong Qiang, author, translator and professor of French literature at Peking University, the Fu Lei prize is awarded for the translation of French books into Chinese, and also promotes the dissemination of these translations.

Supported by intellectuals, including Nobel laureates in literature Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio and Mo Yan, the prize acknowledges the crucial role of translators as conveyors of words, as well as their role in bolstering cultural exchange between France and China.

The prize is given in three categories — "Literature", "Essay", and



**Left:** (From left) The jury chair of this year's Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Prize Yu Zhongxian, the event's organizing committee chair Dong Qiang, and last year's Fu Lei prize for Newcomer Award winner Lyu Junjun at the news conference. **Right:** Books nominated for the 16th Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Prize. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



since 2013, the "Young Shoots" category to encourage the next generation of translators.

"We are aware that without the participation and involvement of young people, and without the emergence of outstanding young translators, the translation industry will inevitably face a talent gap," says Dong.

This year, 47 titles are competing for the Fu Lei prize, with 28 in the "Essay" category and 19 in the "Lit-

erature" category. Notably, 42 of the 60 translators were born after 1980.

Yu Zhongxian, chairman of the jury this year, says that the finalists are younger than those in previous years, and a majority are women.

In the "Essay" category, the original versions of some of the translations are lengthy, difficult books on which multiple people worked to complete the translation.

In the "Literature" category, trans-

lations cover an impressive array, including not only books from the last century, but also those that reflect the contemporary lifestyles of young people in France.

Yu says that, given the increasing variety of books introduced in recent years, there is a need for younger publishers to discover them, and for younger translators to translate them.

Ten books — five about social sci-

ences and five literary titles — made

it to the final list and the winners will

be announced in Beijing on Nov 30.

The finalists include Francois Furet and Mona Ozouf's *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, Delphine de Vigan's novel *Children Are Kings*, which addresses the pitfalls of social networks, Dany Sandron's *Notre-Dame de Paris: History and Archaeology of a Cathedral*, and Nastassja Martin's *In the Eye of the Wild*, which explores the relation-

ship between humans and nature. These books demonstrate the diversity and vitality of French-to-Chinese translations today.

Since 2013, China has been the largest buyer of French copyrights abroad. Last year, 1,383 contracts were signed between French and Chinese publishers.

"The enduring appeal of French literature and thought is inseparable from the contribution of translators, and we should be grateful for their work. For this reason, we place great importance on supporting translators," says Pillerel.

He says that translators are usually obscure like shadows, but that at least once a year, there is a need to "cast the spotlight" on them.

In addition, the French embassy in China financially supports the publishing of at least 30 translations, in addition to translation training programs to nurture more young talent.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-French diplomatic ties, as well as the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism. Pillerel says that the series of activities organized by the French embassy around both themes throughout the year culminates with the prize.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## EU taking wrong path of protectionism by imposing hefty tariffs on Chinese EVs

In a sign of the European Union resorting to rising protectionism, the 27-member bloc on Tuesday formally approved the imposition of hefty extra tariffs of up to 35 percent on imports of Chinese-made electric vehicles starting Wednesday, based on the results of a probe that the EU claims indicates Chinese government subsidies have unfairly undercut European automakers.

Chinese car giant Geely — one of the country's largest sellers of EVs — now faces an extra duty of 18.8 percent, while SAIC will be hit with the highest at 35.3 percent, on top of the current 10 percent on imports of EVs from China. Other EV producers in China including Western companies such as Volkswagen will be subject to duties of 20.7 percent, according to the final ruling of the European Commission. The tariffs will be definitive and last for five years.

Despite the EU trying to justify the protectionist move targeting Chinese auto companies by describing it as "fair market practices" aimed at safeguarding the European industrial base, it cannot change the fact that the so-called anti-subsidy probe did not comply with the World Trade Organization rules. Moreover, the levying of extra duties will inevitably disrupt the stability of the global auto manufacturing supply chains and harm the interests of European consumers.

Given that Chinese-made EVs, known for their advanced battery technology and energy efficiency, have played an irreplaceable role in Europe's green transportation revolution, the new curbs on them will erode their confidence in investing in the continent and severely slow down the global fight against climate change.

There has been strong opposition to the protectionist practice even within the trade bloc, with five countries including the group's biggest economy, Germany, voting against the tariffs and 12 abstaining. The extra tariffs are "a step backwards for free global trade and thus for prosperity, job preservation and growth in Europe", German Association of the Automotive Industry's president, Hildegard Mueller, said in response to the tariffs.

China has always sought to resolve its trade disputes with the EU, its second-largest trading partner, through dialogue and consultations, and has conducted more than 10 rounds of negotiations with the EU on its EV exports to Europe since the end of June, in the hope of avoiding the escalation of trade tensions, as it believes that would lead to a "lose-lose" situation for both sides. Some Chinese car producers have also offered to restrict their sales and raised prices to avoid tariffs.

It is therefore disappointing that the EU has ignored the efforts on the part of China to keep trade relations on the right track of healthy and stable development by going ahead with the "unreasonable" and "protectionist" practice.

The Ministry of Commerce has made it clear that China does not "agree with or accept" the tariffs, and has already filed a complaint under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, with a ministry spokesman saying "China will take all necessary measures to firmly protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies".

A trade war between China and the EU is in the interests of neither side, and the best way ahead for them is to continue negotiations in pursuit of an alternative to tariffs even after the tariffs are in place. The EU, a long-time champion of free market and globalization, should exercise strategic autonomy by maintaining the mutually beneficial trade relations with China, rather than allowing itself to degenerate into a pawn in the US-orchestrated economic "Cold War" against the country to the detriment of the bloc's own economy.

Since the European side has said it will continue to consult with China on price commitments, and the technical teams of the two sides are conducting a new round of consultations, it is hoped that the EU will engage with the Chinese side in a constructive manner so as to reach a mutually acceptable solution that is pragmatic and balanced as soon as possible.

## Tel Aviv votes with Palestinian lives

Although the Palestine-Hamas conflict is often mentioned in parallel with the Russia-Ukraine conflict as the two burning global issues the international community needs to immediately help resolve, they are not even similar, let alone being the same, in nature. Unlike the Ukrainians, the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip are not engaged in a conflict with, but are being butchered by, Israeli forces.

In the latest assault, the warmongering Benjamin Netanyahu Cabinet, defying the global opposition to what some term as "genocidal onslaught" in the Palestinian enclave, including symbolic ones from the United States, carried out two air strikes on Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza, on Tuesday, killing at least 88 people, including dozens of women and children.

In its offensive in northern Gaza over the past weeks, Israel has launched deadlier and more frequent ground operations, raising alarm over the worsening humanitarian situation in the already devastated enclave.

In a hypocritical show, the Netanyahu government said it allowed 50 trucks of humanitarian aid from Jordan into northern Gaza earlier this month, taking pride in the weaponization of food, water and medicines.

The UN World Food Programme warned on Tuesday that the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza could soon turn into a "famine" unless immediate action is taken. As winter approaches, the lack of food and other necessities in Gaza will likely lead to catastrophic consequences.

By passing two bills on Monday to remove the only UN agency providing humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in Gaza, the Israeli administration demonstrated what a Netanyahu-led Israeli system free from UN restrictions would look like.

As the Tuesday attacks show, after Gaza is turned into rubble as a result of Israel's "precise strikes", which in reality are more like carpet bombing, the Israeli military, ignoring Hamas' signal that it is ready to resume cease-fire talks, has been targeting places where displaced Palestinians have taken shelter, if one can call them that.

For instance, Israel's recent offensive in northern Gaza is focused on the Jabalia refugee camp, where it has already killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes.

As Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said in his harshly-worded message to Netanyahu and most Cabinet members hours before Israel struck Iran over the weekend, Israel's war efforts have become aimless as Tel Aviv has been following an "outdated compass", so it needs to refocus its attention given the regional developments over the past year. Though Gallant made the remarks in a different context, it is clear Israel needs to refocus efforts to end the conflict.

Netanyahu's office called Gallant's letter "bizarre", saying "there is a single compass, and that is the war aims as determined by the Cabinet".

With more than 150,000 people reportedly dead, wounded or missing in Gaza, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk urged the world to act immediately to protect civilians in Gaza. "My gravest fear is, given the intensity, breadth, scale and blatant nature of the Israeli operation currently underway in north Gaza, that number will rise dramatically," the UN human rights chief said.

However, judging by Washington's indulgence of Netanyahu — US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller played down the Beit Lahiya attacks as coming "at a great cost to civilians" — Gaza will continue to be a death hell, a living testimony to the US' inhuman callousness.

It seems Israel has intensified its attacks in Gaza as it awaits the results of the US presidential election scheduled for next week before possibly responding to Egypt's two-day cease-fire proposal for Israel and Hamas to consider on Sunday. By tightening its siege of and military operations in northern Gaza, Netanyahu is trying to do his part to influence the election results by killing Palestinians.

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## Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

## Continued reform and opening-up to advance country's modernization

The central authorities have recently urged departments at all levels to put in place the systematic arrangements for further comprehensively deepening reform that were emphasized in the resolution adopted by the third plenary session of the 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee in mid-July.

Ever since the third plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in November 2013 opened a new path for China to comprehensively deepen reform, the country's efforts to advance reform on all fronts have yielded substantial results.

Over the past decade, the country has continuously gained impetus, activated vitality and rallied forces from all sectors of society through reforms, lifting its economic, scientific and

technological, and overall national strength to a new level. The country has continuously consolidated and fortified the strengths of its socialist system, giving full play to its advantages and making improvements in its weak areas. It has continuously turned theories into guiding principles for further deepening reform. A series of substantial results achieved across practical, institutional and theoretical dimensions have provided a strong driving force and institutional guarantee for China to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

Also, China has broken through ideological shackles and the barriers of entrenched interests, and resolutely addressed institutional shortcomings

in all areas to advance reform. Improving the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a dynamic process, and comprehensively deepening reform in the new era provides a solid foundation and valuable experiences for further deepening reform in the new journey.

China is at a critical juncture in its bid to develop itself into a strong country and promote national rejuvenation. The more complex the environment is, the more it needs to strengthen confidence, gather strength, and strive to open up new horizons for reform and development. With reform and opening-up, the country will have better prospects of advancing Chinese modernization.

— PEOPLE'S DAILY

## Talent transfer to next gen aboard Shenzhou XIX

The three astronauts on China's Shenzhou XIX spaceflight mission have docked at the Tiangong space station and met with the astronauts living there on Wednesday, starting a new round of in-orbit crew handover.

This is a significant journey in that two out of the three astronauts on board were born in the 1990s. Particularly Wang Haoze, one of the two astronauts, worked as a senior engineer with China Aerospace Science and

Technology Corporation. It shows the importance China attaches to scientific research in astronautics.

The team's commander, Cai Xuzhe, was part of the earlier Shenzhou XIV mission. China already has dozens of serving astronauts and now the team has a balanced mix of experienced and new members.

During their stay in Tiangong, apart from carrying out the scheduled experiments, the three astronauts will also

receive the Tianzhou 8 cargo ship, which will arrive with supplies for them, and, later, Shenzhou XX, which will arrive with a new crew that will replace them. The technologies involved in the two missions are not new, but they will be further tested this time so as to be mature enough to form a stabler loop in which Tiangong will be a long-term base for astronauts in space.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## US reheating 'cold rice' with fabricated spying claims

Recently, some US intelligence agencies and media outlets have once again hyped up the false narrative of a so-called Chinese spy threat, claiming that Chinese hackers are invading US telecommunications networks.

These US media play a bad role in poisoning the atmosphere of the country's public opinion on China. Although these US media organizations claim that their reports are objective, they do not provide any reliable evidence for their allegations. They have become a tool for Washington to implement its China-containment strategy.

The US Department of Justice launched a "China action plan" in 2018, subsequently a number of innocent Chinese experts and scholars were arrested to fabricate a number of "Chinese spy" cases. Yet due to the lack of evidence and strong opposition from the US academic community, the Department of Justice had to announce the termination of this plan in 2022.

However, in September this year, the US House of Representatives passed a bill to curb "espionage activities" against US intellectual property and academic institutions, trying to revive the "China action plan".

People have long known which country is the real "hacker empire" and which country has never stopped its espionage activities around the world these years.

For a long time, it has been an open secret that US intelligence agencies have set up intelligence networks around the world, instigated other countries' personnel, stolen other countries' trade secrets, interfered in other countries' internal affairs, and subverted other countries' regimes.

The United States firmly controls the global "key nodes" such as the Atlantic and Pacific submarine optical cables, and has also established at least seven full-flow monitoring stations, colluding with other countries to analyze and steal data from the optical cables.

China is the main target and victim of the US' espionage. In recent years, many Chinese institutions such as Northwest Polytechnical University of China and Wuhan Earthquake Monitoring Center in Hubei province have been attacked by foreign hacker organizations many times. The Chinese investigation found that the initiators were all related to the US security departments.

In order to conduct espionage infiltration, the CIA established a so-called China mission center in 2021, publicly

claiming to strengthen espionage activities against China. It has recently posted online instructions in Korean, Mandarin and Persian detailing steps that potential informants can take to contact US intelligence officials without putting themselves in danger, which seriously infringes on China's national interests.

A report of the National Computer Virus Emergency Response shows that the Five Eyes intelligence alliance led by the US has long been conducting indiscriminate wiretapping and stealing secrets from global telecommunications and internet users. The US has also implemented the Volt Typhoon false information operation, conspiring to defraud US congressmen and taxpayers in order to obtain relevant legal protection and financial support.

In addition, the US has developed a stealth "toolkit" to insert Chinese language and other strings into the code of cyber weapons in an attempt to mislead investigators splashing dirty water on China.

China will resolutely crack down on the theft of secrets by foreign forces and effectively safeguard its national sovereignty, security and interests.

— CHINA MEDIA GROUP

## COMMENT

Wu Jinyuan

## Shenzhou XIX mission a journey of progress

At precisely 4:27 am Beijing time on Oct 30, China's Shenzhou XIX spacecraft soared into the night sky aboard a Long March 2F rocket. With an efficient autonomous rapid docking system, Shenzhou XIX docked just 6.5 hours later with the Tianhe core module of China's Tiangong space station, settling in at forward port. As Shenzhou XIX docked smoothly, it's hard not to feel a growing sense of pride in the country's space program.

The launches and successful space missions have now become symbols of excellence, and increased people's confidence in China's prowess in the field of science and technology.

This confidence didn't emerge overnight. I still vividly remember standing on the sandy shores of Wenchang in 2021 with my colleagues, hearing the roar of Tianhe's launch, seeing the sky light up, and joining the thousands of voices cheering as the core module ascended. The memories stretch back further to 2003, watching the launch of Shenzhou 5 with bated breath in my dorm at Beihang University, anxious for Yang Liwei's safety. More than 20 years later, China's space achievements have become examples of space exploration.

Shenzhou XIX represents the 33rd mission of China's manned space program and the fourth manned mission during the space station's development phase. The new crew comprises both familiar and new faces: Cai Xuzhe, previously on Shenzhou XIV, returns as mission commander, while two young astronauts, Song Lingdong and Wang Haoze, both born in the 1990s, make their first journey into space. Incidentally, Wang is only the third female Chinese astronaut, and also a pioneering spaceflight engineer.

China's first female astronaut, Liu Yang, and the first woman to fly twice, Wang Yaping, have left a legacy of inspiration for young women. In the course of my work, I've met students in rural areas, and have heard many girls, inspired by the female astronauts, say that they too want to fly into space. Hopefully, Wang Haoze's flight will inspire a new generation of young women who perhaps believe space is indeed within reach.

Wang Haoze's journey is unique as she joins this mission as an aerospace engineer responsible for the critical upkeep and operation of the spacecraft's equipment. Unlike her bespectacled colleague Gui Haichao, a payload specialist, Wang

Haoze manages the technical systems, and is in charge of maintenance and repairs. Before joining the astronaut team, she was a rocket engineer, earning the affectionate nickname "the first Chinese rocket engineer to fly on a (real) rocket".

Life aboard the Tiangong space station is not easy. The Shenzhou XIX team will undertake 86 science and technology experiments, covering everything from trying to grow plants in space to conducting genetics studies. Perhaps most intriguing is the "space farm": Cai may pick up his lettuce-growing project from two years ago, while Song plans to cultivate sweet potatoes, giving the mission a gardening touch.

The mission will also test how fruit flies — a common model in genetic research due to their short lifespan and high genetic similarity to humans — react to microgravity and low magnetic environments. About 75 percent of human disease genes exist in fruit flies, making them ideal for studying the biological impacts of

space travel. For instance, how will humans fare on the moon or Mars, where gravity and magnetic forces differ dramatically from Earth's?

In an exciting sneak peek into the future, Shenzhou XIX's crew will expose lunar soil bricks to the harsh elements of space. These soil bricks, replicas created from samples returned by the Chang'e 5 and 6 lunar missions, will face space radiation and extreme temperature fluctuations. The ultimate goal? To someday build structures on the moon from locally sourced materials. A "village" built on the moon from lunar soil is an astonishing concept that could soon become a reality.

China's preparations for manned lunar exploration are underway. The fourth group of astronaut trainees began their rigorous training in August, with the group including specialists from the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions. To make their in-orbit lives more comfort-

able in the future, the team has even planned Cantonese-style space meals — a touch of home miles above Earth.

Walking on the moon, however, is not simply a matter of visiting the space station. Due to the moon's lower gravity, astronauts must undergo special training for lunar mobility. With just one-sixth of Earth's gravity, even a light step could propel them meters above the lunar surface. China's manned lunar lander, Lanyue (which means "Embracing the Moon"), will play a crucial role in the success of the mission. Redesigned from the Chang'e 5 model, it will support the more challenging tasks of the manned spacecraft's soft landing and lifting off.

On the lunar surface, a distant 380,000 kilometers from Earth, there's no robust launch support system like the one at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Northwest China, or the on-site backing of tens of thousands of engineers and designers. Lunar astronauts, relying solely on the support of the Lanyue lunar lander, will have to ignite fuel for liftoff from the lunar surface, a challenge which is very difficult to meet.

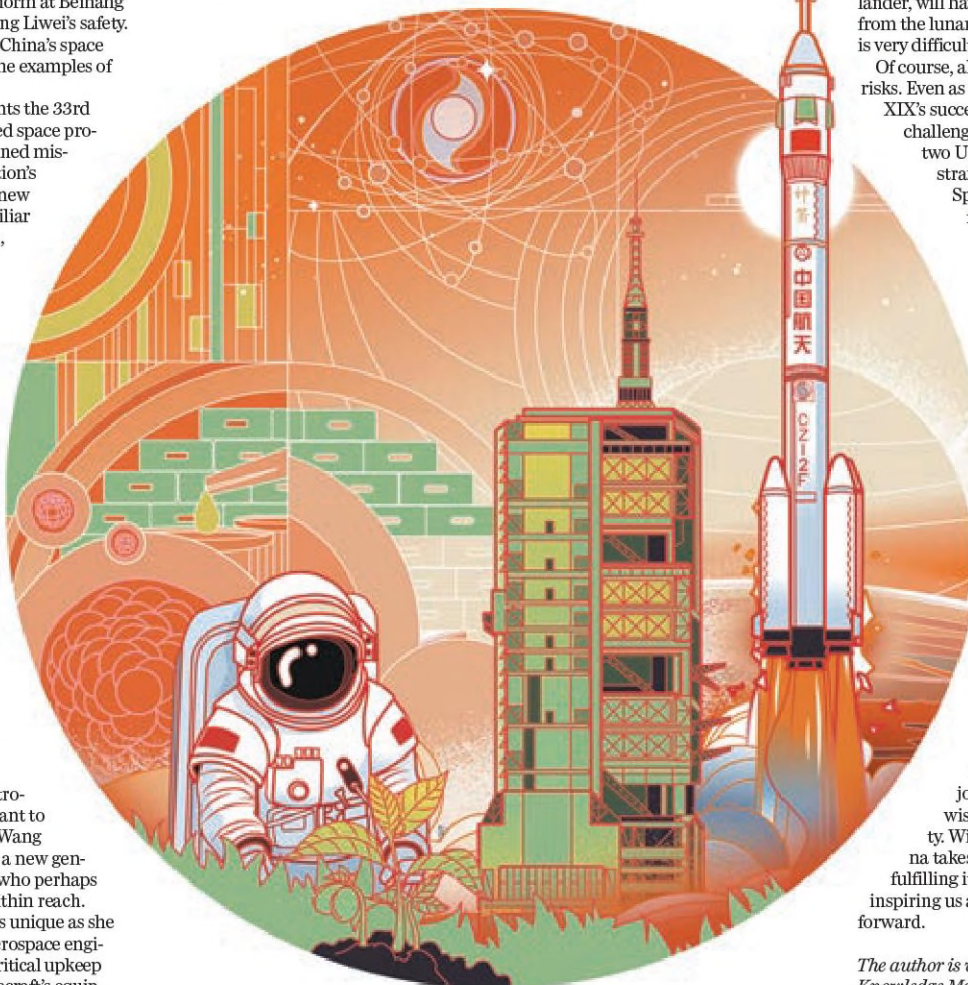
Of course, all space missions come with risks. Even as we celebrate Shenzhou XIX's success, we're reminded of the challenges. Since earlier this year, two US astronauts have been stranded on the International Space Station due to the malfunctioning of a spacecraft.

Every mission includes countless steps, each with potential risks, as shown in the history of manned spaceflight, including dramatic rescues like Apollo 13's safe return.

China's manned space program has a "one launch, one backup" policy, with a backup rocket and spacecraft ready in case of any emergency. Since the Shenzhou XII mission, a second rocket has been kept on standby, ready to launch for a rescue mission if needed.

As Shenzhou XIX embarked on a six-month journey of exploration, let's wish its crew success and safety. With each space mission, China takes another step closer to fulfilling its ambitious goals in space, inspiring us all to look upward — and forward.

*The author is vice-president of Aerospace Knowledge Magazine. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Sun Xingjie

## BRICS promotes multipolar and fairer world order

Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates joined BRICS in January and attended the just-concluded summit of the grouping in Kazan, Russia, as full members. As a grouping of emerging market economies and developing countries, BRICS has been trying to make more contributions to global development and peace, while making efforts to reform the global governance system to make it fairer and truly representative.

Since its meeting in 2006, the grouping has evolved from a concept into reality, becoming a key force promoting a multipolar world order. Accordingly, one of the main topics on the agenda of the Kazan summit was collaboration between BRICS member states and the Global South in order to build a better world marked by equality and justice.

Just as President Xi Jinping said in his important speech at the "BRICS Plus" leaders' dialogue in Kazan, Russia, on Oct 24, the collective rise of the Global South is a distinctive feature of the great transformation across the world. Global South countries marching together toward modernization is monumental in world history and unprecedented in human civilization.

The Kazan summit was important for several reasons. First, after its enlargement, BRICS has become a more important platform for the Global South to voice its concerns and needs, a platform that will endeavor to get the Global South its rightful due. This has attracted many emerging economies and developing countries to seek BRICS' membership.

## The emerging economies and developing countries are moving from the fringes to the center of the global economic governance system.

Second, Russia, which hosted the just-concluded summit, is under severe economic and financial sanctions from Western powers, prompting many to ask how Russia can promote BRICS' financial and monetary cooperation with other countries to not only ease its economic stress but also help the developing world to boost its development.

BRICS is not a political bloc or military alliance. It is a cooperative platform for emerging economies and developing countries. And it is through this platform that BRICS will help Russia ease its economic constraints and the developing countries boost their development.

The 2008 global financial crisis pushed the US and many other developed economies into recession. On the other hand, emerging economies, including China, by overcoming the effects of the financial crisis, became the major engines of global growth. While the share of the developed economies, represented by the G7, decreased in the global economy, the economic center of the world began shifting from the Global North to the Global South.

The BRICS cooperation platform has helped emerging economies gain prominence. The platform is devoted to promoting development and peace, as well as helping developing countries pursue modernization by deepening their trade and industrial cooperation. But modernization is both a common mission and challenge for countries, with development being their shared task and goal.

As modernization advances around the world and developing countries pursue modernization, the traditional center-periphery structure of countries is loosening and developing countries are gaining greater autonomy. The emerging economies and developing countries are moving from the fringes to the center of the global economic governance system.

BRICS aims to reform the global economic governance system to make it fairer, more just and truly representative, rather than building a new economic governance system. Therefore, it is inappropriate to compare BRICS with the G7, which wants to consolidate its hold on not only the global economic governance system but also the overall global governance system to serve its own interests.

The BRICS platform is open and inclusive. Although BRICS member states have differences, they seek common ground so that BRICS-led cooperation becomes a model for the rest of the world. While developed countries are more homogeneous in terms of their political and economic systems, BRICS member states, despite being diverse, are united in their common goal of achieving socioeconomic development and modernization. Respecting and embracing diversity is a key feature of BRICS' cooperation and a driving force of the grouping's growth.

BRICS will continue promoting a multipolar world order, offering new choices for Global South countries and injecting fresh vitality into the reform of the world order.

*The author is a professor at the School of International Relations, Sun Yat-sen University. The views don't necessarily present those of China Daily.*

Martin Sieff

## China, Finland building a bridge of science and hope

The four-day visit of Finnish President Alexander Stubb to China starting Monday offers great opportunities for Finland and a welcoming boost to bilateral scientific and trade ties for China. But perhaps most important, it signals China's continued efforts to build peaceful, constructive relations with the West at a time when international relations, especially between Russia and the United States over the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and between Iran and the United States over the Israel-Palestine conflict, have been hostile and dangerous.

The omens are propitious and the historical record encouraging for the Finnish president's visit, during which he held talks with Chinese leaders. China's Foreign Ministry said Finland was among the first Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China back in 1950 and it confirmed that relations between the two countries "are experiencing sound development".

Finland, with a population of only 5.6 million but impressive natural resources for its size, seeks investment from the vast Chinese economy, which for a quarter century now has enjoyed by far the largest and fastest growing industrial base in the world. China has been Finland's largest trading partner in Asia for many years and the bilateral trade volume reached \$8.2 billion in 2023.

Finland, though its own industry and population base is tiny by comparison, is a world leader in some fields of advanced technology and in developing economi-

## The entire history of Finland's global diplomacy and approach to world conflicts over the past three-quarters of a century, however, has been against all extreme and immoral courses of action.

cally sustainable systems for the 21st century. Helsinki has also signaled its eagerness to rapidly expand cooperation with Beijing in addressing the challenges posed by global climate change.

China now enjoys advanced scientific technologies and has thousands of companies with global investment potential and resources that dwarf those of even the leading European countries. Finland is eager to foster partnerships and to offer its own fresh approaches developed in a very different global environment.

Also, Finnish companies are eager to access and work with Chinese companies that are established global leaders in fields, ranging from sustainability to digital technologies, Finnish Chambers of Commerce China Chairman Juha Tuominen has said.

Finnish companies from other sectors such as healthcare, digitalization and consumer products, too, are optimistic about opportunities for expansion and cooperation in the colossal Chinese mar-

ketplace, Juha Tuominen said.

Most of all, Finland has enjoyed good diplomatic relations with China since 1950. The Finnish people and their leaders have never been prone to any of the waves of hysteria and xenophobia that have repeatedly swept the United States and that have now poisoned the relations of the US, the United Kingdom and NATO with Russia at every level.

Finland last year abandoned the historic neutrality that had served it so well since the end of World War II and ensured its continued peace, security and unrivaled prosperity and quality of life for its people. In April 2023, it eventually joined NATO.

The move was clearly made under immense and sustained pressure from the Joe Biden administration and the bipartisan foreign policy and national security consensus in Washington. But far from strengthening Finland's long-term security, it has dragged Helsinki into the crosshair of the Biden administration's alarming global confrontation with Russia.

Now, ironically, Finland's diplomats and politicians may find themselves asking Beijing to serve as a peace-fostering bridge with Russia even more than they might serve themselves as a bridge between China and the West.

At the very least, however, Finland's long low-key but always positive record or cordial and constructive relations with China should enable it to speak as an important voice of moderation and reason in the councils of NATO, which today are dominated by obsessive confronta-

tion, polarization and unremitting hostility and bias against all rational diplomatic and bilateral relations with both Moscow and Beijing.

Stubb is clearly aware of all these sinister crosscurrents, and his office announced in anticipation of the visit that he will discuss the Ukraine crisis as well as direct Sino-Finnish relations with his hosts.

Chinese officials are also certain to emphasize to Stubb the reckless stupidity of NATO's now repeatedly proclaimed plans to expand its global reach to confront Beijing on the US' side in the Western Pacific. Given the well-documented drainage of NATO's own European arsenals and capabilities in the service of Washington's determination to keep Ukraine armed and fighting in its hopeless conflict with Russia, these loudly proclaimed efforts to alienate and threaten China too can only be regarded as delusional insanity.

The entire history of Finland's global diplomacy and approach to world conflicts over the past three-quarters of a century, however, has been against all extreme and immoral courses of action. Stubb's visit to China, by contrast, should be welcomed as a sensible and constructive effort to build and preserve bridges of communication, cooperation and peace even in the most fraught and dangerous of times.

*The author is a senior fellow at the American University in Moscow. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*

## GLOBAL VIEWS

ERIK SOLHEIM

## Replacing win-lose with win-win

The summit in Kazan was a new chapter in global multilateralism, a major step toward a more powerful BRICS standing up for the Global South, and a true rules-based global order

One of the most hopeful developments in global politics this year was the announcement that China and India have struck a border deal which will ease tensions in the Himalayas. The deal will hopefully pave the way for more mutual trade and investments, resumed tourism and a better political dialogue.



Considering myself a friend of both India and China, I opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate. Maybe even traveling between the two countries will soon become easier if they reopen direct flights between Beijing and New Delhi, or between Mumbai and Shanghai. Better relations between the two Asian giants, which will dominate global politics in the 21st century, is a world-shaking positive development. It was no coincidence that this important deal was announced on the eve of the BRICS meeting in Kazan and followed up by a successful meeting, on the sidelines, between President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A week before the India-China rapprochement, Sri Lanka, a small but strategically significant nation, expressed its desire to join the BRICS, yet another signal of the broad appeal and relevance of the group. Many developing nations have already applied for membership; and many more are expected to follow.

The appeal of BRICS extends far beyond the original five members — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Last year's inclusion of major players such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab States and Saudi Arabia reflects the growing demand from nations across the Global South to join a multilateral institution that genuinely represents their interests and aspirations. Regional powers such as Türkiye have applied for membership, and Indonesia and Nigeria have expressed interest, further emphasizing the BRICS' widening influence.

The BRICS is becoming the forum for the Global South, embodying the aspirations of countries historically sidelined in global decision-making. This shift marks a departure from the global governance of the 19th and 20th centuries, dominated by the West, first by the colonial powers such as the United Kingdom and France, and later, by the United States. Now, in the 21st century, a new multipolar world is taking shape — one where multiple powers contribute to a much more prosperous and greener world, hopefully also a more stable and peaceful one.

What unites BRICS nations, despite

their differences in governance, geography, and levels of development, is their shared vision of establishing a global order which works for all. The BRICS has evolved from a platform for secondary powers into a collective voice for the Global South, helping to establish fairer, more inclusive global rules.

The world is facing multiple challenges — climate change and environment degradation, poverty and pandemics, crises in Ukraine, Palestine, Lebanon and Sudan. To handle these issues, we must establish a true rules-based international order. While Western powers often champion this ideal, in practice, the application of such "rules" has been inconsistent and hypocritical. Take, for example, the stark contrast in how sovereignty is treated: the West rightfully defends Ukraine's sovereignty, yet the decades-long occupation of Palestine has been largely ignored. The US has been involved in over 80 regime change operations in other nations, assassinations of leaders, support for military coups or financial support to US friendly political parties. This must stop, or every power will claim a similar "right".

This double standard extends to the global economic order as well. When Europe and the US face competition from China's electric vehicles, they respond with tariffs and levies. Yet, throughout the 20th century, the US dominated global markets with its own industrial "overcapacity". Why, then, is China's "overcapacity" in green sectors such as electric vehicles and solar panels seen as a threat? China is, in fact, providing exactly what the world needs — affordable, scalable green technology essential to our collective future.

When "overcapacity" once drove growth in the West, why should the same logic not apply to China today? Rather than resorting to protectionism, the West should focus on fostering innovation and healthy competition. Just as China welcomed Tesla's gigafactory in Shanghai, Western nations should invite Chinese companies like BYD and CATL, Tongwei and Goldwind to invest in Europe and America. This would foster innovation and create win-win scenarios, benefiting all parties as they transition to a green economy.

Yet, some powers, particularly the United States, continue to view global competition as a zero-sum game. But this mindset only perpetuates a harmful cycle. To move forward, the US must shift its approach. Success should not be measured by slowing each other down or by one side triumphing over the other. Instead, resilience and cooperation — not dominance — should guide us toward a more peaceful and stable world.

The unipolar moment of US domi-

nance after the Cold War was an exception, not the rule. In today's world, neither the US nor China or any other power can realistically achieve dominance. Innovation is unpredictable, and we cannot foresee how new technologies will reshape daily life or global conflicts. Ironically, the US' efforts to restrict Chinese companies from accessing advanced technologies could backfire, potentially stifling its own innovation while pushing developing countries to become more reliant on domestic suppliers and government support.

Over time the BRICS will empower the Global South by providing alternatives to such unfair trade practices. What the world needs now is a spirit of collaboration. The US and the Global South must remain interconnected, learning from one another, and advancing together. Cooperation, rather than confrontation, will pave the way for true progress. Win-lose must be replaced with win-win.

The BRICS will grow into a core institution of the Global South. While only the United Nations can set rules that are accepted by all, it is now frozen in systems established in a world still dominated by colonial powers. It's also very process-rather than outcome-focused and very poorly led. The UN desperately needs urgent reforms and BRICS nations can provide major inputs. The BRICS, alongside initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, is playing a crucial role in reshaping global governance.

Amid this global uncertainty, the BRICS emerges as a beacon of hope. It provides a powerful voice for the Global South, bringing together nations that, while diverse, share a common belief: a world governed by the same set of fair rules is one where all nations can prosper. Countries such as India, China and Brazil may not agree on everything, but they agree on this fundamental principle — no country should be above the rules, and only through fairness can we create more opportunities for shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and lasting peace.

The BRICS summit in Kazan was a major step toward a more powerful BRICS standing up for the Global South. It was a step toward a true rules-based global order with mutual respect and real dialogue.

*The author is vice-president of the Green Belt and Road Coalition and former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

BENYAMIN POGHOSYAN

## Mutual economic ties are assets, not liabilities

Both the EU and China have grievances over their trade ties, but the way forward is through direct and frank dialogue, not sanctions or trade restrictions

As the global order passes through a turbulent era of transition from a unipolar world to a more diverse and complex security architecture, relations



between the world's leading powers become crucial in maintaining global stability and prosperity. In this context, relations between China and the European Union play a significant role in promoting peace and security in greater Eurasia. The EU has faced unprecedented challenges unseen in the last three decades — the large-scale war in Eastern Europe, growing domestic polarization over migration and other issues, the negative impact of cutting economic ties with Russia, and the stagnation of living standards. All these developments put enormous pressure on the EU, bringing political and economic instability. The results of the June 2024 EU Parliamentary elections proved that a growing number of Europeans were unsatisfied with the status quo and demanded change.

Meanwhile, as competition between great powers is growing, the issue of competitiveness takes center stage as a critical pillar of ensuring security and stability. Recently, the European Commission tasked Mario Draghi — former European Central Bank president, former Italian prime minister and one of Europe's great economic minds — to prepare a report of his vision on the future of European competitiveness.

In the report published in September 2024, Draghi came up with a bunch of suggestions, arguing that without serious and urgent steps, the EU may lose its competitiveness, which will endanger millions of Europeans' way of life. Starting from the transatlantic divide in productivity — due to the weakness of the EU's high-tech industry — Draghi's report recognized that European enterprises were caught in a "middle-tech trap". It means that most large EU companies were in middle-tech sectors and remained languishing there because they did not want to leave the field they knew. For example, the current

It is well known that the EU has many concerns over its economic relations with China, including the fair-trade rules, access to Chinese markets, and state subsidies for Chinese products, and these concerns should be discussed and addressed. China also has its list of grievances on the EU.

travails of the German automotive sector clearly illustrated how this was a losing strategy.

Besides domestic reforms and investments in critical sectors, the EU needs a clear vision for its foreign economic relations. As relations with Russia are caught in geopolitical turbulence and mainly depend on the course of the crisis in Ukraine, where the EU has no decisive role to play, the relations with other major economic powers, in particular with the United States and China, will be crucial for reviving the EU's economy. The US is a traditional EU ally, as many EU member countries are NATO members protected by the US' military might. However, in the economic sphere, the US often acts not as an ally but as a competitor. In recent years, the US adopted several legislations, including the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 — which authorized roughly \$280 billion in new funding to boost domestic research and the manufacture of semiconductors in the US — and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 — which enhanced or created more than 20 tax incentives for clean energy and manufacturing. This legislation triggered a capital flow from Europe to the US, making the US a more attractive place for investments.

Simultaneously, the US offered the EU to join its trade

war with China and put restrictive measures on EU-China economic ties. From the US perspective, a trade war with China, especially the restrictions on the export of high technology products to China, such as advanced microchips, is part of the US strategy to contain China's economic growth. From the US perspective, the negative impact on China will be higher if the EU joins efforts with the US.

However, as the EU already struggles with the ripple effects of economic sanctions on Russia, and the US takes steps to increase its economic competitiveness compared to the EU, will the trade war with China benefit Europe? The most likely answer is negative. The EU should not simultaneously cut itself economically off from Russia and China. The biggest European export-oriented economies need export markets, and China is the biggest export market for many well-known European companies. Meanwhile, European companies need access to the vast Chinese production base. Despite many talks about decoupling or de-risking from China, many European companies still have strong connections with China, and cutting ties will only worsen the situation in the European economy.

It is well known that the EU has many concerns over its economic relations with China, including the fair-trade rules, access to Chinese markets, and state subsidies for Chinese products, and these concerns should be discussed and addressed. China also has its list of grievances on the EU. However, the only way to discuss and overcome those difficulties is through direct and frank dialogue, not sanctions or trade restrictions. As the EU looks forward to increasing its global competitiveness, and China wants to keep its growth levels, mutual economic ties are assets, not liabilities, and should be nurtured and not destroyed.

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YIN YIYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## BUSINESS

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EXPO

## Upcoming CIIE bringing benchmark tech to China

Foreign pharma, medtech firms among major beneficiaries

By WANG KEJU  
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The China International Import Expo will continue to cement its status as the global launchpad for new products, technologies and services, attracting a growing number of companies eager to capitalize on the immense potential of the Chinese market and grow a global network of collaborative partners.

This year's expo, the seventh edition to be held in Shanghai from Nov 5 to 10, will feature the debut of more than 400 representative new products, technologies and services across a wide range of cutting-edge sectors, including high-end equipment, advanced materials, marine engineering, biotechnology and innovative agricultural technologies.

The speed at which exhibited products have been converted into top-selling items has exceeded the expectations of many participants, while the event's ability to connect global companies with prospective partners has grown tremendously, said Bai Ming, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Intuitive Fosun, a robotics-assisted medical device manufacturer founded by US company Intuitive Surgical and Shanghai-based Fosun Pharma, will showcase a new transcranial magnetic resonance guided ultrasound device during the event.

This innovative technology is poised to provide noninvasive surgical treatment options for Parkinson's disease, which is difficult to manage with medication alone, said Wu Yifang, chairman of Fosun Pharma.



Exhibitors to the 7th CIIE introduce their products during a preparatory meeting in July. FANG ZHE / XINHUA

Exhibiting at the CIIE allows businesses to leverage favorable policies and incentives to aid in the introduction and commercialization of their new products and technologies, Wu said.

The company's ion robotic bronchoscopy, a robotics-assisted minimally invasive biopsy system first showcased at the CIIE in 2019, has now received regulatory approval and entered commercial deployment after a rigorous review process.

The CIIE has not only helped streamline the overall process of bringing innovative products to market, but has also created numerous opportunities for companies to drive their continued expansion in

China, Wu added.

China's substantial imports of a wide range of products, from premium consumer goods to advanced equipment, have also served to satisfy the needs of both industrial and consumption upgrades, said Xu Hongcai, deputy director of the China Association of Policy Science's Economic Policy Committee.

China's imports climbed 4.1 percent year-on-year to 13.71 trillion yuan (\$1.92 trillion) in the first three quarters, said the General Administration of Customs.

The debut of groundbreaking new products and technologies during the CIIE has also enabled participants to forge valuable collaborative partnerships.

The CIIE is a great platform that fosters global collaboration and opens new opportunities in the Chinese market. Six consecutive years of participation reflects German pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim's confidence in driving accelerated innovation in China, said Mohammed Tawil, president and CEO of Boehringer Ingelheim Greater China.

"We aim to leverage the CIIE to advance various partnerships on open innovation. While advancing our own growth, we are focused on contributing to China's high-quality development and deepening cooperation on innovation between China and the rest of the world," Tawil said.

## Latest medical solutions head to Shanghai

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai  
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Multinational pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies will bring a variety of innovative medical solutions that integrate cutting-edge technologies and clinical insights to the seventh China International Import Expo to be held in Shanghai in early November.

They said they are resolute in bringing the top echelon of innovative products and technologies to China at the fastest speed possible, aiming to help promote the innovation and development of techniques regarding disease diagnosis and treatment, and contribute to the country's medical and health undertakings.

Siemens Healthineers' flagship artificial intelligence-empowered cardiovascular ultrasound system, ACUSON Origin, will make its China debut at CIIE. The German company said that ACUSON Origin's AI capabilities are trained on the world's largest cardiac image database with 2 billion cardiac images, providing more than 5,600 AI-automated ultrasound measurements.

ACUSON Origin's fully integrated AI solutions, high-definition image quality, convenient intelligent operation and diversified examination methods, reduce differences between doctors, improve accuracy and consistency of diagnostic results, and help ultrasound users accurately evaluate various cardiovascular diseases, said the company.

Also, to address the challenge of coronary heart diseases, Siemens Healthineers has worked with a domestic innovator and will launch the world's first integrated multimodality therapy platform at CIIE.

The platform unprecedentedly combines the intra-vascular images generated through Digital Subtraction Angiography (DSA) and Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) to provide clinicians with comprehensive vascular information ranging from anatomy to

functional medicine, while treating a coronary heart disease. It empowers clinicians to complete precise, individualized heart stent surgeries, said the company.

The United States-based Abbott said it will unveil AVEIR™, the world's first dual-chamber (DR) leadless pacemaker system, at CIIE.

Through Abbott's proprietary i2i™ (implant-to-implant) communication technology, AVEIR DR devices provide synchronized cardiac pacing between two leadless pacemakers.

During the CIIE, the company will also launch FreeStyle Libre 2 System, a sensor-based system that provides real-time glucose readings to a smartphone without the need for finger pricks for diabetes patients. Enhanced features of this upgraded system include a Bluetooth connection and customizable real-time glucose alarms for more informed action.

French pharmaceutical company Sanofi's booth will feature its global R&D pipeline including 12 potential blockbuster products and seven transformative therapies in the field of immunology.

They include Tzield, the world's first and sole therapy that can postpone the onset of type 1 diabetes for nearly three years, and Dupixent, the world's first approved targeted medicine for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Sino-French diplomatic relations. As one of the first multinational companies to enter China more than four decades ago, Sanofi has brought the country over 60 innovative medicines and vaccines, addressing seven of China's 10 most life-threatening diseases, said Paul Hudson, CEO of Sanofi.

"China is one of the largest Sanofi markets today. Also, we have a deep appreciation for the scale and speed of innovation in China, and we look forward to supporting the growth of the world-class healthcare ecosystem here to benefit patients globally," said Hudson.

## Briefly

## Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 107 pips to 7.1390 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

## Pickup truck sales up 3% in September

Sales of pickup trucks in China rose 3 percent year-on-year in September, driven by surging market demand, said the China Passenger Car Association. Some 45,000 pickup trucks were sold in the country last month, surging 17 percent month-on-month. Exports of such vehicles accounted for 52 percent of the country's total pickup truck sales, or 27 percent of overall truck sales.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## Dynamic supply-demand factors to lift steel sector profits

By LI JIAYING  
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As China's steel industry is facing declining demand and tightening margins, a balanced approach to production and a focus on emerging consumption sectors are likely to stabilize the market and ensure sustainable growth, a top industry association said.

"China's steel industry has entered a phase of 'stock optimization,' with a persistent 'three-highs and three-lows' scenario — high output, high costs, high exports alongside low demand, low prices and low profitability," said Jiang Wei, vice-president and secretary-general of the China Iron and Steel Association (CISA), at the organization's third-quarter data release last week.

Throughout the first three quarters, domestic demand showed further signs of weakening, leading to a slight dip in iron and steel production.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, China's crude steel production totaled 768 million metric tons in the first nine months, down 3.6 percent year-on-year, with pig iron produc-

tion at 644 million tons, down by 4.6 percent.

Although there has been a decline in output, apparent steel consumption fell even more sharply, keeping steel prices at low levels. Combined with the challenge of volatile raw material costs, industry profits have been significantly affected, with CISA reporting a 56.39 percent year-on-year drop in profits among key steel enterprises to 28.97 billion yuan (\$4.06 billion) in the first three quarters.

"The demand for steel products lacks price elasticity — excessive price cuts will not stimulate its consumption. As the industry transitions into a phase of stock optimization, it is crucial to maintain dynamic supply-demand balance to sustain reasonable profitability," said Shi Hongwei, deputy secretary-general of CISA.

Shi added that any impulse to ramp up production during slight market improvements would exacerbate supply-demand imbalances, suppress prices, and risk pushing the industry back into a "more production, more losses" cycle.

CISA also called on industry players to align with the central government's guidelines to avoid vicious competition, practice

mutual self-discipline and maintain market stability, therefore reducing operational risks, and ultimately achieving high-quality and effective development.

Looking ahead, the CISA forecasts a general decline in steel demand with notable shifts within segments. According to the World Steel Association's recent outlook, China's steel demand is expected to decrease by 3 percent in 2024 and 1 percent in 2025.

"Demand will continue to diversify across product types, with construction steel expected to see a slight marginal recovery, while manufacturing remains the key growth driver, particularly in emerging sectors such as new energy, high-end equipment manufacturing and photovoltaic products," Jiang said.

Jiang added that the steel demand structure is gradually shifting toward the manufacturing sector, which, along with construction, currently accounts for 48 percent and 52 percent, respectively, of total steel consumption.

By the end of this year, the balance is expected to reach parity, and manufacturing demand may even take a larger share going forward, he said.



Mounds of iron ore at Rizhao Port, Shandong province. AN BAIMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## State utility gives helping hand in Xinjiang's green transition

By ZHUANG QIANGE  
and PANG BO

To aid in China's dual goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060, the country's largest power utility is helping enterprises boost technological innovation, in a bid to bolster the green transition.

In the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, State Grid — a State-

owned enterprise — has decided to strengthen cooperation with local governments, research institutions and related enterprises, jointly promoting technological innovation and industrial upgrades, thereby contributing greatly to its green transformation.

In the city of Kuitun, CN Green Electricity launched a 1.1 million kilowatt new energy project on Nov 10, 2023, a key initiative under

Xinjiang's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), in order to help in the area's green transformation.

Its four substations, with respective installed capacities of 80,000 kW, 480,000 kW, 210,000 kW and 240,000 kW, jointly form a massive clean energy matrix, meeting the demand for an additional 1,000 megawatts of photovoltaic power in the region.

To help the project, staff members from the State Grid Kuitun

Power Supply Co decided to actively monitor and support its technological innovation, as it covers a large area (of 2,100 hectares) and has advanced technical capability.

Zhang Gaoju, head of the local power supplier's power station operations and maintenance center, said the company is monitoring its construction, has thoroughly inspected its installation angles and the spacing of photovoltaic panels

as well as the operational status of its inverters, thus optimizing the performance of its photovoltaic equipment and eliminating potential risks.

He said the company's team of technical experts has also conducted rigorous reviews of the photovoltaic station's internal lines, accuracy of metering devices and overall system performance, in addition to providing on-site equipment maintenance tips and quick trouble-

shooting techniques.

CN Green Electricity has set up branches in many areas in Xinjiang, including Altay, Burqin and Barkol, which are mainly engaged in power generation, power transmission, power supply and distribution businesses as well as related technical services.

Zhang said the move highlights State Grid Kuitun's active role in promoting Xinjiang's energy transformation, thus contributing to China's dual-carbon goals.

Contact the writers at zhuangqiange@chinadaily.com.cn

# BUSINESSFOCUS

## Light meals, full flavors for healthier lives

Evolution of wholesome eating habits now a journey of self-discovery for many

BEIJING — As the warm afternoon sun slanted in, the clamor faded to a quiet hush in a courtyard lush with trees and flowers in a coastal community of Xiamen, East China's Fujian province.

Geng Xue, 55, runs a light food eatery at a three-and-a-half-storey villa. While many peers woo white-collar workers and fitness enthusiasts in downtown buildings with traditional light dishes like boiled chicken and raw salad, Geng's eatery stands apart. The signboard above her semi-dome entrance proudly reads "Hot Chinese Light Meals".

Geng's menu presents a fresh take on local cuisine, offering lighter versions of beloved dishes like soy sauce chicken and monk fruit-braised beef, all prepared to retain both flavor and nutritional value. "Farewell to the days of 'eating grass'. Warm dishes go better with Chinese stomachs," a customer noted on the eatery's Dianping page, a popular review platform akin to Yelp in China.

Health and weight awareness have taken center stage in China in recent years, as the world's second-largest economy looks to address the "sweet burden" of affluence: obesity. Today, more than half of all adults in the country are overweight or obese, a figure that could reach 65.3 percent by 2030, official data calculated in 2020.

This trend has spurred a national focus on wellness foods. A bold estimate released at a July industry conference in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, projected the market for sugar-free and low-sugar foods in China will exceed 900 billion yuan (\$126.4 billion) by 2027.

### Appeal of familiarity

The market, however, was initially dominated by Western-style dishes — salad loaded with leafy greens and topped with lean proteins. For many in a country renowned for its culinary diversity like China, such offerings left much to be desired.

Deng Linyu, a dance major in her junior year in Kunming, Southwest China's Yunnan province, tried to shed weight in the summer of 2022 by following a strict regimen of daily workouts and meals of whole-grain bread, greens and zero-fat sauces.

After losing three kilograms, however, she found herself suffering from stomach ache and mood swings. Deng returned to traditional Chinese food while cutting back on bubble tea and snacks. She successfully shed another two kilograms. "Losing weight on a traditional diet is easier on my body," Deng said.

Economics is also a factor. A salad featuring avocado jam, boiled egg, vegetables and healthy rice costs 68 yuan at a Western-style eatery in Beijing. For many, that's a splurge



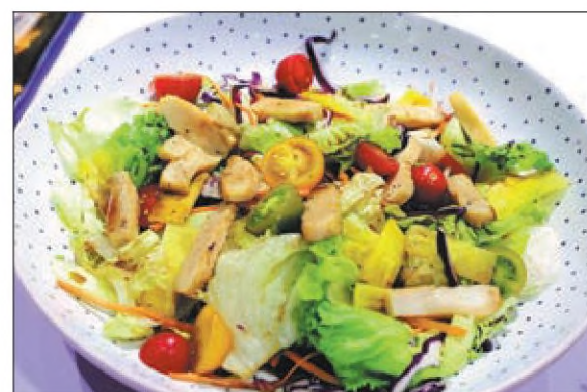
Customers enjoy *malatang* at a store in Tianshui, Gansu province, in April. MA XIPING / XINHUA

considering the average annual salary for private-sector employees was 68,340 yuan in 2023.

Industry insiders challenged the stereotype that "light food" has to be bland. Whether food is considered "light", they asserted, is not determined by ingredients, quantity or preparation, but rather by its calories. Weight control does not have to be an ascetic process.

Almost overnight, stir-fries and dumplings featuring a cornucopia of familiar proteins and vegetables — now prepared with reduced oil, salt, sugar and carbohydrates — have appeared on many menus. Even beloved holiday treats like Mid-Autumn Festival mooncakes and Dragon Boat Festival *zongzi* (sticky rice dumplings) have enjoyed a wellness makeover, featuring lighter fillings and bite-sized portions for calorie-conscious celebrators.

Attune to the market trend, Geng diversified her nutrition business. She rebranded a noodle shop into a light food eatery in Kunming in 2023, followed by a second location in Xiamen in late February.



A light salad is presented during a food expo in Shanghai in August 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Seven months into the operation of her Xiamen shop, she is serving 40 to 60 meals a day, priced at around 30 yuan each, gleaning a monthly profit of roughly 10,000 yuan. She expects a larger chunk of future profits in light meals from training programs, which are priced

at roughly 4,500 yuan on her shop on WeChat, Tencent's all-in-one social media app.

"In five to 10 years, I believe more people will embrace my ideas," Geng said, referring to the growing preference for fresh ingredients, lighter Chinese cooking methods, and the

view that food is part of a healthy lifestyle rather than just a way to fuel up between work. This is why she chose to establish her light food business in communities rather than corporate offices.

### Affordable alternatives

Wellness isn't limited to restaurants on high streets or neighborhoods. For fans of traditional street foods, fast food options are evolving, too.

In 2023, domestic fast-food chain Home Original Chicken introduced a weight-control menu that quickly went viral, sparking a craze among young people. The brand also lists calories against its main dishes on food delivery platforms like Eleme.

Xu Lan (pseudonym), a college teacher in Kunming, is a fan of *malatang* — a dish traditionally featuring fresh vegetables and meat cooked in a spicy, flavorful broth. It's a great spot for her and her friends to sit, chat and catch up with each other from time to time.

"I go for a light broth, swap meatballs for options like basa fish or chicken breast, and add low-calorie, nutrient-dense sides like lotus root, Chinese yam and leafy greens, pretty much the same way I cook at home," said the 42-year-old.

In fact, homemade dishes, like scrambled eggs with tomatoes, can be just as enjoyable when prepared with a lighter touch, said Xiaodou, a 39-year-old employee at a bank in South China's Guangdong province.

She lost 20 kg over seven months by reducing carbs, oil and salt intake and keeping a consistent dinner routine. Rather than following market trends blindly, she has been gradually replacing unhealthy ingredients in her diet with healthier ones. "Some of these replacements are actually more economical," Xiaodou said.

The evolution of light meals in China reflects people's continued pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, and has become a journey of self-discovery for many, said experts. The trend also underscores young people's growing identity with homegrown culture and their confidence in it, they added.

XINHUA

# Join hearts, work together!



CHINA DAILY

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## WORLD

# Gaza facing famine threat, warns WFP

More border openings needed to deliver critical supplies amid tight restrictions

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong  
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The World Food Programme has warned that the dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza could escalate into famine, appealing for more secure and functional entry points into the war-torn area to enable much-needed aid to flow in.

The renewed alarm came a day after the Israeli parliament approved new legislation banning the United Nations Palestine relief agency, UNRWA, and two weeks after the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification projected that 1.95 million people in Gaza, or 91 percent of the population, would face acute food insecurity.

Restrictions on humanitarian aid coming into Gaza are severe. This month, only 5,000 metric tons of food were delivered to the enclave, amounting to just 20 percent of basic food assistance for the 1.1 million people who depend on the World Food Programme's lifesaving support.

The WFP said it currently has about 94,000 tons of food — enough to feed 1 million people for four months — ready to go to Gaza, with 46,596 tons positioned in the Israeli port of Ashdod, Egypt and Jordan. It stands ready to bring the urgently needed supplies but “(needs) more border crossing points to be open and for them to be secure.”

The WFP also reiterated that UNRWA is “indispensable” in providing lifesaving aid and social services in Gaza, responding to the Israeli parliament's move.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who is banned in Israel, sent a letter on Tuesday to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, outlining “the issues of international law that have been raised” by the new Israeli legislation.

The UN also stressed that the Israeli government will have to meet the needs of Palestinian refugees under international law if it cuts ties with UNRWA.

Separately, UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini has written to the president of the UN General Assembly calling for “decisive intervention” to help his agency carry out its mandate

in the occupied Palestinian territory, Al Jazeera reported.

Lazzarini said the rules-based international order “is crumbling in a repetition of the horrors that led to the establishment of the United Nations, and in violation of commitments to prevent their recurrence”, adding the attacks on UNRWA “are an integral part of this disintegration”.

Abdalfatah Asqool, a former international law lecturer at the University of Palestine, told China Daily that Israel has been “using hunger as a weapon against civilians in the Gaza Strip” since October last year by banning humanitarian aid entering the region, which “clearly violates the rules of international humanitarian law”.

“Doubtlessly this Israeli law is violating the rules of international humanitarian law. As the occupation authority, during the armed conflict, (it) is obliged to reduce civilian suffering and facilitate the mission of humanitarian agencies, especially the UN agencies,” Asqool said.

“Even if the Israelis claim that they will handle the humanitarian relief, this doesn't legitimize their law. And they have no right to do so.”

## Fresh bombardments

On the ground, Israel pummeled the Gaza Strip with new bombardments that killed at least 20 people on Wednesday, Palestinian medics said, a day after one of the deadliest single strikes of the year-old conflict killed scores in the north of the enclave.

Eight of Wednesday's victims were killed in a strike in the Salateen area of Beit Lahiya in northern Gaza. The area is near where medics said at least 93 people were killed or missing on Tuesday in an Israeli strike.

Meanwhile, a Hamas official said on Wednesday the group had not received any proposals for a Gaza cease-fire but would discuss any ideas that include an Israeli withdrawal.

“We are prepared to engage with any ideas or proposals presented to us, provided they ultimately lead to an end to the war and a withdrawal by the army from the Strip,” the official told AFP.

Agencies contributed to this story.

## Riding high



A camel guide leads a tourist through the Giza Plateau as a skydiver soars above the area's iconic pyramids, including the Pyramid of Menkaure, during the Egypt International Skydiving Festival on Tuesday. AMR ABDALLAH DALSH / REUTERS

## Envoy calls for Kosovo peace talks

By MINGMEI LI in New York  
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China's top envoy to the United Nations on Wednesday emphasized the importance of dialogue and consultation for achieving regional peace and stability in Kosovo.

“The issue of Kosovo bears on the peace and stability in the Balkans and Europe as a whole. China's position on the Kosovo issue is consistent and clear. We believe that any unilateral action will not contribute to the settlement of the Kosovo issue. Nor will it be conducive to regional peace and stability,” Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, said at a Security Council briefing.

China is ready to work with all parties concerned to make continued efforts to enhance dialogue, engagement and peaceful coexistence among the ethnic communities of the region and promote an early political settlement of the Kosovo issue, he said.

Fu said all parties should adhere to the framework of Council Resolution 1244, aiming for a mutually acceptable political solution through dialogue and consultation while respecting Serbia's “sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity”.

“Today's changing and turbulent world cannot afford more upheavals.

Reality tells us that if security disputes are allowed to accumulate, they will eventually lead to the outbreak of a crisis,” Fu said. “Given the region's history of tragic wars, the international community has the responsibility to work together to explore the building of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture and prevent the Balkans from being plunged into turmoils again.”

Fu listed recent actions by Kosovo authorities — such as banning the Serbian dinar, closing Serb-run institutions, conducting violent searches of Serbs in northern Kosovo, and planning to open the Ibar River Bridge — as “unilateral actions” that adversely affect the livelihoods and security of Serbs, leading to heightened fear and confrontation and an increase in violent incidents in northern Kosovo.

China expressed deep concern about the situation and urged Kosovo authorities to cease unilateral actions, returning immediately to the path of dialogue and consultation, Fu said. He emphasized that the Kosovo Force, a NATO-led international force, should genuinely respect Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and act in ways that support peace and stability in the Balkans, Fu said.

“Tolerance, reconciliation and harmonious coexistence among all communities are not only a prerequisite

for the stability in Kosovo but also serve the long-term and fundamental interests of all parties,” Fu said.

Fu cited the UN secretary-general's report, which indicated frequent instances of intimidation and arrests of Serbs by Kosovo authorities, as well as a persistent lack of Serb representation in northern Kosovo's municipal institutions, which he said is resulting in repeated violations of their fundamental and legitimate rights and interests.

“We urge the Kosovo authorities to put people first and put reconciliation first and resolve differences through pragmatic and constructive dialogue and negotiation,” Fu said.

Fu added that the new EU leadership should maintain neutrality on the Kosovo issue and use its offices “in a fair and impartial manner”.

He also urged EU parties to continue discussions toward a political resolution, emphasizing that Kosovo authorities should respect and implement existing commitments, particularly regarding the establishment of the Serb community municipalities as outlined in the 2013 Brussels Agreement, rather than introducing new demands and conditions.

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) plays an important role in maintaining stability and promoting national reconciliation, Fu said.

## Mercury risk found in Europe's canned tuna

By JONATHAN POWELL

in London

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Mercury contamination in canned tuna sold across major European markets has reached worrying levels, with some samples containing four times the legal limit, French environmental groups said on Tuesday.

According to a new report from the Paris-based NGO Bloom, which focuses on preserving the marine environment, and consumer rights organization Foodwatch, tests revealed mercury contamination in all 148 canned tuna samples purchased in France, Germany, England, Spain and Italy.

More than half of the samples exceeded the mercury safety limit of 0.3 milligrams per kilogram, the standard typically applied to other fish, they warned.

The two organizations are urging retailers and governments to take immediate action, including reducing the permitted levels of mercury in tuna products, Agence France-Presse reported.

“What we end up with on our dinner plates is a colossal risk to public health that's not considered seriously,” Karine Jacquemart, CEO of Foodwatch France, said at a news briefing this week.

Europeans consume an average of 2.8 kg of tuna annually, primarily in canned form, which according to Bloom contains two to three times more mercury than fresh tuna. The European standard currently allows a maximum mercury level of one part per million, Euronews reported.

“We won't give up until we have a more protective European standard,” Jacquemart said.

Bloom claimed that the current mercury threshold was established to ensure 95 percent of caught tuna could be marketed. That is the reason why tuna, among the most contaminated species, is given maximum tolerance in mercury three times higher than less-contaminated species, it said.

## 'No health reason'

The two organizations argued that there is no health reason to justify different mercury standards between tuna and other fish species. “Mercury is not less toxic if it's ingested through tuna, only the concentration of mercury counts,” they said.

The European Food Safety Authority permits a weekly intake of 1.3 micrograms of methylmercury per kg of body weight — significantly higher than the United States threshold of 0.7, the organizations said.

Methylmercury is the most common mercury form when it comes to food and it is classified as “possibly carcinogenic to humans”, meaning it could have the potential to cause cancer, Euronews reported.

Julie Guterma, who headed the 18-month study for Bloom, challenged the existing standards, saying: “If we apply the maximum threshold set out in European regulations, anyone weighing more than 79 kg is at risk after consuming one portion. So what's the point of these standards?”



Palestinians wait in line at an UNRWA clinic in Deir al-Balah to receive medication and medical treatment on Tuesday.

ASHRAF AMRA VIA GETTY IMAGES

## More than 14m displaced in Sudan: UN

KHARTOUM — The conflict in Sudan has displaced more than 14 million people, or about 30 percent of the population, since it broke out in April last year, creating the world's largest displacement crisis this year, the International Organization for Migration said on Tuesday.

“The (internal) displacement number has hit 11 million. That's up 200,000 just since September,” the United Nations agency's director-general, Amy Pope, said.

“Another 3.1 million people have traveled across borders to flee the fighting. In total, nearly 30 percent of Sudan's population has been displaced.”

More than half are women and more than one-fourth are children under 5 years old, she said.

“The scale of the displacement and the humanitarian needs are growing every day. Frankly, half of the population now needs help,” she said, noting that they have no access to shelter, clean drinking water, or healthcare.

She highlighted the cost of the displacement crisis, calling for “the guns in Sudan to fall silent”.

The UN this week warned that almost 25 million people require humanitarian assistance, with more than 750,000 people suffering from “catastrophic” food insecurity.

The deadly conflict in Sudan broke out in April last year when tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces escalated to violence in the capital Khartoum and spread out across the country.

More than 24,000 people have died, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, a group monitoring the conflict.

Most recently, intense fighting broke out in east-central Sudan, where 124 people were killed in attacks by RSF fighters.

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## First lady dons panda costume at Bidens' last Halloween event

US President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, who dressed as a giant panda, hosted trick-or-treaters on the White House South Lawn for the last time on Wednesday. Earlier this year, the first lady participated in the Washington National Zoo's announcement that pandas would be returning to Washington. The pandas arrived in the nation's capital two weeks ago, and Jill Biden donned the panda suit on Wednesday as a “welcoming gesture”, the White House said. In a video posted on May 29 to announce the expected arrival of the panda pair “later this year”, the first lady enthusiastically clutched a toy panda that someone threw to her. AP - CHINA DAILY PHOTOS BY NATHAN HOWARD / REUTERS