

Fatal strikes

Dozens killed in Gaza as truce talks resume in Qatar WORLD, PAGE 9



Renewals and trade-ins boost consumption BUSINESS, PAGE 7



Double the fun

After finding fame on reality show, twins to hit road with comedy acts LIFE, PAGE 15

# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

## Salvaging what remains



Residents dig through mounds of mud on Saturday to retrieve personal belongings after a landslide triggered by tropical storm Trami flattened homes and killed several people in Talisay, Batangas province, Philippines. AARON FAVILA/AP PHOTO See story, page 5

## More stimulus policies eyed to boost economy

Expanding investment, spurring consumption, stabilizing real estate market crucial, experts say

By OUYANG SHIJIA and WANG KEJU

China will step up countercyclical adjustments of its macro policies to bolster economic recovery in the fourth quarter, which will lay a solid foundation for achieving the annual growth target of around 5 percent this year, said officials and economists.

Investors are closely watching for clues on new incremental policies as the recently announced stimulus package significantly boosted market confidence and expectations, which has shown the firm determination of policymakers to tackle pressing issues such as lukewarm domestic demand and housing woes facing the broader economy.

Economists said that China will likely introduce soon a new round of incremental policies, with a key focus on expanding effective investment, spurring consumption and stabilizing the real estate market.

Vice-Minister of Finance Liao Min highlighted China's powerful stimulus package during the World Bank's 110th Development Committee meeting on Friday in Washington, DC, according to a statement posted on Sunday on the ministry's website.

Liao said that China will intensify countercyclical adjustments of fiscal policy, with a series of strong measures implemented to resolve local government debt risks, stabilize the real estate market, increase the income of key groups, enhance people's livelihoods, and drive large-scale equipment upgrades and trade-in deals for consumer goods.

By leveraging government spending to stimulate social investment and consumption, effective demand will be increased, he said.

Liao added that China is confident of achieving its annual growth target of around 5 percent this year, which will continue to inject impetus into global economic growth.

Zou Yunhan, deputy director of the Macroeconomic Research Office at the State Information Center's Department of Economic Forecasting, said, "China's economy will likely pick up in the fourth quarter, propelled by the incremental policy package, ongoing reform efforts and intensified steps to boost technological innovation."

The Finance Ministry said that China expressed concerns about the tariff hikes imposed by the United States during a meeting held on Friday between the two countries' economic working groups in Washington.

The two sides had in-depth, practical and constructive talks on the macroeconomic situations and policies of the two countries, response to global challenges and cooperation to help low-income countries cope with liquidity challenges, and the next step of communication arrangements, the ministry said.

Jin Xu, chairman of the China Association of International Trade, said the US' efforts to "decouple and sever industrial and supply chains" and build "small yards with high fences" will ultimately harm US businesses and global industrial and supply chains.

China, with its robust technological capabilities, solid industrial foundation and strong government support, is well-positioned to overcome any technological blockades, he said, adding, "Whether in case of chips or artificial intelligence, I firmly believe China will make breakthroughs."

Zou, from the State Information Center, said that China is working to lead in the new round of industrial, scientific and technological revolution.

"I believe many companies' innovations, including innovations on the demand side, will further stimulate the internal driving force of the economy," she said. "With the stimulus package taking effect and the

See Economy, page 3

## WORLD WATCH

By Rana Mohamed

## Middle East an important area for nation

The just-concluded 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, saw the deepening of global cooperation, with China's Middle East policy advancing regional stability as part of its broader foreign policy to support development across the Global South.

The Middle East has been of great importance to China, and is high on the country's foreign policy agenda. It is one of the most geopolitically important regions in the world. That China pays great attention to the Middle East is evident from the nature of China's political, economic, commercial, cultural and technological cooperation with the countries of the region.

China aims to contribute to the stability of the Middle East by deepening economic cooperation with the region, which hopefully may serve as a counterbalance to the ongoing conflicts, and even help end them.

China's economic cooperation with other countries and regions is based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence including mutual benefit, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, as well as the principle of resolving crises and political problems through political means.

See Policy, page 3

## High entry barriers mark AI jobs

By CHENG SI chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn

As artificial intelligence continues to make headlines, Chinese internet companies are busy scouting for talent that can take them to the forefront of this transformational technology. The domestic job market is in the process of adapting to this new environment, which in turn is raising the eligibility threshold for job seekers, experts said.

A joint report released recently by Peking University's National School of Development and recruitment portal Zhaopin shows that AI-related job openings surged in the first half of the year.

Positions related to natural language processing increased 111 percent year-on-year in the first six months on Zhaopin, while those related to deep learning increased 61 percent. The average monthly salary for these jobs was around 24,000 yuan (\$3,370).

Hu Jiayin, an associate professor at the National School of Development, noted that it is not easy to get AI-related jobs, because they have higher entry threshold.

"Several positions related to natural language processing and deep learning have higher requirements in terms of education and work experience. The eligibility criteria have been rising, so it's necessary to get higher education degrees and richer work experience if job seekers wish for employment in the AI sector," she said.

In 2022, United States-based OpenAI's chatbot ChatGPT and other large language models — AI systems that are capable of

comprehending and generating human language by processing vast amounts of text data — caught the domestic job market off guard.

The massive influence of AI has already reduced some clerical and customer service-based positions, Zhaopin said, and the joint report concluded that job seekers must continuously improve their skill set in order to remain competitive in the rapidly changing employment market.

Another report, released by the World Bank earlier this month, also mentioned the impact of AI on jobs, particularly in East Asia and the Pacific region.

"Displacement effects are beginning to be felt in occupations involving primarily routine cognitive tasks that involve standard optimization and low social interaction, and gradually to occupations involving nonroutine cognitive tasks," the World Bank report said.

"Malaysia and China stand out as countries with a relatively high share of people employed in non-routine cognitive tasks who may be equipped to benefit from complementarities with AI," it added.

Xu Yifan, 27, a postgraduate student at Shanghai University of Engineering Science, said he is optimistic about a career in the AI sector because he is focusing on the research of federated learning, a state-of-the-art AI tool mainly used in data security and distributed data processing.

"It's undeniable that fast-developing AI technologies have greatly shocked traditional industries and the job market. I

think the knowledge and skills I've acquired, especially in federated learning, will work to my advantage. AI is not just a technology-driven innovation tool, it is also a force reshaping society and the economy," he said.

Xu said that to cope with the everchanging revolution brought by AI, it is necessary for him to keep learning. "New algorithms, tools and applications come up all the time, which require us to be learners for life. A certain single skill will not work forever, so we need to train ourselves to be all-rounders, combining AI knowledge with other skills to foster competitiveness in such a complicated job market," he added.

Li Qiang, vice-president of Zhaopin, said that job seekers need to be more flexible and have the ability to keep learning new things, in order to adjust to a life and career based on AI.

"It is important for people to be sensitive to AI-related knowledge and development and to embrace the integration of such knowledge with their current professions, such as healthcare or finance," Li said.

"Learning some soft skills that AI lacks, such as teamwork and communication, and becoming involved in or leading some AI projects to gain more practical experience, if possible, would also be beneficial," he added.

Hu, from Peking University, emphasized that no job seeker or employee could be a bystander in the AI storm. For average employees, it's important to learn to use some AI tools while enhancing soft skills, including their ability to innovate, organize and communicate, she said.

## ANCIENT WISDOM OF CONFUCIUS RESONATES LOUDLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Traditional cultural values guide new generation, spread globally

By LIU WEILING and ZHAO RUIXUE in Qufu, Shandong



A ceremony honoring teachers held in Qufu, Shandong province, in late September saw the mass participation of 2,575 students from primary, middle and high schools, including interna-

tional students, along with teachers.

Their collective recitation of classic quotes from the *Analects of Confucius* echoed in the air,

demonstrating the deep connection between ancient wisdom and the present, and highlighting the enduring impact of Confucian thought.

"Respecting teachers and valuing education are esteemed traditions of the Chinese nation. Attending the ceremony has strengthened my sense of duty and

mission as an educator," said Tan Juan, a teacher at the affiliated kindergarten of Zoucheng No 10 Middle School.

"I will continue promoting traditional cultural values and guiding students to grow up with an innovative mindset," she said.

See Shandong, page 2

## Run for a cause



Children cheer a runner during the Luang Prabang Half Marathon 2024 on Saturday in Luang Prabang, Laos. The event was hosted by Lao Friends Hospital for Children and co-hosted by China Daily and the RVi Group, with the aim of raising funds for the hospital, which is the only pediatric facility in northern Laos that offers free treatment to over 35,000 children annually. EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

INSIDE Rethinking biodiversity beyond '30x30 goal' Global Views, page 13

Newstand prices: US \$1 Canada C\$1 UK £1 EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 baht Philippines 120 php Myanmar 2000 kyat Japan 210 yen Dubai 10 dirhams Pakistan 300 rupee www.chinadailyglobal.com A member of ANN CHINA DAILY GLOBAL ©2024 All Rights Reserved

# PAGE TWO



International guests participate in the memorial ceremony for Confucius in Qufu, Shandong province, on Sept 28.  
YANG GUOQING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Shandong: Confucian wisdom still shines

From page 1

Since roughly the 5th century BC, the school of thought Confucius founded and the philosophy of Confucianism that developed from it have inspired and guided individuals across multiple generations.

Yet, while most young people learn about Confucius in school, they're not sure about his current influence in fast-moving modern China. While almost every one of them can quote a handful of sayings from the *Analects of Confucius*, do they really see value in applying Confucian thought to nurturing their views on life and the world?

Shandong, the birthplace of Confucius, has been hosting a series of events to provide opportunities for people from China and overseas, to gain a deeper understanding of Confucian thought and some answers to this question.

### Understanding deepened

Maria Uriarte Huang, a 22-year-old student from the United States who attends Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong province, has been learning the teachings of Confucius since she was a child. She traveled to Qufu in September for the China International Confucius Cultural Festival, which enhanced her understanding of the sage's philosophy.

"This event epitomized an exquisite fusion between education and entertainment, not only broadening my understanding regarding Chinese heritage, but also igniting within me newfound curiosity," she said.

Uriarte Huang has long been impressed by Confucian thought such as education without discrimination, and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude. "And his caring thought of the benevolent loving others deeply resonates with me," she said.

Under the influence of Confucian thought, Uriarte Huang embarked on an internship at the Guangdong Provincial Museum in 2023, where she guided students on educational tours.

"I often saw the children standing in front of the glass windows, gazing intently at the cultural relics from around the world. These relics form a shared history that binds us all as inhabitants of this planet," she said.

Observing the curiosity in the eyes of the children, Uriarte Huang conceived an idea — to take the knowledge safeguarded in the museum to rural children.

In December 2023, she volunteered to teach in the mountain village of Xiaojia in Leizhou town, Guangdong, where she



A student volunteer provides guide services to visitors at the Confucius Museum in Qufu. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Maria Uriarte Huang from the US visits the Confucius Museum.



A foreigner tries traditional embroidery during the Confucius Cultural Festival.



Young people from overseas practice calligraphy during the Confucius Cultural Festival.

draw from her museum internship experience to create an educational program with lessons on intangible cultural heritage, biology, geography and history.

"Students in the remote mountainous areas need diverse knowledge. There should be no distinction of classes as Confucius says," said Uriarte Huang.

Through the field studies in Qufu, she was able to expand her understanding of Confucian culture.

"At the festival venue, the hall's courtyard, eaves, and gate, with the characteristics of their time, evoked a sense of wonder as I realized what I had learned about ancient Chinese history had come to life," she said.

Looking at a huge sculpture of Confucius, Uriarte Huang reflected

on her studies of the *Analects of Confucius*.

"I recalled his assertion that education should transcend origins, regardless of race or ethnicity, everyone deserves access to learning opportunities," she said.

This educational philosophy has surmounted challenges and restrictions over millennia, akin to flowing water quietly permeating all facets of life while nurturing future generations.

"It embodies profound life wisdom that inspires individuals to steadfastly pursue their goals and ideals. I really want to dismantle economic, regional, cultural and especially linguistic barriers in education," Uriarte Huang said.

For Salma Elhouari from Morocco, who is studying at Beijing Lan-

guage and Culture University, Confucius no longer belongs to China, but also the world.

Her uncle, an Arab author, often told her that civilized people around the world, regardless of their education level, all know Confucius. This sparked her love for Confucian thought and Chinese culture.

She has pursued her passion and made Confucius the main theme of her doctoral research.

"I hope to promote the exchange of literature and culture among countries through cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons," she said during a field study in Qufu in September.

### Engaging activities

Shandong has played a leading role in promoting Confucian cul-

ture, which is valued as an important aspect of the excellence of Chinese traditional culture.

During the Confucius Cultural Festival, the Shandong Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism launched more than 150 activities including cultural performances, exhibitions and tourism projects, with most of them tailored to young people from home and abroad.

One of the activities saw 176 students hailing from 46 different countries and regions converge on Qufu to immerse themselves in the teachings of Confucius and participate in traditional Chinese cultural activities, such as tea-making.

"This event made me deeply realize that cultural diversity is the world's wealth, and cultural exchanges are a crucial pathway to achieving world peace and progress," said Cheng Shaojun, a student from North Minzu University in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

"Against the backdrop of globalization, the ideals of love and harmony advocated by Confucius still hold practical significance, offering valuable wisdom to tackle the complex issues of today's world," he said.

The Confucius Museum in Qufu has staged memorable exhibitions and diverse immersive activities such as woodblock printing, rubbings and paper-cutting, to foster a deeper connection with Confucian culture.

"The museum is a good place to study the evolution of Confucian culture; and its digital presentation of Confucius and his teachings attract young people," said Uriarte Huang.

"From the age of bamboo and wooden slips to the era of artificial intelligence, we have been fortunate witnesses along this transformative journey," Uriarte Huang added.

During the National Day holiday from Oct 1 to 7, the museum welcomed an impressive 120,500 visitors, with the third day witnessing a record attendance of 23,000 visitors, the biggest since it opened in 2018.

"Traditional Chinese culture exemplified by Confucian culture is appealing to young people because it embodies the ideological core of the Chinese people, creating spiritual resonance with them," said Yang Chaoming, a professor at the Advanced Institute for Confucian Studies of Shandong University.

"The frequent 'going viral' of traditional Chinese culture among young people indicates that it is inspiring young minds to be innovative in the new era," Yang added.



People learn about traditional weaving procedures at the Confucius Museum. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## TOP NEWS

## Dark symbolism



A machine nicknamed Lillith, which depicts a creature that is half-woman and half-scorpion with spider legs and ram's horns, is paraded down a street on Saturday in Toulouse, southwestern France. Created by the French company La Machine, Lillith is one of the characters in the company's urban opera titled *The Guardian of the Temple Opus II: The Portal of Darkness*, which was presented between Friday and Sunday in the city. MATTHIEU RONDEL / AFP

## Xi's remarks at BRICS summit in Kazan applauded as visionary

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong, WANG XIAODONG in Nairobi and XING YI in London

The speeches delivered by President Xi Jinping at the 16th BRICS Summit were pivotal for advancing global peace and cooperation, and his vision of building BRICS into an important platform for strengthening solidarity and cooperation is in the interests of all, global experts said.

Xi visited Russia from Oct 22 to 24 to attend the 16th BRICS Summit, held in Kazan. During the summit, he called on BRICS countries to build a BRICS that is committed to peace, innovation, green development, justice and closer people-to-people exchanges.

He also said that BRICS countries should be defenders of common security, pioneers of high-quality development, promoters of sustainable development, forerunners in reforming global governance, and advocates for harmonious coexistence among all civilizations.

Karori Singh, former director and emeritus fellow of the South Asia Studies Centre at the University of Rajasthan in India, said that what Xi

has called for is in the interests of all.

He said Xi's words imply a recognition of diversity and multilateralism in countries' behavior while conducting their foreign policy. Such willingness and commitment by China also imply that the country is ready to make its contribution to "ensuring common security, sustainable development and reforming global governance through bilateral and multilateral cooperation," Singh said.

He added that Xi has also clarified that BRICS is not against any other existing organizations, but rather supplements the cause of other organizations and institutions "in a more egalitarian and democratic manner with a greater sense of equity and empathy toward all — whether rich or poor, strong or weak."

During the summit, Xi also elaborated on the direction and fundamental principles of greater BRICS cooperation, and he called for joint efforts to build BRICS into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations as well as a vanguard for advancing global governance reform.

Francisco Dominguez, former head of research on Latin American Studies at Middlesex University in the United Kingdom, said the 16th BRICS Summit was a robust stride toward building global multilateral collaboration, peace, development and prosperity, with the Global South being the main beneficiary.

Adhere Cavince, a Nairobi, Kenya-based international relations scholar, said that this year's BRICS summit marked a major development in the pursuit of inclusive and functional multilateralism.

"The world is currently embroiled in many conflicts, and some big countries are turning inside and elevating ultranationalism at the expense of international cooperation. The Chinese leader's call for upholding world peace through targeted reforms of global governance structures, joint promotion of green development, and cultivation of intercultural amity is quite welcome," Cavince said.

"China has been a strong champion of the rights of poor countries. BRICS Plus builds on the trajectory set by China in galvanizing disenfranchised voices in the world to

chart a new path of inclusion, peace and shared prosperity," he added.

Experts also spoke highly of the principles put forward by President Xi for resolving ongoing global conflicts.

Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, president of the Center of Pak-China Corridor of Knowledge and executive director of the Center for South Asia & International Studies in Islamabad, Pakistan, said that regarding the de-escalation of the Ukraine crisis as soon as possible, Xi's emphasis on upholding the three principles of no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation of fighting and no provocation by any party is an approach in the right direction.

He also lauded Xi's unremitting efforts toward a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question, which offers hope for peace and an immediate cease-fire.

Furthermore, he added that Xi's speeches gave the message of peace, stability, prosperity, mutual cooperation, common security, civilizational dialogue, cultural diplomacy and collective efforts in embracing the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, paving the way for universal security.

Yang Ran in Beijing contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at vivienxu@chinadailyupac.com

## Economy: Treasury bonds sought to boost spending

From page 1

strengthening of endogenous driving forces continuing, China will likely achieve the preset annual growth target this year."

Despite the steady recovery trend, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Sunday the latest official snapshot of pressing challenges from

lackluster demand facing the economy, as profits of China's major industrial companies declined 3.5 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters.

Yu Weining, an NBS statistician, said the decline in industrial profits was mainly due to the lack of effective demand, falling prices of industrial products and the high comparison base in the

previous year.

More efforts should be made to speed up the implementation of existing policies and new incremental policies, Yu added.

Cao Jing, an associate researcher at the Institute of Finance and Banking of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the government should issue special treasury bonds to increase fiscal spending

on social welfare sectors, and increase the support for key sectors and key groups including the services sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and college graduates.

"That will encourage consumers to spend more and stabilize expectations," she added.

Contact the writers at ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

## Policy: Discourse centered on justice, especially for Palestinians

From page 1

China's proposal of and efforts aimed at building a community with a shared future for mankind prompt it to use every possible opportunity to mediate peace between warring parties in different regions and help resolve conflicts and disputes through negotiations. China has also begun making joint efforts to deal with some political and security crises and issues.

"Pragmatic cooperation" has indeed become a cornerstone of China's foreign policy, shaping its approach to international relations, particularly in the Middle East. The pragmatic cooperation framework underpins various Chinese initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative, which is aimed at improv-

**China advocates for the rights of the Palestinian people, positioning itself as a supporter of their cause against perceived injustices. ... China seeks to uphold the values of justice and equality, and safeguard human rights.**

ing connectivity and boosting economic development across regions by building and/or revitalizing infrastructure facilities and trade routes that connect China with the Middle

East and other regions.

China is also strengthening collaboration with other countries on technology transfer to boost local industries, and bolstering partnerships in oil and gas to ensure the smooth supply of energy. But the most important factor that defines China's role in the Middle East and other regions is its efforts to develop a just and fairer world order. China's discourse is centered on justice, especially in the case of the Palestinian people.

China advocates for the rights of the Palestinian people, positioning itself as a supporter of their cause against perceived injustices. Its stance aligns with its broader narrative of ensuring that all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected.

Therefore, China's approach is

one of striking a balance between pragmatism and principles. While safeguarding its economic and strategic interests, China seeks to uphold the values of justice and equality, and safeguard human rights. The commitment to resolve crises, especially in the Middle East, is one of the most prominent components of China's foreign policy.

While trying to resolve the crises in the Middle East, China's moves are based on several key determinants, including maintaining stability, balancing relations and using diplomacy to address problems. For long China has been calling for dialogue to help resolve the conflicts in the Middle East, during which it has urged all parties to exercise restraint and avoid taking actions that could further escalate tensions.

The fact that China has been

## US condemned for arms sales plan to Taiwan

Beijing urges Washington to stop arming the region, vows to safeguard national sovereignty

By ZHOU JIN  
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

China has urged the United States to stop arming the Taiwan region and undermining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, vowing to take resolute measures to safeguard national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

The Foreign Ministry made the remarks late on Saturday in response to US approval on Friday of a \$1.99 billion arms sale package to Taiwan, including delivery of an advanced surface-to-air missile system and radar systems.

Inside

Editorial,

page 11

The surface-to-air missile system has been battle-tested in Ukraine and represents an increase in the air defense capabilities that the US is exporting to Taiwan.

China strongly condemns and firmly opposes the US move and has lodged serious protests with the US, the ministry said in an online statement.

The sales seriously undermine China's sovereignty and security interests, harm China-US relations as well as peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and send a gravely wrong message to "Taiwan independence" separatist forces, a spokesperson said in the statement.

Washington's arms sales to the island seriously violate the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiques, especially the Aug 17 communique of 1982, according to the statement.

The US decision to use Taiwan to contain China and help advance a "Taiwan independence" agenda by

arming the island goes against US leaders' commitment to not supporting "Taiwan independence" as well as the two sides' efforts to stabilize China-US relations, the spokesperson added.

On Sunday, Zhu Fenglian, a spokeswoman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, warned Taiwan authorities under Lai Ching-te that purchasing weapons will not bring safety to Taiwan, but will only push the region toward the danger of military conflict.

Separatist acts of "Taiwan independence" forces and external interference cannot halt the trend of China's national reunification or shake China's determination and resolve to solve the Taiwan question, she said.

Under US President Joe Biden's administration alone, there reportedly have been 17 instances of arms sales to Taiwan.

Earlier this month, the People's Liberation Army carried out an interservice exercise surrounding Taiwan Island aiming to thwart Taiwan separatists' attempts.

In response to Taiwan leader Lai's remarks that he "would not yield an inch of ground in defense of Taiwanese territory", Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian emphasized that Taiwan is part of China's territory.

No matter what the Democratic Progressive Party authorities in Taiwan say or do, the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one and the same China will not change, Lin said on Friday at a regular news briefing in Beijing.

The historic trend that the two sides of the Strait will and must be reunified will never be reversed, he added.

## Shoot and score



Robot soccer players compete during the RoboCup Asia-Pacific 2024 in Qingdao, Shandong province, on Saturday. More than 200 teams from over 20 countries and regions participated in the event, which concluded on Sunday. ZHANG JIN'GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

particular, it has urged the international community to extend support to Sudan, prevent foreign interference in Sudan's internal affairs and lift sanctions on it.

China's efforts in the Middle East have been welcomed by the countries of the region, because they are aimed at resolving differences through dialogue.

But there are still challenges that need to be addressed, including the political challenges the Arab world is facing because of the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. In conclusion, China's pragmatic cooperation strategy underscores its commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships in the Middle East while simultaneously advocating for justice in critical issues.

The author is an associate professor of Political Science at Suez Canal University, Egypt. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

# CHINA

## Russian goods fair

A pair of women introduce goods to visitors at the first Russian products trade fair in Shenyang, Liaoning province, on Saturday. The exhibition, which began on Friday and will end on Tuesday, aims to strengthen economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia, and provide Chinese consumers with more diverse shopping choices.

ZHANG WENKUI / FOR CHINA DAILY



## More grads returning to hometowns to find work

By ZHAO YIMENG  
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

An increasing number of Chinese college graduates are opting to return to their hometowns for employment, driven by government policies and a shift in attitudes toward job opportunities in rural and smaller urban areas, according to the 2024 China Undergraduate Employment Report.

The report, published by education consultancy MyCOS, revealed a growing proportion of graduates from central and western regions in China choosing to find jobs in the areas where they grew up.

In 2023, 87 percent of bachelor's graduates in Central China were employed locally, and 80 percent in the western region landed jobs in their home provinces, marking a rising trend as regional development initiatives and evolving job preferences continue to influence employment decisions.

The government has introduced policies to encourage university graduates to seek grassroots work in China's central and western regions, as well as remote areas, offering incentives such as tuition reimbursements or student loan repayments for undergraduate and vocational students, with a maximum amount of 12,000 yuan (\$1,689) per person per year.

Additionally, graduates who complete their service in grassroots employment projects will be eligible for a 10-point bonus on the national postgraduate entrance exam within three years after their service, the Ministry of Education said in notice in 2022.

Local governments have also been ramping up efforts to encourage this shift. An alliance of college graduates in Liuyang, Hunan province, includes over 800 students from 237 universities nationwide and works to connect local talent with job opportunities.

The city has held a recruitment event for six consecutive years, attracting over 1,100 students to participate. More than 60 percent of them have chosen to return to Liuyang for career development. Of these, 59 percent found employment in enterprises and public institutions, 35 percent chose grassroots jobs and 6 percent started their own businesses.

Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the number of graduates choosing to work in county-level cities and rural areas, the report said.

According to MyCOS, 27 percent of bachelor's degree earners and 29 percent of vocational college graduates from the class of 2023 found employment in county-level regions, rising 6 and 7 percentage points, respectively,

“This has provided more opportunities for associate degree holders, bachelor's graduates, and even some highly skilled postgraduates.”

Hu Dawu, professor at the Southwest University of Political Science and Law

from 2019. The increase is particularly pronounced in central and western counties, it added.

As the number of graduates continues to rise annually, job openings in major cities have remained relatively stable amid intensifying competition. As a result, many are turning to smaller cities and counties where job hunting is less competitive, the report said.

Moreover, lower living costs and less financial pressure in these areas are attracting many graduates, particularly those who prioritize work-life balance and proximity to family.

The economic development of county-level regions has also contributed to the trend, as many younger employees are seeing opportunities closer to home.

County cities have become the main focus of big chains such as Starbucks and Luckin Coffee for opening up new outlets and increasing their growth prospects in the country.

County-level regions accounted for 46.3 percent of China's total retail sales of consumer goods, according to a report released in July from CCID Consulting about the high-quality development of the county-level economy.

One-third of the 895 cinemas that opened last year were in county regions, and coffee consumption in those areas grew 26 percent faster than in major cities, according to data from e-commerce platform JD.

Hu Dawu, a professor at the Southwest University of Political Science and Law, said finding jobs in second- and third-tier cities or counties has become more feasible as county economies integrate with surrounding metropolitan areas.

“This has provided more opportunities for associate degree holders, bachelor's graduates, and even some highly skilled postgraduates,” Hu told news outlet ThePaper.cn.

In addition, parents of those born after 1995 may be able to offer them more support in terms of daily care and finances, making county-level employment a viable choice for many young workers, Hu said.

# New air routes set to open for start of winter-spring season

## Passenger flight network expands in Africa, Latin and North America

By LUO WANGSHU  
luowangshu@chinadaily.com.cn

China's civil aviation industry is preparing for a busy winter-spring season — running from Oct 29 to March 29 — with increased international flights expected.

According to the Civil Aviation Administration of China, around 118,000 weekly passenger and cargo flights will be operated by 194 Chinese and international airlines during this period, reflecting a 1.2 percent growth from the previous winter-spring season.

Internationally, the CAAC has approved 178 airlines' applications to operate 19,327 weekly flights connecting China to 79 countries. Approximately 53.48 percent of these flights will serve 57 countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, with new expansions in Latin America, Africa and North America.

The passenger flight network to Latin America and Africa is set to expand, with more flights also planned for North America. Steady progress is anticipated in traditional markets, including Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan, South Korea and Europe. Meanwhile, the cargo sector has shown robust growth, with marked increases in flights to

the United Arab Emirates, Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the United States and Canada.

To meet rising demand, airlines are adjusting routes by adding or resuming flights.

For instance, United Airlines is set to expand its Los Angeles to Shanghai Pudong route from four to seven flights weekly. Air Serbia will debut a new route from Belgrade to Shanghai Pudong, offering two flights per week.

Air China is launching routes from Urumqi to Tbilisi; from Beijing to Almaty, Cairo and Tashkent; and from Chengdu to Brussels and Almaty. China Eastern Airlines is planning a Shanghai to Cairo route, and China Southern Airlines will resume its route from Guangzhou to Perth, Australia.

In total, Air China aims to operate 105 international routes covering 44 countries and regions across 187 cities, with more than 230 international and regional flights per day, including new connections such as Shanghai to Hanoi and Urumqi to Tbilisi.

Airports across China are also scaling up their international flight offerings. Beijing Capital International Airport is expecting an average of 176 daily international flights to 82 overseas destinations, a slight

increase from last year.

New destinations for the winter-spring season include Basra, Iraq, and Vladivostok, Russia, bringing the airport's total international routes to 82, two more than in the previous summer season. Beijing Daxing International Airport is also seeing growth, with airline Saudia launching a Beijing-Dammam route on Oct 28 and Singapore Airlines introducing daily flights to Singapore from Nov 11.

December will bring new routes from China Southern Airlines to Sydney and Melbourne, while Royal Air Maroc plans to resume its Beijing Daxing-Casablanca route with three weekly flights from January next year.

Despite the growth, several European airlines have announced route suspensions to the Chinese mainland due to operational and economic constraints. Virgin Atlantic plans to end its London-Shanghai service in late October due to high costs, while British Airways has suspended its London-Beijing route, and LOT Polish Airlines has paused Warsaw-Beijing flights. Lufthansa also canceled its Frankfurt-Beijing Capital route as of Oct 27, citing intense competition, although the CAAC has approved its operation, leaving room for future adjustments if market conditions improve.

Wang Changshun, chairman of the China Air Transport Association,

noted that air travel demand typically declines in the winter-spring season compared to summer and autumn.

“As the Northern Hemisphere transitions into the winter-spring period, airlines adjust capacity to match seasonal demand fluctuations,” he said.

Other challenges, such as Russian airspace restrictions and heightened market competition, have also impacted the industry. Despite these factors, China's civil aviation market has shown resilience, with international air passenger traffic rebounding to over 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels from 2019 since July, according to CAAC data.

The sector recorded a 78 percent year-over-year surge in international passenger volume in the third quarter, reaching 18.2 million, which contributed to a 15.2 percent increase in overall passenger volume compared to the same period in 2019.

Wang noted that geopolitical issues are also influencing the global aviation landscape.

“China's airlines are committed to fostering open and cooperative relationships with foreign counterparts to help mitigate disruptions due to political factors,” he said. “By enhancing international collaboration, Chinese airlines aim to tackle emerging challenges in the aviation sector and support the steady recovery of the global market.”



# Together

红十字与“一带一路”同行

RED CROSS / RED CRESCENT HAND IN HAND WITH THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE



微博



微信

AD

## CHINA

## Scientists use biomass to make ethylene glycol

By YAN DONGJIE  
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese scientists have recently launched trial production of bio-ethylene glycol from straw sugar, creating a more eco-friendly way to make as much as 1,000 metric tons a year of the industrial compound, experts said.

Ethylene glycol is an important chemical raw material with a global annual consumption of more than 30 million tons, said Zheng Mingyuan, a researcher at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics, which is part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"In China, as a major producer and consumer of EG, the annual consumption exceeds 20 million tons. EG is used as a primary raw material for making clothing fibers, plastic products like beverage bottles and many other things," he said.

Professor He Mingyuan from East China Normal University said previously, EG was mainly produced using petroleum or coal as raw materials, which are nonrenewable resources. The production process resulted in high carbon dioxide emissions and energy consumption.

"In terms of resource utilization, biomass is the only organic carbon source that has the potential to replace fossil fuels," said He, who is also an academican of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. "With new technologies that can change the energy system, I feel very excited."

He emphasized that the effective utilization of biomass is a crucial issue in green and sustainable development, which scientists have been addressing since recognizing the energy value of biomass.

"The transformation of living organisms into fossil fuels and then being used by humans is a large carbon cycle. By processing and utilizing biomass, we can bypass this cycle. For example, agricultural straw can be directly utilized, forming a short loop that

enhances energy efficiency," he said, adding that biomass can never be depleted as it is a renewable energy source.

In 2008, a team led by Zhang Tao at the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics pioneered the reaction of directly catalyzing cellulose to produce EG internationally. The technology has obtained over 40 invention patents and possesses complete independent intellectual property rights.

"This provides an important technological solution for upgrading the EG industry chain and the development of the green chemical industry in China," said Zhang, who is also an academican of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. "It is of great significance for environmental protection, achieving China's dual carbon goals and sustainable economic development."

Over the past 16 years, the research team has continued to improve the long-term stability of the catalyst, expand the range of raw materials and reduce production costs, finally transforming the technology from a scientific discovery in a laboratory to a technology suitable for industrial production.

Zheng, the researcher, said the cost of bio-EG produced from bio-based raw materials through catalysis is more expensive than traditional coal-based production, but the compound is more pure — 99.9 percent — and of better quality.

In addition, the ultraviolet transmittance meets the national standard for polyester-grade EG.

"The technical verification at the 1,000-ton level can eliminate potential issues in mass production and serve as the basis for designing industrial plants at the 10,000-ton level," Zheng said. "This technological breakthrough means that the technical preparation for 10,000-ton industrial production is now in place."

## Free clinical care



Medical experts from Beijing run a free clinic for residents in Zamtang county, Aba Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, Sichuan province, on Saturday. The clinic, launched in Aba on Friday, saw 200 medical experts and volunteers from 29 medical institutions in Beijing conduct free health checkups for anyone who wanted them. CUI JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Experts discuss urban growth in Shandong

Collective action and partnerships are crucial to promote city sustainability

By HOU LIQIANG  
and ZHAO RUIXUE  
in Weihai, Shandong

Against the backdrop of global urban challenges, experts and officials from home and abroad have emphasized the crucial need for collective action and partnerships to promote urban sustainability and address related crises.

They made the remarks on Saturday at a celebratory event for World Cities Day in Weihai, Shandong province, under the theme of "Build People-Centered Cities for Better Life".

Initiated by the Chinese government in 2010, World Cities Day falls annually on Oct 31. The world started celebrating it in 2014, following its endorsement from the United Nations in 2013.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the Weihai event, Anaclaudia Rossbach, executive director for the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, also known as UN-Habitat, lauded the day as "a very crucial global platform from China to the world".

It is very important and strategic for knowledge exchange, and for exploring cooperation among cities worldwide, she said.

Noting formidable obstacles confronting the world in tackling climate change, alleviating poverty and addressing humanitarian crises, she emphasized the interconnected nature of these challenges with the global housing crisis.

"Nowadays, we have 1 billion people living in informal settle-

ments, 2 billion people not accessing potable water," Rossbach said.

As houses are devastated in disasters and conflicts, she stressed that nations shouldn't have to handle these crises alone.

"We need to go collectively," she said.

Rossbach said she welcomes the UN partnership with China, as well as the partnership with Shandong and Weihai, to use the event to maximize wisdom and exchange, and share knowledge, expertise and experiences.

"We need to identify new paths for humanity to overcome the major crisis that we are facing right now," she continued.

Over the past few decades, China has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for sustainable development, Rossbach said.

"We are highly expecting to deepen broader cooperation with all levels of government and various stakeholders in China," she added.

Also attending the event, Ni Hong, China's minister of housing and urban-rural development, highlighted that the thriving development of cities profoundly influences the quality of life for more than 5 billion people globally, and emphasized that promoting urban sustainability is a shared responsibility of nations.

"As we look toward the future, aside from recognizing the tremendous achievements in city development, we should also be acutely aware of the various crises and challenges that urban develop-

ment still faces, including resource scarcity, environmental pollution and extreme weather conditions," he said.

The minister put forward several proposals to tackle these challenges.

He called for the greater usage of cutting-edge information technologies such as big data, cloud computing and the internet of things to elevate urban intelligence and enhance the well-being of city dwellers.

More emphasis should also be placed on fostering a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature through the advancement of green buildings and construction materials, along with the promotion of sustainable travel practices, he noted.

Zhu Yongxin, vice-chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, pledged unwavering dedication from China to enhance collaboration with global communities and organizations such as UN-Habitat.

China is undergoing the most extensive and swiftest urbanization phase in the history of humankind, and the nation is poised to actively contribute its wisdom and solutions to drive global sustainable urban development, he said.

The event in Weihai is co-hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, UN-Habitat and the Shandong government. Running from Saturday to Monday, it was expected to draw over 2,000 participants from more than 30 countries and regions.

Contact the writers at  
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

## Company to launch commercial spaceflights in 2027

NANJING — Chinese rocket startup Deep Blue Aerospace recently announced plans to carry out commercial suborbital flights in 2027, projecting a ticket price of about 1.5 million yuan (\$210,700) per passenger.

The suborbital flights will last approximately 12 minutes, during which time the spacecraft will fly to an altitude of 100 kilometers but will not enter orbit, according to Deep Blue.

The spacecraft has six panoramic windows, can accommodate up to six passengers and is designed to be used over 50 times, the company said.

The spacecraft is approximately 4 meters tall, with a maximum diameter of 3.5 meters and a take-off weight of 7.9 metric tons. It is expected to ascend to altitudes between 100 km and 150 km, providing a zero-gravity experience that will last up to five minutes, according to Deep Blue.

### 1.5 million yuan

The cost of a ticket for the sub-orbital flight

The company pre-sold two tickets for its 2027 suborbital flights during an e-commerce livestream activity on Thursday, with each ticket charged at a discounted price of 1 million yuan.

The successful purchasers paid a deposit of 50,000 yuan per ticket, but Deep Blue requires interested customers to sign contracts in-person and visit the company before making their final payment.

The startup plans to subject its Nebula-1 rocket to multiple recovery and reuse tests in 2025, and complete dozens of tests on its manned spacecraft and rocket combination in 2026.

The oxygen and kerosene-fueled Nebula-1 is Deep Blue's first reusable launch vehicle. It completed 10 of its 11 key verification tasks during its first high-altitude vertical recovery flight test last month, but experienced an anomaly in the final landing phase, leading to a fracture in the body of the rocket.

Despite these imperfect results, Zhao Ya, executive president of Deep Blue, said that the test has provided valuable data and experience to help the company identify problems and deficiencies, and to improve the performance and reliability of the rocket.

Deep Blue has said that its decision to sell tickets three years in advance stems from a deep awareness of the complexities and risks involved in rocket technology. The company is dedicated to rigorous research and development, extensive testing and performance optimization to ensure its rocket meets the highest safety standards.

XINHUA

## Police pal



Children interact with a robotic dog at a police camp event in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Saturday. Police officers demonstrated various skills and equipment, allowing visitors to engage with them and learn about safety through interactive games.

DENG XIAOWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Nation's seniors show strong sense of wanderlust

By CHENG SI  
chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn

China's seniors have exhibited a growing willingness to travel this year and are expected to be prominent consumers during the current tourist off-season as they strive to get more bang for their buck from their trips, according to travel agencies and tourism experts.

Travel portal Trip.com said that in the first nine months of the year, bookings by people 50 and older increased 26 percent year-on-year on its platform. Even more recently, from Oct 8 to 14, such bookings were up 20 percent compared with the same period last year.

Moreover, reservations by users between 61 and 65 years old on the platform surged 58 percent year-on-year, showing the fastest growth of all age groups.

Tuniu, another travel agency, said that nearly 40 percent of the tourism bookings made from Oct 7 to the end of the month have been

made by users 50 and older. The agency said people in the age group tend to have more free time for traveling in the off-season, with cheaper flights and hotel rooms available that meet their budgets.

"The growing ranks of the elderly are mainly retirees with stable pension incomes, greater spending power and more open ideas on consumption. Tourism is now a 'rigid demand' among seniors," said Cai Muzi, a researcher from travel portal Qunar's data research center.

Based on Qunar's figures, Cai said that travelers between 55 and 65 years old are so far the "definite main forces" of tourism consumption on its platform. The silver tourism sector boomed in the first half of this year, she said, adding that seniors took an average of 2.14 flights from January to June, and an increasing number of them took more than one trip during that time.

Considering their more flexible

traveling schedules and superior spending power, older adults usually prefer long-distance destinations, both domestic and foreign.

They also prefer not to travel during peak seasons such as July and August so they can save money.

Qiao Chengwei, a manager in charge of domestic leisure products at Tuniu, said leisure trips focusing on viewing landscapes, enjoying natural springs and slower-paced cruises are among the top choices for seniors.

Domestically, they prefer visiting Beijing, Guangzhou in Guangdong province and Chengdu in Sichuan province, while favoring overseas destinations with easier visa access and greater value, Qiao said.

"Elderly travelers take up 60 percent of cruise ship cabins on trips to neighboring Japan and South Korea, and that proportion rises in the off-season," he said.

The travel agencies and experts

also noted that more senior travelers have been booking tours online and sharing their travel photos on social media thanks to easier access to such travel products and their increasing acceptance of online platforms.

Figures from Trip.com show that over 10 percent of travel strategies or tourism-related content are produced by older adults on its platform, and that proportion has grown rapidly this year.

The company said that the silver-haired content creators currently comprise 7 percent of the platform's total content contribution.

Unlike younger travelers planning individual or self-driving trips, seniors usually take group tours due to their relative safety, comfort and cost effectiveness, Qiao said, adding that the older travelers also care about the itinerary pace, tour guide quality and accessibility to barrier-free facilities.

However, tourism-related prod-

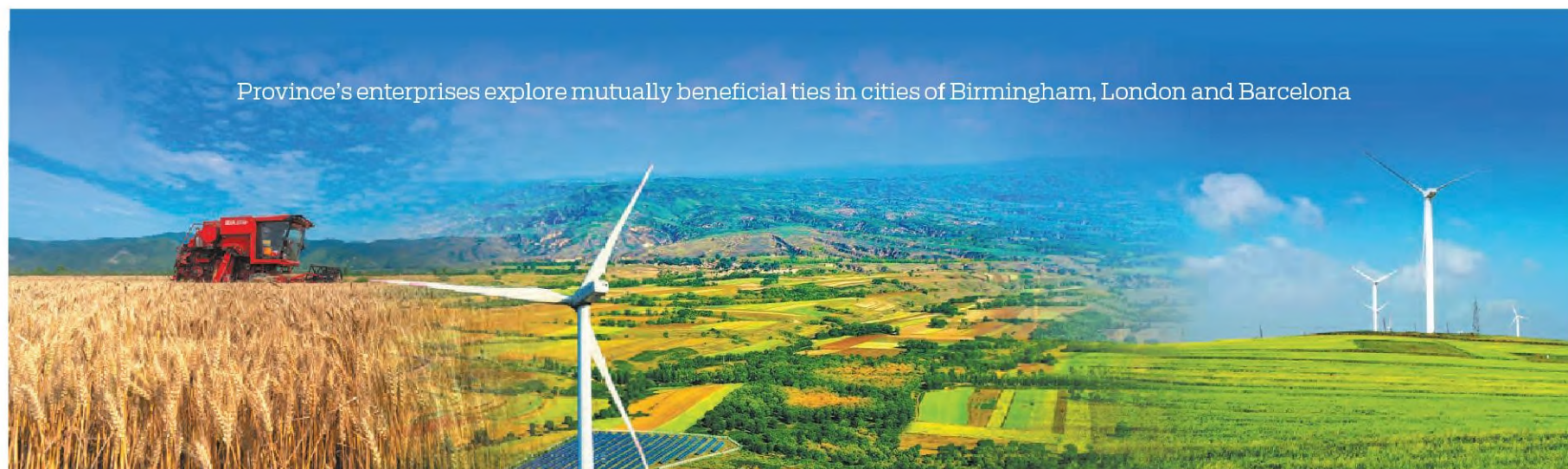


Elderly visitors dressed in traditional Miao costumes ride on a raft at the elephant hill scenic area in Gullin, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Friday. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

ucts and services for those over 70 have yet to be optimized.

"As far as I know, many tourism companies don't accept travelers 70 and older due to possible safety and insurance issues," said Cai from Qunar, who added that it's

necessary to develop or enhance tour products for older travelers allowing for people's increasing life expectancy and advancement of healthcare, alongside the growing traveling willingness of older people.



Province's enterprises explore mutually beneficial ties in cities of Birmingham, London and Barcelona

Agricultural modernization and the development of new energy resources, like solar and wind power, are among the many areas where businesses across Europe can find opportunities for cooperation with Shanxi. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## International tour opens up opportunities for Shanxi's businesses

By YUAN SHENGGAO

**S**hanxi province recently showcased its investment and trade opportunities to the European business community with promotional events held in the United Kingdom and Spain.

The events, running from Oct 7-15, were part of a large promotional campaign called Shanxi Brands on the Silk Road, a move aiming to enhance trade and investment cooperation between Shanxi and the countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

The events included exhibitions of products made in Shanxi, promotions of Shanxi's business opportunities and investment matchmaking activities.

Shanxi's trade officials and business representatives also held talks with their counterparts in Britain and Spain, trying to tap into trade and investment opportunities.

### Two expos

The Shanxi delegation arrived in the UK on Oct 7.

On Oct 9, 29 companies from Shanxi, mostly manufacturers of activated carbon, filtering devices, pipes, valves and pumps, attended the Air Quality and Emissions and Water, Wastewater and Environmental Monitoring — which are known as AQE and WWEM — expos held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.

The expos are the leading events in the UK for professionals addressing environmental challenges through solutions for water and air pollution monitoring and treatment.

The events featured cutting-edge technologies and strategies in net-zero emissions, resource management, the circular economy, water scarcity and management, biodiversity conservation and environmental emergency response.

Shanxi Carbon Industry was one of the eye-catching exhibitors at the expos.

"This time we are showing our activated carbon products made from coal, anthracite and charcoal, which can be widely used in the water treatment, air treatment and catalyst industries," said Qu Pengfei, sales manager of the company.

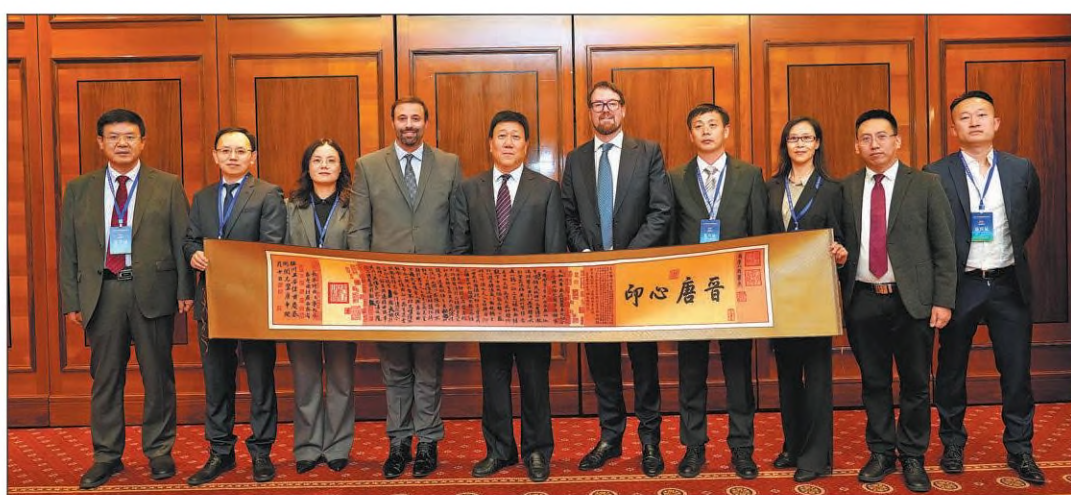
The executive said that Shanxi Carbon's products have been sold to markets in Japan, South Korea, Africa and Europe, with a total annual export volume of about 40,000 metric tons.

"We are attending the Birmingham expos in a hope to further expand the market in Europe," Qu said.

He explained that the WWEM and AQE, which are held twice a year, are the largest expos in the UK for the resources management industry.

"Attending the expos definitely means a great opportunity for China's water treatment-related companies to make inroads into Europe, as well as the rest of the world," Peng said.

David Hellyer, director of exhibition sales at ILM Exhibitions, one of the organizers of the events, paid a visit to the Shanxi exhibition zone. He noted that this was the first time for Shanxi's companies to show up in the expos but the scale of their exhibition was large enough to attract attention from visitors, showing their ambition to expand in the UK and European markets.



**Clockwise from top:** Shanxi's delegates present a scroll of calligraphy to British guests during the London promotion event. Sergio Sanchez Famoso, head of Barcelona provincial bureau of commerce, talks with the media during Shanxi's promotion in Barcelona. Attendees of the London promotion event listen to a Shanxi official's speech about the business opportunities in the Chinese province. PHOTOS BY LIU JIE / FOR CHINA DAILY

He said that ILM will offer better services for Shanxi's businesses, helping them in realizing that ambition.

### British capital

On Oct 10, the Shanxi delegation arrived in London, holding a trade and investment promotion event to boost multisector cooperation between Shanxi and the UK.

The event included activities to publicize Shanxi's business environment, industrial policies and investment opportunities; and exhibit Shanxi's industries and products; as well as matchmaking meetings between Shanxi's and Britain's enterprises.

The delegation also paid a visit to the London-based China-Britain Business Council, the UK's national business network promoting trade and investment with China. The two sides held talks and agreed to enhance exchanges and cooperation and help enterprises to develop in each other's markets.

During the London event, officials from two organizations in Shanxi's Yuncheng city — the Yuncheng Council for the Promotion of International Trade and the administrative committee of the Yuncheng Salt Lake High-Tech Industrial Development Zone — introduced their business environment and advantageous industries.

A provincial official from Shanxi also made a brief introduction to this North Chi-

na province, especially industrial fundamentals.

He said Shanxi is pushing itself onto the track of modernization and opening-up to the world.

He noted that Shanxi has formed a modern industrial system with its traditional strengths in such heavy industries as coal mining, electricity, steelmaking, chemicals, construction materials and equipment manufacturing.

In recent years, Shanxi has implemented an industrial transformation that involves the upgrading of traditional heavy industries with modern, digital and intelligent technologies, as well as the cultivation of emerging sectors such as modern coal-based chemicals, advanced manufacturing, synthetic biology, new materials, environmental protection, finance and modern logistics.

The official also said that there is an energy revolution campaign in Shanxi, which is shifting its focus to developing new energy resources. This includes solar and wind power, coal-bed methane and hydrogen fuel.

He said the moves for industrial transformation and energy revolution can offer opportunities for businesses in Britain.

Jack Perry, chairman of the 48 Group Club, was present at the promotion event.

The 48 Group Club, founded in 1954, is a local organization dedicated to promoting

business ties between China and the UK.

Perry said Shanxi has been known for its coal mining industry for decades and is now at the forefront of China's energy industry transformation.

With Shanxi's energy industry shifting its focus to growing new energy sources like hydrogen, wind and solar power, and developing technologies, equipment and solutions for cleaner, safer and more efficient coal production, the province is rapidly evolving into one of the advanced manufacturing hubs in China, Perry said. He added that this transformation is offering cooperation opportunities to British businesses.

He explained that while Shanxi can offer scenarios for cooperation in the clean and new energy, industrial equipment manufacturing and agricultural modernization sectors, British companies can supply their expertise in such fields as finance, services and research on energy efficiency. He said he expects British businesses to establish long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships with their counterparts in Shanxi.

An official with the Shanxi Council for the Promotion of International Trade said the trip to the UK was aimed to help businesses from both sides get familiar with each other's investment environment and policies, and their industrial advantages.

"This is a valuable opportunity for communication and networking," the official said. "I hope this event can be followed by practical collaborations and win-win partnerships."

After the promotion event, the SCPIT signed a framework agreement for trade and business cooperation with the UK Chinese Business Association, an organization for the overseas Chinese business community in Britain.

### Spanish trip

On Oct 13, the Shanxi delegation held a trade and investment promotion event in Spain's coastal city of Barcelona, aiming to help Shanxi's businesses find opportunities to cooperate with their Spanish counterparts.

The delegation also held a meeting with the Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises, aiming to enhance the exchanges and cooperation between SMEs from both sides.

During the Barcelona event, Sergio Sanchez Famoso, head of the Barcelona provincial bureau of commerce, delivered a speech at the Shanxi promotion. He said that his bureau is willing to offer high-quality services to help Shanxi's businesses expand in Spain. He also suggested Shanxi companies research local market demand for mapping out accurate marketing strategies.

Lin Feng, chairman of the Federation of Overseas Chinese Associations in Spain, was present at the event. He made a speech on the potential cooperation opportunities between Shanxi and Barcelona's businesses.

"Today's promotion event presents to our local business community a vivid picture of the fast-developing Shanxi," Lin said. "With abundant natural resources, a long history, brilliant culture, and a rapidly modernizing economy, Shanxi is showing unlimited possibilities for business development."

"On the other hand, Barcelona has great development potential in science, technology, culture, new energy, agriculture and urban development. Those are the complementary advantages of each other, which can lay a solid foundation for win-win cooperation."

Lin said that he hopes enterprises from both Shanxi and Barcelona to make better use of the event to explore the markets of each side and establish practical collaborations.

An official from the SCPIT said that he also hopes enterprises in Spain and Shanxi use the event to get a better understanding of each other's advantages and find the best paths for cooperation.

He noted that the economies of both Spain and Shanxi are in a transformation toward green, sustainable and innovation-driven development, so the businesses should enhance cooperation in the green economy, new energy, energy conservation, environmental protection and the digital economy. And there should also be practical exchanges in the fields of culture, education and sciences.

At the Barcelona event, the SCPIT and the Spanish Federation of Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurs signed a framework agreement for strengthening trade and investment cooperation.

Li Yao contributed to this story.



**From Left:** An aerial view of a massive solar farm in Shilou county, Shanxi province. Blue skies above a coking plant in Shanxi are evidence of the province's achievements in the clean production of energy. An interprovincial power transmission line from Shanxi supplies electricity to the rest of the country. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ADVERTORIAL

## BUSINESS

MORE NEWS WHENEVER YOU WANT IT · CHINADAILY.COM.CN/BUSINESS



Passenger cars wait to be shipped in Ningde, Fujian province, for sale to various markets on Oct 10. WANG WANGWANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Renewals, trade-ins unlock investment, consumption

Households in China have combined total of more than 3 billion major home appliances and over 300 million automobiles

By WANG KEJU  
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China's stimulus package, which includes incentives for large-scale equipment renewals and consumer goods trade-ins, has helped to boost investment growth, unlock consumption potential, and better facilitate economic recovery amid domestic downward pressure, officials and analysts said.

The technological upgrade and green transformation driven by the initiatives will pay dividends, not only in terms of immediate economic benefits but also in laying the foundation for a more sustainable development path, they added.

In March, the State Council, the country's Cabinet, launched a plan to promote large-scale equipment upgrades and old-for-new exchanges of consumer goods. This was followed by an additional measure in July, where the government allocated around 300 billion yuan (\$42.4 billion) in long-term special government bonds to further support these initiatives.

All 31 provincial-level regions on the mainland have issued implementation plans to further support these initiatives, complementing the central government's policy framework, said Zhao Chenxin, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, during a recent news conference.

In terms of equipment renewal, China has set targets to increase investment in a wide range of sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, construction, transportation, education, culture, tourism, and medical care, by at least 25 percent by 2027, compared to 2023 levels, as outlined in the plan.

The commission has streamlined the approval process and identified over 4,600 eligible projects, with the 150 billion yuan in special bonds for equipment upgrades already allocated to these initiatives in two batches, Zhao added.

China's investment in the purchase of equipment and tools grew by 16.8 percent year-on-year in the first eight months of the year, outpacing the overall growth in fixed-asset investment by 13.4 percentage points, and contributing 64.2 percent to total investment growth, data from the commission showed.

This Jan-Aug figure represented a 3.5 percentage point increase com-

pared to the first seven months, indicating that the government's intensified policy support for equipment upgrades had a more pronounced effect in August, Zhao said.

According to preliminary estimates, the equipment upgrade projects supported by government bond funding this year will involve a total investment of nearly 800 billion yuan, said Liu Dechun, director-general of the commission's department of resource conservation and environmental protection.

This can facilitate the replacement of more than 2 million units of various types of equipment, resulting in energy savings of equivalent to approximately 25 million metric tons of coal per year, Liu added.

As the world's largest manufacturing powerhouse, China accounts for around 30 percent of global manufacturing value added, and is home to the largest inventories of various types of machinery and equipment globally. With the ongoing advancement of industrialization and urbanization, the demand for advanced equipment continues to grow, presenting a vast and significant opportunity for equipment upgrades, analysts said.

The speed of technological change has created a situation where a significant portion of the equipment currently in use is no longer adequate to address the evolving needs of modern industrial production, said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank.

The combination of aging infrastructure, outdated features, and a lack of digital and smart capabilities has become a critical issue that Chinese manufacturers must address to remain competitive and drive sustainable growth, Wen explained.

"Upgrading the equipment is not just about improving efficiency and productivity, but also about ensuring that industries can adapt to the increasingly digitalized and intelligent operating environments of the future," he said.

Faced with a cloudy external environment, particularly in terms of the global trade landscape, by channeling resources toward initiatives that can directly boost domestic demand, the government can create a more stable foundation for economic development, Wen added.

In a production workshop of Wison Group, a Zhoushan-based offshore engineering company in



**Middle:** A potential buyer checks out a car at an automobile store during its old-for-new vehicles trade-in program in Yunnan province on Sept 22. XUE YINGYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

**Bottom:** A salesperson explains the policy of providing subsidies for the trade-in program for old home appliances to a customer at a Suning outlet in Renhuai, Guizhou province, on Sept 12. CHEN YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Zhejiang province, a new batch of fully automated production lines has been put into operation to undertake the manufacturing of modules for floating liquefied natural gas facilities.

"In the first half of this year, we invested 540 million yuan to purchase new machinery and equipment, which is more than five times the amount compared to the same period last year," said Xu Tianfeng, the company's chief financial officer. "After the equipment update, we have been able to accept a wider range of high-tech manufacturing tasks, which has greatly broadened our company's business horizons."

To address the financing needs of enterprises undertaking equipment upgrades, the People's Bank of Chi-

na, the country's central bank, has, in coordination with relevant departments, established a 500 billion yuan re-lending facility for technological innovation and technical transformation, with an interest rate of 1.75 percent.

The re-lending facility, which channels low-cost funds to banks for on-lending to eligible enterprises, is a crucial tool to empower businesses to invest in advanced technologies and the equipment they need to enhance their competitiveness and drive sustainable growth, said Peng Lifeng, deputy head of the bank's financial market department.

In addition to the large-scale equipment renewal, the trade-in policies, which offer incentives for

consumers to replace their existing goods with newer models, have stimulated demand and facilitated the upgrading of consumer durables, according to officials and experts.

Currently, China's households hold more than 3 billion major home appliances and over 300 million automobiles, signaling vast potential for upgrades and replacements, according to the commission.

The rollout of "trade-in" policies across various regions has led to a significant increase in the sales of key consumer products, as shown by recent data.

The China Automobile Dealers Association reported that nationwide passenger vehicle retail sales reached over 2 million units in September, a substantial 9 percent increase from the previous month. Notably, new energy vehicle retail sales soared to more than 1.1 million units, a 9 percent jump compared to August.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that the retail sales of household appliances and audio-visual equipment registered a 20.5 percent year-on-year increase in September, accelerating 17.1 percentage points from the previous month.

The implementation of trade-in policies for consumer goods has also indirectly driven investment growth and improved profitability across related industries, said Wen Hua, deputy director-general of the commission's department of resource conservation and environmental protection.

In the first eight months of the year, investment in the consumer goods manufacturing industry increased by 14.9 percent year-on-year. In August, the value-added output of the consumer goods manufacturing industry grew by 4.2 percent year-on-year, with the growth rate accelerating compared to July, Wen said.

The trade-in programs create a win-win scenario, benefiting both enterprises and households, said Xu Hongcai, deputy director of the China Association of Policy Science's Economic Policy Committee.

"These targeted initiatives not only spur sales for manufacturers and retailers, but also enable consumers to access more advanced and efficient products, ultimately contributing to the improvement of living standards," Xu said.

In Hangzhou's Shangcheng district, the first trade-in model apartment for age-friendly home renovations in Zhejiang province has been unveiled. The apartment features renovations focused on improving safety for using the restroom and bathing, indoor mobility, smart monitoring, and the installation of assistive equipment.

"As a central urban area of Hangzhou, Shangcheng district has a high concentration of elderly residents, with 249,000 elderly people aged 60 and above, accounting for 27.6 percent of the total population," said Ping Yuan, deputy director of the district's civil affairs bureau.

Ping said that by including a range of age-friendly products and materials as part of the "trade-in" subsidy program, the goal is to integrate these adaptive solutions into the living spaces of the elderly, enhancing their safety and convenience.

Industry insiders believe that the increased participation of e-commerce platforms and the innovation of e-commerce services have made the trade-in channels more accessible and the experience more seamless, which can effectively enhance consumers' willingness to make purchases and further unlock the potential of domestic demand.

Chinese e-commerce giant JD.com has joined forces with over 100 home appliance and furniture brands, committing 3 billion yuan to fund trade-in subsidies and service upgrades. Using air conditioners as an example, JD.com has streamlined the process from the previous two or three visits to a one-stop service that includes both delivery and installation.

Another major e-commerce platform Tmall has cumulatively invested over 700 million yuan this year to increase the subsidies and expand the coverage of its trade-in program.

Tmall has also upgraded its "last-mile" service experience, offering nationwide one-visit delivery and installation for large products such as air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, and TVs.

According to the China Galaxy Securities Research Institute, the current round of trade-in policies is expected to drive the replacement of approximately 60 million home appliances, leading to nearly 100 billion yuan in total home appliance consumption.

## BUSINESSINSIGHT

## Better risk mgmt of long-term capital urged

EAGLE EYE

By Li Xunlei

While China's central regulators have clearly expressed their support for capital inflows from long-term funds, the performance of late is less satisfactory.

For example, China's pension and insurance capital funds only direct 10 to 20 percent of their capital to equity investment. This level is much lower than the international average of 50 percent. It is also far from the 40 percent and 45 percent ceilings respectively set for social security funds and insurance funds in terms of equity investment.

Meanwhile, their asset allocations are too "conservative".

The proportion of trading financial assets as included in the balance sheets of the social security fund was 48.32 percent, 55.1 percent and 51.81 percent, respectively, in the three years between 2020 and 2022. This shows that the social security fund significantly increases its participation when the stock market enjoys upward momentum over the short run, but rapidly reduces its exposure when the market weakens. The ratio of trading financial assets has not increased accordingly when the Ministry of Finance lifted the upper limit equity of investment for the social security fund beginning in 2021.

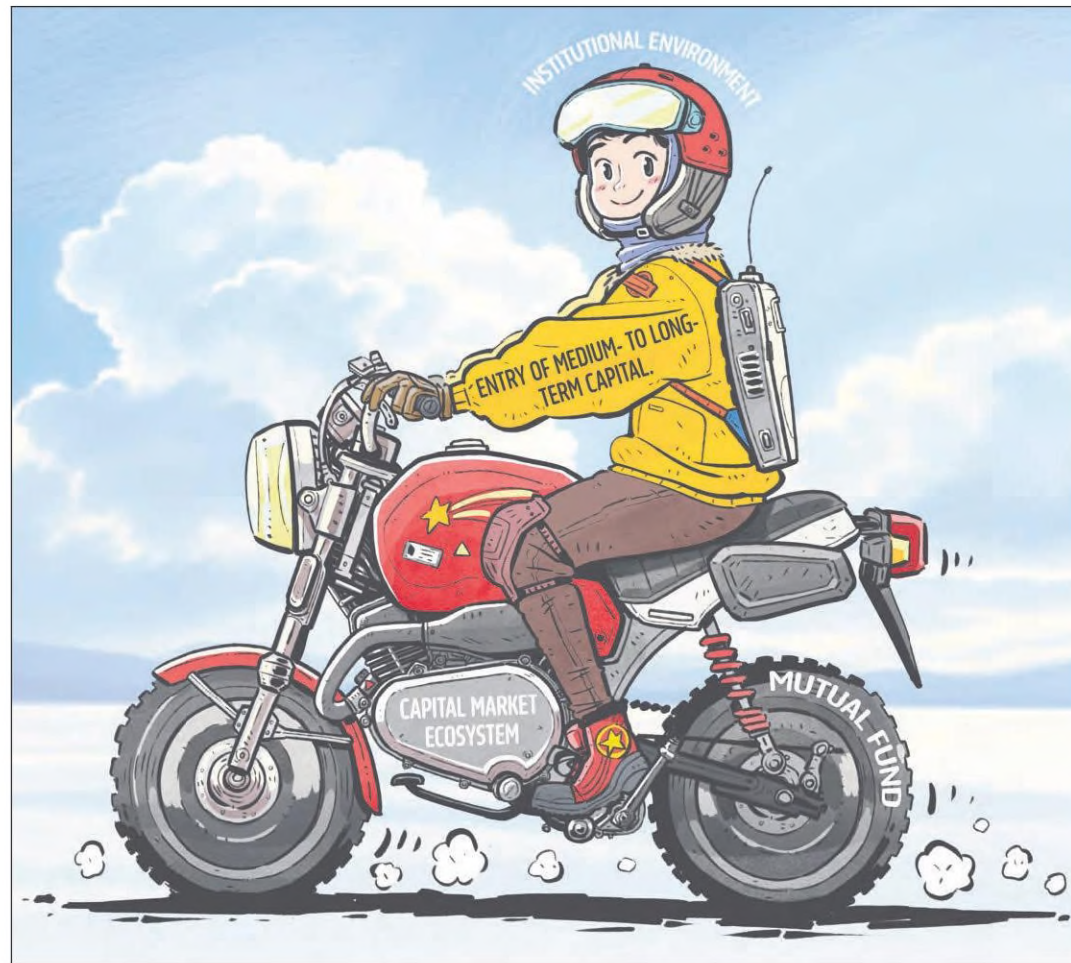
According to the National Financial Regulatory Administration, about 23.23 trillion yuan (\$3.26 trillion) of insurance capital was used in 2021, of which 12.7 percent was directed toward share purchases and fund products. The comprehensive rate of return for the insurance sector was around 5.5 percent in 2021.

In 2023, the balance of used insurance funds stood at 27.67 trillion yuan, of which 12.02 percent was invested in stocks and funds, with an average return rate of about 4.02 percent.

Both social security and insurance funds have shown an extremely cautious attitude amid market volatility. The proportion of equity investment has remained at a low level, even showing a downward trend. Their preference over low-risk, high-dividend or fixed income investment products is comprehensible, as they are closely related to people's lives.

But these figures also suggest that China's long-term capital practices insufficient participation in the equity market. Long-term capital has not given full play to its role as market stabilizer or fulfilled its mission as serving the real economy and facilitating China's economic restructuring. This is not conducive to preventing risks in the financial market, attracting global resources or addressing people's needs in an increasingly aging society.

There are some deeper structural problems in the Chinese stock market that have been inhibiting the entry of long-term capital.



CAI MENG / CHINA DAILY

**Equity-focused mutual funds should seek substantial development. An institutional environment facilitating more long-term capital inflows and advocating long-term investment should be completed. The overall capital market ecosystem should also be further optimized.**

For one thing, the stock market has relatively higher volatility. Listed company quality needs to be further improved. The idea of value investment has not been deeply taken to heart, resulting in the lack of confidence in long-term capital.

In addition, the institutional construction of the bond market has lagged behind.

Credit risk events thus occur from time to time, styming investment demand of insurance and pension capital. The less developed derivatives and alternative investment markets cannot fully meet the risk management and asset allocation needs of long-term capital.

Therefore, top financial regulators introduced a set of guidelines in late September to advance the entry of more medium- to long-term capital. Equity-focused mutual funds should seek substantial development. An institutional environment facilitating more long-term capital inflows and advocating long-term investment should be completed. The overall capital market ecosystem should also be further optimized, according to the guidelines.

The guidelines — together with the Securities, Funds and Insurance Companies Swap Facility officially launched on Oct 10 — will complement each other. They will safeguard market stability and prevent systematic risks amid market downturns and liquidity dry spells.

But it should be noted there is no such thing as an omnipotent financial tool. Actually, every tool is a double-edged sword.

Tools will aggravate market performance in both bull and bear markets. The various policies and tools introduced have somehow reflected the incompleteness of the internal mechanism of the Chinese capital market.

To address existing structural problems, the development of a multilevel capital market is crucial — especially for professional and market-savvy institutional investors. The expansion of medium- to long-term capital, best represented by pension and insurance capital, is thus of great importance.

In fact, pension and insurance funds have served as pillars in mature markets.

Assets under the management of public pension funds in the United States are now around \$4.5 trillion. The size of private pensions in the US is some \$35.4 trillion, which is about 1.3 times the country's GDP. Pension assets account for 63 percent and 92 percent of GDP, respectively, in Japan and Canada.

The huge amount of long-term funds are not only important participants for stock and bond investment in multilevel markets, but also help stabilize the market with their investment philosophy and professional research capabilities.

Overseas fund experience concerning investment tools, risk management and asset allocation can be referenced in a useful way.

By the end of 2022, more than half of the 200 largest pension funds in the US used derivatives including stock index futures, interest rate swaps and credit default swaps to hedge inflation, interest rates, credit and other risks, according to news portal Pensions & Investments. Their average allocation in alternative sectors such as private equity, real estate and infrastructure also reached 26 percent, up nearly 10 percentage points from 10 years ago.

Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund allows the use of derivatives such as stock index futures and treasury bond futures for hedging. The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has widely used derivatives such as swaps and forwards to manage risks.

Therefore, the investable scope of China's long-term capital should be expanded by considering risk appetite. The yield of bond investments can be amplified when the equity market is weak, and the hedging tool portfolio can be enriched.

For example, restrictions on the use of stock index futures and treasury bond futures can be relaxed. Long-term funds can be allowed to invest in structured products linked to stock indexes. Most of China's social security fund and companies' annuities are entrusted to domestic asset managers. Their investment styles are similar while excess returns are limited. Therefore, opportunities can be given to domestic and overseas private equity firms who are more experienced in managing pension funds, multi-asset allocation and the use of hedging tools.

In addition, the limits on long-term capital's overseas investment should be further relaxed. The ratio of foreign direct investment should be increased, and the risk management system for cross-border investment should be enhanced.

Long-term funds should step up strategic cooperation with world-leading asset management firms to grasp more advanced investment philosophy practices and risk management skills.

In addition, the A-share market stabilization fund should be set up as soon as possible, which is the most powerful support for the entry of patient capital and long-term funds.

The Ministry of Finance can take the lead by paying a certain amount of "guarantee money" to provide an insurance mechanism for institutions that invest in A shares for longer periods.

Meanwhile, the social security fund, insurers, companies and annuities should withdraw a certain percentage of investment income to pay the "security funds". Only qualified institutions should be included in this policy.

In this way, market structure can be improved. There will be less short-term speculation in the A-share market and more long-term capital can be ushered in.

The writer is chief economist at Zhongtai Securities.

The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## Favorable 'east wind' backing renminbi internationalization going forward

MAIN STREET

By Cheng Shi

The internationalization of the Chinese yuan, or the renminbi, is a continuous endeavor that is currently at a critical stage of significant progress.

On the one hand, the acceleration in renminbi internationalization is an inevitable trend over the long term as the country's strategic goal of sharpening financial strength requires a strong local currency as the primary pillar.

The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China underscored the importance of promoting high-standard opening-up of the financial sector and planned strategies for enhancing financial strength from multiple dimensions.

The country's strategic aspirations provide a solid, long-term foundation for the renminbi's steady ascent on the global stage. On the other hand, this is the right time to accelerate renminbi internationalization based on short-term factors, amid a rapid shift in domestic and international economic and financial policies.

Starting late September, the United States embarked on a rate-cutting cycle with a larger-than-expected rate cut, while China announced a series of substantial expansionary fiscal and monetary measures.

Global financial markets reacted swiftly, with Chinese financial assets gaining capital

inflows, creating a timely window for the renminbi to make significant strides in internationalization.

From my perspective, the "east wind" — which in Chinese culture symbolizes the catalyst for a major change or a harbinger of a new phase — is right at the back of renminbi internationalization, signaling a future full of promise.

First, high-level financial opening-up has laid a solid foundation for the steady internationalization of the renminbi.

The pace of China's financial market opening-up has notably accelerated since 2018, lifting the global left of China's capital markets. The bond market, for instance, experienced a gradual shift in capital flows from the second half of 2023, with a particularly significant increase in net cash inflows starting from the fourth quarter of last year.

China is committed to further improving financial market connectivity and refining qualified foreign institutional investor systems, aligning with international standards, enhancing market transparency and strengthening investor protection. The positive effects of China's high-quality economic development and high-level financial opening-up will continue to reinforce each other in the future.

The continuous opening-up of China's financial markets and the increased convenience of renminbi cross-border use have facilitated the transformation of the renminbi from a trade settlement currency to an investment and reserve currency.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the share of the renminbi in global official allocated foreign exchange reserves had risen from 1.07 percent in

2016 to 2.14 percent by the end of the second quarter of this year, reflecting the growing status of the renminbi in the global monetary system.

The third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee called for pushing forward the development of a homegrown, controllable cross-border payment system. The Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, or CIPS, is expected to continuously improve and the use of the renminbi in economies participating in the Belt and Road Initiative is likely to increase further, which will mark significant progress in renminbi internationalization.

Second, flourishing offshore renminbi markets have provided a stepping stone for the currency's global advancement.

Offshore renminbi markets have shown unprecedented vitality and dynamism in recent years. Hong Kong, the world's largest offshore renminbi hub, holds over 1 trillion yuan (\$140.3 billion) in renminbi deposits, official data showed. Hong Kong's renminbi bond market is also substantial, offering international investors a diverse array of renminbi asset allocation options and further solidifying its position as the gateway for renminbi internationalization.

Meanwhile, London, Europe's most important offshore renminbi center, continues to expand its renminbi services. The renewal of the bilateral currency swap agreement between China and the United Kingdom in 2021, worth tens of billions of British pounds, demonstrates a mutual commitment to deepening financial cooperation.

Other offshore renminbi centers like Singapore, Frankfurt and Paris each con-

tribute their unique strengths, forming a diversified global network of offshore renminbi hubs. They excel in different areas, such as promoting cross-border renminbi usage, providing renminbi financing channels and driving renminbi product innovation, collectively constructing a more comprehensive and expansive platform for the renminbi's international journey.

Third, the digital wave has unlocked potential space for internationalization of the renminbi as financial innovation becomes a key driver of changes in the global monetary system.

China, one of the first major economies to initiate the development of a digital currency, has achieved significant milestones in the research and application of the digital renminbi, or e-CNY, paving a new digital avenue for renminbi internationalization.

The digital renminbi pilot program has covered 26 pilot areas across 17 provincial-level regions, including various scenarios such as retail consumption, public services and transportation. In Shanghai alone, more than 1.4 million digital renminbi pilot application scenarios have been implemented.

These figures demonstrate the broad application and acceptance of the digital renminbi in the domestic market, laying a foundation for its digital internationalization.

In the realm of cross-border payments, Shanghai, as an international financial center, plays a central role in promoting the cross-border application of the digital renminbi, advancing digital renminbi trials in cross-border scenarios like trade, investment and finance.

For instance, through collaboration with offshore renminbi centers like

Hong Kong and Singapore, cross-border remittance and trade settlement tests of the digital renminbi have significantly increased transaction speeds, reduced fees and enhanced transparency and traceability, offering new solutions to traditional cross-border payment challenges.

The cross-border application of the digital renminbi also focuses on serving economic and trade exchanges under the Belt and Road Initiative. By interfacing with local payment systems, the digital renminbi offers new payment options for small-scale trade and tourism consumption in economies involved in the BRI, helping to enhance the circulation and influence of the renminbi within the region.

The open stance of the digital renminbi on the international stage is also remarkable. The People's Bank of China is strengthening cooperation with other central banks and international organizations surrounding issues such as the exchange mechanisms between the digital renminbi and foreign currencies and cross-national regulatory coordination. This aims to build a more inclusive and orderly international digital currency ecosystem.

This open and cooperative approach has not only fostered international understanding and acceptance of the digital renminbi but also opened up new viable avenues for the renminbi to go global.

The writer is chief economist at ICBC International Holdings Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China in Hong Kong.

The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## WORLD

# Iran vows defense after Israeli strikes

Regional nations condemn retaliatory attack that stokes fears of escalation

TEHERAN/CAIRO — Iran warned on Saturday it would defend itself after Israeli airstrikes killed at least four soldiers and further stoked fears of a full-scale war in the Middle East.

Scores of Israeli jets completed three waves of strikes before dawn against missile factories and other sites near Teheran and in western Iran, Israel's military said.

It was retaliation for Iran's Oct 1 attack on Israel with about 200 ballistic missiles as Israel warned its arch-foe not to hit back after the latest strike.

Iranian officials should determine how best to demonstrate Iran's power to Israel, Iran's official IRNA news agency cited the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying on Sunday.

"The evil committed by the Zionist regime (Israel) two nights ago should neither be downplayed nor exaggerated," IRNA cited Khamenei as saying.

Iran condemned the Israeli raid and its Foreign Ministry said Iran was "entitled and obligated" to defend itself. But it added that it "recognizes its responsibilities toward regional peace and security," a more conciliatory statement than after previous bouts of escalation.

Iran's military said the Israeli warplanes used "very light warheads" to target border radar systems in the provinces of Ilam, Khuzestan and around Teheran.

"Enemy planes were prevented from entering the country's airspace ... and the attack caused limited damage," Iran's military joint staff said. However, four soldiers were killed

while countering the Israeli strike.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Saturday that Iran's nuclear facilities "have not been impacted" in the Israeli strike.

"IAEA inspectors are safe and continue their vital work" in Iran, IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi said in a statement.

Iran's Lebanese ally Hezbollah said it had already launched rocket salvos targeting five residential areas in northern Israel. The Israeli army said 80 projectiles were fired across the border on Saturday.

Hezbollah later issued evacuation warnings for more than a dozen named locations in Israel, while the Israeli army made similar warnings for two neighborhoods in southern Beirut.

## Violation of intl law

In a statement, Jordan's Foreign Ministry called the Israeli attack a violation of international law and an infringement on Iran's sovereignty, as well as a serious escalation that pushes the region toward further tension.

Kuwait slammed the Israeli escalation, saying it "exemplifies the policy of chaos adopted by Israeli occupying forces by breaching countries' sovereignty, jeopardizing regional security and breaking international law principles and norms".

Syria's Foreign Ministry denounced the Israeli attacks as a "brazen violation" of Iranian and Syrian sovereignty and a "blatant breach" of international law and the United Nations Charter.

A US defense official said there was "no US involvement" in the

strikes on Iran, but afterward, Israeli President Isaac Herzog paid tribute to "our great friend the USA for being a true ally, and for the overt and covert cooperation". He did not elaborate.

A senior official from US President Joe Biden's administration said: "If Iran chooses to respond once again, we will be ready, and there will be consequences for Iran once again. However, we do not want to see that happen. This should be the end of this direct exchange of fire between Israel and Iran. Israel has made clear to the world that its response is now complete."

Following the attacks, analysts believe the multiyear conflict between Israel and Iran is entering a new, more dangerous phase. However, Israel's latest "moderate" military action suggests that neither side is inclined to escalate the situation further, making a full-scale war unlikely, at least for now.

Trita Parsi, executive vice-president of the Quincy Institute in the United States, wrote on X, "Teheran is downplaying it — even mocking it — which may be more reflective of their desire to de-escalate than a true assessment of the damage Israel inflicted on Iran."

"But if Iran chooses to exercise restraint, as it did after Israel's limited strikes in April, then this chapter may be closed, yet the conflict will remain very much alive."

"As long as Israel's slaughter in Gaza and Lebanon continues, a new exchange of fire between Israel and Iran will only be a question of time. And the next round will likely be more ferocious than the previous, just as this round was larger than the exchange in April," he said.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Palestinian civil defense members rescue a child on Saturday following an Israeli bombardment on a four-story house in the Zarqa neighborhood in the north of Gaza City. OMAR AL-QATTAA / AFP

## Dozens killed in Gaza as truce talks resume

CAIRO/GENEVA — Israeli military strikes killed at least 36 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip on Sunday, most of them in the north of the enclave, Palestinian health officials said, as efforts to secure a cease-fire in the more than yearlong conflict resumed in Qatar.

At least 34 of those killed on Sunday were in northern Gaza, where Israeli troops have returned to root out Hamas fighters who it says have regrouped there.

Twenty people were killed following an airstrike on houses in Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, which has been the focus of an Israeli military offensive for more than three weeks, medics and the Palestinian official news agency Wafa said.

In addition, an Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in Shati camp in Gaza City killed four people and wounded 20 others, medics said.

On Sunday, Israel's military said it had "eliminated more than 40 terrorists" in the Jabalia area in the past 24 hours, as well as dismantling infrastructure and locating "large quantities of military equipment".

Meanwhile, the death toll from an Israeli airstrike on Saturday on a residential district in the town of Beit Lahiya rose to 40, Wafa reported.

The Israeli military said it had carried out "a precise strike using precise munitions on Hamas terrorists within a structure in the area of Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip", and "a number of terrorists have been hit in the strike".

The situation in northern Gaza is "catastrophic", World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X on Saturday, warning that "a critical shortage of medical supplies, compounded by severely limited access, are depriving people of lifesaving care".

The directors of the CIA and Israel's

Mossad intelligence agency would meet with Qatar's prime minister on Sunday in Doha, an official briefed on the talks told Reuters.

Negotiations will seek a short-term cease-fire and the release of some hostages being held by Hamas in exchange for Israel's release of Palestinian prisoners, the official said.

The talks aim to get Israel and Hamas to agree to a halt in fighting for less than a month in the hope it would lead to a more permanent cease-fire.

In a separate development, a truck rammed into a bus stop near the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, wounding 35 people, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service. The circumstances were not clear, but Palestinians have carried out dozens of vehicle-ramming attacks over the years. The attack occurred near the headquarters of Mossad.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## CHINA DAILY USA

### NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com  
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:

twitter.com/chinadaily  
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

### WASHINGTON

National Press Bldg, Suite 1108  
529 14th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20045  
Tel: 202-662-7249

Fax: 202-662-7247

### SAN FRANCISCO

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: 415-348-8288  
Fax: 415-348-8388

### SEATTLE

800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Tel: 206-922-2868

### HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100  
Houston, TX 77077  
Tel: 713-595-7660

### CANADA | TORONTO

471 Yonge Street, 10th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, M5N 6K8  
Tel: 416-481-5706

CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 — No. 1445

## China-aided project boosts education quality in Cambodia

KAMPONG CHAM, Cambodia — A China-aided project has played a crucial role in helping improve learning facilities and education quality in Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Saturday.

Hun Manet made the remark during the inauguration ceremony of the project, which was held at the Hun Sen Peam Chi Kang High School in Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham Province.

He said the project had school buildings, dorms for teachers, sanitary and sewage facilities, wells, soccer pitches, basketball courts, fences and roads at 26 high schools and the Hun Sen Kandal Regional Teacher Training Center, located in the capital Phnom Penh, Kandal Province and Kampong Cham Province.

The project has also supported information and communication technology development for education in Cambodia.

Hun Manet said these achievements are a testament to excellent ties and close cooperation between Cambodia and China, particularly in the education sector.

"This project has significantly contributed to improving the quality of education in Cambodia, benefiting both teachers and students," he said.

Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wenbin expressed confidence the project would importantly contribute to improving the quality of high school education in Cambodia.

"Youth represent the future. Investing in the education sector of Cambodia is investing in the future of

China-Cambodia relations," he said.

Wang added that an alignment between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategy would help deepen cooperation in the education sector between the two countries.

Sean Sophal, deputy principal of the Hun Sen Peam Chi Kang High School, said a total of 1,452 students at the school have greatly benefited from the project.

The project had a resource building with 15 classrooms, a dorm for teachers and other infrastructures such as laboratories, he told Xinhua News Agency.

"I'd like to thank China for providing a great deal of assistance, enabling our school to have enough education-

al materials and school buildings for the students," Sophal said.

Roeurn Liza, a grade 12 student, said the project has transformed the school into a modern one, with enough learning facilities and laboratories.

"I'm really glad that I have the luck to study at a school that has good learning materials and buildings, and these have motivated us to study harder," she told Xinhua.

Say Bunkheang, another grade 12 student, said he was pleased to see the library full of reading books.

"I'd like to thank China for having provided a great amount of assistance to Cambodia, especially in the education sector."

XINHUA

## Tropical storm death toll in Philippines rises to 110

MANILA — Rescuers in the Philippines were diving into a lake and scouring isolated villages on Sunday to locate dozens of missing people as the death toll from Tropical Storm Trami hit 110.

Trami ramed into the Philippines on Thursday, forcing more than half a million people to flee their homes, while at least 42 people remain missing in the storm's aftermath, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

It announced on Sunday night that at least 110 people were reported dead, though no provincial breakdown was provided for the death toll.

Police in the hardest-hit Bicol region have recorded 41 deaths, most because of drowning.

"We are still receiving many calls and we are trying to save as many people as we can," Bicol regional police director Andre Dizon told AFP. "Hopefully, there will be no more deaths."

Dizon added that "many residents" in the region's Camarines Sur Province are still trapped on roofs and the upper floors of their homes.

South of Manila, the death toll in Batangas Province rose to 60,

provincial police chief Jacinto Malinao told AFP.

Most of the deaths in Batangas have been attributed to rain-induced landslides.

Eight deaths were recorded in other provinces, bringing an AFP tally to 109, calculated from official police and disaster agency sources.

But a "higher death toll is possible in the coming days since rescuers can now reach previously isolated places", Civil Defense Office's spokesperson Edgar Posadas said.

After leaving a path of destruction in the Philippines, Trami hit central Vietnam on Sunday, threatening to trigger heavy rains and dangerous floods.

Rainfall in several parts of provinces from Quang Binh to Quang Nam is forecast to reach 60 centimeters on Sunday and Monday, according to the national weather forecast agency.

"The risks of floods are high in urban areas from Ha Tinh to Binh Dinh provinces," the agency said.

Heavy rains are also expected to hit the Central Highlands, the country's key coffee growing area, according to the agency.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Kenya calls on unlocking green energy potential

By OTIATO OPALI in Nakuru, Kenya  
otiato@chinadaily.com.cn

Kenyan President William Ruto has called on private investors to fully explore geothermal energy to unlock the country's potential and bolster economic growth.

Speaking on Thursday at the groundbreaking ceremony for a Chinese-invested 35-megawatt geothermal power plant in Nakuru County, Ruto said Africa is rich in clean energy sources and partnerships with the private sector have the ability to explore this potential.

Ruto said that only 10 percent of Kenya's geothermal energy has been explored. So far, the country has tapped only 950 MW out of an estimated 10,000 MW, leaving immense opportunities still untapped.

Relying on the private sector for such infrastructure projects eases the burden on taxpayers and allows for more efficient implementation, he said.

"Many people would have expected us to borrow money to invest in this facility. This is not the right way because we do not want to burden Kenyans with additional taxes and loans when the private sector can do it more efficiently."

The remarks were made at the launch of the Orpower 22 facility, the third geothermal power plant in Kenya's Menengai Geothermal Complex in the scenic Rift Valley region of Nakuru. Orpower 22, an investment by Shanghai-based Kaishan Group, is projected to generate about \$400 million in revenue within its first 25 years of operation, according to the company.

Kenya's Geothermal Development Company said the Menengai complex harbors an estimated 1,600 MW of energy potential, with a long-term goal of generating 465 MW of geothermal steam through similar partnerships.

Ruto also cited a number of public-private partnership projects in Kenya, including the Chinese-built Nairobi Expressway, as instrumental in creating a synergy between public resources and private investment, thereby unlocking Africa's growth potential.

The launch of the Orpower 22 facility exemplifies the government's commitment to harnessing Kenya's vast geothermal potential to power economic growth, Ruto said. The project's ability to tap into China's technology demonstrates Kenya's strength in mobilizing private investment to accelerate infrastruc-



Kenyan President William Ruto (second from right) attends the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Orpower 22 power plant in Nakuru County on Thursday. HAN XU / XINHUA

ture development and economic transformation, he added.

Susan Kihika, governor of Nakuru County, hailed the investment by Kaishan, saying it will boost Kenya's green transformation and highlighting the country's appeal as a destination for both local and international independent power producers in energy and beyond.

"This investment will accelerate industrialization by leveraging Nakuru's abundant geothermal resources, creating new opportunities in agriculture, agribusiness and manufacturing," Kihika said.

"We want to promote green industries by utilizing geothermal energy and other renewable resources such

as solar and wind. The aim is to create jobs, enhance agricultural productivity and support local and export markets, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa."

Paul Ngugi, managing director of Kenya's Geothermal Development Company, said this development underscores Kenya's commitment to sustainable energy generation since the construction of this third geothermal power plant promises wide-ranging benefits, such as lower electricity costs. He added that the project will also create job opportunities and boost economic growth.

"It showcases the successful collaboration between the government and private sector players," Ngugi said.

# WORLD

## Pollution problems



A team from the Delhi Jal Board, which is responsible for the production and distribution of drinking water in the capital, spray defoaming chemicals in the Yamuna River ahead of the Chhath Puja festival in New Delhi on Saturday. The measures will help eradicate the toxic foam caused by heavy pollution. SALMAN ALI VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Harris and Trump pitch in swing states

NOVI/KALAMAZOO, Michigan — Democrat candidate Kamala Harris and Republican contender Donald Trump battled for holdout votes over the penultimate weekend of campaigning across US swing states, with Michelle Obama joining the Democrat onstage before the Republican nominee hosts a rally in New York.

With just over a week left in a contested presidential race, the rivals converged Saturday on Michigan, one of the three “Blue Wall” states — along with Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — that Democrats see as critical to Election Day victory on Nov 5. Both candidates are making closing pitches to voters in one of the US’ most divisive and suspense-

filled electoral fights, with polls suggesting a dead heat ahead of the election. In the southern Michigan city of Kalamazoo, about 210 kilometers away, Harris drew contrasts between her and Trump on issues such as abortion rights, taxes and healthcare. Former first lady Michelle Obama appeared in the rally, while her husband Barack Obama joined Harris on Thursday for a rally in Georgia. After leaving Michigan, Trump traveled to Pennsylvania, where he tried to reel in young voters with a rally on the campus of Penn State University. “We have to finish it off with a big victory on Nov 5,” he said.

Trump was to rally supporters on Sunday at the iconic New York arena Madison Square while Harris was expected to go neighborhood to neighborhood in Philadelphia. With some 8.4 million registered voters and 15 Electoral College votes of the 270 needed to win, Michigan is one of seven competitive US states that will decide the election, Reuters reported. So far, 19.5 percent of registered voters in Michigan, or nearly 1.42 million people, have voted, Michigan’s State Department said on Friday. Only 10,900 were in-person early votes, while the rest were returned absentee ballots.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Putin warning over long-range strikes

MOSCOW/KYIV — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday that Russia’s defense ministry was working on different ways to respond if the United States and its NATO allies help Ukraine to strike deep into Russia with long-range Western missiles.

“The Russian defense ministry is thinking about how to respond to the possible long-range strikes on Russian territory, it will offer a range of responses,” Putin told Russian state TV’s top Kremlin reporter, Pavel Zarubin. Putin said that it was too early to say exactly how Russia would react to such a move but that Moscow would have to respond accordingly and different options were being examined.

Asked if the West had heard Russia’s warnings, Putin told Zarubin: “I hope they have heard. Because, of course, we will have to make some decisions for ourselves, too.” Putin said only NATO officers would be able to fire such weapons into Russia and they would need to use Western satellite data for targeting the weapons, so the question is “whether they will allow themselves to strike deep into Russian territory or not.” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has for months been asking his Western allies for permission to use long-range missiles against targets deep inside Russian territory. The United States and Britain signaled a decision on the matter was imminent last month, but later

delayed the move after Putin warned they risked putting NATO “at war” with Moscow.

On the battlefield, the Russian defense ministry said on Sunday its military had advanced further in east Ukraine, capturing a frontline village just a few kilometers north of a key Ukrainian-held industrial hub. Russian army units “liberated the settlement of Izmailovka,” the Russian defense ministry said in a daily briefing, using the Russian spelling for the village. The Ukrainian military said on Sunday that Ukraine’s air defenses downed 41 of 80 Russian drones launched overnight.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



## Blast tragedy

Firefighters work in a collapsed building, on Saturday in the northern Spanish city of Santander. Three people died and a further 10 were injured as a result of the collapse due to an explosion that occurred around 4 am. The cause of the explosion was unknown, although the electricity and gas supplies were cut off in the neighboring buildings because of gas leaks. NACHO CUBERO / EUROPA PRESS

## Briefly

### DPRK US slammed for military drill with allies

The Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on Saturday condemned the United States for the latest military drill conducted with its allies, along with other provocations, saying these actions exacerbated the already heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula. In a press statement released by the official Korean Central News Agency, the DPRK condemned Washington for staging a large-scale joint air drill, code-named “Freedom Flag”, with the Republic of Korea and Australia,

which the United States openly stated was directed at the DPRK. Stressing the drill “shows the offensive and aggressive nature more vividly in its scale, content and character”, the statement called the drill “a very dangerous military provocation aimed at preemptive and surprise strike on the DPRK”.

### MEXICO 24 killed, 5 injured in road accident

Twenty-four people were killed and five others injured after a passenger bus collided with a tractor-trailer early Saturday in the central Mexican state of Zacatecas, local authori-

ties reported. National Guard coordinator Juan Manriquez said the crash occurred when the trailer detached from the truck transporting corn, causing the bus to tip onto its right side. Rodrigo Reyes, secretary-general of the Zacatecas government, said in a video statement that the bus was traveling from Tepic in the western state of Nayarit to Ciudad Juarez in the northern state of Chihuahua. He advised travelers to avoid the highway which remained closed after the accident. The injured are receiving treatment at the Mexican Social Security Institute, Reyes added.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

# Japanese go to polls in neck-and-neck race

Experts point to challenges facing govt after House of Representatives election

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo  
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

The voting for Japan’s House of Representatives election concluded on Sunday evening, amid public distrust following a major slush fund scandal of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Exit polls from major Japanese media outlets suggest that the LDP is likely to see a significant decrease from its pre-election 247 seats, casting doubt on whether the party and its coalition partner Komeito can retain a majority of 233 seats.

As of 11:30 pm in Tokyo, the LDP and Komeito had won 136 and 17 seats, respectively, while opposition parties and others had secured a total of 179 seats, according to broadcaster NHK.

Election results were expected between late Sunday night and early Monday morning. By press time, it was still not released.

If the ruling coalition falls short of a majority, it may need to seek new partners for a coalition or operate as a minority government.

“The question is what comes after that. Prime Minister (Shigeru) Ishiba may not quit so easily, and there can be a certain sort of cooperation with the opposition parties. But in any event, it will not be easy to form a coalition,” said Izuru Makihara, professor at the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology at the University of Tokyo.

“The question remains whether Ishiba is able to muddle through step by step. It will be something to watch closely,” Makihara added.

In the election, 1,344 candidates are competing — an increase of 293 from 2021 — for a total of 465 seats, with 289 in single-member districts and 176 through proportional representation. Before the election, the ruling coalition held a combined 279 seats, with 247 held by the LDP and 32 by Komeito.

During the campaign, controversies surrounding the LDP faction’s “politics and money” became a focal point. In a high-burden society, public criticism of political funding issues has intensified. Following the rise in the consumption tax rate to 10 percent and the introduction of the invoice tax filing system, taxpayers — who are required to diligently collect and report receipts — are increasingly frustrated by the leeway granted to politicians.

“There’s a growing sense of egalitarianism that does not condone political privilege and a strong pursuit for fairness,” Makihara said.

During a speech on Saturday in front of Tokyo’s Ikebukuro Station, Yoshihiko Noda, leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, said, “Will we continue with dark money politics, or will we end it? That’s what this election is about.”

According to Noda, the issue of “dark money” represents more than political reform; it’s about taking the first step toward changing how funds are handled in Japanese politics. He warned a system that favors a privileged elite leads to reliance on specific groups or individuals, generating debts and pushing those in power to cling tightly to it. This results in an unfair, inefficient

allocation of funds, which ultimately contributes to national decline.

The CDP has committed to abolishing corporate and organizational donations, making tuition at national and public universities free, and implementing a consumption tax refund system for low-income households. However, both the CDP and the LDP face challenges in maintaining internal governance without such political funds, Makihara observed, adding that how to build internal governance is now a pressing issue for both the ruling and opposition parties.

In a statement on Sunday, the LDP acknowledged the pressing challenges Japan faces in areas such as the economy, security, and population decline, reaffirming its commitment to achieving national revitalization.

On the final day of campaigning, Ishiba, serving as LDP president, focused on speeches across seven Tokyo locations where LDP candidates face strong competition from opposition parties.

Late in the campaign, a controversy arose over the LDP’s decision to allocate 20 million yen (\$131,334) in operational expenses to the branches of candidates who were not officially endorsed due to political funding issues. However, Ishiba did not address this matter in his closing remarks in Koto Ward.

On Sunday, the Japan Innovation Party released a statement calling for an end to money-in-politics issues and reforms in social security, education, and regulations to eliminate generational disparities. Speaking in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, on Saturday, Nobuyuki Baba, the party’s leader, stressed the need for a party that could give the LDP a wake-up call, tightening its lax discipline regarding political funding issues.



## COMMENT

## Editorial

## No doubt Beijing will take any measures necessary to defend territorial integrity

In August, Jake Sullivan, the Joe Biden administration's top security advisor, paid an official visit to Beijing, during which he reiterated that the US upheld the one-China policy and did not support "Taiwan independence".

Yet for the second time since his visit, the Biden administration has sold weapons to the Chinese island in a show of Washington's support for the secessionist-minded Democratic Progressive Party. The US Defense Department announced on Saturday that the State Department has approved a \$1.99 billion arms sale to Taiwan that includes National Advanced Surface-to-air Missile System — the world's first operational network-centric short- to medium-range ground based air defense system — and radar systems.

Although bilateral exchanges in different sectors markedly accelerated after Sullivan's visit, the Biden administration's repeated renegeing on its Taiwan-related promises to Beijing undoubtedly consumes the positive energy that has been painstakingly accumulated in recent months.

China's foreign ministry said in a statement released late on Saturday that Beijing strongly condemned and firmly opposed the latest US weapons sales to the island, and it lodged "solemn representations" with Washington.

The US' arms sales to Taiwan severely violate the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, especially the August 17 Communiqué of 1982. And the administration's decision to try and use the cross-strait tensions as a means to contain China undermines the two sides' efforts to stabilize their relations.

In its bid to rapidly supply them with arms, the Biden administration is sending a gravely wrong message to the separatist forces on the island. To the DPP authorities led by Lai Ching-te, any external assistance, be it US arms or the moral support it has received from the European Parliament, which passed a pro-independence resolution related to Taiwan on Thursday, is a straw they can clutch in their efforts to convince the island's residents that they are not alone and can resist the Chinese mainland's pursuit of national reunification.

Since his inauguration on May 20, Lai has tried to cheat the world by packaging his "pro-independence" agenda in the garb of pro-peace, pro-development and pro-democracy rhetoric, seeking to portray Beijing as aggressively taking the initiative to change the status quo of cross-strait relations.

His scheme is evidenced by his attempts to desinicize the island's history and culture, as proved by his speech on Oct 10, in which he argued the two sides of the Strait do not belong to each other, and his authorities' selected ignorance of the commemoration of the 79th anniversary of China's recovery of sovereignty over Taiwan from Japanese occupation on Friday — Taiwan was seized by Japan in 1895 — an occasion when Taiwan compatriots express their great respect for the Chinese martyrs who fought against Japanese aggression and colonial rule.

The return of Taiwan to its motherland in 1945 was the fruit of the victory won by the Chinese people, including Taiwan compatriots, in their struggle against Japanese aggression. That Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory is an incontrovertible historical and legal fact. The island's return to the motherland that year deserves to be commemorated and celebrated by compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

By whitewashing Japanese colonial rule, hyping up the false proposition that the island has an "undetermined status" and seeking to erase the Chinese national identity of the Taiwan people, the DPP authorities, encouraged by their overseas patrons' support, are trying to advance their "pro-independence" cause, pushing the island to the brink of war.

Although the Middle East and Ukraine crises are essentially different from the Taiwan question, which is strictly China's internal affair, the ugly role the US has played in both conflicts with the help of its regional partners should serve to awaken the world to the nature and danger of the collusion between the Lai authorities and Washington.

Sullivan's remarks can now be seen to have been a makeshift choice the Biden administration made in a trying moment for Biden during his reelection bid back then.

The US should not underestimate Beijing's resolve to firmly defend the nation's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. The Foreign Ministry made clear in its statement that Beijing will take countermeasures in response to any dangerous moves that undermine peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and resolutely oppose any attempts to separate the island from its motherland.

## The key to ending conflict lies with the US

For the umpteenth time those who have been counting on the United States to play a competent peace-broker's role in the Middle East have been disappointed, because US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's trip to the region last week not only failed to defuse the situation there but also prompted Israel Defense Forces to launch "precise and targeted" air strikes on targets in several places in Iran on Saturday, a day after he returned to the US.

Blinken's weeklong visit to Israel, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, his 11th visit to the Middle East in one year ostensibly to mediate peace between the warring sides, ended in what in every sense of the term is a failure. The IDF's attack on Iranian targets has raised fears that the yearslong confrontation between the two powerful militaries could turn into an all-out regional war, drawing in the US and possibly other powers. Saturday's strikes, the IDF said, were in retaliation to Iran's missile attacks on Israel on Oct 1.

Since launching a massive military offensive on Lebanon-based Hezbollah two months ago, Israel has acted as if it was ready to take on any military or militia it deems an enemy. Under such circumstances, especially with the critical US presidential election just around the corner, Washington apparently feels the need to quell the boiling situation in the Middle East.

But except for the resumption of negotiations on the release of Hamas-held Israeli hostages, Blinken's latest trip yielded almost nothing, let alone a much anticipated cease-fire in Gaza, which many, the US included, saw as a possibility after Israel announced the assassination of Hamas military chief Yahya Sinwar.

With Israel assassinating top Hamas and Hezbollah leaders in recent months, the international community thought Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would stop his military recklessness. But what happened on Saturday shows how misplaced that perception was.

An Israeli-Iranian conflict would deal another devastating blow to the world, which is still coping with the humanitarian disaster Israel's brutal assault on the Gaza Strip has caused. It's high time the US told Israel to not prolong or spread the conflict, which has already claimed close to 50,000 lives, including Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese lives.

It is an open secret that Washington's staunch support has encouraged Tel Aviv to let loose the brutal violence on the region. It is an open secret, too, that instead of repeatedly sending its top diplomat to the region, Washington could have helped end the conflict by stopping the supply of advanced weapons and military equipment and aid to Israel.

Last week, the Israeli Defense Ministry said Washington and Tel Aviv have begun implementing a \$5.2 billion emergency aid package to bolster Israel's air defense system, which was part of the \$8.7 billion military aid the US had approved in late September. As long as the US continues to favor Israel, there is no hope of the confrontations and conflicts ending in the Middle East.

The human cost of the conflicts is both staggering and appalling: In Gaza, more than 42,000 lives have been lost, a figure that represents about 2 percent of the Palestinian enclave's population. In Lebanon, the country's health ministry said the death toll over the past year is more than 2,500 — with over 12,000 wounded.

The only way to end the conflict is for the US to act responsibly and stop oiling Israel's war machine. This is not the time for symbolic gestures and sham diplomacy. It is a time to make sincere efforts to stop Israel's military adventure and end Palestinian people's suffering, and prevent the vicious circle of tit-for-tat retaliations. It is a time for the US to act humanely and restore peace by bringing Israel back to its senses.

Li Min



## Opinion Line

## Preventing a trade war over EVs in the interest of China and EU

The European Union is scheduled to impose so-called anti-subsidy duties of up to 35.3 percent on Chinese-made electric vehicles from Thursday on top of the 10 percent import duty it already imposes on cars, but the two sides have intensified their efforts to prevent that from happening in order to avert a trade war.

China and the EU have reiterated their willingness to resolve the dispute over the latter's "anti-subsidy" investigations into Chinese-made EVs through dialogue. The two sides have also decided to make a commitment on price as a way to resolve the issue, according to a statement released by China's Ministry of Commerce after Commerce Minister Wang Wentao talked, via video links, with European Commission Executive Vice-President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis last Friday.

Observers both in China and the EU have urged the two sides to properly handle the case. Since Sept 20, intensive negotiations have been held between the two sides on the price commitment issue. And although some positive progress has been made in certain aspects, there remain significant differences between the two sides on issues of core concern to businesses both in China and the EU.

China will safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of its enterprises. And it is hoped that the two sides will continue to make efforts to break the deadlock and prevent a trade war. Henceforth, the talks on price commitment should be conducted based on mutual consideration of each other's core concerns, as Wang said.

The EU has put forward specific suggestions regarding the price com-

mitment plan and proposed that technical teams from both sides engage in video consultations on the issue. That the Chinese side, in response, has agreed to immediately start the next stage of negotiations and welcomed the EU's technical team to visit China as soon as feasible shows Beijing is committed to settling the disputes with the EU through talks and preventing a tariff war.

The trade investigations by China against EU goods such as brandy, pork and dairy products were initiated at the request of domestic industries, and in full compliance with the World Trade Organization's rules. China will continue to conduct the investigations in accordance with its law and regulations, and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of all parties involved.

— LIYANG, CHINA DAILY

## Move to further develop telecom services

Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Hainan province launched a pilot project on Wednesday to further open up value-added telecommunication services to the outside world.

The three cities and one province will allow the use of foreign capital to operate telecom services such as internet data centers, thus helping stimulate market competition, and allowing China to share its digital development opportunities with other countries.

The telecom industry is an important sector to attract foreign investment, as its high revenue and user scale rank among the top in the world, and China's digital economy still has huge development potential despite its rapid development over the past years.

China began opening up its telecom market to the outside world after its

accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001, and till the end of September this year, the number of foreign-funded enterprises approved to provide telecom services in China had increased to 2,220.

The entry of foreign capital has not only intensified the competition in the country's telecom market but also contributed to its development by introducing new technologies and other resources. Competition and cooperation with foreign companies have prompted domestic telecom companies to take measures to expedite their transformation, and upgrade their technologies and services, thereby helping improve the industry's overall service level and international competitiveness.

China's major domestic telecom operators are today leading global

companies in terms of user scale, technology and corporate strength. So the green light to use foreign capital to operate telecom services should not be seen as the entry of a predator in the domestic telecom market.

Among the businesses piloted to lift the restrictions on foreign equity ratios in the three cities and one province are internet data centers and information services, which foreign investors have already set their eyes on.

Opening up these services to foreign capital is conducive to attracting more technologies and other resources, which will help build a solid computing power base, and promote innovation in advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data, and the merging of the digital economy and the real economy.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

## What They Say

## Reconciliation signs don't necessarily mean real change

China and India not only reached a deal on patrolling their disputed borders to end a four-year military impasse last week, but also their leaders met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, and agreed to make efforts to restore lasting peace in the border areas and strengthen communication and cooperation.

One of the reasons why India chose to repair relations with China is that it didn't get the expected benefits from deepening its relationship with the United States over the past few years. Since 2016, India under the Narendra Modi government has been seeking to curry favor with the US, while saying it has no intention of joining forces with the US to contain China. However, during his second term as prime minister, Modi

discovered, gradually though, that India has "suffered heavy losses" due to its increased engagement with the US, and Washington has taken advantage of its new-found "friendship" with New Delhi to repeatedly breach India's exclusive economic zone without permission in the name of "freedom of navigation" and pressure India to stop buying Russian oil.

New Delhi slowly realized that being an enemy of the US was dangerous, but being its friend was no less dangerous. New Delhi also woke up to the fact that maintaining relations with China was crucial to its economic development. And hence Modi turned to Beijing in his third term.

India even tried to "decouple" its economy from China's, but its trade with China kept growing, with its dependence on China increasing significantly.

China is India's largest source of goods, including industrial products. Official Indian data show India's imports from China have surged 56 percent over the past four years, and its trade deficit with China has almost doubled to \$85 billion.

After four years of foreign policy experiments, the Modi government finally realized that maintaining cooperative relations with China is crucial for India's development. India's so-called friendship with the US, which tried to hype up the "border confrontation" issue, didn't secure any gain for India.

However, considering that the Modi government has been in the habit of balancing India's foreign policy, the improvement of Sino-Indian relations does not mean New Delhi has changed its China policy.

— GUANCHANG.COM

## CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

## Contact us at:

**China Daily**  
15 Fuxin Dongjie Chaoyang District,  
Beijing 100029  
News: +86 (0) 10 6491-8366  
editor@chinadaily.com.cn  
Advertisement: +86 (0) 10 6491-8631  
ads@chinadaily.com.cn  
Subscription: +86-400-699-0203  
subscription.chinadaily.com.cn  
App: www.chinadaily.com.cn/mobile/daily.html

**China Daily UK**  
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK  
+44 (0) 207 398 6270  
editor@chinadailyuk.com

**China Daily Asia Pacific**  
**China Daily Hong Kong**  
Unit 1818, Hing Wa Centre, 7 Tin Wan  
Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong  
+852 2518 5111  
editor@chinadailyhk.com  
editor@chinadailypacific.com

**China Daily USA**  
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,  
New York, NY 10036  
+1 212 537 8888  
editor@chinadailyusa.com

**China Daily Africa**  
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
+254 (0) 20 242 8589 (Nairobi)  
editor@chinadailyafrica.com  
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com  
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

## COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | The Chinese and World Economy

**Editor's note:** With the world facing uncertainties, enhanced international cooperation is needed to revive global economy. As China pursues high-quality development, it will continue to be the engine of global growth. Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Otton Solis

# Prosperous China good for the world

There is no meaningful definition of development today that does not have at its heart poverty reduction. Whether one looks at the University of Oxford's concept of "multidimensional poverty", the "human development" approach of the United Nations, the "sustainable development goals" (set also by the UN in 2012) or Economics Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen's view of "development as freedom" where freedom from deprivation is a core component, pure economic variables are not sufficient to make people understand and design policies on development.

There are still some neoliberal economists and policymakers that propagate the idea that to become developed economies, the countries of the Global South ought to be only concerned about increasing their economic growth rate. There are others that, while identifying with a broader definition of development that includes poverty reduction, promote the idea that fast-paced economic growth is a necessity to realize that objective.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are paradigms that associate development with poverty reduction or consider reducing poverty and inequalities a prerequisite to accelerate economic growth. Much of the traditional left in Latin America, Africa and Asia has been committed to such an approach. In their view, for development to take place, productive resources ought to be owned by the state in representation of the community. Indirectly, everyone would get an equal share and, depending on the wealth of the country, people would emerge out of poverty (at least nominally).

In that paradigm there is a disdain for private property and market competition, as they are deemed bourgeois tools to exploit the poor. Most of the guerrilla movements in Latin America were of that persuasion.

Post-1978 China did not make choices within the limits of this false dichotomy. Instead, it implemented policies based on its own realities and historical background, indifferent to ideological purities and orthodox recipes. Adopting a pragmatic approach guided by the search for specific outcomes, China recognized the importance of private property, market competition, the profit motive and foreign investment, while working out aggressive anti-poverty policies and keeping in the hands of the state strategic sectors, in order to boost economic growth and social development.

Additionally, the Chinese government became increasingly sophisticated at fully using anything available in the economic and social policy toolkit to meet specific sectoral or regional needs

or to achieve broad national objectives.

The countries in Latin America and other less- and least-developed regions took a very different path. For instance, most of the Latin American policy debates have been focused on ideology. Far from making assessments on the basis of results, most economists and politicians have been obsessed with whether socialism or neoliberalism possesses the best toolkit for development. This ideological pomposity has ignored the pragmatic eclecticism that has prevailed in every successful development story, be it in Western Europe, the United States, Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand or China.

Unlike China's reform and opening-up, which were launched in 1978, Russia's reforms in the early 1990s fully complied with the "advice" of Western experts, proceeding, in a hurry, to liberalize markets and privatize assets. Far from becoming an industrial and technological powerhouse, Russia became heavily dependent on its energy resources, missing out on real development.

In fact, most Latin American countries share with Russia the negative consequences of following neoliberal policies and implementing the recommendations of Western advisers, often, in the case of Latin America, attached as conditions for granting development loans.

On the other hand, China achieved on average more than 9 percent growth for almost four decades and lifted over 800 million people out of absolute poverty, thereby accounting for three quarters of global poverty reduction.

How did China pull off this mighty feat? It did not fall into the false Catch-22 dilemma about the presumed contradiction between economic growth-friendly policies and social development. In contrast, it pushed for policies that have allowed for a mutual reinforcement of those two objectives.

Market-led development alongside state activism, plus heavy investments in education and healthcare, resulted in high economic efficiency, not by the displacement of the less-competitive people but by their incorporation into the economy as small entrepreneurs (via microloans and subsidies) or as productive human resources into the industrial sector. Millions of jobs were created



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY



The author is a professor at the Instituto Empresarial University in Spain, a senior fellow at the Beijing Club for International Dialogue, and was special adviser to the president of Costa Rica from 2018 to 2022.

as China became the main supplier of industrial and technological goods to world markets.

Beyond reducing poverty within the country, China has also helped improve the conditions of the people around the world. First, its fast GDP growth has boosted world demand for raw materials and agricultural goods from less- and least-developed countries. Second, its lower prices for thousands of consumption and capital

goods have made them accessible to millions of people in the Global South. And third, its accumulation of international reserves (due to its massive continuous trade surplus) has increased the supply of world credit, lowering interest rates.

All these have led to an increase in world investment and employment and stronger financial conditions for mortgages and other types of debt required by lower-income sectors in every corner of the world. Imagining the global poverty situation without China's success in poverty alleviation is chilling. Therefore, if we are serious about human rights, above all the right to enjoy a life without deprivation and the right to have hope, the world needs a prosperous China.

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

Wu Songbo

# Washington's false overcapacity claim convincingly debunked

The United States, through its official remarks, has been creating a false narrative about China's so-called overcapacity, while claiming that China has increased its production capacity and exports at the expense of other countries. Some Western leaders and media even argue that China's economic growth is heavily reliant on exports, which poses a threat to the global economy. That these claims lack factual basis and suggest the US-led West has a hidden agenda is obvious.

Contrary to what US officials claim, China is not any more dependent on exports for economic growth than other developing countries. From 2020 to 2023, China's total merchandise exports is equivalent to about 17.9 percent of its GDP. For comparison, developing economies' average is 17.7 percent, while developed economies have a much higher average (of 35.8 percent). It is therefore clear that China's economy is less dependent on goods exports than many developed economies.

Moreover, US practices contradict its claims that China's industries have massive overcapacity. The US complains that sectors such as solar cells, lithium batteries and electric vehicles (EVs) in China have been oversupplying and causing global overcapacity. Yet the US has invested more than \$860 billion in the clean energy and semiconductor sectors due to Biden Administration's Investing in America agenda. If the US respects market principles, why is it investing huge amounts in sectors that supposedly have overcapacity?

The contradiction between what the US claims and its own policy underscores the hypocrisy of its stance on overcapacity. The Biden administration's large-scale interventions in certain sectors mirror the actions it criticizes China for. This double standard shows the US' overcapacity narrative is more about geopolitical strategy than economic facts.

The global economy has been grappling with numerous challenges, and the US is using the false overcapacity narrative as a tool to justify its trade protectionism and bolster its strategic competition with China, rather than helping the world overcome those challenges.

By propagating the false overcapacity narrative, the US is trying to use a pretext to protect its industries from foreign competition. In essence, its claim that China is causing global overcapacity is a convenient excuse to impose more punitive tariffs on imported goods to shield US companies from global competition.

Promoting the false overcapacity narrative allows the US to justify its aggressive economic stance and interventions in strategic industries. By alleging that China's industrial expansion is harmful to the global economy, the US is trying to prove its own policies are necessary and justified in a bid to "protect" its domestic interests. In reality, the US is trying to curtail China's industrial growth to revive its own manufacturing sector.

The overcapacity argument also serves as a smoke-screen to distract people from the fact that the US' own economic policy has exacerbated global economic imbalances. Critics often overlook the fact that the US' fiscal and monetary policy has had profound spillover effects, which have contributed to the very global economic instability it claims to be addressing.

After taking office, Biden implemented large-scale fiscal stimulus measures, which have raised the US' debts to record levels, caused high inflation and led to soaring interest rates. The US' total debt has reached \$35 trillion — equivalent to the combined economic output of China, Germany, Japan, India and the United Kingdom. This immense debt poses a severe challenge to US economic governance and limits its ability to respond to future economic recessions. As the US faces growth deficits, neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have shown any real willingness to introduce policies that would curb spending or reduce the national debt.

The US' ballooning debt and persistent fiscal irresponsibility have triggered growing concerns among other countries and international institutions. And more and more countries are concerning the US dollar's status as the world's primary reserve currency, with economists like Paul Krugman warning that the US' debt might become unsustainable as interest rates outpace GDP growth.

The US Federal Reserve's tightening of monetary policy to combat inflation has had widespread negative spillover effects on the global economy. Rising US bond yield has caused ripple effects across global financial markets, tightening financial conditions worldwide and creating turmoil, particularly in emerging markets. As the International Monetary Fund reported in 2023, more than half of the low-income countries are either at or near high risk of debt distress.

In many ways, the US' monetary policy has not alleviated but exacerbated global imbalances. By taking controversial measures to control inflation at home without regard for their global impacts, the US has contributed to the instability in the world economy.

The US should take responsibility for the global repercussions of its fiscal and monetary policy rather than deflecting blame onto China with unfounded claims of overcapacity. The interconnected nature of the global economy demands that governments, especially of major economies such as the US, engage in responsible macro-economic policy coordination. The false narrative of Chinese overcapacity is a convenient excuse for the US to resort to protectionism, which will fail to address the deeper issues of global economic governance that the US has played a significant role in creating.

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

He Wetwen

# Tariffs on Chinese goods raise US inflation

The data released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics recently show the consumer price index (CPI) rose by 2.4 percent year-on-year in September, slightly lower than the 2.5 percent in August. The core CPI, except for energy and food, however, rose by 3.3 percent year-on-year in September compared with 3.2 percent in the previous month.

On the whole, the United States has made significant progress in curbing inflation over the past two years and more, with the CPI falling from a record high 9.1 percent in June 2022 to 2.4 percent in September this year. With the CPI entering the 2 plus percent zone in July and staying there in August, the US Federal Reserve cut the federal interest rate by 50 basis points on Sept 18, suggesting serious inflation in the US is over.

However, the decline in inflation in the US has lagged behind that in the eurozone, where the CPI rose by only 1.7 percent in September compared with 2.2 percent in August. Considering the fact that Europe has been suffering seriously due to a drastic increase in natural gas prices following the halt in low-cost oil and gas supply from Russia and that the US didn't face such a problem, the tempo of the CPI's decline in the US has been very slow.

One of the reasons the US is lagging behind other major economies in curbing inflation is its high tariffs on more

than \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods. The total tariff volume add up to more than \$80 billion per year, most of which, incidentally, had to be borne by US consumers and downstream industrial users.

According to a study by Oxford Economics, in the first two years (2018 and 2019), the punitive tariffs imposed on Chinese goods increased American families' spending by \$88 billion. And from 2018 to 2022, the direct prices of apparel, textiles, travel goods and furniture increased by \$166 billion.

Before the former Donald Trump administration imposed extra tariffs on Chinese goods, low-cost imports from China helped reduce inflation by 1.0-1.5 percentage points per year, as pointed out by a white paper issued by the Chinese government on Sept 18, 2018. The high tariffs on Chinese goods have reversed the effect and now contribute to inflation.

The Joe Biden administration once considered lifting most of the extra tariffs on Chinese goods to help bring down inflation. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen even told Reuters in an interview that tariff cuts could cause a "deflation" effect. Had that been done,

the CPI could have declined to below 3 percent much earlier. However, the Biden administration has announced additional tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles, batteries, steel and aluminum. And yet it has not been able to achieve its original goal of checking Chinese imports to the US.

According to Chinese customs data, Chinese exports to the US reached \$478.42 billion in 2018, before the extra tariffs were imposed. Initially, the sweeping tariffs on Chinese goods during 2018-19 led to a decline in Chinese exports to the US by 12.5 percent to \$418.67 billion in 2019. But Chinese exports started picking up from the second quarter of 2020, ending the year at \$451.81 billion, a rebound of 7.9 percent. The trend continued into 2021 and 2022, reaching a new high in 2022 at \$581.78 billion, up 21.6 percent from the pre-tariff year of 2018.

Chinese exports to the US started falling in third quarter of 2022, hitting \$500.29 billion in 2023, down 13.1 percent year-on-year. The direct reason for that, however, was not new tariffs, but the US' restrictions on the imports of technology products from China. However, Chinese exports started rebounding again in the third quarter of 2023.

In the third quarter of this year, Chinese exports to the US reached \$139.87 billion, up 5.2 percent year-on-year. Compared with the same period of 2022, or the previous high, the decline

in the third quarter of 2024 was 9.9 percent, lower than the 13.1 percent in the same period last year. In September, Chinese exports to the US hit \$47.02 billion. If multiplied by 12 to get the whole year's estimate, we get the figure of \$564.18 billion, 97.0 percent of the total Chinese exports to the US in 2022.

The close and intertwined China-US supply chains make it difficult to decouple the two economies.

Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, has said he will impose a whopping 60 percent tariff on Chinese goods, and Tom Cotton, Republican House representative from Arkansas, has again proposed the "Trade with China Act", calling for revocation of permanent normal trade relations with China. What the Republican politicians are saying is not only a violation of World Trade Organization rules, but also a threat to the world economy.

But despite the US politicians' threats, high inflation is likely to hit the US again, neutralizing the Fed's hard efforts to bring down the CPI and cause more misery to American families. The only way the US administration can protect American families from high inflation is to lift all punitive tariffs on Chinese goods. That would also serve to normalize the US' relations with China and thus give a boost to the global economy.

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

# GLOBAL VIEWS

WANGHUO

## Rethinking biodiversity beyond 30x30

If people understood how closely the extinction of a frog on a distant island is linked to their well-being, they would probably give it as much, if not more, importance than climate change

Significant milestones in global biodiversity conservation have been making headlines this October. The Regional Assembly of Portugal's Azores Islands officially approved the establishment of the largest marine protected area in the North Atlantic. This newly designated marine reserve, covering nearly 299,998 square kilometers, will safeguard the rich biodiversity of the region, including deep-sea corals and hydrothermal vents.



Earlier, Australian Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek made a high-profile announcement that the government plans to expand the marine protected area around Heard Island and McDonald Islands by over 300,000 square kilometers, saying that this move will bring the total proportion of Australia's protected ocean territories to 52 percent. This far exceeds the global target of effectively protecting and managing 30 percent of the world's terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas by 2030, more common as the "30x30" goal.

Plus, this October, the Joe Biden administration of the United States announced the establishment of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, the first tribally nominated marine sanctuary in the US. It spans 187 km of the California coastline and covers over 11,655 sq km of coastal and offshore waters, protecting its rich marine biodiversity.

As the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD-COP16) opened on Oct 21 in

Colombia, many countries — both CBD parties and non-parties — are eager to showcase their progress in nature conservation. This year marks the second anniversary of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. How much progress has been made? According to CBD Executive Secretary Astrid Schomaker, 31 parties have submitted their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, while 103 countries have submitted their national targets. The pace of alignment is notably faster than during the 2011-20 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

This is certainly a positive sign. At the CBD COP15 held in 2022, countries agreed on the "30x30" goal. As of August 2024, however, only 17.5 percent of the Earth's land and inland waters were protected or conserved, while the protection rate for oceans was only 8.5 percent (with less than 3 percent fully or highly protected). With only six years left to reach the 2030 target, the gap obviously remains significant, making the task ahead daunting.

A closer look reveals that many countries' current reports still focus primarily on the area of protected areas. However, the Kunming-Montreal framework comprises four long-term goals for 2050 and 23 action targets for 2030, aimed at halting and reversing biodiversity loss. The target to protect 30 percent of land, oceans and inland waters is just one of these specific goals. More broadly, the 2050 goals emphasize ecosystem and species health, including stopping human-induced species extinction, sustainably using biodiversity, ensuring equitable benefit-sharing, and securing funding to close the annu-

al \$700 billion biodiversity financing gap.

Therefore, we need to maintain a necessary vigilance and avoid complacency over the achievements we currently observe, as we overlook the broader context — global biodiversity is rapidly declining, and this trend is accelerating without signs of mitigation.

First, the intense focus on the area of protected lands may lead us to neglect the effectiveness of conservation efforts, especially in regions that truly need protection, such as biodiversity hotspots. A recent study published in Nature Communications explored the distribution of global protected areas and their influencing factors. It concludes that there is a significant imbalance in the global distribution of protected areas, particularly in regions of high biodiversity, indicating that current conservation strategies may not effectively encompass critical ecosystems and habitats. Another study published in Marine Policy in 2023 found that one-third of the global marine protected areas assessed may be "paper parks". Among the 184 marine protected areas they analyzed, 30 percent were identified as such, with the majority located in Latin America and the Caribbean (31 percent), Southeast Asia and Oceania (25 percent), and the Indian Ocean (20 percent).

This is why, when Australia announced in October that it would expand its marine protected areas to bring the total protected marine area to 52 percent of its waters — exceeding the global target of 30 percent — it faced a wave of criticism from the scientific community. Experts argued that the government's statement misled the public, emphasizing that the actual pro-

ected areas are far lower and noting that less than 25 percent are designated as "no-take" marine sanctuaries.

Second, I believe we should emphasize the benefits that biodiversity conservation brings to humanity via effective mainstreaming. In fact, compared to climate change communication, the discourse surrounding biodiversity is generally lagging. However, biodiversity directly impacts human life and survival. Many sources of medicine, food and ecosystem services — such as water purification, soil fertility and climate regulation — depend on healthy ecosystems. Historically, many people believed biodiversity conservation as requiring sustained financial investment. We should shift our communication to more effectively highlight the "returns" on these investments, using real-world vivid examples to create a persuasive narrative. For instance, the establishment of marine protected areas can generate significant benefits through the development of ecotourism (such as whale and dolphin watching), which in turn supports coastal communities or island residents. Similarly, reducing monotonous plant landscaping in urban green spaces, respecting wild areas, and protecting and restoring small wetlands can help mitigate urban water pollution and flood risks through nature-based solutions.

In a conference in 2018, I raised a question to Inger Andersen, the then general director of the International Union for Conservation of



Nature and now executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme: why is there significantly more attention on climate change than on biodiversity loss? Her response left a lasting impression on me: People often struggle to connect the extinction of a frog on a distant island to their lives, but they are deeply concerned about whether they can breathe the clean air every day. If individuals understood how closely their well-being is linked to biodiversity, perceptions would change dramatically. This underscores the critical importance of communicating biodiversity's relevance. That's why mainstreaming biodiversity is the key.

My third recommendation is to focus more on the issue of species extinction. It is important to remember that the Framework is a comprehensive initiative, not just the 30x30 target. The 2050 goals explicitly state that human-induced extinction of known threatened

species must be halted, aiming for a tenfold reduction in extinction rates and risks for all species, while enhancing the abundance of native wild species to healthy, resilient levels. Additionally, the genetic diversity within populations of both wild and domesticated species should be maintained to safeguard their adaptive potential. Therefore, rather than just noting newly announced protected area sizes, I hope to see more countries presenting their "report cards" on these critical aspects.

*The author is deputy secretary-general of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation and a member of the IUCN Intersessional Council Working Group on the development of a new 20-year Strategic Vision for the Union. 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.*

DONG YIFAN

## Time to strike a balance

Only by breaking the mindset of 'overusing security concepts' and zero-sum games can the EU strike a balance between development and security for win-win outcomes with China

In recent years, industrial changes and value chain restructuring have been accelerating amid mounting geopolitical and security turbulence. In this backdrop, the European Union is emphasizing security issues in its foreign economic policy. The bloc has also shown a tendency of overusing the concept of "security", which is reflected in the anti-subsidy investigation into imports of battery-powered electric vehicles from China.



Driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, the EU has gradually developed a trend of generalizing the concept of security in its policy.

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, various supply chains in the EU, such as medical products, were strained, prompting the EU to regard over-dependence on other countries as an important economic security risk, and making the bloc wary of other countries using interdependence to "coerce and influence".

The outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in 2022 has led to the return of traditional geopolitical security confrontation. Alongside the increasingly fierce rivalry with Russia, the EU has deepened its negative perception of excessive dependency and economic coercion, so that when balancing economic interests and economic security, it tilts toward the latter.

In June 2023, the European Commission and its High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security published a Joint Communication on a European Economic Security Strategy, the first document in its history to map out strategic objectives and policy

planning around economic security issues.

In January 2024, on the basis of the Economic Security Strategy, the European Commission adopted five initiatives to strengthen the EU's economic security, by putting forth policy ideas in the fields of outbound investment review, export control of dual-use technologies, research and development support, security precautions for scientific and technological cooperation, and inbound investment screening rules.

Under the dual impact of global industrial changes and spillover effects from geopolitical crises, the decline in the advantages of the EU's dominant industries has been accelerating. Problems such as surging energy costs and insufficient production and innovation capacities have further weakened the EU's industrial competitiveness and aggravated its anxiety.

In September 2024, the European Commission unveiled The Future of European Competitiveness, a report by former European Central Bank president and former Italian prime minister Mario Draghi. The report starts by stressing that boosting competitiveness has become a key issue for the EU to support its welfare, lifestyle and even global status. It not only mentions the downward trend caused by the EU's economic size, labor productivity, development of digital and green industries, and the empowerment of traditional industries by emerging technologies, but also emphasizes that the EU's approach to enhancing competitiveness includes promoting the diversification of key product supplies, safeguarding interests through trade instruments, and strengthening the protection of local technological capabilities from a security perspective.



To ease its anxiety over declining competitiveness, the EU blatantly rolls out trade protectionist measures under the disguise of security concerns, treating highly competitive products from other countries, especially China, as threats and challenges. The issue of electric vehicles is a most obvious example.

When overstretching security concepts in its foreign economic policy, the EU's security agenda has gradually gone beyond the so-called over-dependency problem and de-risking, to further expand to a wider range of areas.

Europe has been more vigorously emphasizing the differences and competition with non-Western countries in terms of values, and calling for more focus on values in its domestic and foreign policies. In recent years, some EU institutions

and politicians have claimed that the Ukraine crisis is a war "against European values and the future", and one of "democracy versus autocracy", hyping that their own people are "affected by foreign interference". Some even proposed a Defense of Democracy Package to tackle the threat of foreign interference and block foreign infiltration and influence.

At the same time, the EU has overused the concept of "democracy" in such areas as critical infrastructure, digital technology application and trade and industrial chain cooperation, believing that these areas are at risk of being attacked, exploited and used as levers of influence by other countries. The EU's tendency of de-risking and self-protection is gradually reflected in its protectionist meas-

ures in trade, investment, scientific and technological cooperation and other fields.

In the wake of its declining economic competitiveness and the negative impact of the globalization process, the EU has also begun to play up the "security issues" in the industrial sector, constantly hyping the "overcapacity" problem and accusing other countries of producing far too much and squeezing the European industry and market.

Some European politicians have been adding fuel to the fire. For instance, in December 2023, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen publicly accused China of industrial overcapacity, claiming that exports to Europe have undermined Europe's industrial base by unfair competition. French President Emmanuel Macron has linked the "excess capacity" to what Europe calls an influx of exports to Europe and the concept of European sovereignty and national security.

At the same time, the EU's automotive and photovoltaic industries are advocating that they face an existential threat, and the influx of external products is undermining Europe's industrial autonomy.

The EU's overstretching of security concepts in economic and trade areas has turned into protectionist actions.

The anti-subsidy investigation into the imports of battery-operated electric vehicles from China launched in October 2023 is one of the largest anti-subsidy and countervailing cases by the EU in recent years. The European Commission insists on using high tariff policies and EU countries recently voted in favor of taxation, which reflects rising protectionist sentiments within the bloc and the stubbornness of its security dilemma. It is not conducive to the proper handling of trade frictions and disputes between Chi-

na and the EU on the basis of objective and rational consideration of each other's concerns, but rather, will push things to the extreme.

As a matter of fact, at present, many European industry insiders are expressing grave concerns over the EU's security-driven protectionism.

A large-scale protest was organized by French cognac producers, the first since 1998, asking the French government and the EU to seriously consider the concerns and the survival of the industry. BMW, Mercedes and other carmakers are also concerned about the "deeper and longer recession" in the development of the industry. Recently, the China Chamber of Commerce to the EU and European Union Chamber of Commerce in China jointly called for mutual trust building between China and the EU, expressing hope for joint efforts by enterprises from both sides to build an industrial ecosystem and tap into the vast cooperation potential in the transformations of green and digital economies.

Therefore, only by returning to the track of correctly viewing market competition, interdependency and security issues, and breaking the mindset of "overusing security concepts" and zero-sum games, can the EU safeguard the common interests it shares with China in a turbulent world, and strike a balance between development and security for win-win outcomes in a rational and balanced way.

*The author is an assistant research fellow at the Institute of European Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. 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.*

## LIFE

## Festival shows Chaoyang in new light

A mix of natural beauty, interactive art and high-tech installations gives the district of the capital a chic appearance, **Du Juan** reports.



Tourists and residents enjoy a light show with music by the Liangma River near Solana, a shopping mall close to Chaoyang Park, during the 2024 Beijing Chaoyang International Light Festival.

The 2024 Beijing Chaoyang International Light Festival, which kicked off on Oct 18 and will continue until Nov 10, has illuminated the city including places such as the Olympic central area and the Liangma River zone, merging modern technology with artistic brilliance to provide a visual feast for the public.

The opening ceremony on the night of Oct 18 attracted people of all ages to get together and enjoy the light show with music, as well as snacks and drinks at a market nearby.

"The 'light apples' with yellow and red colors are hanging in the trees along the site, making the night look so pretty," says a local resident, Li Lingling, in her 20s. "The snack stalls provide so many choices. It has a chill vibe to eat and drink outside here, enjoying a night at the weekend with lights, music and a cool breeze."

Wen Xian, Party secretary of Chaoyang district, says that the festival, leveraging artificial intelligence digital technologies, will serve as a big stage for artists from home and abroad, international sporting events, and corporate entities, inviting people to delve into the boundless realms where light intersects with technology, art and culture in the vibrant heart of Chaoyang.

More than 40 light installations, nine art projects and over a dozen light shows have been set up in important building groups in Chaoyang district, according to the local authorities.

One of the main attractions, the Liangma River, was transformed from an ordinary waterway into a vibrant leisure destination. Its 18 kilometers of scenic waterfront paths and a 6-kilometer-long cruise route connect popular spots, such as Solana, a fashionable shopping mall near the Chaoyang Park, and Sanlitun subdistrict, a shopping, dining and nightlife area.

Visitors can now enjoy a mix of natural beauty, interactive art and high-tech installations.

"The river looks beautiful at night," a tourist, Chen Yun, says. "With lights reflecting off the water, it's like walking through a painting."

In addition to the light festival, the river has become well-known for creating an



**Clockwise from above left:** Buildings in Chaoyang district come alive at night, with colorful illuminations and light performances, such as those in Wangjing area, the central business district, the Liangma River economic belt, and the Sanlitun subdistrict, which is a shopping, dining and nightlife hub. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

immersive light show under the Haoyun (Good Fortune) Bridge. This installation, using 300,000 optical fibers, re-creates Van Gogh's painting of *The Starry Night*, leaving visitors spellbound.

"It feels like sailing through a starry galaxy," says Li Shiqing, a visitor in awe of the



mesmerizing display during her boat trip on the river.

The Liangma River economic belt has become a hub for innovative, cultural and commercial experiences and brings increasing consumption to the surrounding area. Zhang Guanbin, deputy head of Chaoyang

district, says the mix of commerce, tourism, culture and sports has created a dynamic, open and fashionable district.

"We try to integrate cultural elements well into the tourism and commerce," he says, adding that projects, such as turning Wangjing Xiaojie street into an interna-

tional commercial area, have also reflected this approach.

Tourists taking the river cruises along such areas can enjoy unique cultural experiences, such as traditional tea ceremonies of Song Dynasty (960-1279) style, and visit the surrounding commercial areas after their cruises, according to Zhang Xiaoyu, new media manager from the Beijing Waterfront Fun Tour Technology company. "This has led to increased footfall and new opportunities for local businesses, turning the riverbanks into thriving cultural and economic areas," Zhang says.

Chaoyang district has long been known for its iconic spots, including the Beijing central business district and the 798 art district. However, the district's emphasis on urban renewal and cultural activities has injected new life into its tourism offerings.

For instance, during this year's Dragon Boat Festival, the fifth day of the fifth month on the Chinese lunar calendar, which fell on June 10, together with the weekend on June 8 and 9, the district received 1.14 million visitors that contributed 530 million yuan (\$74.4 million) in revenue — a year-on-year growth of 2.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

While Chaoyang district is a key player in Beijing's tourism landscape, these developments are part of a larger trend across the city.

Beijing has become a leading destination for cultural tourism, attracting millions of visitors annually. Over the National Day holiday at the start of this month, the capital welcomed over 21 million tourists, a year-on-year increase of 18.35 percent. This growth underscores the city's potential in the cultural and tourism sectors.

"Beijing's cultural tourism sector has vast potential," says Zhao Yufeng, an associate researcher at the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research. "At the same time, it's important to maintain the balance between development and preserving the city's rich cultural heritage."

Zhu Sidi contributed to this story.

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

## Rural village in Beijing's Pinggu district flips its fortune with tourism

By DU JUAN

Beijing's Nanshan village in Pinggu district, once an underdeveloped rural area, has transformed into a popular destination for tourists driven by its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and integration of art.

Located in Nandulehe town of Pinggu district, it was once a traditional agricultural village with a significant population outflow, leaving many vacant houses and idle resources. But now, it has become a popular destination for tourists, attracting 30,000 visitors since the beginning of the year.

"Through the integration of art, Nanshan village has not only transformed its appearance but also experienced economic growth and improved the residents' living standards," says Meng Chao, an art post-doctorate and employee at Tsinghua University, who was elected and serves as the Party secretary of the village.

The village kicked off its first art

festival in July, drawing more than 300 students and faculty members from eight universities to participate. Students collaborated with local villagers and artisans to create more than 30 artworks on its walls, fences and other spaces suitable for display.

These artworks have enhanced the village's landscape, attracting many urban tourists to experience the unique contemporary art in a rural life setting.

"By revitalizing idle homesteads and underutilized agricultural land, the village is rejuvenated and has been given new opportunities for growth," says Jia Jingyu, deputy director of the organization department of Nandulehe town.

Through renovations, the village now boasts 70 boutique guesthouses and 10 public facilities, creating a high-quality rural leisure complex, which also benefits the villagers.

It has also focused on the renovation and improvement of rivers, waste management, sewage systems, electrical infrastructure and



**Left:** Nanshan village in Pinggu district has been turned into a fairy-tale citadel since the launch of its first art festival in July. **Right:** One of the installations by college students. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

roads, which ensures the provision of essential infrastructure and supporting services and laying the foundation for the development of a high-quality tourism destination. "Our village has become more beautiful and we see so many tour-

ists during the holidays," says Duan Yuzhen, a resident who operates a homestay. "My homestay business is doing well and our income has increased significantly, something we never could have imagined before."



In addition to the booming homestay industry, traditional agricultural products have found broader markets.

"With more tourists, I can finally sell my persimmons, hawthorns and walnuts," says a local farmer

surnamed Hu. "Some added me on WeChat, promising to buy more if my products are good. Few people believed that I could do business from home, but it's a reality now."

Since the beginning of this year, income from self-operated homestays has increased by approximately 300 percent compared to previous years, with more than 20 homestays operating so far.

It is expected that the village will welcome an average of 70,000 visitors annually by 2030, generating an estimated annual revenue of 1.5 million yuan (\$210,774) for the village collective and providing 92 new homestays, according to statistics from village officials.

In the future, Nanshan village will continue to use art to deepen the integration of culture and tourism and promote its sustainable growth, showing art's great potential in rural revitalization, according to the local authorities.

Zhu Sidi and Li Boyu contributed to this story.

## LIFE

For new players of mobile first-person shooting games, struggling with the controls is a common challenge.

You might intend to pick up loot only to accidentally fire a round, trigger untimely emotes or gestures during intense moments, or even inadvertently take out your own teammates in the heat of battle.

Common blunders like these have been reproduced onstage by twins Gao Chao and Gao Yue on Tencent's comedy competition program *Amazing Night*.

Leveraging the advantage of being identical twins, they portray characters with the same in-game skin controlled by novice players, using striking body language to turn awkward moments into uproarious comedy.

Being twins makes them more recognizable to audiences compared to other budding comedians. Nevertheless, their identical looks have also imposed constraints when it comes to writing scripts.

Throughout the season, the pair have portrayed a range of characters, including an individual and his soul, twins with a unique connection that allows them to share sensations, and superpowered brothers born from gourds — the latter sketch drawing inspiration from the classic Chinese animated series *Calabash Brothers*.

Gao Chao and Gao Yue secured third position in the comedy sketch competition.

Growing up in Qingdao in Shandong province, they began by imitating the skits on China Central Television's Spring Festival Gala, China's most-watched TV program.

"We have loved watching the gala's comic performances since we were children. When we were in first grade, our mother started encouraging us to imitate the comedians. We would perform our skits at family reunions on festive occasions," Gao Chao says.

Later, the brothers competed in school talent shows and put on local performances. By fifth grade, they began studying with cross-talk performer Li Bingjie, learning to hone their comedic craft.

As they entered university in Liaoning province, they continued to spend all their time together and studied traditional performing arts while sharing the same dorm room, and putting on cross-talk performances at local theaters.

After graduation, Gao Chao tried his hand at part-time directing and scriptwriting jobs while Gao Yue took up acting roles in plays, mini-drama series and commercials.

Later, as the popularity of short videos grew, they began scripting, acting and editing funny short videos.

"We have both loved the same things since we were kids. We always dreamed of doing comedy but we didn't know which direction to take," says Gao Chao.

"Was making funny short videos doing comedy? I wasn't sure. We also felt that cross talk wasn't exactly what we wanted to do," he says.

Their uncertainty dissolved in 2021 with the debut of the comic competition reality program *Super Sketch Show*, which brings

## Life's a barrel of laughs for droll duo

After finding feet on reality show, sidesplitting twins plan to take their show on the road, **Xing Wen** reports.



**Top:** Twin brothers Gao Chao (right) and Gao Yue perform in a show. **Above from left:** Gao Chao (right), the elder brother, plays a man and Gao Yue plays his soul in a sketch. Gao Chao plays a character from a mobile first-person shooting game. The twins play the same roles in a look inspired by the classic Chinese animation *Calabash Brothers*. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

together scriptwriters and comedians to create sketches over the course of multiple rounds of competition.

The most common form of comedy featured on the show is sketch, which is typically comprised of a series of short, entertaining scenes or vignettes usually lasting between one and 10 minutes.

"After watching the program, we felt that sketches were precisely the type of comedy we had always wanted to pursue," says Gao Yue. "This inclusive form seems to encompass all the whimsical ideas we have."

He adds that performing sketches on stage reminds him of the days when he and his brother re-created classic comedy skits at family gatherings.

"It's like we're telling a group of people who like us, 'I have a little show for you all, let's see if it makes you laugh,'" says Gao Yue.

They describe their productions as "single-cell comedies" and their primary goal is to entertain.

"When it comes to film and drama, I think of myself as genuinely portraying a character, not just myself. But when I'm doing a sketch, I feel like I am still me, I just happen to wear the hat belonging to a specific character as I perform for the audience," says Gao Yue.

Beijing-based media company Mewe produces both the *Super Sketch Show* and *Amazing Night*. It has been holding workshops to nurture and discover talented comedians in recent years.

In preparation for *Amazing Night*, which aired between July and September, they interviewed 3,600 actors and scriptwriters.

The workshop schedule is quite intense. Attendees initially learn the basics of sketches, then move on to developing and rehearsing their pieces, with the possibility of a public performance on the fifth day.

The audience's reaction determines whether the competitors proceed to the next phase, according to Li Nannan, chief producer of *Amazing Night*.

Typically, Mewe arranges around 10 public performances before

recording the sketches for the show. They are usually attended by an audience of about 500, primarily aged between 18 and 35.

Gao Chao and Gao Yue are among the comedians who most frequently participate in these public performances.

The relatively introverted Gao Chao, who is marginally older than his twin, focuses on the script while the more outgoing Gao Yue contributes ideas and unexpected humor. "We complement each other in our creative process," Gao Chao says.

After the competition, the pair plan to explore the possibility of coming up with their own hour-long comedy show, which they hope to perform in a theater in the near future.

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

## China seeks to shed weight with lighter foods

As the evening deepened, Wu Ke peeled back the silver lid of a small bottle and the fresh scent of green juice rose up to greet her as she plunged her straw through the foil.

Her first sip was small but deliberate — this was her dinner. The 29-year-old primary school teacher in Beijing is mindful of her health and she is determined to stick to her diet, one sip at a time.

The recent Golden Week holiday has fueled interest in liquid salads — a blended drink made from vegetables and fruit marketed as a fresh solution for those eager to undo the effects of holiday overindulgence. On Oct 7, the final day of the holiday, online searches for the product surged on WeChat, Tencent's all-in-one social media app.

This isn't the first time liquid salad has found itself in the spotlight this year. In July, HeyTea, a leading contemporary tea chain in China, partnered with Anta Sports to introduce a drink made from kale, apple, lemon and chia seeds. Around 1.6 million bottles, priced at 19 yuan (\$2.7) each, were bought within the first few days of the Paris Olympics.

The growing popularity of liquid salads and lighter foods in China underscores an increasing

health consciousness and trend toward weight control.

Many office workers are now opting for bowls of greens topped with beef, chicken breast or salmon for lunch. The trend has also been linked to the likes of fast food operators like KFC, most famously known for its "finger lickin' good" offerings, and to the rise of more health-conscious offerings through the launch of brands like Kpro, a new health-conscious eatery, in cities like Hangzhou in Zhejiang province, Beijing, Shanghai, and most recently Guangzhou and Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

Even festival staples like the high-calorie mooncake have been revamped with healthier fillings or offered in mini packages to cater to calorie-conscious customers. "I prefer options with cleaner labels over complex alternatives that have a laundry list of ingredients," says Wu.

The statistics are weighty. According to official data in 2020, over half of Chinese adults are overweight or obese and the rate could reach 65.3 percent by 2030.

China struggled for centuries to feed its vast population, with undernourishment a genuine concern for many families up until the late 1970s. Obesity only emerged as a public health challenge after



People sample local dishes in Jianshui county in Yunnan province's Honghe Hani and Yi autonomous prefecture on Oct 4 during the weeklong National Day holiday. YANG JUNPENG / XINHUA

the economy took off.

As living standards improve, dietary habits have moved away from traditional plant-based consumption in China. While incorporating more animal proteins has improved overall nutrition, it has also led to excessive fat intake, says professor Wang Youfa, head of the obesity branch of the China Nutrition Society and deputy director of the Xi'an Jiaotong University Health Science Center.

Zhang Peng, chief bariatric and metabolic physician at the Beijing Friendship Hospital affiliated with Capital Medical University, identified traditional beverages, snacks, takeout foods, and dining out as leading contributors to obesity in the country.

Against this backdrop, light foods have increasingly gained traction among consumers. A bold estimate released at a July industry conference in Hangzhou pro-

jected that the market for sugar-free and low-sugar foods will exceed 900 billion yuan by 2027.

Some consumers, however, complain about the relatively high prices of light food. A survey indicates around 71 percent of light foods cost between 20 yuan and 40 yuan. In 2023, the average annual salary for employees in the private sector was 68,340 yuan.

Xiaodou, a 39-year-old employee at a bank in Guangdong province, is 1.6 meters in height and successfully lost 20 kilograms over seven months, bringing her weight down to 55 kg in May.

Besides workouts, her secret is reducing her intake of carbohydrates, cooking oil and salt. As a mother of two, she prepares her dinner in the morning and takes it to work, allowing her to enjoy supper by 6 pm, a time she believes is more conducive to her health.

"I tried the lighter food available on the market, but it didn't seem to work for me. So, what I've done is to replace unhealthy foods in my diet with healthier options little by little. Some of these replacements are actually more economical," she says.

Experts corroborate her claims. Zhang says that while obesity is often associated with the meat-based diets of the West, excessive carbohydrate intake is

a significant contributor to obesity in China.

He says that cooking oil usage in China exceeds recommended levels by over 40 percent while the intake of seafood, eggs, fruit, vegetables, dairy and beans falls significantly short of recommendations. "This unbalanced nutritional intake increases the risk of chronic diseases," he says.

Adding to Xiaodou's experience, a medical cosmetologist also nicknamed Zhang from Beijing has turned to cooking to maintain her health.

The 39-year-old has shifted her meals to include beef, chicken, vegetables, brown rice, corn and sweet potatoes after successfully losing 12.5 kg. The change occurred within two months through a weight loss therapy that combined Chinese massage and meal replacements. "I trust the meals I prepare for myself more," she says.

Xiaodou rejects the idea of following a shock diet. Instead, she advocates for a more natural approach that is both realistic and compassionate.

"Weight control is one of the few things in the world we can absolutely achieve on our own. So, trust yourself," she says.

XINHUA

## CULTURE

# Feeling the festival spirit

Festival Fringe entertain and educate, **Zheng Wanyin** reports in Edinburgh.

Many people have encouraged Lai Hongxi, a part-time Chinese folk singer and full-time student at the University of Edinburgh, to sing in English, but she always insists on using her mother tongue to compose and perform, even when busking in the United Kingdom.

"People have suggested I sing a few songs in English to attract more local audiences," she says. "They might be right from a commercial perspective, but it's more of my instinct to sing in my native language, just like babies are born with the instinct to suckle for food."

"When I read Chinese, I can feel that connection — an emotion that I don't experience with other languages. This somehow reflects the limitations of languages, as we might indeed be able to understand each other better if we all spoke the same one."

"But I believe in the universality of music in transcending boundaries. A few non-Chinese said they were also moved by my work, even though they don't necessarily get the lyrics. So, I guess, I should stay dedicated to composing in Chinese."

Lai is one of many artists who are eager to showcase their Chinese heritage at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, one of the world's oldest and largest celebrations of arts and culture, which has been held every August, since its founding in 1947 as an unofficial offshoot of the Edinburgh International Festival.

This year's 25-day event featured more than 51,446 scheduled performances of 3,317 different shows from 58 countries.

Chinese folk songs might not be an art form as widely heard in the West as some of the traditional vehicles, such as kung fu, Peking Opera, or Chinese calligraphy. However, Lai's cultural background imbues her songs in a more nuanced way, which is reflected in the poetic, often reserved, and subtle lyrics.

In a song titled *Jie Jie (Older Sisters)*, she writes: "Jie Jie, you have dark hair and calm eyes. Falling into your embrace, I now sleep the big sleep."

Jie Jie, here, does not refer to a biological older sister, Lai explains, but rather is a symbolic concept that personifies death.

"I don't want to treat death as a heavy thing, so I personify it as a female figure who gently stands at the endpoint of life to greet us," she says. "Everything will fade away one day, but let's not be afraid of the end. My mode of expression is more abstract."

## Unusual style

The appreciation for usually understated ways of storytelling to evoke feelings rather than stating them outright is deeply embedded in Chinese culture. That sentiment is also echoed by other young Chinese artists, including Long Chen and Su Jian, two members of inversion ensemble, a female-led theater troupe that shared their debut production, *Vanishing*, at the Edinburgh Fringe.

*Vanishing* starts with a mysterious phone call connecting two diners, one in Hong Kong and the other in Los Angeles, who have conversations that transcend temporal and spatial boundaries.

One noteworthy element driving the story flow is the cubes designed to represent objects related to two different realities, such as pancakes that are typical of a restaurant in Los Angeles and pineapple buns that are unique to a cafe in Hong Kong.

The diners' experiences are tied to the cubes, while viewers may also have their own memories triggered by a bottle of ketchup or a receipt. Sometimes, the actresses bring some of the food cubes to the audience, saying: "Here is your order."

Long and Su explain that the cubes function in the play by referencing cultural tradition in a way that can bring a wave of nostalgia.

"The entire play is delivered abstractly, instead of depicting every detail intricately for the audience, and the audience is intended to be part of the show, so they

are guided directly or indirectly to create associations during the performance that fully complete this story," Long and Su say. "It's not an all-done meal, and you have to figure it out by yourselves."

Although the storytelling can sometimes be quite experimental, Su emphasizes its distinctly Chinese roots.

"These elements have existed throughout the 5,000 years of Chinese history, and we integrate them into the contemporary theater narratives. While many may find it confusing or overly abstract, for us, it revitalizes our tradition of subtle, layered expression."

Su adds: "And, (when designing), it happens very naturally for me. I didn't intend to create a counter-West framework. It just came to me, and I think many other artists feel the same way."

Yet, what Chinese budding creators sometimes encounter is that their innovation is seen by the Western world as diverging from the more general Western fascination for Chinese culture.

"I study in the United States, and, as the only Asian face in an American theater club, they sometimes say, 'Oh, Jian, we want someone like you to join us to bring more diverse perspectives.' But at times, I do feel like they include me simply to appear diverse," Su says.

"I'm often not very knowledgeable about some classical ancient or traditional Chinese culture, even though the concept of nostalgia I mentioned earlier is also a Chinese thing. However, it is not a highly formalized Chinese art form, like Peking Opera. If I can't present those 'authentic' aspects to Americans, they may wonder why I chose to study in the States."

And, as Long adds, in an ever more interconnected and globalized world where creativity embraces eclecticism, how could we assume the images of any cultures by labeling them or putting them in boxes?

"You are so good at delivering English lines; you must have lived abroad for quite some time! You're so extroverted — how can you be Chinese? These are a few of the similar experiences mentioned by other Chinese artists."

“

The good thing is that more and more Chinese people are speaking for themselves, sharing their stories, and pushing the world to realize, 'Wow, this is China; this could also be China.'"

Xue Yahan, producer of *Picasso 2033*

## Speaking for themselves

While these "compliments" may not come from malice, they are, in fact, a form of stereotypical "Orientalism", as many artists point out.

"You are so friendly, so outgoing — you can't be Chinese! I often found myself confused in those moments. Where does that perception come from? China is such a vast country with a diverse population," says Xue Yahan, producer of *Picasso 2033*, a play that explores Chinese mother-daughter relationships in a world where artificial intelligence has replaced human artists.

"The good thing is that more and more Chinese people are speaking for themselves, sharing their stories, and pushing the world to realize, 'Wow, this is China; this could also be China.' That's one of the reasons we are here in Edinburgh."

Zhang Keyuan, director of *Picasso 2033*, says every single person's efforts count, and many drops could make a river.

"We are just a drop of water, and I don't think we can convey the full picture of the entire country. However, when many drops, represented by different groups of artists, theater troupes, musicians and others, come together, continuously sharing their stories, I believe that little drops of water can create a mighty ocean: the image of modern China, rather than some vague concept of 'the East.'"

Contact the writers at [zhengwanyin@mail.chinadailyuk.com](mailto:zhengwanyin@mail.chinadailyuk.com).



Chinese folk singer Lai Hongxi sings songs in Edinburgh in August.



Left and above: The theater troupe behind *Picasso 2033* gathers on stage and later poses for a photo following the opening of the show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August.



Left and above: Cubes that appear in the play *Vanishing* create a multimedia experience; Members of inversion ensemble capture a group photo to mark their successful debut at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY