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Guests in Xunpu floral headwear take a selfie during the Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on June 26. WANG DONGMING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Friendships forged at China-U.S. youth festival

Kuliang is not only a famous summer retreat on the hilly outskirts of Fuzhou, but also a longtime haven for friendly exchanges between Chinese and U.S. people.

In the 1880s, foreign expats including doctors and engineers from France, the United Kingdom and the United States who resided in or near Fuzhou, capital of Fujian province, built holiday villas in Kuliang, and lived in harmony with local villagers for decades.

In June, Kuliang and Fuzhou hosted the Bond with Kuliang: 2024 China-U.S. Youth Festival—the largest youth exchange event of its kind between the two nations since diplomatic relations were established in 1979. More than 200 young people from the U.S. attended the five-day festival, together with over 300 Chinese youths.

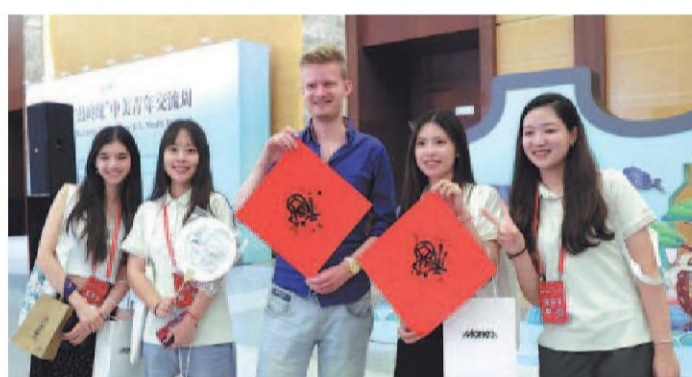
"If there is anything that I've seen so far throughout this trip, it's that although we may have different cultures, there are things that we share," said Zev Curriel-Friedman, a festival participant and a member of the communication staff at the University of California, Davis.

Curriel-Friedman's enthusiasm for interaction led him to participate in a friendly three-on-three half-court basketball match. The match stood out as a highlight of activities held during the festival, such as roundtable discussions, bazaars, documentary screenings, art salons and concerts.

Thanks to the basketball connection, Curriel-Friedman made a great Chinese pal in Han Zheng, a 26-year-old office clerk from Fuzhou and an English major graduate.

Sports have never failed to bring people of different nations together, and baseball is no exception.

A U.S. baseball coach was giving tips at a venue next door to the one the youngsters



Participants show their artworks during the festival. QIN LANG / XINHUA

played at, and he attracted a large number of Chinese youth eager to improve their skills.

He delivered a number of instructions about balancing properly, keeping eyes on the ball, and how to correctly hit a baseball. His vivid descriptions of the techniques had the Chinese youngsters laughing and applauding.

Amy Chastain, a faculty member at the University of Iowa and executive director of Global Ties Iowa, a non-governmental organization that coordinates international people-to-people exchanges, has vast global experience in teaching English as a second language.

She used to live and teach in China, and attended the festival along with students from her university.

"I call it my second home, so I want them to experience places that are dear to me, because I know the people in China are so warm and welcoming."

Speaking at the festival's opening, Lisa Heller, the U.S. consul general in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, shared her early memories of China. She told of when she first came to China as a 21-year-old college graduate.

"My own children grew up here, and I can think of no better place for a young person to get to know about the wider world and its parts, than China."

She called the decision by

participants to take part in the festival "a testament" to their curiosity, which showed their willingness to share their experiences, and their commitment to becoming leaders, and possibly future diplomats.

When underlining the huge importance of the U.S.-China relationship, she said, "From economic cooperation to environmental protection, the work we do is crucial in shaping a peaceful and prosperous future for all."

"Studying in China offers you an unparalleled opportunity to immerse yourself in its rich cultural heritage," she said.

Forty years ago, the U.S. state of Oregon and Fujian province established a sister state relationship.

A delegation of more than two dozen young people representing the Oregon Rhythmic Gymnastics Team attended the festival.

Cheryl Myers, deputy secretary of the State of Oregon, said the team members' participation "demonstrates our unwavering commitment to the long-term relationship between Fujian and Oregon and to our shared optimism for the future."

"We are delighted to invite you to the magnificent state of Oregon to experience the hospitality of its people," she added.

—ZHANG YUNBI, HU MEIDONG AND YANG JIE

# Country set on intensifying its opening-up

Official says vast market of second-largest economy in world presents major opportunity

China's policymakers outlined details of the to-do list for the nation's future opening-up, pledging initiatives to increase unilateral opening to least-developed countries and expand access to the commodity, service, capital and labor markets in a well-paced manner.

The priorities for the nation's reform and opening-up until 2029 were mapped out during the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Party's central leadership, held between July 15 and 18.

Han Wenxiu, executive deputy director of the Office of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs, explained at a news conference on July 19 that expanding institutional opening-up and building a high-standard open economy were the key aspects of the reform-themed resolution adopted at the epoch-making policy meeting.

"We will turn China's vast market into a major opportunity for the world," he said, adding that China will continue to make life more convenient for foreign travelers in terms of accommodation, medical services and payments.

Over 300 reform measures were outlined in the resolution on further deepening reform to advance Chinese modernization, which was released in full on July 21.

According to a communique released by the Party's central leadership on July 18, the nation will deepen foreign trade structural reform, further reform the management systems for inward and outward investment, and improve planning for regional opening-up.

The measures came after China rolled out 15-day visa-free regimes for tourists from 15 countries and expanded the coverage of its 144-hour visa-free transit policy to 37 ports of entry recently, in a move to welcome more foreign travelers.

Officials have also sought to extend a strong message that China will remain a top destination for global investment.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, China saw the establishment of 26,870 new foreign-invested enterprises in the first half of this year, marking a 14.2% increase year-on-year. However, the nation's foreign direct investment dropped by

29.1% year-on-year to 498.91 billion yuan (\$68.65 billion) during the period.

Han said the fall in FDI into China is only temporary. "As the nation's business environment continues to improve and market opportunities multiply, China's utilization of foreign capital is set to keep expanding."

The official reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to creating a transparent, stable and predictable institutional environment for foreign firms.

"We need to proactively align with international high-standard economic and trade rules, ensuring compatibility and alignment in rules, management and standards in areas such as intellectual property protection, industrial subsidies, environmental standards, labor protection, government procurement, e-commerce and the financial sector."

He stressed the necessity to fully put in place the negative list for cross-border services trade, and promote the well-paced expansion of openness in areas such as telecommunications, the internet, education, culture and healthcare.

To level the playing field for domestic and foreign businesses, Han said foreign enterprises must receive national treatment in areas such as access to resources, qualification and licensing, standard-setting and government procurement.

"We are willing to share the great opportunities from China's development of new quality productive forces and the advance of Chinese modernization. We'll be pleased and wish to see foreign companies thriving together with the Chinese economy."

Jean-Christophe Pointeau, president of Pfizer China, said he believes that China's reforms will further unleash market vitality, better allocate resources, boost the innovation and competitiveness of the nation's economy, and lead to the overall progress of the economy and society.

"Pfizer is looking forward to the future of China's economy," he said. "China's world-class business environment that is market-oriented, law-based, and internationalized will further enhance foreign investors' confidence. And multinational companies, including Pfizer, will be more willing to invest and expand their business in China."

—XU WEI, ZHONG NAN AND LIU ZHIHUA

## Booming secondhand trend helps environment

From pre-loved clothing and handbags to furniture and books, the trade in secondhand merchandise is growing rapidly in China, delivering not only bargains, but also green benefits.

The trend represents a change in Chinese people's mindset, as more consumers are recognizing the value of extending the life span of products through reuse and recycling. By embracing the secondhand market, they are not only finding cost-effective alternatives but also contributing to a more sustainable and eco-friendly way of life through the recycling of goods.

Kang Lin, in her 40s, is originally from Shenzhen, Guangdong province. For Kang, buying secondhand goods is more than

just a cost-saving measure—it's a lifestyle choice that celebrates sustainability and uncovers hidden treasures from the past.

Affordability isn't the sole reason Kang is drawn to secondhand shopping. She values "the opportunity to uncover treasures—especially antique items that offer a glimpse into past production techniques."

Kang has discovered "gems" from the 1990s to 2000s, no signs of wear, such as a 1925 thermos flask and 1950s woolen military long johns.

The Deja Vu Recycle Store launched its app in 2017. In 2020, it started its secondhand clothing business and simultaneously opened a store on Anfu Road in Shanghai. In 2024, a new store

opened in Hongqiao Tiandi in Shanghai, with an area of 16,100 square feet, selling nearly 6,000 secondhand clothing items.

The transaction volume of China's used goods market surpassed 1 trillion yuan (\$139.9 billion) in 2020, and is expected to reach 3 trillion yuan in 2025, according to a report issued by the Institute of Energy, Environment and Economy of Tsinghua

Data from Xianyu, one of China's largest platforms for trading secondhand products, shows that the daily transaction volume on the platform has exceeded 1 billion yuan. Over the past year, about 4 million secondhand items were listed on Xianyu on a daily basis.



Consumers select products at an outlet of Deja Vu Recycle Store in Beijing. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

About 43% of users are from the post-1995 generation, and 22% are from the post-2000 generation, the data showed.

The generational change is also reflected in a stronger awareness of how consumption impacts the environment.

The understanding of green

consumption among those born in the 1990s and 2000s is significantly higher than other age groups in China, reaching 70% and 79% respectively, according to the Green Development Report on E-commerce in China released in 2023.

—YU RAN FOR CHINA DAILY