

Confidence boosted

Key banks raise China's GDP growth forecast on back of Q3 uptick

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Premier Li Qiang delivers a keynote speech on Tuesday during the opening ceremony of the Seventh China International Import Expo and the Hongqiao International Economic Forum in Shanghai. The expo, which runs through Sunday, has attracted about 3,500 exhibitors from 129 countries and regions. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

WORLD WATCH

By Jack Perry Jr.

Building bridges through trade for 70 years

As I reflect on the ongoing 2024 China International Import Expo, which kicked off on Tuesday and runs through Sunday in Shanghai, it becomes evident that China continues to lead the way in global trade. In a world where protectionism is rising in some Western countries, this import-oriented expo, initiated by President Xi Jinping in 2018, underscores the country's unwavering commitment to fostering international trade through mutually beneficial relationships.

The London Export Corporation, founded by my grandfather Jack Perry Senior in the United Kingdom, was among the first Western companies to trade with China, breaking the ideological ice and trade embargo on the newly founded People's Republic of China. In 1952, our company exported wool tops from Bradford in England to China. From the 1960s through the 1980s, we played a vital role in supplying China with essential imports to support its burgeoning industries.

Ever since China embarked on the path of reform and opening-up in 1978, we have witnessed the country's remarkable transformation from importing basic commodities to sourcing high-quality goods. With the growth of Chinese private companies and State-owned enterprises, London Export Corporation has continued to be a key partner, particularly in large-scale commodity trade and navigating the complexities of international trade finance.

Today, China is committed to high-quality imports, a trend we've seen accelerate in recent years. Chinese buyers at major trade fairs, including the CIE, seek the best the world offers — particularly in advanced machinery, life sciences and medical equipment — to complement their domestic capabilities.

In his congratulatory letter to last year's CIE, President Xi noted that the world economic recovery lacks momentum and requires the solidarity and cooperation of all countries, and that China will always be an important opportunity for global development. Xi envisioned the CIE as a platform for high-standard opening-up, allowing the world to share in China's enormous market potential. He is right: the future of the global economy hinges on our commitment to peace, collaboration and openness, not isolation.

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CIE offers key platform to drive growth

Premier calls for concerted efforts to enhance openness, collaboration and common development

By SHI JING in Shanghai
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As uncertainties and complexities affect trade and economy worldwide, building deeper and closer business relations is of utmost importance to accelerate economic growth and advance technological innovations, said officials and top executives of multinational corporations attending the 7th China International Import Expo in Shanghai.

Delivering a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the expo on Tuesday, Premier Li Qiang said that amid growing uncertainties and the rise of unilateralism and protectionism, concerted efforts should be made to enhance openness to promote lasting peace, stability, development and prosperity.

Global economic recovery awaits more impetus, and countries need

to address different problems on their development paths, he said, adding that cooperation is key for promoting global growth and China is making its due contribution in this regard.

Li also called for efforts to uphold the international economic order and implement more bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, so that various parties can better promote openness and cooperation and jointly advance common development.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, director-general of the World Trade Organization, said in a video speech at the opening ceremony that as geopolitical tensions intensify and signs of

fragmentation emerge in global trade and investment, it is crucial for political and business leaders around the world to collaborate on preserving and reforming the multilateral trading system.

Jean-Paul Agon, chairman of French beauty giant L'Oreal, said that China's commitment to embracing the world, which was reflected in Premier Li's speech, powers the group's growing confidence in the Chinese market.

According to Li, a large number of new growth engines have been nurtured amid the new wave of technological and industrial revolution around the world.

While China has been advancing opening-up through innovative cooperation, it is willing to expand access to its enormous market by implementing more such measures, the premier said at the CIE opening ceremony, which also marked the

start of this year's Hongqiao International Economic Forum.

China will continue to advance opening-up in telecommunications, education, culture and medical care, and adopt unilateral visa-free policies, he added.

Roy Jakobs, CEO of Royal Philips, lauded China's development as an innovation hub and said it is crucial to understand the supportive policies that not only facilitate innovation within the country, but also around the globe.

The CIE serves as an important platform through which companies can closely connect with players in the technology and innovation sectors, as well as the government, he said.

Philippe Metzger, secretary-general and CEO of the International Electrotechnical Commission, said that global cooperation is becoming increasingly important to promote the use of emerging technologies,

such as artificial intelligence, in a safer and more sustainable manner amid the ongoing digitalization trend worldwide.

The seventh CIE, which runs through Sunday, has attracted the participation of about 3,500 overseas exhibitors, including a record 297 industry leaders and Fortune Global 500 companies.

On Tuesday, Li also held separate meetings in Shanghai with Serbian Prime Minister Milos Vucevic, Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsan-namsrai Oyun-Erdene and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, all of whom attended the opening ceremony.

Luo Bin in Shanghai and Cao Desheng in Beijing contributed to this story.

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Trump, Harris in tight battle for White House

By HENG WEILI in New York
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The US presidential election reached a climax on Tuesday as Democratic Vice-President Kamala Harris and Republican former president Donald Trump vied for the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House.

After weeks of early voting and mail-in ballots, the divisive campaign culminated with the conclusion of voting on Election Day.

As of 11:55 pm ET, Trump held a lead in electoral votes with 230, while Harris had 200, after getting a boost from California's 54 electoral votes, according to The New York Times.

Trump had roughly 59 million votes nationally to about 55 million for Harris, CNN reported.

In the 100-member Senate, which Democrats currently control, Republicans held a 49-40 advantage.

In the 435-member House of Representatives, currently controlled by Republicans, they held a 169-125 lead.

The Associated Press has called the outcome in several states, based on vote projections.

The AP called the reliably red (Republican) states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wyoming for Trump.

A Des Moines Register poll over the weekend had Harris leading in



A moderator helps a voter (right) cast her ballot for the 2024 presidential election in Dixville Notch in New Hampshire, northeastern United States, on Tuesday. Six registered voters in the tiny town voted early Tuesday morning, marking the official start of Election Day. LI RUI / XINHUA

Iowa, which Trump won in 2020.

Harris was projected to win the usually blue (Democratic) states of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.

The key northern swing states of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin were considered too close to

call but they were leaning toward Trump, according to the Times.

Trump also had a significant lead in Georgia, a highly contested state that President Joe Biden won by under 12,000 votes over Trump in 2020.

The contest was close in the pivotal Western state of Arizona.

"The Arizona early vote has been counted, and it shows a very close

race, but Trump will probably win the Election Day vote by a wide margin. To have any chance of winning the state, Harris would need a decisive victory in the late mail ballots tabulated after Election Day," Nate Cohn reported in the Times.

With slightly less than 60 percent of the expected vote counted at 10:45 pm ET, Trump led Harris by just over 110,000 votes, the AP reported. He

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was winning central and northeastern Pennsylvania, but Philadelphia and its neighboring counties, which have historically been Democratic, hadn't reported all their votes yet.

Earlier Tuesday, there were reports of some voting-related problems around the US, and officials and judges were addressing them.

In Georgia, a state judge decided that five voting locations could remain open after their 7 pm ET closing times "due to evacuation necessitated by a bomb threat," the Times reported.

After some unsubstantiated threats, according to Brad Raffensperger, Georgia's secretary of state, Judge Ural Glanville of Fulton County Superior Court ruled Tuesday that each metro Atlanta polling site could stay open for as long as it was closed while the threats were being investigated. The five locations around metropolitan Atlanta were expected to remain open from 15 minutes to 45 minutes more, the Times reported.

As voters went to the polls, about 7 in 10 voters said they were "very concerned" about the impact of the cost of food and groceries on their household budgets, according to AP VoteCast.

Agencies contributed to this story.

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PAGE TWO

Farmers gather freshly harvested pomelos in Rongshui, a county in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Saturday. LONG TAO / XINHUA



Farmers weather adversity to reap record grain harvests

China's leading agricultural provinces secure bumper crops despite natural disasters

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Heze, Shandong province and SHI BAOYIN in Zhengzhou

Harvesting is almost done in the major Chinese agricultural provinces of Heilongjiang, Henan and Shandong, with a bumper grain crop expected, despite extreme weather this year that caused multiple natural disasters.

China's grain output is projected to hit a record high of 700 million metric tons this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Oct 25.

The anticipated milestone harvest follows nine consecutive years of maintaining grain output above 650 million tons, the ministry said at a news conference.

As of Thursday, northeast China's Heilongjiang province, the country's top grain producer, had harvested more than 90 percent of its crops, or 14.7 million hectares of its planting area, according to the provincial department of agriculture and rural affairs.

The grain harvest included 3.4 million hectares of rice, 6 million hectares of corn and 4.9 million hectares of soybeans. Meanwhile, harvesting of 80,000 hectares of miscellaneous grains and beans has been completed.

Heilongjiang experienced a cold spell and lingering rain from June to July this year, which hindered the growth of crops in many parts of the province.

Han Zhimin, who leads a grain-planting cooperative in Yilan county, in the provincial capital Harbin, said his cooperative planted 2,000 hectares of corn and soybean this year. Advanced farming techniques and modern agricultural practices helped him cope with the disaster, while crop insurance saved him from financial worries.

"We have hired a full-time agronomist, and used new technology and professional management to increase the soybean planting density while enhancing the crop quality," said Han, adding that the cooperative had spent more than 10 million yuan (\$1.4 million) in the past 10 years on purchasing modern farming machinery such as high-powered tractors, harvesters and high-speed precision planters.

From January to August, Heilongjiang had 11.4 million hectares of grain growing area covered by crop insurance, up 4.27 percent year-on-year, with the insurance coverage rate in the province standing at 77.7 percent, according to data from the Heilongjiang branch of the National Financial Regulatory Administration.

The province also leads the country in establishing more than 7.3 million hectares of high-standard farmland. This farmland is characterized by well-leveled, contiguous plots with advanced irrigation, efficient water use and enhanced soil fertility. Designed to



Above: Villagers harvest corn in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on Oct 12.

Left: A farmer dries persimmons in Handan, Hebei province, on Oct 28.

Right: Villagers harvest rice in Tengchong, Yunnan province, on Oct 27.

LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY
HAO QUNYING / XINHUA
GONG ZUJIN / XINHUA



withstand both droughts and floods, it aligns with modern agricultural practices and features chemical-free soils and high yields.

The province's grain output reached 77.88 million tons in 2023, extending its hold on the No 1 ranking in China for 14 consecutive years.

Nature wreaks havoc

Farmers overcame various disasters to achieve the grain harvest, as the country grappled with extreme weather events occurring with increasing frequency this year, featuring both relentless heat and heavy downpours.

They attribute the hard-earned bumper harvest to the combined effects of the authorities' swift response to disaster relief, the continuous development of high-standard farmland, the promotion of modern and even smart farming methods, and the timely payment of agricultural insurance.

Zhao Zhidong, a farmer in Zhecheng county in central China's Henan province, said that his 13 hectares of farmland suffered from severe drought in June. He hurried to hire more than 10 people to pump water round-the-clock into the field to rescue the corn seedlings.

In the middle of July, the same field was subjected to continuous heavy downpours, and Zhao had to hire people to do drainage work. Under the coordination work of the

local authority, they dug a channel to direct the rainwater into nearby rivers.

Half of the annual precipitation occurred during just three days of extreme rainfall that month. The average precipitation in Zhecheng reached 397 mm from July 15 to 18, while the county's annual precipitation over the past 30 years averaged 767 mm, according to the county's meteorological service.

Zhao has since harvested his corn, and the field's per-unit yield is 25 percent less than that of a normal year. However, he is satisfied with the result after the difficulties encountered this year.

In addition, local authorities helped farmers rebuild irrigation and drainage infrastructure following the disasters.

The heavy rainfall resulted in crop failures in nearby Tanghe county, Henan. After the floodwaters receded, however, agricultural experts guided farmers in replanting mung beans, sweet potatoes, vegetables and other cash crops to compensate for their losses.

Qiao Zhenqun, who lost 6.7 hectares of his 133.3-hectare corn harvest this year, said the replanting was successful.

The income from mung beans and sweet potatoes is expected to be slightly higher than that from corn, based on current market prices.

Data from the Henan investigation group of

the National Bureau of Statistics shows that Henan reaped a total summer grain output of 37.9 million tons, 6.64 percent higher than that of last year, safeguarding the province's role as the country's second-largest grain producer.

Although its autumn grain fields suffered losses, harvesting of 5.1 million hectares of crops will soon be completed. Henan's annual grain output is expected to remain stable at more than 65 million tons.

In central Hunan province, Zhang Shunda, a veteran grain grower in Taoyuan county, in Changde, has been busy harvesting rice grown on his 40 hectares of land. Estimating a harvest of more than 300 tons of rice, the farmer let out a sigh of relief.

It was a hard year for rice farmers in Hunan, as the province experienced a snowstorm at the beginning of the year and severe floods in summer.

"All three of my rice seedling greenhouses were toppled by the snowstorm in February, and 40 hectares of early rice was inundated by floods in June," said Zhang.

The heavy rainfall caused severe damage to early rice growth in Taoyuan, the top grain-growing county in Hunan. Local authorities promptly took measures to help farmers overcome the disaster.

Zhang said technicians dispatched by the county and township governments visited

him to investigate the damage after the snowstorm and guided him on rebuilding and heating his warehouse. He received 80,000 yuan in disaster relief subsidies and more than 300,000 yuan in policy subsidies for rice planting.

According to Hunan's Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, grain production in the province remained sound this year. The harvesting of more than 1.5 million hectares of mid-season rice in the province has been completed, with an estimated year-on-year yield increase of about 1 percent. Harvesting is nearing completion on more than 1.3 million hectares of late rice fields, which can expect a year-on-year yield increase of 1.5 percent.

Planting for next year

In late October, bustling construction of wells, dredging of waterways and deep plowing of land were in progress in Bandi town of Dingtao district in Heze, Shandong.

"These wells are equipped with pumps. The water pumped from the wells will be transported to farmers' fields through underground pipelines, which will substantially enhance irrigation efficiency," said Pan Luhua, a publicity officer in the town.

In the fields adjacent to the wells, Li Guangli is plowing 6.7 hectares of his farmland in preparation for replanting wheat. Li plans to plant over 33 hectares of wheat and corn in total. Each year, after harvesting his corn in early October, he grows wheat on the same farmland. This year, he noticed some wheat seedlings were growing slowly, so he decided to replant the crop.

"Just after I planted the wheat, there was heavy rain in mid-October which caused the soil to clump, hindering the wheat's growth. So, I am deeply plowing the land to replant, ensuring a bountiful harvest of wheat next year," said Li.

"After the corn harvest, the town government arranged for tractors to deeply plow our land, laying the groundwork for sowing the wheat," he said.

Dingtao district provided free deep plowing for over 2,666 hectares of farmland after the corn harvest in October to create a favorable soil environment for planting winter wheat.

Li said advances in technology have also boosted harvests.

With support from a local government agricultural subsidy, Li bought a new machine equipped with a Beidou navigation system to help plant wheat this year.

Qi Xin contributed to this story.

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By ZHAO RUIXUE in Dongying, Shandong

In late October, a bustling scene is unfolding as harvesters and grain transportation vehicles move back and forth across 173 hectares of rice fields in Kenli district of Dongying, Shandong province.

"We are harvesting the salt-tolerant rice. We anticipate a good year," said Wang Xiaomeng, deputy general manager of Dongying Benlai Agricultural Technology Development Co.

"Our rice base benefits from an extended growing season, resulting in exceptionally fragrant and sticky rice that commands high demand in the market," Wang added.

Dongying cultivated over 14,666 hectares of rice in the Yellow River estuary

Saline solutions transform barren land into fertile fields

area, data from 2023 shows, with Kenli district and Lijin county serving as primary cultivation areas. Kenli alone boasts a rice cultivation area of 10,000 hectares, solidifying rice's standing as a signature grain grown in the saline-alkali land.

Located in the Yellow River estuary where the waterway flows into the Bohai Sea, Dongying faces significant challenges with severe soil salinization. It has over 130,666 hectares of saline-alkali farmland, which represents about 60 percent of the city's total arable land.

Consequently, the transformation of saline-alkali lands into productive fields has

become a central focus of Dongying's agricultural development strategy.

The city has been exploring innovative agricultural technologies to convert once barren soil into productive farmland. "Successful cultivation on saline-alkali lands requires a blend of high-quality seeds and advanced techniques," said Wei Lixing, head of the Dongying comprehensive experimental station, which is involved in the development of a provincial rice technology system.

Methods such as burying pipes underground to drain salt-contaminated water from the soil, and increased use of organic

fertilizer have significantly enhanced soil quality and rice output on saline-alkali lands, said Wei.

To apply these methods to agricultural productivity, Dongying has established seven technical teams to focus on increasing production of major crops such as rice and soybeans.

These teams offer on-site assistance and training, ensuring the effective implementation of new technologies and innovations in the field, thereby increasing rice production.

At Dongying's agricultural high-tech industrial demonstration zone, soybeans

are also set for a promising harvest.

"This variety is known for its large beans, with some plants producing up to 185 pods," Jin Zhendong, a researcher at the demonstration zone said, while holding a cluster of bean pods in his hand, with each pod containing three plump beans.

Despite the soybean plants being shorter than in previous years due to heavy rainfall, he remains optimistic about the yields they will produce.

Thanks to a series of work projects on cultivating salt-tolerant seeds and improving soil quality, what was once barren saline-alkali land has been transformed into fertile fields in Dongying. By the end of 2025, Dongying aims to transform 2,320 hectares of barren saline-alkali land into new arable land.

TOP NEWS

PLA's new stealth jet ready for debut

By ZHAO LEI
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The People's Liberation Army Air Force declassified its latest hardware, the J-35A stealth fighter jet, on Tuesday, saying that the model will make its public debut at an upcoming air show.

Colonel Niu Wenbo from the PLA Air Force's Equipment Department told reporters at a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday that the J-35A will take part in the 15th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition, set for Nov 12-17 in Zhuhai, Guangdong province.

The J-35A is a midsize stealth combat plane with multiple roles, Niu said.

Besides providing a picture of the J-35A, the officer did not give details about the new aircraft, including whether it has been commissioned or in which way it will be shown to the public at the exhibition.

Popularly known as the Zhuhai Airshow, the biennial China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition is the country's largest arms show and is recognized as one of the world's most significant defense exhibitions.

With Tuesday's announcement, the Chinese military has finally made public the long-anticipated J-35 series, a hot topic of speculation and analysis among military observers at home and abroad.

Upon the plane's commissioning, China will become the second nation after the United States to have two types of stealth fighter jets in active service.

Currently, the PLA Air Force has deployed a large fleet of J-20 heavy-duty stealth combat aircraft, which started to be commissioned in late 2016.

The J-20 made its debut at the 11th Zhuhai Airshow in November 2016.

According to the Aviation Industry Corp of China, which is the country's dominant aircraft maker, the J-35A symbolizes a new milestone in the State-owned conglomerate's endeavor to improve the PLA's arsenal and support its integrated joint combat system.

The new fifth-generation fighter jet was designed by the aircraft maker's Shenyang Aircraft Design and Research Institute and will be used primarily to carry out air combat. The plane can also conduct strikes against targets on land and at sea, the company said in a news release.

Wang Yongqing, the institute's chief designer, said the J-35A features world-class technologies and has good stealth, information and intelligence capabilities.

It is able to detect and hit hostile aircraft before they can do so, and has outstanding superiority when engaging with fourth-generation jets, he added.

The new fifth-generation fighter jet will be used primarily to carry out air combat. The plane can also conduct strikes against targets on land and at sea.

Defense industry observers said there are several variants in the J-35 family, including the J-35A, which is designed for the PLA Air Force, and another model for deployment on aircraft carriers. The series has a common root, the FC-31, which is a technology-demonstration prototype of stealth combat aircraft designed by the Shenyang institute.

The FC-31 was unveiled in October 2012, when the prototype made its debut flight at the Zhuhai Airshow that year, becoming China's second prototype of fifth-generation fighter jet following the J-20.

In addition to the J-35A, the J-20 and Russia's Sukhoi Su-57 are also set to take part in the coming Zhuhai event. If that happens, it will be the first time in the world that three models of stealth combat jets appear in the same show.



A file photo released on Tuesday shows a J-35A stealth fighter jet taxiing on a runway. CHEN YANG / XINHUA

Flood fears again in Spain



A car lies partially submerged in floodwaters in the Barcelona suburb of Castelldefels on Monday after torrential rains drenched Catalonia. Spanish authorities remained on highest alert as rain pounded the northeast of the country, barely days after severe flash floods killed 218 people in the Valencia region. Telephone alerts urged residents to practice utmost caution. JOSEP LAGO / AFP

Economic indicators display upward movement after nadir

Fastest services activity expansion seen in 3 months, manufacturing likely on sustained rebound

By ZHOU LANXU
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was a privately surveyed purchasing managers' index for the services sector in October, the highest reading in three months

China's economy showed early signs of bottoming out across the board in October, indicating that the country's ramped-up efforts to revitalize domestic spending amid external uncertainties are starting to have an impact, analysts said on Tuesday.

The comments come as data from media group Caixin pointed to the fastest expansion of services activity in three months while manufacturing activity resumed its upward momentum, matching the improvements of official indicators.

David Chao, global market strategist for the Asia-Pacific region (excluding Japan) at Invesco, said: "China's leading economic indicators improved across the board for October, suggesting that the economy continues to regain momentum. This should translate into improving economic conditions and activity for the rest of the year."

A privately surveyed purchasing

managers' index for the services sector came in at 52 in October, up from 50.3 in September and marking the highest reading in three months, a Caixin report said on Tuesday. Any PMI reading above 50 indicates an expansion in activity.

The reading was higher than the 50.3 many analysts had expected as the rate of expansion in new business inflows rose for the first time in four months following the launch of a series of policies to shore up the economy since late September.

In October, the level of confidence among service providers was at the highest since May, while selling prices stabilized after falling for two successive months. Service providers

raised staffing levels for a second consecutive month, albeit marginally, the report said.

The uptick in services activity came along with manufacturing activity resuming expansion in October, driven by renewed new business growth. The Caixin China General Composite PMI, covering both manufacturing and services activity, came in at 51.9 in October, up from 50.3 the previous month, marking the best showing in four months.

Also indicative of momentum recovery, the official composite PMI came in at 50.8 in October, up from 50.4 a month earlier, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Thursday.

Wang Zhe, senior economist at Caixin Insight Group, said the PMI surveys showed that market demand had stabilized and optimism improved, which are early signs of the new policies' impact, though the labor market remained under pressure and prices were still subdued.

China is expected to further con-

solidate its policy support as the country's top legislature is expected to approve additional fiscal support this week.

Zhang Bin, deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of World Economics and Politics, said that China's current round of countercyclical adjustments is aiming at promoting a robust recovery in overall income levels, which is key to lifting consumption.

The task of convincing consumers to spend more is deemed by analysts to be of particular importance against elevated external political and trade uncertainties and amid China's pursuit of a more consumption-oriented growth model.

While services providers polled by Caixin reported a solid increase in exports in October, export orders in the manufacturing sector remained in decline, though the rate of reduction slowed. The official PMI survey showed that manufacturers' new export orders contracted at a faster rate in October.

China's Zheng Qinwen keeps her eyes on WTA Finals prize

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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Staying alive and doing it the "Queen Wen" way — China's top ace Zheng Qinwen's career-first victory at the WTA Finals has cemented her reputation as the most resilient fighter on the women's tennis circuit this year.

As a last-minute qualifier to the 2024 WTA Finals, reigning Olympic tennis champion Zheng again put the steely will that drove her to top of the Paris podium on full display, after the world No 7 pulled off a 7-6 (4), 3-6, 6-1 win over group opponent Elena Rybakina in her second match in Riyadh on Monday, keeping her in contention for the title at the coveted season-ending championship.

It's the first time the 22-year-old Zheng has qualified for the finals, where the top-8 singles stars and doubles teams compete in round-robin groups, before progressing to the semifinals to fight for a share of a \$15.25 million purse being offered by debutant host Saudi Arabia.

Zheng's win over Rybakina, her



You need to know how to use the crowd. ... My heart rate went up (when they shouted my name), so I had to hold on, until I couldn't hold it in anymore and I shouted at them to stop."

Zheng Qinwen

first in three encounters against the 2022 Wimbledon champion, also marked her tour-leading 20th three-set win in her 24 matches that went to a decider, also a record, this season, consolidating the power hitter's status as one of

the mentally toughest opponents in the women's game.

Of course, she'd love to have quicker wins, but Zheng took particular pride in the huge progress of her mental game, which has contributed significantly to her fruitful 2024 campaign.

"I don't know. Maybe in lot of matches, because I know it's supposed to be three sets, I always let it happen in three sets," Zheng joked about her tendency of having to go the distance to win after outlasting the Kazakh world No 5 over nearly two hours and 30 minutes at the King Saud University Indoor Arena.

"It's tough for me to play against her. I had a lot of chances in the second set, but I didn't take them. ... But in the third set, I told myself, even if I broke her first, I had to stay focused on my service game, because (there are) two big servers on court. One little detail can change a lot.

"I think when everybody arrives in the third set, they've already got into a rhythm, not like the beginning of the match. And for me, I felt I raised my level in the third,

and I started to play my tennis again."

So focused on clinging on to the win in order to progress, at least into the final group round, Zheng let her emotions get the better of her midway through the deciding set, as she chastised a group of loudly cheering Chinese fans in Mandarin, urging them to stop calling her name before she was able to serve.

She expressed regret for venting her nerves on her loyal supporters, who almost turned the Saudi arena into a "home" court, where red Chinese flags flew vigorously during changeovers and chants of "Queen Wen! Come on!" filled the air.

Zheng used the post-match interview to apologize to her fans for "not keeping her temper in check" during tense moments, yet she insisted that sometimes it's helpful to blow off steam.

"You need to know how to use the crowd. ... My heart rate went up (when they shouted my name), so I had to hold on, until I couldn't hold it in anymore and I shouted at them to stop. I am not supposed to say that to my supporters though."

"Afterward, I felt my level automatically got better, and I felt I was able to see the ball better and to react faster," said Zheng, who, with the win, has overtaken Jessica Pegula of the United States in the live WTA rankings, climbing to a career-high No 6.

Business: Decoupling from China harms West

From page 1

However, as China has grown into an economic powerhouse and a leader in innovation, some Western countries have responded with concern, opting to "contain" China. Yet the so-called decoupling would only harm those countries themselves. If Western nations choose to decouple from China, their goods and supply chains will become more expensive. Companies that attempt to "de-risk" from China risk losing access to a vast market of 1.4 billion consumers.

It's crucial to remember that trade is about more than just the exchange of commodities. It fosters personal connections and mutual understanding. My grandfather started our family's story with China, which was continued by my father, Stephen Perry. Both were held in great esteem by China, where they were affectionately known as "Old Perry" and "Little Perry". I now proudly carry the mantle as "Little Little Perry", continuing our family's legacy of trust and collaboration with China.

As we move into the next phase of global trade, it is evident that China's demand for new resources,

The future of the global economy hinges on our commitment to peace, collaboration and openness, not isolation.

technologies and innovations will only grow. China is not merely a participant in global trade; it is actively shaping the future of it. We at London Export Corporation are proud to be part of China's ongoing journey toward becoming the most innovative country in the world.

Our expertise in facilitating trade and building trust has positioned us as a leader in connecting Western businesses with Chinese companies. As China advances in areas like green energy, life sciences, artificial intelligence and modern agriculture, we are ready to continue serving as a trusted partner to China — just as we have for over seven decades.

The author is chairman of the 48 Group and CEO of London Export Corporation. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA



Workers plant grass grids for sand control in the Tengger Desert in Zhongwei, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on May 30. FENG KAIHUA / XINHUA

China leads in combating desertification

By HOU LIQIANG
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With more than half of its reclaimable desertified land treated, China has taken the lead globally in achieving zero growth in land degradation and become the largest contributor to global afforestation, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Since 2012, China has seen its desertified land decrease by 4.3 million hectares, said Guan Zhiou, head of the administration, reporting to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, on Tuesday.

"This demonstrates a positive trend of overall improvement and accelerated enhancement," he said.

He credited the achievement to a series of concerted efforts by the country to promote initiatives aimed at controlling desertification, underpinned by the establishment of a robust and effective legal framework.

Currently, the legal framework

has included six national laws, including laws for sand prevention and control, as well as forest and wetland conservation, he noted, adding the 13 key provincial regions for desertification control have all enacted regional regulations on the issue.

He highlighted the significant roles of a series of projects in tackling desertification, including the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, which was launched in 1978.

Thanks to these projects, 35.9 million hectares of desertified land have been brought under protection and 7.9 million hectares of such land have been effectively treated, he shared.

Guan elaborated that within the expansive scope of the Three-North program spanning from northwestern to northeastern China, the forest coverage rate has risen significantly from approximately 12.4 percent to 13.8 percent. Moreover, effective measures have successfully controlled soil erosion on 61 percent of the affected land.

He continued by noting that

within the Yellow River Basin, the boundary delineating regions with and without vegetation cover has shifted approximately 300 kilometers westward. Due to these efforts, northern China has embraced a remarkable decrease in the number of days with severe sand and dust weather, he added.

He also noted, however, China is still confronted with an arduous task to forge ahead with desertification control, considering the size of its desertified land and the severity.

"Currently, there are 47.2 million hectares of desertified land that can be reclaimed across the country," he said. "Of them, 22.2 million hectares remain untreated, mainly concentrated in the Three-North region and are all hard nuts to crack," he said.

The official vows a series of measures to advance the work, including incentivizing the public and enterprises to participate in desertification control.

China will tap into different modes to encourage farmers and herdsmen to participate in desertification control, he continued.

Notable strides made in higher education

Minister urges universities to adopt flexible approach for talent cultivation

By ZHAO YIMENG
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In recent years, China has made remarkable strides in the development of its higher education system, particularly through the initiative of building world-class universities and disciplines with Chinese characteristics, Education Minister Huai Jinpeng said.

The "Double First Class" initiative, which was launched to develop a set of world-class institutions and disciplines in China, has undergone two rounds of changes, Huai said when delivering a report which was submitted to an ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for review on Tuesday.

The first round identified 140 universities and 465 disciplines to be part of the initiative and the second round has added seven universities and 41 disciplines, with an emphasis on foundational and cutting-edge fields that are critical to the country's development, according to the report.

China has implemented programs for basic disciplines, establishing 288 elite student training bases, 14 national centers for talent development in mathematics and physics and 16 interdisciplinary research centers, aiming to contribute to significant advances in disciplines such as quantum science, materials engineering and space exploration, it said.

Universities are evaluated based on their overall development and growth potential. Some top-tier

institutions like Peking University and Tsinghua University are allowed to autonomously determine their own disciplines, creating a model for personalized growth, Huai said.

Since 2016, China has invested over 166.7 billion yuan (\$23.4 billion) in "Double First Class" universities to support the development of these institutions and their high-level research programs, the report said.

Universities involved in the initiative have trained more than half of China's master's degree students and 80 percent of its doctoral students.

Focusing on national strategic needs, 84 new undergraduate majors have been added, including interdisciplinary engineering, intelligent sensing engineering and carbon storage science, it added.

However, the traditional academic structure in Chinese universities, which was based on departments and disciplines, limits the flexibility required to foster innovative, interdisciplinary talent, Huai said.

"The model for talent development needs to evolve, with greater emphasis on integrating STEM or science, technology, engineering and mathematics, with the humanities, and on strengthening collaboration between education and industry," he said.

Moreover, China still faces challenges in producing leading-edge and disruptive innovations, particularly in fundamental research. The potential for universities to contribute more effectively to economic and social development has not

been fully realized, and the commercialization of scientific discoveries remains insufficient, the report said.

"There is still a gap when compared to top universities in developed countries," Huai said. The ability to attract and retain global talent is a key challenge, as is China's participation in global educational governance, especially in cutting-edge fields like artificial intelligence, he said.

There is an urgent need to refine the criteria for evaluating disciplines, particularly for interdisciplinary studies and social sciences. The lack of a clear, characteristic development model for "Double First Class" universities further complicates the process of building distinct, world-class institutions, according to the report.

In response to these challenges, a more tailored evaluation system should be developed, focusing on contributions to society, especially in areas such as ideological leadership, national security and social stability, Huai said.

To cultivate top talent, China should strengthen early identification of potential innovators and foster a more integrated talent development model that combines research with education, according to the report.

Special emphasis should be placed on developing engineers, professionals in emerging fields, and interdisciplinary researchers. Improving core curriculum and integrating research breakthroughs into teaching will help nurture a new generation of world-class talent, it added.

The ability to attract top international talent will be crucial to building globally competitive institutions, according to the report.



WORLD CONFERENCE OF CLASSICS

A case for a classical dimension

Beijing event to examine legacy of ancient civilizations and their relevance to the modern day, **Fang Aiqing** reports.



Above: Classical studies scholars from China and overseas participate in a ceremony to pay homage at the Temple of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong province, on Tuesday. **WANG YINING / FOR CHINA DAILY** **Below:** Visitors look at a statue at an exhibition to mark the inaugural World Conference of Classics, *The Countless Aspects of Beauty in Ancient Art*, jointly organized by the National Museum of China and the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum that opens in Beijing on Wednesday. **JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY**

With the support of its long-standing academic tradition, the study of ancient Chinese classics has achieved evident development in the past 30 years. Meanwhile, encouraging progress has been made over the past decade in the field of Western classical studies in China, despite the fact that the field is still in its early stages.

Classical studies scholar Liu Xiaofeng says that the academic progress seen in the study of Western classics will surely help the study of ancient Chinese classics take on a fresh look.

The professor at the School of Liberal Arts of Renmin University of China expounds on his idea of promoting the field of Chinese classical studies, one that integrates the study of ancient Chinese classics and Western classical studies, as the inaugural World Conference of Classics is set to be held in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday.

The three-day event, co-organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as the Ministry of Culture of Greece and the Academy of Athens, is joined by more than 400 Chinese and foreign scholars, discussing the enduring intellectual legacy of ancient civilizations and its relevance in the modern world.

Liu will address the conference clarifying that classical studies, both in the East and the West, reexamine the past with a modern perspective and offer wisdom for contemporary society.

According to Wu Fei, professor of philosophy at Peking University, "classical studies" in the West usual-



Liu Xiaofeng, classical studies scholar

ly examine ancient Greek and Roman civilizations in terms of their languages, literature, history and culture. However, Western scholars these days have increasingly realized the need to involve the studies of other ancient civilizations into the realm of classical studies.

In China, there have long been debates within the academic circle on topics such as: What should China's classical studies deal with? Should the comprehensive study of ancient Chinese classics be called "Chinese classical studies"? Which ancient periods should be considered within the scope of classical studies?

Wu suggests that the World Conference of Classics serves as an opportunity to present recent progress made by Chinese scholars in the fields of Western classical studies and the study of ancient Chinese classics, fostering a more profound and comprehensive dialogue between Chinese scholars and the international classical studies community.

But more importantly, he says the conference will provide inspiration in helping China's classical studies clarify its scope and positions and make its way to the country's higher education system as a formal discipline.

According to him, although many Chinese universities have founded study centers focusing on classical studies, there's still a long way to go in training students, developing dedicated research teams and



establishing sustainable communication with other disciplines such as literature, history, philosophy and archaeology.

In Wu's perspective, China's classical studies should cover Western classical studies and the study of pre-Qin period (before 221 BC) Chinese classics. While the historical and modern interpretation of the spirits of ancient Greece and Rome shall be included, the understanding and interpretation of the pre-Qin Chinese classics since the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) should also be considered within the scope of classical studies.

Liu says that Chinese scholars engaging in Western classical studies should be well-versed in China's ancient classics and hold respect for traditional Chinese culture. Similarly, scholars specializing in ancient Chinese classics should also have a solid knowledge base of Western classical studies.

He adds that nowadays, Chinese scholars on humanities, even those focusing on ancient Chinese classics, have more or less received some academic training in modern Western academic concepts and methods. Yet, that doesn't necessarily mean they are familiar enough with ancient Western classics.

To explain what can possibly be a proper way to cultivate a comprehensive background in classical studies, Liu takes the example of the RUC's experimental undergraduate program on classical studies, which he founded in 2010.

The students of this program are required to take lessons in philology, learning ancient Chinese language, classical Greek and Latin, as well as literature and history, apart from intensive reading on ancient Chinese and Western classics alike.

Liu says that one student of this experimental program, whose undergraduate thesis features Athenian lawmaker and poet Solon and who speaks classical Greek and Latin, has received a doctoral degree in ancient Chinese philosophy.

According to him, under the modern classification system, the ancient Chinese classics have been observed in disciplines such as history, philosophy and Chinese literature. Yet, by promoting "Chinese classical studies", scholars like him aim to integrate the ancient classics studies scattered in these disciplines.

Wu says that the current classification system results in the lack of an overall perspective in ancient Chinese classics studies, and some important aspects are absent.

For example, it's not enough to

examine classics like the *Shi Jing*, also known as *The Book of Songs* or the *Classic of Poetry*, simply as a literature work, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as historical records, and *I Ching* (The Book of Changes) as a philosophical work.

"Classical studies scholars should first of all have a comprehensive understanding of the classical civilizations, before they delve into a specific domain," Wu says.

He will deliver a presentation comparing the philosophy of Aristotle and Confucius at a sub-forum of the conference, and expects to draw inspiration from his international counterparts in order to reexamine Chinese classical traditions.

Speaking of the future of China's classical studies, both scholars emphasize the comparison and resonance between the East and the West, and new thoughts generated in the pursuit of understanding ancient classics in the way ancient people did and interpreting the classics in a modern context.

"It is only after a relatively long period from the classical times and when people come to recognize these works as historical classics with significant relevance to modern society, that classical studies as a discipline can be established," Wu says.

"What's important is not how much of the modern spirit recognized today can be traced in the ancient times, but how ancient wisdom can provide richer dimensions and perspectives to examine and better address contemporary issues."

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Soundbites



Klaus Vieweg, professor of philosophy at Germany's Friedrich Schiller University Jena

The first World Conference of Classics holds significance for the exchange and mutual learning between Eastern and Western civilizations.

In the modern era, numerous challenges persist, and many prominent thinkers, particularly from recent history, have derived valuable insights from classical and ancient philosophies. Figures like Aristotle and Lao Tzu have left an enduring impact on Eastern and Western thought, shaping each tradition in fundamental ways.

In this era of globalization, it is remarkable to witness the convergence and interaction of classical works from diverse nations, creating opportunities for rich cultural exchange and mutual understanding.



Hashiba Yuzuru, professor of ancient history, Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at University of Tokyo

The first World Conference of Classics serves as a platform to allow classics across the world to communicate with each other. Connecting ancient civilizations is crucial for fostering mutual understanding, as insights from these civilizations enable individuals to navigate and flourish in an increasingly globalized world.

Confucian thought feels familiar to me, largely due to its profound influence on Japanese culture, particularly through *The Analects of Confucius*. Confucius has taught us to engage in self-reflection and consider what holds the greatest value for us. He encourages us to identify what is most important in our lives. This, in essence, is one of the most significant lessons from Confucius.



Asimina Koutrouli, architect engineer of the Ministry of Education of Greece

Classical studies are an essential body of knowledge that is crucial for understanding and contextualizing modern existence. Without a thorough awareness of a nation's historical foundations, it becomes challenging for individuals to grasp how that nation has achieved its current level of development. This understanding is significant not only for individual nations but also for humanity as a whole, representing a global culture. By engaging with classical texts, individuals gain valuable insights into the needs and responses of people across diverse contexts, thereby fostering a deeper appreciation for our shared human experience.



Chen Feng, professor of Advanced Institute for Confucian Studies of Shandong University

The World Conference of Classics provides an opportunity to explore how classical civilizations can maintain their modern relevance.

Through this channel, civilizations try to ensure that their teachings resonate with contemporary societies and daily life. This connection is essential for preserving and carrying these traditions into the future. Classical civilizations, including Confucianism and other Eastern and Western traditions, are a shared spiritual legacy of humanity.



Thomas Michael, professor at School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University

The conference is a good opportunity for me to learn about what other scholars study, make new relationships and meet some old friends. We can discuss our ideas about classics and share our cultural interactions, and it makes us understand each other more closely. It's wonderful that China is hosting the conference. China excels at bringing different cultures together for cultural communication and mutual understanding.

CAO JIAYUE AND XU LIN

Historical sites and artifacts impress foreign experts

By **XU LIN** in Zhengzhou
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While several expats are admiring the intricate animal patterns on an ancient Chinese bronze object, others are carefully listening to a tour guide explain the skill and wisdom behind the craftsmanship.

It was part of the "Exploring China" Henan Tour event in Zhengzhou, Luoyang and Anyang in Central China's Henan province from Sunday to Tuesday.

More than 40 foreign experts in classical studies from 13 countries visited Henan's heritage sites, Longmen Grottoes and the Yinxu Museum, immersing themselves in the rich Chinese culture and civilization.

Two other groups joined the tours in Shandong province, visiting places like the Temple of Confucius, and in Sichuan province, traveling to key archaeological sites like Sanxingdui and Jinsha.

These experts are participants in the World Conference of Classics, being held in Beijing from Wednesday to Friday.

"I'm excited to visit China for the first time, and I plan to travel to China again with my family, to see more of its deep culture and history," says Michael Trapp, emeritus professor of Greek literature and thought at King's College London.

Before setting out, he sought advice



Left: Participants of the "Exploring China" Henan Tour admire a bronze ware at Henan Museum in Zhengzhou city. **XU LIN / CHINA DAILY** **Right:** Experts attending the first World Conference of Classics visit Jinsha Site Museum in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Monday. **ZHANG LANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE**

from his Chinese doctoral student in London and his brother, a Chinese language translator who often travels to China for work. Both suggested that given his passion for history, archaeology and art, he would find his visit to Henan particularly captivating, which he does.

At the museums, he finds that the use of modern technology has made historical sites more accessible to a modern audience, striking a delicate balance between preserving ancient materials and showing their history vividly via replicas and digital reconstructions. "This endeavor requires considerable effort and creativity," he says.

He believes that it's wonderful to

see the massive size of the Erlitou Site in Luoyang and the artifacts excavated from it at the nearby museum. It shows the archaeological process of their discovery.

Thomas Michael from the United States, professor at School of Philosophy, Beijing Normal University, who does research into Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, agrees.

"I've read about all these places, but it's the first time to see various artifacts about the origins and downfall of the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) and the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-771 BC)," he says. "It's amazing to see the ancient centers of Chinese civilization. These

are important periods for Confucianism. ... The Confucian tradition goes all the way back to Zhougong (the Duke of Zhou) from the Western Zhou Dynasty."

The duke was believed to have been a prolific author with humanistic ideas and written *Rites of Zhou*, a fundamental ancient Chinese classic on organizational theory.

Mary Evelyn Tucker, a senior lecturer and research scholar at Yale University, says: "It's exciting to have this cultural tour to Henan and see that China is recovering its own traditional past. ... China's modernization has developed very rapidly over the past 40 years since my first visit to the country in 1985."



CHINA

Xinjiang enriches 'Chinese fruit platter'

Farmers in region leverage sunshine and fertile soil to produce high-quality specialty agricultural goods

By ZHANG WEI in Kunyu, Xinjiang and MAO WEIHUA

With its sweet Hami melons, crispy apples, fragrant plums and tart pomegranates, the fruits grown in Xinjiang's diverse, semi-arid soil have gained widespread acclaim domestically and internationally.

Situated in northwestern China, the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region boasts abundant sunshine, distinctive geographical conditions and varied fertile soil. Leveraging its exceptional water, soil and light, Xinjiang produces high-quality specialty agricultural goods that have enriched the "Chinese fruit platter".

Agriculture in Xinjiang continues to evolve with advances in modernization that have led to steady and stable growth in farmers' incomes. Xinjiang's distinctive agricultural products, forestry and other advantageous industries are thriving, creating unique industrial clusters that pave the way for local farmers to increase their incomes and prosper.

Last year, Xinjiang's output from specialty fruit trees reached 18.77 million metric tons, a year-on-year increase of 3.4 percent, according to data from the regional government.

"This is the joy of a bountiful harvest," said Niu Hailin, a 55-year-old orchard owner from Laobing town in Kunyu city as he leads a vibrant scene of harvesting, sorting and packaging ripe plums alongside fellow farmers. The air is filled with the palpable joy of a fruitful harvest, which is reflected on the faces of all involved.

"This year, the plums have flourished remarkably, creating high demand in the market," Niu said.

He emphasized the nutritional



Left: Niu Hailin harvests plums with a fellow farmer at his orchard in Laobing town, Kunyu city, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in September. Right: Li Songying shows the tiger nuts she harvested in Xing'an town, Tumushuke city, Xinjiang in September.

PHOTOS BY ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

richness of plums, which are abundant in dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, and other nutrients. In recent years, plum sales have thrived across various regions. Since embarking on plum cultivation, Niu has garnered technical support from a few universities and research institutions, enhancing his expertise in the field.

Growing plums has become more accessible with the ease of obtaining loans, and sales of plums from Niu's orchard have surpassed previous periods.

"The picking season runs from March to September annually, with this year's harvest commencing around Aug 20 and extending until

the National Day holiday," Niu said.

He anticipates a yield of 35 to 42 metric tons per hectare, and he has already sold plums worth more than 20,000 yuan (\$2,800).

The promising outlook for the development of fruit and agricultural by-products has instilled confidence in countless farmers.

"Family pressures have lessened, economic gains have improved and I am confident in our future cultivation endeavors. I am eager to explore additional markets, emphasizing high-quality cultivation practices that will contribute to generating employment opportunities," Niu said.

His vision extends beyond eco-



nomical gains, encompassing a genuine concern for the employment prospects of his Uygur neighbors in the area.

Awaitihan Gapar, a 56-year-old farmer, tends to the fields in Niu's orchard. "My livelihood thrives here. Without Niu, life would be an uphill battle," the farmer said.

To bolster local employment opportunities, Niu emphasized the pivotal role played by farmers, such as Awaitihan, who hail from neighboring villages. "We allocate around 150,000 to 160,000 yuan annually to bring them on board, thereby catalyzing job prospects for numerous villagers," Niu said.

The swift agricultural progress in

Xinjiang heralds transformative shifts in the livelihoods of local farmers.

The change in living standards is profound, Niu said. "Once residing in modest flat-roofed abodes, we now dwell in a verdant residential district teeming with water, foliage and blooms," he said. "The ambience is serene and comfortable. Our two-story house is surrounded by fruit trees such as peaches, apricots and pears."

In the fields of Xing'an town, Tumushuke city, 42-year-old farmer Li Songying uprooted nearby tiger nuts. "While these tiger nuts may not be large, they are sweet," Li said.

Originally from Longnan city,

Gansu province, Li ventured to Xinjiang in 2018 to delve into the cultivation of tiger nuts, starting cultivation in 2019. "The region offers an ideal environment for the growth of tiger nuts, promising significant developmental opportunities," Li said.

She cultivates 3 hectares of tiger nuts. "In the initial stages of cultivation, the government extended various forms of support, including seeds, water and electricity subsidies, planting assistance, technical guidance, training and substantial national subsidies for utilities," she said.

Having already sold all the tiger nuts she harvested before June, Li intends to continue cultivation next year because of the crop's easy management and high level of mechanization in farming.

Li is also actively delving into e-commerce livestreaming platforms to broaden sales. "Viewers born in the 1980s who have savored these nuts reminisce about their childhood flavors upon watching my videos and reach out to make purchases. Over time, my fan base has grown, with enthusiasts making repeat purchases and recommending the nuts to others," she said.

Li hosts online sales of her tiger nuts on short-video platform Douyin almost every evening, generating an income of over 10,000 yuan per month.

"I am now confident in showcasing tiger nuts through livestreams. Sales are thriving and we have many regular customers now," she said.

Most of her online followers are from big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in Guangdong province.

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CHINA INTERNATIONAL IMPORT EXPO

Moves seen helping boost consumption

Execs at ongoing import emporium bullish on China's spending power

By WANG KEJU in Shanghai
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China's recent introduction of a potent stimulus policy package, including dedicated efforts to shore up consumer spending, will provide massive opportunities for global businesses keen to tap into its super-sized market and facilitate the transition toward a consumption-led growth model, global executives said on Tuesday.

In particular, the China International Import Expo, running from Tuesday to Sunday in Shanghai, will play a key role in scaling up imports of quality goods and services and boosting the country's consumption upgrading, they said during the ongoing trade event.

Noting the great confidence in China's consumption landscape, Jean-Paul Agon, L'Oréal Group chairman, said that the optimism is rooted in China's vision for modernization, especially driven by recent government initiatives.

Both national and local authorities have rolled out policy measures to bolster consumer confidence and unlock the full potential of domestic demand, he said.

Governmental stimulus is key to elevating consumer sentiment, and this significant support will be instrumental in upgrading consumption and driving high-quality development, he added.

China has solidified its position as the world's second-largest consumer market for several consecutive years, and the trend continues to hold strong this year, said Li Gang, director-general of the department of market operation and consumption promotion of the Ministry of Commerce.

Consumption has remained the primary driving force for China's economic development as the growth in consumption contributed 49.9 percent to GDP growth in the first three quarters, said the Bureau of National Statistics.

"The future of consumption in China is full of potential. That is why we at L'Oréal firmly believe that the next China is China, and that investing in China is investing in our future," Agon said.

Notably, the CIIE has emerged as a critical channel for expanding imports of high-quality goods and

services to cater to the growing demand of the Chinese people and create more development opportunities for enterprises from all over the world.

This year's expo has set new benchmarks, drawing the participation of 3,496 exhibitors from 152 countries and regions — the highest number represented in the event's history.

As China's consumption-driven economic transformation continues to gain momentum, the CIIE has emerged as an indispensable gateway for international enterprises to showcase their latest innovations.

Healthcare company Abbott has utilized the expo as a significant platform to showcase hundreds of its latest products over the years, with many of them successfully transitioning from exhibition items to commercially available goods.

This year, the company is again leveraging the CIIE stage to debut dozens of new-to-market products, said Fanny Chen, vice-president of Abbott Core Diagnostics, adding that this will allow the company to better understand the evolving needs of Chinese consumers and tailor its products accordingly.

Between January and September, the total number of new consumer products launched nationwide came in at 15.18 million, representing a 13.1 percent year-on-year growth, according to data from the State Administration for Market Regulation.

The sheer size and growth potential of the Chinese market make it a highly attractive and strategic destination for any businesses looking to expand their global footprint, Chen said.

Moreover, the expo will significantly enrich China's supply-side and bring new development frontiers for the country's enterprises, said Wang Wei, senior research fellow at the Institute of Market Economy, which is part of the Development Research Center of the State Council.

The trade event brings together a vast array of premium global brands and service providers that will introduce a wide range of cutting-edge products, technologies and services from around the world, Wang said.



A view of Sony's booth at the 7th China International Import Expo in Shanghai. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Sony charts big plans for Chinese creative sector, content creators

By FAN FEIFEI
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Japanese consumer electronics company Sony Group Corp is betting big on the creative entertainment industry in China and is supporting Chinese content creators to give full play to their expertise through technological innovation, to satisfy consumers' rising demand for high-quality entertainment experiences.

Moreover, Chinese video game *Black Myth: Wukong* has also become popular on Sony's PlayStation gaming platform, pushing up sales of its PS5 consoles, said a senior company executive.

"Sony has been deeply cultivating the Chinese market for many years, and has always maintained a strategic vision for long-term development and deepened its business layout in China," said Takeshi Yoshida, president of Sony China.

Yoshida emphasized the importance of the Chinese market in the world economy and the high priority the Chinese government attaches to innovation-driven and high-quality development.

He added that the company will leverage its advantages in technology, content and services to fully support creators in China.

Takehito Soeda, vice-president of Sony China, said the company's businesses, which mainly include content creation, electronic products and semiconductors, have all witnessed steady growth in China over the past few years.

Although the consumer electronics business still takes up a large share, there is immense growth potential in content creation and cooperation, Soeda said.

According to him, apart from



Takeshi Yoshida

introducing popular overseas games to the Chinese market, Sony has launched a program aimed at supporting the creation of native games from Chinese developers, and bringing original Chinese content to the global market through the PlayStation platform. It provides assistance to the creators in terms of technology, creativity and publication.

The move not only shows the innovative capability of China's gaming industry, but also provides a more diversified gaming experience for global players, he said.

The company, he said, will expand cooperation with domestic game developers to promote the development of high-quality console games.

Soeda said he sees immense development opportunities from the integration of technology with entertainment, and emerging industries in the future.

Sony has deepened its collaboration with local partners and established a studio for virtual cinematography in Shanghai, providing crystal light-emitting diode display systems, professional cameras and monitors.

At the ongoing China International Import Expo in Shanghai, the Japanese company is displaying a series of innovative technologies, such as virtual avatars, immersive experiences in location-based entertainment, image sensing and artificial intelligence, as

well as technical achievements in environmental protection.

"The CIIE provides an important platform for Sony to showcase the latest technologies, deepen cooperation and stimulate innovation. Sony's continuous participation in the CIIE not only reflects our long-standing commitment to the Chinese market, but also demonstrates our strong belief in creating a better future with China," Yoshida said.

It also responds positively to the Chinese government's sustainable development strategy, and bolsters the upgrading of green industries and green consumption in China.

The structure of foreign investment continues to be optimized, as China's high-tech manufacturing sector attracted 77.12 billion yuan (\$10.9 billion) in the first nine months of the year, or 12 percent of its total foreign direct investment inflow, up 1.5 percentage points from the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Zhang Jianping, deputy director of the academic committee at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said foreign companies have accelerated their localization steps in China in recent years, while high-tech industries and advanced manufacturing have become important sectors for foreign investment in the country.

He added that the implementation of a new round of opening-up measures, such as a shortened negative list for market entry and establishing more pilot free trade zones, has created favorable conditions for foreign businesses to invest in China.

Sinopec signs deal for 30m tons of LNG

By ZHENG XIN
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China Petroleum and Chemical Corp (Sinopec) has signed a 15-year deal with TotalEnergies for 2 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually from 2028, which is expected to further bolster TotalEnergies' foothold in China's energy market and advance the country's clean energy goals, industry experts said.

Sinopec signed the LNG sales agreement with TotalEnergies on Monday, under which TotalEnergies will supply approximately 2 million tons of LNG per year to Sinopec for 15 years starting in 2028.

The agreement with Sinopec, one of the leading LNG players in the country, is part of the company's strategy to grow its LNG business and strengthen its long-term position in the LNG market in China, said TotalEnergies.

This agreement comes within the strategic cooperation agreement signed earlier this year between the two companies, it said.

An analyst said the sales agreement between TotalEnergies and Sinopec will help the latter better cement its presence in China, the world's largest LNG importer and a key player in global energy transition.

This agreement not only enhances TotalEnergies' long-term revenue stability in Asia but also positions it as a competitive force in a region with increasing demand for cleaner energy alternatives, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

For China, LNG plays a crucial role in balancing renewable energy's intermittency and replacing coal in power generation, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This collaboration with Sinopec underscores TotalEnergies' strategic pivot toward environmentally sustainable energy solutions, advancing its global energy portfolio while supporting China's energy transition efforts, he said.

In China, natural gas is a key component of the energy transition as it mitigates the intermittency of rapidly growing renewable energies and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions when it replaces coal in electricity production.

Sinopec sees TotalEnergies as a crucial partner in the company's natural gas strategy and this agreement will further strengthen their strategic cooperation in the gas sector, said Niu Shuanwen, vice-president of Sinopec.

This agreement further strengthens cooperation between the two companies in natural gas. Natural gas is an important enabler for realizing China's energy transition and dual carbon goals, Niu said.



Consumer products on display at the ongoing China International Import Expo in Shanghai. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Value of State-owned assets stable

The value of China's State-owned assets remained stable last year, official data showed on Tuesday. The assets of State-owned enterprises totaled 371.9 trillion yuan (\$52.37 trillion) at the end of 2023, according to a State Council report. The assets of financial SOEs stood at 445.1 trillion yuan at the end of last year, and State-owned assets in administrative departments and public institutions came in at 64.2 trillion yuan.

Listed companies on stock market hit 5,363

There were 5,363 companies listed on the Chinese mainland stock market by the end of September, according to the China Association for Public Companies. The stock exchanges in Shanghai, Shenzhen and Beijing had 2,271, 2,839 and 253 listed firms, respectively, by end September, data from the association showed.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

HK, Shanghai foster ties for win-win development

By WU KUNLING in Hong Kong
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Officials vowed on Tuesday to deepen collaboration between Shanghai and Hong Kong to further unleash the two economic engines' potential in the nation's further opening-up, emphasizing the special administrative region's springboard role for mainland enterprises to go global.

They made the pledge at a high-level conference promoting Hong Kong's investment opportunities in Shanghai, a significant event during the seventh China International Import Expo.

Addressing the 2024 Hong Kong Investment Promotion Conference-Shanghai Forum, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu stressed that Hong Kong possesses the capacity to serve as an investment and financing hub for the development of Shanghai and related mainland businesses, welcoming more enterprises to leverage Hong Kong for global expansion.

HK\$2 trillion

total market value of Hong Kong's stock exchange, which is home to over 1,400 listed mainland companies

He said Hong Kong is home to over 1,400 mainland companies listed on the city's stock exchange, with close to 200 originating from Shanghai alone — boasting a total market value exceeding HK\$2 trillion (\$260 billion).

"Leveraging each other's strengths, Hong Kong and Shanghai can sail together toward new horizons," Lee said.

He believes that the two cities can further strengthen cooperation in areas such as global talent attraction, services and employment so as to advance the development of talent hubs in both locations.

At the same event, Hong Kong

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po extended an invitation to mainland enterprises to establish headquarters in Hong Kong, highlighting the city's status as a premier treasury center with unrestricted capital movement and tax incentives offered by the SAR government.

Zhou Ji, executive deputy director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, highlighted that both Shanghai and Hong Kong serve as vital gateways in China, connecting international and domestic markets.

Zhou pledged that his office will continue to support Hong Kong's unique role in Shanghai-Hong Kong cooperation and the country's external opening, as well as to back ongoing research and implementation of favorable policies to facilitate Hong Kong's development.

Shanghai Mayor Gong Zheng stated that Shanghai will further encourage its enterprises to invest in Hong Kong, while particularly strengthening cooperation between

the two cities in emerging industries such as artificial intelligence and biomedicine. Furthermore, Gong mentioned that Shanghai will support more qualified enterprises to list on the stock exchange in Hong Kong.

He also pledged that the two cities will work together to jointly explore overseas markets. Shanghai will fully leverage Hong Kong's advantages as a super-connector, assisting businesses in establishing a presence in international markets and participating in international cooperation as well as competition, he said.

This year, more than 300 Hong Kong enterprises are participating in the import expo to promote Hong Kong's quality goods and services, accounting for one-tenth of the total number of exhibitors.

During the promotion conference, Invest Hong Kong under the Hong Kong government signed agreements with numerous Shanghai enterprises to deepen cooperation.

BUSINESSFOCUS

China at center of our business, says StanChart Group CEO

BEIJING — China remains a key focus for Standard Chartered Bank and the group's overall commitment to the country has only increased, said Bill Winters, group CEO of the banking corporation, in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency.

"We are constantly evolving our business in China, and we are looking at where our role as a connector can be most effective and most helpful. As trade patterns change, the Chinese population becomes wealthy, and the needs of our clients in China continue to evolve. As national priorities change, we adjust our business model," Winters added.

He noted that this adjustment sometimes means expanding operations in new locations or scaling back certain services, but emphasized that the bank's overall commitment to China remains stronger than ever.

One of the bank's key growth areas has been supporting Chinese manufacturers, such as electric vehicle and battery makers, as they expand overseas, Winters said, noting that Standard Chartered has played a critical role by providing financing, currency hedging and other essential services to these companies.

As an international bank with operations across all ASEAN countries, most South Asian nations, and major economies in the Middle East and Africa, Standard Chartered is well-positioned to support Chinese companies in navigating any transition, Winters said. "We have done that, and it's been a material source of growth for our business. We'll continue to help Chinese companies in every way that we can."

According to the business leader, Standard Chartered's operations in China are benefiting from the country's economic recovery, the opening-up of the country's capital markets, and the internationalization of the renminbi.

Winters noted that recent policy measures introduced by Chinese authorities have been highly effective in reducing financing costs, especially in the property sector.

"The policy had the desired effect of changing the sentiment around, both within consumers and investors in China. So we saw the reaction in the equity markets, which improved very substantially," he said, adding that a strong and contributing China is crucial for global growth.

“The policy had the desired effect of changing the sentiment around, both within consumers and investors in China.”

Bill Winters, group CEO at Standard Chartered Bank

Earlier this year, at the China Development Forum, Winters spoke about Standard Chartered's confidence in the opening-up of China's capital markets, describing the process as careful and thoughtful.

Standard Chartered was one of the first foreign banks to locally incorporate in China in 2007. Since then, it has gained a domestic fund custody license, participated in the Bond Connect Scheme between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, and joined the Wealth Management Connect Pilot Scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It has also been designated as one of the quoting banks for the loan prime rate by the Chinese central bank.

Winters praised the significant growth in RMB usage in trade, emphasizing that it is well on its way to becoming a truly global currency.

As a foreign bank operating in the cross-border interbank payment system both on the Chinese mainland and offshore in Hong Kong, Standard Chartered plays a leading role in advancing RMB internationalization, according to Winters.

Winters attended the Swift International Banker's Operation Seminar 2024 in Beijing from Oct 21 to 24, marking the first time the event was hosted on the Chinese mainland. He described the experience as "fantastic."

"China is at the heart of the system of global trade and cross-border payments. So the opportunity to be here looking at the global payments infrastructure and do that through the lens of a Chinese market and Chinese perspective is a special opportunity for us and could not be more timely," Winters said.

XINHUA



Standard Chartered's booth during a supply chain expo in Beijing in December 2023. SU WEIZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Employees work on a Volkswagen smart production line in Hefei, Anhui province, in September. CHEN ZHUO / FOR CHINA DAILY

Graded policy steps boosting foreign investor confidence

Key banks raise nation's GDP growth forecast for 2024 on back of Q3 uptick

BEIJING — Foreign investors are becoming increasingly bullish on the Chinese market, bolstered by the country's recent incremental policies aimed at vitalizing growth momentum.

UBS Investment Bank has raised its China 2024 growth forecast to 4.8 percent from 4.6 percent, while Goldman Sachs has lifted China's GDP growth prediction this year from 4.7 percent to 4.9 percent.

The uplift is mostly due to China's third-quarter year-on-year GDP growth of 4.6 percent, slightly above market expectations of 4.4 percent, and the series of support policies the government recently launched, said UBS economist Wang Tao.

Economists at Goldman Sachs noted that the latest round of China's incremental policies clearly indicates that policymakers have made a turn on cyclical policy management and increased their focus on the economy.

So far this year, multiple international institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, have raised their forecast for China's economic

growth for 2024.

In the face of mounting challenges at home and abroad, China's GDP grew 4.8 percent year-on-year in the first three quarters of this year. The country has set a target of economic growth at around 5 percent for this year.

To beef up the economy in response to looming challenges, Chinese authorities have unveiled a broader than expected policy package since late September, which focused on enhancing countercyclical adjustments, expanding effective domestic demand, supporting business operations, promoting the recovery of the property market, and invigorating capital markets.

Aside from these pro-growth policies, Chinese policymakers have continued to improve investment facilitation, create a favorable investment environment, promote high-level financial opening-up to the outside world, and actively support foreign investors in participating in the Chinese capital market.

Alan Ho, co-senior country officer for China at JP Morgan, said that the pace of China's financial

market opening-up had accelerated in recent years.

For example, foreign ownership restrictions in local securities, funds and futures companies have been lifted and financial markets' connectivity mechanisms have been maturing more quickly than expected, which have brought broader development opportunities to foreign financial institutions, Ho said.

Data from the State Administration of Foreign Exchange showed that foreign holdings of domestic renminbi bonds have so far exceeded \$640 billion, reaching a historic high.

Net foreign investment in domestic bonds surpassed \$80 billion in the first three quarters, while foreign investment in Chinese equities saw notable improvement.

Foreign central banks and commercial banks are the biggest investors in domestic renminbi bonds, as they allocate a higher proportion of investment in medium and long-term bonds such as treasury bonds and policy bank bonds, according to the foreign exchange regulator.

The growing foreign holdings have reflected global investor confidence in the Chinese market. Cur-

rently, 24 global systemically important banks have a presence in China.

Industry insiders believe that foreign investors' active buy-in of Chinese assets shows their optimism in China's continuous opening-up measures and policy support in the capital market.

During the World Bank's 110th meeting of the Development Committee on Oct 25 in Washington DC, Vice-Minister of Finance Liao Min pledged that China will intensify countercyclical adjustments of fiscal policy.

A series of strong measures will be implemented to resolve local government debt risks, stabilize the real estate market, increase the income of key groups, enhance people's livelihoods, and drive equipment upgrades and trade-in deals for consumer goods, Liao said.

By leveraging government spending to stimulate social investment and consumption, effective demand will be increased, he said, noting that China is confident in achieving the annual economic growth target, and will continue to inject impetus into global economic growth.

XINHUA

IMF official: Asia powerhouse of global economy

WASHINGTON — Asia, which is contributing 60 percent to global growth, is clearly the powerhouse of the global economy, said Krishna Srinivasan, director of the International Monetary Fund's Asia and Pacific Department.

"This is the most dynamic region of the world. It has a huge amount of labor force. A lot of that is also skilled labor force. It's a region that is highly integrated into global supply chains. And lastly, it's a region which has seen a huge increase in productivity growth," Srinivasan told Xinhua in an interview recently.

"For these three reasons, this region is contributing a lot more than other regions," he said.

In its latest World Economic Outlook report, the IMF has maintained its global growth forecast for 2024 at 3.2 percent, consistent with its pro-

jection in July. Emerging and developing Asia, meanwhile, is expected to grow 5.3 percent.

"Emerging markets in Asia are pulling their weight much more than advanced economies," as advanced economies are still seeing interest rate tightening and weak domestic demand, Srinivasan said.

The IMF official noted that going forward, the region also will have to confront the risks of geoeconomic fragmentation, impact of artificial intelligence, impact of climate change and so on. The impact of geoeconomic fragmentation on Asia is particularly concerning, he said.

According to IMF estimates, there were roughly 1,000 trade restrictive measures in 2019, but in 2023, the number had surged to 3,000. "A lot of trade distorting measures are happening, which is leading to greater fragmentation,"

Srinivasan said.

"In a region like Asia, which has benefited the most from regional integration and integration of supply chains, any kind of fragmentation means that Asia risks losing the most," he continued.

The IMF official noted that there is redistribution of trade — for example, Association of Southeast Asian Nations economies have benefited in some targeted sectors because of US-China trade tensions.

However, "over the long term, everybody loses, because the dynamism of the global economy declines, global output declines," he said.

Noting that IMF research shows that for every trade restriction, whether it's a tariff or non-tariff barrier, there's a 74 percent probability that countries will retaliate, Srinivasan urged policymakers to focus on

ways to reduce these trade restrictions.

The IMF official said the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation provides a very good forum for such kind of dialogue, as this is a group of 21 economies that account for a large part of global trade.

"So it provides an economic forum, a forum for dialogue between countries on how to alleviate these trade frictions and how to embrace, or how to continue with multilateralism," he said.

The latest WEO report showed that the Chinese economy is expected to grow by 4.8 percent this year, down by 0.2 percentage point from the previous projection.

Looking ahead, better than expected third quarter GDP data, combined with recently announced policy support, mean that "risks are broadly balanced," he said.



Krishna Srinivasan (left), director of the International Monetary Fund's Asia and Pacific Department, attends a media conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in May 2023. GAYAN SAMEERA / XINHUA

Noting that many of the measures recently announced by Chinese authorities are consistent with IMF's suggestions in the Article IV report, Srinivasan said that there

still needs to be greater fiscal support from the central government to rehabilitate the property sector.

XINHUA

WORLD

Localization of New Urban Agenda urged

Promoting partnerships, coalitions helps realize development goals, forum hears

By EDITH MUTETHYA
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Leaders and experts have called for localization of the New Urban Agenda, a crucial agreement for sustainable urban development endorsed by the United Nations, in addressing the urban development challenges as well as achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs.

The leaders, who spoke at the 12th World Urban Forum, or WUF, that opened in Egypt's capital Cairo on Monday, said localizing the SDGs, promoting partnerships and coalitions as well as catalyzing actions will help in realizing development targets.

The New Urban Agenda, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2016, provides the road map for sustainable urban development in cities globally.

Antonio Guterres, the United Nations secretary-general, said real progress begins at the local level, in the communities and people's lives, adding that local and regional authorities are the crucial part of the answers on many issues at all levels.

In a video address, Guterres said the newly adopted Pact for the Future will accelerate SDGs as well as address inequality.

The pact, he said, calls for ensuring adequate, safe and affordable housing for all and supporting developing countries to plan and implement just, safe, healthy, accessible, resilient and sustainable cities.

"I invite you to seek innovations and inspiration and take them back to your communities and help to develop infrastructure and public services for all. Local actions are the building blocks for future green, just and resilient cities," he said.

Similar sentiments were shared by Jan van Zanen, mayor of The Hague, the Netherlands, who said that local and regional governments are crucial for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, noting that they lead the way to protect lives and livelihoods, provide services, guarantee access to housing, and place people first.

"Only through localization will we

ensure access to housing, face the climate emergencies, be able to transform our financial ecosystem and place our communities at the heart of a peaceful, safe and sustainable future for all," he said.

Ana Claudia Rossbach, executive director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, or UN-Habitat, said the Pact of the Future recognizes the importance of the New Urban Agenda, housing and cities, and the relevance of local and regional governments.

People-centered cities

The pact, she said, also addresses the challenges and opportunities related to digitalization and technology, which is closely connected with UN-Habitat's efforts in promoting people-centered smart cities.

"The outcomes of this session of WUF, including the Cairo Call to Action, will no doubt convey a strong unified message from urban stakeholders for local action," she said.

Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, president of Egypt, said this year's World Urban Forum convenes at a critical time, as the world is grappling with successive global crises, including devastating wars and their catastrophic repercussions for cities and urban communities.

"This requires the mobilization of efforts and the exercise of political will to establish peace, terminate conflicts and prioritize development, reconstruction and rebuilding," he said.

He said the conflicts raging in the Middle East, primarily in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, serve as a stark reminder of the exorbitant losses that nations incur as a result of opting for conflict over peace and stability.

Similar sentiments were shared by Mahmoud Abbas, president of Palestine, who called for the international community to help in ending the ongoing killings in the Gaza Strip that have not only afflicted people but also destroyed urban infrastructure and hindered the implementation of the urban development agenda.

"The rules of safety and security will open ground toward implementing sustainable urban development in Palestine which is in consensus with the objective of the UN," he said.



A Palestinian man rests in front of the ruins of his house, which was destroyed in an Israeli military offensive, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday. MOHAMMED SALEM / REUTERS

WHO raises alarm over UNRWA ban

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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Israel's disregard of international law, with its ban of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, would only further endanger the country, the World Health Organization warned on Monday.

"There is simply no alternative to UNRWA," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote on X, echoing an earlier plea by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The ban "will not make Israel safer," Tedros wrote. "It will only deepen the suffering of the people of Gaza and increase the risk of disease outbreaks and other health issues."

The remarks came after Jacob Blitsstein, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, notified Guterres that Israel was withdrawing from the agreement regulating UNRWA operations in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, citing the organization's "involvement in terrorism".

Last week, the Israeli parliament passed a bill banning UNRWA, which will go into effect after a three-month period.

Relations between Israel and the United Nations have turned increasingly sour after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct 7 last year, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages back to

Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed 43,391 people in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to Gaza health ministry figures.

Israel's military issued new evacuation orders in northern Gaza on Tuesday after carrying out strikes across the enclave, which Palestinian media and medics said had killed at least 30 people.

Last week, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza, said the Israeli violence was not happening in a vacuum "but is part of a long-term intentional, systematic and state-organized forced displacement, intended to erase the Palestinians from their own land and allow Israel to fully annex Palestinian territory".

The plans are now expanding to Lebanon, she added.

Israeli curbs

Some independent UN experts have complained about Israeli restrictions when conducting a probe into Israel's actions in Gaza, particularly its attack on medical facilities and medical workers, as well as children and women.

Muslim Imran, director of the Asia Middle East Center for Research and Dialogue in Malaysia, said, "Without the UN partition plan and the support Israel got in the UN, the whole state of Israel

wouldn't have the legal basis to emerge as a new nation-state.

"A few generations later, Israeli leaders having this arrogant attitude toward the UN means they are dismantling the few bases of the few elements of international legitimacy that they used to claim to have," he said.

Such an attitude would only deepen its isolation on the global stage, he added.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Monday his country has prepared a draft resolution for the UN General Assembly, which proposes the removal of Israel's UN membership, "should there be a violation of laws, rules and decisions in issues involving Palestine", the Anadolu news agency reported.

Imran described the move as "a very logical development because Malaysia (and) many countries of the Global South have grown frustrated with Israel's disrespect of international law and disregard for international resolutions and UN agencies".

The initiative by Anwar "reflects this realization that no one should be entitled and above international law", he said.

"No country should have the freedom to violate international resolutions and laws without consequences."

Agencies contributed to this story.

Briefly

CHINA

Presidents of Italy, Indonesia to pay visit

Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto will pay respective state visits to China later this week. Mattarella's six-day tour, starting from Thursday, comes less than four months after Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's visit to the country in July. Starting on Friday, the Indonesian leader will pay a three-day state visit to China, his first overseas trip since taking office in October. The visit will be Prabowo's second trip to China within the year. He also chose China as the first destination for his overseas trip in April after winning the presidential election.

INDONESIA

Govt to evacuate 16,000 near volcano

The Indonesian government aims to evacuate at least 16,000 residents from villages around the active Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki volcano that erupted and killed nine people and damaged thousands of houses, a local official said on Tuesday. Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki, located on Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara Province, erupted on Sunday night, followed by a smaller eruption on Monday night. It erupted again on Tuesday, shooting ash a kilometer into the sky, according to AFP. The local government has declared a state of emergency for the next 58 days, meaning the central government could help provide aid to the residents.

UNITED KINGDOM

University tuition fees to be raised

Britain's Labour government said on Monday that university tuition fees in England would be raised for the first time in eight years, as higher education institutions grapple with yawning financial deficits. The 3.1 percent rise comes as university leaders blame a crackdown on immigration for restricting international student numbers that were already hit by the UK's departure from the European Union. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said a cap on tuition fees for domestic undergraduate students attending English universities would increase to 9,535 pounds (\$12,380) in August 2025.

CHINA DAILY—AGENCIES



Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi (right) and Ana Claudia Rossbach, the executive director of UN-Habitat, speak during the opening ceremony of the 12th World Urban Forum, in Cairo, Egypt, on Monday. SAYED HASSAN / GETTY IMAGES

Hybrid rice project showcases China-Brunei bond

By PRIME SARMIENTO
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Brunei has been keen to attract Chinese investment and strengthen bilateral cooperation, which is in line with the country's thrust to diversify its economy, analysts say.

On Oct 26, the two countries launched a hybrid rice senior expert consultant project in the capital city of Bandar Seri Begawan to promote hybrid rice technology in Brunei.

Under this agricultural cooperation, experts from China's Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture Company, Hunan Hybrid Rice Research Center and Human Agricultural University held a series of lectures on hybrid rice breeding, pest and disease management, soil improvement and rice fertilization.

Chinese Ambassador to Brunei

Xiao Jianguo said the project will contribute significantly to the growth of Brunei's rice industry and food security, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Mustafa Izzuddin, a senior international affairs analyst with Solaris Strategies Singapore, said that China considers Brunei an important partner, not only as a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations but also for its vast oil and gas sector, which is integral to the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative.

Brunei is keen on Chinese investment, Mustafa said, adding that it is focusing on diversifying its economy long dominated by the oil and gas industry.

Mustafa said the hybrid rice project aligns with Brunei's plans as outlined in Wawasan Brunei 2035 (Brunei Vision 2035).

Introduced in 2007, Wawasan

Brunei 2035 is a long-term development plan that aims to reduce the economy's dependence on the petroleum industry.

Attracting more foreign direct investment is key to attaining Brunei's ambition and this is where Chinese investments have played a huge role.

As a small nation with a population of just over 450,000, Brunei is not on most investors' radars but it is also one of the wealthiest countries in Asia.

The World Bank classifies Brunei as a high-income economy, with GDP per capita over \$33,000 in 2023.

"Brunei has an important place in ASEAN, not only because it is the original member, but more importantly, it is a very rich country," said James Chin, a professor of Asian Studies at the University of Tasmania in Australia.

Chin said that Brunei "has built very deep relations with China" in the past few years.

Brunei established diplomatic relations with China in 1991 and elevated the ties to a strategic cooperative relationship in 2013.

Economic ties have strengthened in the succeeding years.

The establishment of the Brunei-Guangxi Economic Corridor in 2014 has driven Chinese companies to invest in various Brunei industries including food processing, pharmaceuticals and logistics.

Brunei also regularly joins trade events such as the annual China-ASEAN Expo and the China International Travel Mart.

In 2017, Brunei's state-owned Darussalam Assets partnered with China's Guangxi Beibu Gulf International Port Group to operate Muara Port, Brunei's biggest container terminal.

DPRK slams joint air drill by US, ROK and Japan

SEOUL — A senior official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea lashed out at the United States, the Republic of Korea and Japan for conducting a joint air drill as a "counteraction" and "warning" to the latest strategic weapon test by the DPRK, insisting the country will stick to its policy of bolstering the self-defensive nuclear deterrent, state media reported on Tuesday.

In a Monday media statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, or KCNA, Kim Yo-jong, vice-department director of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party

of Korea, condemned the trilateral exercises on Sunday involving US strategic bomber B-1B as "another outright action-based explanation of the most hostile and dangerous aggressive nature" of the enemy forces toward the DPRK and "another absolute proof of the validity and urgency" of the country's policy line of building up its nuclear forces.

The statement also mentioned previous military drills like Freedom Edge, the first multi-domain joint military exercises between the US, Japan and the ROK, and Iron Mace, a nuclear operation drill sim-

ulating an all-out nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula, as well as record-breaking deployment of US nuclear strategic assets to the peninsula, saying the drastically increased number of war rehearsals has posed a serious threat to the country and regional peace and security.

The statement stressed that the DPRK will never vacillate in pursuit of its policy line of bolstering the self-defensive nuclear deterrent, calling it "the most correct, one and only choice under the current situation", the KCNA reported.

The ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff

said that the ROK, the US and Japan held a joint air drill involving the US strategic bomber on Sunday, in response to the DPRK's test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile on Oct 31.

Pyeongyang fired several short-range ballistic missiles early Tuesday, Seoul's military said. The ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the launch of the missiles at around 7:30 am into waters east of the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK has so far made no response to the development.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

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US ELECTION DAY

Space cooperation promising despite rhetoric

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco
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Despite tough rhetoric on China in the US presidential campaign, experts see space research as a unique opportunity for collaboration between the world's two largest space powers, potentially opening doors for what some call "moon diplomacy".

The campaign has emphasized rivalry with China — with the Democratic candidate, Vice-President Kamala Harris vowing to ensure that "America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century", and Republican candidate, former president Donald Trump threatening increased tariffs on Chinese goods to 60 percent or higher.

Washington, however, continues to pursue space-related dialogue with Beijing, particularly regarding Chinese lunar samples.

The prospect of cooperation has gained momentum following China's historic Chang'e 6 mission in June, which became the first to retrieve rock and soil samples from the far side of the moon.

That achievement has sparked discussions about potential scientific collaboration, as the samples could help researchers understand how to exploit lunar resources for future long-term space missions.

NASA officials are currently in talks with their Chinese counterparts about allowing US scientists to analyze the lunar samples retrieved by Chang'e 6, according to a Reuters report citing NASA Administrator Bill Nelson.

"China's unprecedented success in retrieving lunar samples from the far side of the moon has offered the country a valuable opportunity to welcome scientists, regardless of their nationalities, to jointly

study these samples," Mei Gechlik, founder and CEO of Sinotalks, a Silicon Valley-based think tank and consultancy, told China Daily.

"Whoever wins the US presidential election should welcome this opportunity to allow US scientists' participation in the studies of these lunar samples. Scientific discoveries from these joint studies will not only break new ground in science but also help demolish barriers in geopolitics," she said.

Chinese officials offered the material to the world's scientists for study, however, the so-called Wolf amendment, a bill introduced by former US representative Frank Wolf in 2011, bars bilateral collaboration between NASA and Chinese space organizations.

The law, designed to prevent China from accessing American space technology, has drawn criticism from experts who believe it

has failed to achieve its intended goals while hampering scientific exchange.

Makena Young, an aerospace security expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote in a 2019 review of the impact of the amendment that the restrictions "only serve to stifle mutually beneficial cooperation for science and exploration".

"There has never been a better time to reconsider this ill-conceived restriction," wrote Howard W. French, a global affairs writer and columnist at Foreign Policy, in a recent article. He views joint space research as "one of the most powerful avenues for serious, high-level cooperation" between the two nations, an opportunity that remains unexplored.

French identified a few areas where US-China collaboration could prove crucial. One area

where NASA could enlist aid from China is the current crisis involving two NASA astronauts stranded aboard the International Space Station following technical issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft.

The astronauts, who launched on June 5 as part of NASA's Boeing Crew Flight Test, have seen their original eight-day mission extended by months. They are not expected to return to earth until late February 2025.

Another critical area for potential collaboration is addressing the growing challenge of space debris, which poses significant risks to both manned missions and satellites, according to French. He suggested this area should allow the two countries to "fashion an agenda of deep cooperation more easily".

Gechlik proposed standardizing lunar time as another potential

area for collaboration. "The current lack of a standard lunar time makes it difficult to accurately position and navigate multiple lunar operations occurring simultaneously, putting everyone involved in the operations at risk," she explained.

Progress is already visible in joint studies of the moon rock samples. According to Reuters, roughly four US universities have applied for access to the Chang'e 6 samples. Some of them are believed to have been accepted through the science review phase of China's application process, Clive Neal, a University of Notre Dame professor who has been involved in efforts to gain access to the samples, told Reuters.

"Scientific discoveries from these joint studies will not only break new ground in science but also help demolish barriers in geopolitics," said Gechlik.

Experts: Foreign policy not top concern in US election but still a factor

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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Although the issue of the US-China relationship has not attracted as much attention as some US domestic issues in this presidential election, which candidate will be more likely to maintain the stability of bilateral relations is being closely watched by experts.

"It is absolutely necessary to endow stability to US-China relations. The current stability in ties is of a recent nature and still rather fragile," Sourabh Gupta, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Institute for China-American Studies (ICAS), told China Daily.

Gupta said that "the biggest challenge in US-China relations, regardless of the election winner — either former president Donald Trump or Vice-President Kamala Harris — is to embed the relationship's competitive dynamic within a steady and stabilizing strategic framework".

"The 'old normal' era of engagement in US-China relations has drawn to a close. A 'new normal' is playing itself out, but unless the many dimensions of the relationship are placed in a leader-led and supervised strategic framework, ties could very easily veer dangerously into outright hostility and rivalry," he said.

"Both sides must pay attention therefore to steady and stabilizing their relationship ... and this will require a great deal of high-level attention as well as much wider people-to-people-level exchanges."

"The issue of US-China relations is somewhat less important in this election cycle," Gupta said, adding that "the overwhelming domestic personality-based focus of this election compared to a policy-based focus, let alone a foreign policy-based focus."

Bonny Lin, a senior fellow for Asian security and director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington DC, said that the US policy toward China "is likely to maintain its broad contours under a Harris or a Trump administration" in one of her commentaries published in September, which is part of a report from the CSIS Geopolitics and Foreign Policy Department titled *The Global Impact of the*

2024 US Presidential Election.

Lin argued that "intense US competition with China will likely continue," and that some Chinese scholars assess that "the China policies of a new Trump administration and a Harris administration will likely be strategically consistent".

In economics and trade, a major area of potential differences identified by experts, Chinese experts expect continued but less dramatic increases in tariffs under a Harris administration than a new Trump administration, worrying that Trump would "significantly ramp up trade disputes and economic competition against China".

Gupta said that trade and technology are the greatest areas of continuity regarding China's policy for the next administration.

"Tariffs will continue to be used to shield US manufacturing," he said. "Export controls and technical denials will continue to be enforced to try to maintain the US' innovation edge over China."

Two scholars with the Brookings Institution, Michael Davidson and Margaret Pearson, said in their article titled "Where are the US and China on addressing climate change?" published two weeks ago, that climate change would be a key issue in the US-China relationship regardless of who wins the presidential election.

"Climate change remains one of the most active areas of US policy engagement with China," they said, mentioning that the climate relationship between the two countries requires them to find common ground in technology innovation, industrial policy and climate finance.

Douglas Paal, a scholar in the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that Harris and Trump "will pretend to be tough" toward China because the two candidates "assume" that is what the times and public demand. "Washington is too ready to consider things it can do to or against China without adequately weighing the costs and benefits to the American people," he said.

Paal also said that the issue of US-China relations is not major in the election, but the outcome may have a substantial impact on those relations.

US voters call for a peaceful transition of power

By MINGMEI LI
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Exit polls showed voters in Pennsylvania on Tuesday desire a peaceful transition of presidential power.

Election volunteers prepared polling stations early on Election Day, before the 7 am opening across Bucks County, one of Pennsylvania's swing counties.

The state was the destination numerous times by the Democratic candidate, Vice-President Kamala Harris, and former president Donald Trump, the Republican candidate.

Harris concluded her campaign 25 miles away in Philadelphia, while Republican vice-presidential candidate J.D. Vance wrapped up in Newtown in Bucks County.

In the tightly contested 2020 presidential election, Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes proved decisive, ultimately securing Joe Biden's path to the White House, with the results not confirmed until the day after.

This time around, Pennsylvania has 19 electoral votes in the Electoral College, but is still regarded as a battleground state by both major political parties.

The Trump campaign filed a lawsuit in Bucks County over alleged voter intimidation and long lines as voters gathered to request mail-in ballots on Oct 29, the last day for requests.

Before the election results were announced, there were bipartisan calls for a peaceful transition of power.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Michelle Henry, along with attorneys general from the 49 other states, issued a joint statement condemning any violence related to the election outcome and urging a peaceful transition of presidential power.

That sentiment was shared by voters in Bucks County.

"I would say integrity is really important to me; character, honesty, how we treat other people, whether they agree with us or not," Elish Mill, a 45-year-old social worker who said



Philadelphia County board of elections staff process mail-in ballots at the ballot counting election warehouse on the outskirts of Philadelphia on Tuesday. ED JONES / AFP

she voted for Harris, told China Daily. "Women's rights are a top priority. It feels important to vote in a swing county. Glad I'm here."

"Part of the intention and goal of the creation of our country is absolutely peaceful transition. Everyone has the right to vote, to have this kind of — one person, one vote — that we follow the will of the people. If we can do that peacefully and with common decency, that would be what I'm looking for from our country," she said.

"Four years ago showed us some concerning things, and there's certainly been rhetoric ... but I will remain hopeful in the core goodness of people," Mill said.

"Anxious, nervous — that it could go the wrong way," said a 64-year-old resident of Doylestown, who identified himself only as Bill. "I've never seen our country in this state, ever. The division started eight or 12 years ago, and now this is where we're at."

"I don't know what's going on. The state of our country is insane," said Bill, who runs a fence company.

He said he cares most about the stability of the border, abortion, and inflation issues, and said he voted for Trump.

"When he was president before, there were no wars — plenty of low-cost gas, low cost of food bills. The other day I went to the supermarket, and it was insane. I can't believe how high they are," he said of grocery prices. "I would rather see a peaceful [transition] if Donald Trump wins, and we'll see if it's peaceful."

"I'm worried, I'm worried about what's going to happen starting tomorrow. I haven't slept for days. I'm so scared for this world," said Patricia, 70, who said she was voting for Harris.

Voters are divided on the abortion issue. The US Supreme Court in 2022 overturned the 1973 Roe vs Wade ruling, which established a constitutional right to abortion. The court's decision left the decision up to the individual states.

Patricia, who said she has four daughters and six granddaughters,

said women's rights are her top priority.

"I won't be here much longer, but my daughters and my granddaughters [will be]. I'm just worried about everybody. I've never seen our country so divided, so it's a little scary," she said through tears.

Mary Ellen, a 65-year-old former teacher, said she voted for Trump.

"I can't ever vote for a country that would espouse killing children in the womb for the convenience of the mother. I just think we have to protect our citizens who are in the womb," she said.

"I don't like that our country is changing right before our very eyes," Ellen said. "The more candidates we can get here and listen to, the better we are."

"Knowing that every vote counts, especially in Bucks County, and especially in Pennsylvania, makes me feel really good," said Jane Cardinale, a 66-year-old physician. "Well, regardless of who wins, we would like to avoid insurrection."

California votes on tougher retail theft penalties

By CHANG JUN in San Francisco
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Among the 10 statewide propositions Californians will vote on Tuesday, Proposition 36 would increase penalties for theft and drug offenses.

The highly publicized proposition, also known as The Homeless, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act, was put on Tuesday's ballot through a petition signed by members of the public. It aims to fix a loophole in a controversial 2014 law.

If passed, it would allow felony charges for the possession of certain drugs and for thefts under \$950 in which the defendant has two prior drug or theft convictions.

Prop 36 also would make fentanyl possession a felony and require those who have multiple drug charges to seek treatment or go to jail.

The measure is endorsed by the California Chamber of Commerce and major retailers such as Walmart, Target and Home Depot.

A recent poll by the Public Policy Institute of California found 71 percent of likely voters said they would vote yes on Prop 36.

Voters rejected a similar initiative in 2020, but this time around, there is a bipartisan coalition backing

Proposition 36, The Associated Press reported. More than 180 Democratic elected officials, including 64 mayors, signed onto a campaign supporting the initiative in September.

Opponents of Prop 36, who include Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders, say it would take the state back to the policies of prosecuting a failed war on drugs and locking up tens of thousands of people, who are mostly black and Hispanic, in overcrowded prisons.

"It's hard for businesses and communities who are really on the front line of it," said Jennifer Barrera, president of the California Chamber of Commerce. "I think that it will likely increase incarceration ... but I do also hope and expect that it certainly will have an impact on reducing crime."

For many, Proposition 36 serves as "a wake-up call for common sense," Peter Lam, a Democrat for 20 years who recently changed his party affiliation to Republican, told China Daily.

"I can't agree with serial policies Democrats have introduced in California — they are soft on criminals, lenient on habitual thefts and let go law offenders and murderers. We need to restore our faith in law and order by saying

yes to Proposition 36."

In 2014, California passed Proposition 47, which downgraded many theft and drug felonies to misdemeanors and made the shoplifting of merchandise worth \$950 or less a misdemeanor.

The intent of Proposition 47 was to reduce the number of prison inmates and reform the judicial system. It has resulted, however, in a surge in crime since its enactment. Retailers, high-end shopping malls, restaurants and small-business owners have been victimized by thefts, looting and sometimes armed robberies.

According to the California Department of Justice, reported retail crimes in 2023 reached 213,000, the highest level in 20 years, which prompted a cluster of permanent store closures and the departure of businesses from the Golden State.

On Oct 30, after the Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the New York Yankees in baseball's World Series, the celebration turned rowdy in LA, with a city bus being burned, stores looted and fireworks thrown, NBC News reported.

In June 2023, Westfield decided to pull out of San Francisco, citing "rampant criminal activities" in the area. It also urged the city to address

the safety issue.

"I was so infuriated and also heartbroken when Westfield announced they would close their San Francisco Center," said Yang Zhang, who was a frequent patron. "It was there for 20 years, already an icon, and was one major reason that I love San Francisco. Now it's gone."

Gerald Pennu, a Democrat, said she already has voted yes on Proposition 36, against her own party's recommendation. Having her vehicle's window smashed twice when she visited San Francisco and all her belongings in the truck stolen, Pennu said "enough is enough. Look at our desolate streets, boarded-up stores, how ridiculous the whole farce is!"

"Let's see how our voices will help those politicians in Sacramento regain their somber mind," she said.

Alok Gupta, an Alameda resident who runs a boutique jewelry shop, said his store has been robbed three times in two years. "Finally, we see the light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "It came to the point that the law enforcement would not even bother to send police officers here."

Agencies contributed to this story.



Voters work on their ballots at a polling place at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on Election Day, Tuesday in Simi Valley, California. CHRIS PIZELLO / AP

COMMENT

Editorials

EU should uphold strategic autonomy instead of doing Washington's bidding

The World Trade Organization's dispute settlement body may not be the ideal mechanism to approach to resolve trade disputes given its complicated and time-consuming procedure. Yet China has filed a lawsuit with the mechanism against the European Union for imposing steep tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles on Oct 30 in order to demonstrate its commitment to resolve trade disputes through proper channels instead of taking tit-for-tat actions.

Although China has taken some countermeasures against imports from the EU, a tariff war is the last thing it wants, because the tariff war the United States launched against China in 2018 has hurt both sides. That's why Beijing has intensified its efforts to push Brussels as well as individual EU member states to seek a mutually acceptable resolution to the trade dispute.

The European Commission may be defending the findings of the so-called antisubsidy probes it launched into Chinese EV makers in October last year as justification for imposing the punitive tariffs of up to 35.3 percent over and above the existing 10 percent duties on imported cars for five years. But its arbitrary move is similar to those made by the US and Canada to levy 100 percent tariffs on Chinese-made EVs.

The EU should stop pretending to be engaging in fair play, and accept it has imposed the tariffs as part of Washington's China-containment strategy, because using allegations that China subsidizes or is dumping its products as a pretext to blunt the country's competitiveness in the EV and other green sectors has been an integral part of the strategy.

Before the EU unveiled its investigations' findings in July, Washington began putting additional pressure on the bloc, as evidenced by the great lengths US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen went to before and during the G7 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Italy in May to urge allies to present a "wall of opposition" against China in the EV, solar panel, semiconductor, steel and other strategic sectors.

After the EU launched the probes, Washington used every possible opportunity to urge the bloc to urgently take steps to dampen the rising exports of Chinese green products including solar panels and wind turbines, prompting EU leaders to all but declare a full-scale trade war against China.

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, for instance, goaded US allies to form a "united front" against Chinese green products before and after Yellen's cry-wolf performance.

Despite the pressure the US put on the EU and its member states, 17 of the 27 EU members, including Germany, opposed or abstained from the Oct 4 vote, exposing the rift within the bloc. Ironically, the major European carmakers the EU claimed it was protecting from Chinese competition by imposing the tariffs said they are against the punitive tariffs and open to cooperating and competing with their Chinese counterparts in the EV market.

In their separate communication with the Chinese side in the past week, both France and Italy, two major EU members that voted for the tariffs, said they attach great importance to healthy and steady trade ties with China and are open to settling the disputes through talks.

An important reason for the lack of substantive progress in the Sino-EU negotiations over the past months is not because the EU side does not know the tariffs will hurt its own interests and slow down its green transition, but because the Joe Biden administration's intensified efforts to pressure the EU to not trade with China in its earmarked sectors.

The result of the US presidential election will have a big impact on the EU as well as its member states in their future consultations with China to settle the disputes. But the EU should realize that the best way to protect its interests is by upholding its strategic autonomy.

Time to decouple from decoupling policy

US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson recently echoed former president Donald Trump's call to repeal the CHIPS Act if he wins the presidential election, only to retract his statement a day later. This flip-flop underscores the political volatility surrounding China-US relations and the strategic decisions that will shape the future of both nations. As the election result is coming, it is crucial for the next administration to reassess the past four years of decoupling policies and high-tech barriers that have defined US-China economic and trade relations.

The CHIPS Act, designed to bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing, has been a cornerstone of the US strategy to reduce dependency on overseas chips, including those from China. However, the act has also symbolized the broader policy of technological decoupling — a strategy shortsighted and detrimental to the US' own global competitiveness. Such decoupling policies could lead to significant losses for American businesses and industries by severing ties with the world's largest comprehensive industrial market.

The decoupling policy seems like a protective measure in the short term, its long-term implications could be far more damaging to the US economy and its technological leadership.

Decoupling from China means American companies losing access to a vast market that drives revenue and innovation. China is not only a major consumer of American tech products but also a significant player in the global supply chains. By cutting ties, US companies might find themselves at a competitive disadvantage, unable to leverage the scale and efficiency that collaboration with China offers. This could lead to increased costs, reduced market share, and a slower pace of technological advancement.

Furthermore, while decoupling might pose short-term challenges for China, it is actually accelerating China's efforts to achieve technological self-sufficiency and industrial upgrading. China has already begun to invest heavily in its own research and development capabilities, aiming to reduce its reliance on foreign technology. However, the implications of China-US relations extend beyond technology. The all-of-government approach to what the US defines as strategic competition with China has left little room for cooperation, let alone its mobilization of US global alliances and partnerships to cut China off from key international supply chains.

Different people have from different perspectives come to the conclusion that the 2024 presidential election will be significant no matter who wins. If the present epidemic of anti-China mindset sustains, it might as well kiss goodbye to hopes for a healthy, stable bilateral relationship. Beijing's wish is for China-US relationship to settle and for there to be "no conflict, no confrontation". But that calls for both sides to make practical efforts to manage differences and keep them at manageable levels.

The present political atmosphere in the US doesn't permit that. Being labeled as "soft" on China means being perceived as numbingly "weak". And Beijing has been a handy scapegoat in the US' political dramas, and both the Democrats and Republicans will be loath to lose public attention given their inertia in coming up with solutions to the US' domestic problems.

Beijing has time and again appealed for Washington to display reason in handling bilateral ties, which is no doubt in the fundamental, long-term US national interest. But too often immediate partisan interests take precedence in the real world. Johnson's latest flip-flop on the CHIPS Act was only a new footnote to that, and a reminder of the fact that by hook or by crook only votes matter.

In the current complex and turbulent international situation, the exploration of a correct way for China and the US to coexist not only serves the interests of both countries but also injects more certainty and positive energy into global peace and development.

The US presidential election presents a pivotal opportunity for a strategic reassessment of the policies that have governed the US' China policies over the past four years. Moving away from the myopic view of decoupling and toward a more balanced approach could enhance global competitiveness and innovation. Only by recognizing the potential benefits of engagement and the risks of isolation, the next administration can work toward a future where bilateral relations are marked by constructive dialogue and shared progress, rather than division and distrust.

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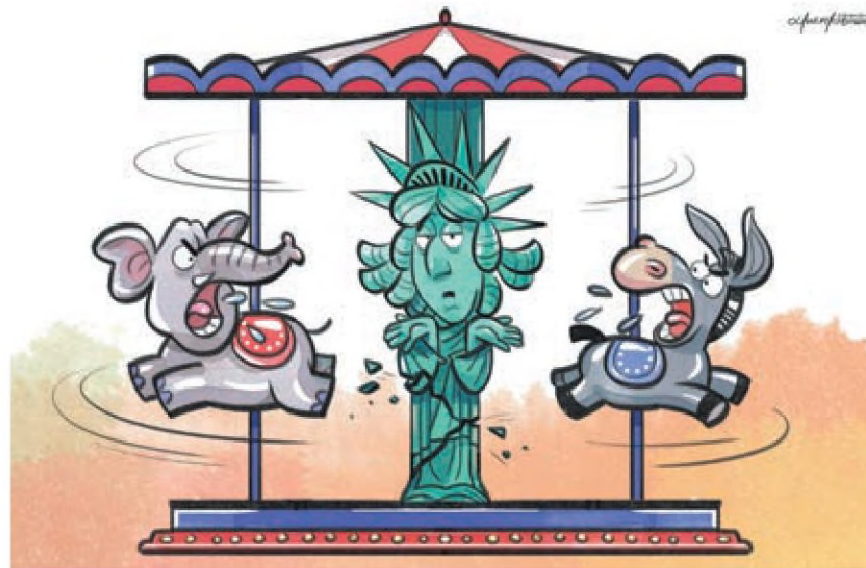
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Li Min



Opinion Line

Opening-up brings opportunities for foreign enterprises and talents

The wider China opens up and the more it develops, the more development opportunities it will create for other countries and their enterprises. This is a view shared by foreign companies and entrepreneurs that have engaged with China in the past.

In a meeting with Premier Li Qiang on Monday, representatives of exhibitors and buyers participating in the seventh China International Import Expo, being held in Shanghai, appreciated the efforts made by China for easing market access, improving the business environment and supporting the development of enterprises. They said China's further efforts to deepen reform, expand opening-up, and promote high-quality development will bring more development opportunities to all enterprises, including foreign ones in China.

Since its launch in 2018, the CIIIE has evolved into an international public good and a crucial platform for China and the rest of the world to embrace each other to develop win-win coopera-

tion. It has become an important symbol of China's high-level opening-up. With the help of the CIIIE, China has demonstrated its commitment to promoting reform and development through opening-up, leveraging the advantages of its superlarge market, and building an open economy.

By participating in the CIIIE, foreign enterprises have felt the pulse of China's economy, and sensed China's willingness to continuously promote high-standard opening-up. The CIIIE has proved to be an open platform through which multinational enterprises can enter China to do business. The CIIIE makes clear China's efforts to deepen reform, expand opening-up and create a market-oriented, law-based and transparent business environment.

From the introduction of the Foreign Investment Law to the full implementation of the management system of pre-establishment national treatment and a negative list, from the establishment of pilot free trade zones to the

construction of free trade ports, from improving the intellectual property protection legal system to the signing of high-standard free trade agreements with an increasing number of countries, China has demonstrated with concrete action that it has made good on its promises.

Against the backdrop of sluggish world economic recovery and insufficient growth momentum, China's successful bid to promote sustained economic recovery, enhance market resilience, and boost new quality productive forces has created broader development space for foreign companies in trade, investment and innovation. With this, the Chinese market has proved itself to be one of the best choices for foreign companies.

A China determined to promote the country's modernization will only open up wider to the world. This will create new development opportunities for foreign countries and enterprises.

— WU YUXUE, CHINA DAILY

Emissions accounting system a must to transition

The central departments have recently vowed to improve the carbon emissions accounting system, which collects, monitors, processes and manages carbon emissions data. It involves hardware such as portable carbon emissions monitoring equipment and software such as satellite remote sensing technology, carbon emissions factor databases, data management platforms and carbon emissions reporting systems. The infrastructure enables real-time or periodic monitoring of carbon emissions in industries, transportation, construction, and other fields, as well as verification of the collected data.

By establishing an accurate carbon

emissions monitoring system, the government can better grasp the carbon emissions status at the national, regional, and industrial levels. It can help improve data transparency and consistency, preventing data fabrication or inaccuracies, and providing a reliable basis for formulating effective carbon reduction policies. Additionally, the system can assist enterprises in managing their carbon footprint, enhancing their ability to participate in the carbon market, and aligning with international carbon emissions standards.

China has already made certain progress in the construction of carbon monitoring infrastructure, with a pre-

liminary annual and quarterly reporting system for carbon emissions established, and a national greenhouse gas emissions factor database under construction.

However, carbon emissions monitoring infrastructure at the municipal level and below is relatively weak, and the compilation of energy balance sheets is progressing slowly, indicating that local carbon emissions data collection and management capabilities need improvement. Moreover, many small and medium-sized enterprises and non-key industries still lack comprehensive carbon emissions monitoring methods.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

What They Say

New round of actions for critical minerals security

A total of 984 prospecting rights were transferred nationwide, including 570 strategic mineral prospecting rights, in the first three quarters of this year, an increase of 218.4 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources. Improving the domestic strategic energy resource guarantee capability and ensuring energy security are the main reasons for the sharp increase.

The worldwide clean energy transition has triggered a large demand for strategic minerals. Although the global strategic mineral output has grown rapidly, and lithium, cobalt and nickel are in over-supply, the trade volume has dropped significantly in recent years, and the stock prices of strategic mineral companies have fallen sharply, strategic minerals are still widely needed in the long run. By 2030, global lithium demand is projected to be seven times that of 2021, and China's demand for strategic

minerals will increase dramatically before 2035.

The exploration and development of mineral resources are at the top of the global industry and supply chains. In 2023, almost all major countries and regions around the world revised their strategic mineral policies, and increased the localization of strategic minerals by reaching intergovernmental strategic cooperation or trade agreements on strategic minerals.

At present, China's dependence on foreign strategic mineral resources such as oil and natural gas is high, with oil as high as about 70 percent and natural gas at about 40 percent. With the continued rapid growth of demand for minerals used in clean energy and emerging industries, such as lithium, cobalt and nickel, it is necessary for China to effectively strengthen the exploration and development of its strategic mineral resources.

The central authorities have already paralleled mineral security with energy security, and ensuring mineral security

has been elevated to a national strategy.

Reflecting the strategic importance the country attaches to the sector, the Ministry of Natural Resources continues to enhance its policy support to encourage mining investment and vitalize the mining market. It has issued a series of policies in recent months to support prospectors and mining enterprises to expand their operation and business, and strengthen the manufacturing of related equipment.

The prospectors and companies should make full use of these policies, and work together with relevant functional departments to strengthen the exploration, development and utilization of strategic mineral resources in the country. The purpose is to establish a reliable national exploration, development and reserve system at an early date. One featuring high adaptability of the energy and mineral resources supply system that can ensure the country's security in mineral resources and energy.

— THE ECONOMIC DAILY

COMMENT

Fu Suixin and Ni Feng

Onus on new US president to improve ties

The ballots have been cast. The US presidential election is over. The result, for the popular vote, will be known soon. But the United States and the rest of the world will have to wait for a month or so to know the Electoral College vote result, which could decide the eventual winner.

No matter who wins the election, the result will have a far-reaching impact on the world, not least because the winner will decide the US' China policy.

Both Donald Trump and Kamala Harris played the "China card" to win votes. Trump has asserted repeatedly that he would impose up to 60 percent tariffs on Chinese goods and revoke China's "most favored nation" trading status if he is elected US president for a second time. He has also vowed to further restrict US investment in and semiconductor exports to China. As for Harris, she is likely to continue the Joe Biden administration's China policy, including maintaining tariffs on Chinese imports and preventing China from obtaining key US technologies.

The deterioration in Sino-US relations in recent years has been largely caused by US hawks. The tragedy is that US voters generally do not understand or care about foreign policy; the country's elites have always formulated the foreign policy and shaped public opinion.

US politicians, strategists and special interest groups that have a negative attitude toward China provoke so-called strategic competition with China to fulfill their own narrow goals. They also take advantage of voters' disinterest in foreign policy and national security to spread the "China threat" theory, thus prompting them to develop a negative attitude toward China.

Both Democrats and Republicans make

As a responsible major country, China has always abided by the principles of peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, and promoted the healthy development of China-US ties.

China a scapegoat for the US' domestic mess. Both try to win over the white working class, which is critical to their victory, because this group has been facing severe economic difficulties such as stagnant incomes and unemployment in recent years.

But many studies show these difficulties are mainly the result of high production costs in the US. The so-called China shock, even if it really happened, is only a very minor factor. Not to forget China, thanks to its rapid economic development, has provided a large number of high-quality, low-cost products for the US people, which have significantly improved their quality of life.

In this election, some US politicians tried to hype up the so-called overcapacity problem in China. In a bid to win over critical voters, such as autoworkers in the Midwestern states, they wrongly blamed the decline of the US auto industry on the import of Chinese-made electric vehicles.

The Biden administration has increased restrictions on the import of Chinese-made EVs, while Trump has repeatedly threatened to impose very high punitive tariffs on Chinese-made cars. But the truth is that the US imported just over 40,000 cars from China in the first half of 2024 and most of them were

made by Tesla, Ford or other American automakers in China.

Instead of telling the truth, the US politicians tried to stir up anger against China among the American people to win their votes. By hyping up China's "overcapacity" problem, they tried to mislead the voters and cover up their inability to improve people's economic conditions.

Such irresponsible practices have worsened China-US relations. Those US politicians can make some personal gains, but the voters have to pay the cost of the deteriorating China-US relations. Studies show that more than 90 percent of the cost of additional tariffs on Chinese goods is borne by US consumers and businesses; the tariffs have also contributed to increasing inflation in the US.

But the US politicians' tricks are set to backfire. Most of the voters do not want the US to be involved in any global conflict after experiencing the results of the long-drawn "global war on terror". Instead, they want their leaders to use the precious resources for domestic development, including improving infrastructure, increasing people's incomes and boosting welfare.

As the competition between Washington and Beijing continues to intensify, the backlash against the US will also intensify and the US voters will have to pay an even bigger price for worsening Sino-US relations. Recently, Morgan Stanley economists estimated that an additional 60 percent tariff on imports from China will decelerate GDP growth by 1.4 percentage points over several quarters.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics has said that the additional tariffs will constrain investments in the US. Also, US exports will lose their global market shares, with US trade as a share of its GDP shrinking. The reckless competi-

tion with China will not only hurt the economy, but also exacerbate discrimination against Asian Americans and undermine democracy in the US.

In fact, many US politicians and strategists have considerable differences on the how to compete with China, meaning there is no consensus on China policy. Although the two candidates played the "China card" during the campaign, the new president will have to face a lot of harsh realities such as the high cost of competing with China, the emergence of a multipolar world and China's strong counterattack capability.

The new US administration, therefore, should give up the illusion of having a consensual China policy, and reflect on the costs of undermining Sino-US relations over the past eight years — and honestly tell the American people the truth about China.

As a responsible major country, China has always abided by the principles of peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, and promoted the healthy development of China-US ties. It has also always urged the US to work together to strengthen dialogue and communications, enhance mutual understanding and trust, expand areas of mutually beneficial cooperation, and jointly maintain the stability of China-US relations. Only in this way can the two sides better meet the needs of their peoples and make greater contributions to global peace and prosperity.

Fu Suixin is an associate researcher at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; and Ni Feng is director of the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

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

Liu Daxian

Literature needs to reflect true evolving ethnic cultures

The rise of cultural pluralism in China can be seen as a form of "delayed modernity". Cultural pluralism had become a hotly debated topic in Europe and North America by the late 1980s.

In fact, all cultures are mixed for all practical purposes. Western culture, with its inclusiveness — of heterogeneous coexistence — embraces cultural pluralism primarily to foster a fragmented multitude that lacks the cohesion necessary for unity.

As to cultural diversity in ethnic minority literature, cultural pluralism has indeed gained widespread recognition, and diversity has been perceived negatively, causing ethnic minority literature to withdraw from efforts to achieve both universality and contemporary significance. In a bid to establish symbolic value and secure a place in the cultural market, ethnic minority literature often emphasizes its own distinct characteristics, inevitably resulting in a form of self-exoticism.

In the creation of literature, this can be seen in the narrow themes, the clichéd plot structures, the flat character images, the self-exoticization of the aesthetic style, and the limitation of the value concepts. Similarly, in research, issues such as the mechanical application of identity and ethnicity theory, outdated methodologies and the lack of paradigm shifts have all become bottlenecks for the development of ethnic minority literature in China.

Some film and literature, as well as poetry, often indiscriminately embrace certain outdated elements, leading to the creation of stereotypes and literary images with stale ideas and contents.

We can easily find certain patterns in the creation of ethnic minority literature since the late 1990s: history-themed works often adopt the individualistic view of history formed by new historicist novels, replacing the previous history of arduous revolutionary and liberation with the history of family, of emotion, and of life. By linking ethnicity with locality, these works construct narratives that are in contrast to those of the Chinese nation, thereby severing the connection between specific ethnic groups and the broader national historical process and creating an imaginary pattern of closed narrative.

Some realist works often focus on the impact of modernity on the traditions of ethnic minorities in frontier areas, characterized by the urban-rural dichotomy. In these works, rural areas, ethnic groups, kinship and communal ties are often portrayed as victims of modernization, and the emotional structure centers on nostalgia for the old culture on the one hand, and resentment and melancholy toward the new culture on the other.

Some film and literature, as well as poetry, often indiscriminately embrace certain outdated elements, leading to the creation of stereotypes and literary images with stale ideas and contents. As a result, the real social problems of ethnic minorities are largely reduced to cultural problems, and culture is reduced to a dying "tradition" without contemporary relevance. Such literary works represent a narrow imagination, detached from the broader reality and life, and thereby unconsciously echo the ideas of Orientalism.

In essence, these issues are rooted in the "diminishment" of worldviews and values. From its inception, ethnic minority literature in China has never existed in isolation from the broader historical process. As contemporaries, ethnic minorities and the Han people share the same societal, technological and everyday challenges. Their consciousness, experiences, emotions and expressions should not be restricted by a specific ethnic identity, which is created in history, evolves over time, or may disappear in history. Presenting ethnic identity and culture as static, defined by fixed characteristics, fundamentally contradicts the dynamic nature of historical evolution.

When viewed dialectically, different ethnic groups have different, unique historical trajectories, cultures, traditions, religious customs and rituals, which are intricately linked to their local environments. But these connections must also be understood in the broader context of fluidity.

While influential works may begin with the detailed depiction of individuals, events, objects and emotions, they should not be content with remaining at that level; instead, they should strive to convey universal human experiences and thoughts.

Moreover, they should have the ability to address the major issues of our times. This ability is the true source of confidence in ethnic minority literature of China.

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Sun Jisheng

Why BRICS attracts Global South countries

The world is threatened by turbulence, chaos and disorder. The competition between major countries has become increasingly tense, impacting trade, investment, industry and supply chains, and people-to-people exchanges.

International organizations, too, face a plethora of problems. For instance, the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization has been suspended since 2019, seriously affecting the smooth operation of WTO. Some regional and international organizations face funding shortage. And organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund need to undergo reform to become truly representative and better meet the needs of diverse countries.

On the other hand, an optimistic picture of development has emerged. BRICS, in the beginning, was only a concept proposed by economist Jim O'Neill. He saw in Brazil, Russia, India and China huge development potential, and thus concluded that these countries will play an important role in the global economy in the near future. That concept became a reality when BRIC held its first summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009. The next year South Africa officially joined the grouping, and BRICS came into being.

Although there have been pessimistic predictions on the development and future of BRICS, the member states have maintained good development momentum. This year, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia joined in BRICS, signaling the start of "Greater BRICS cooperation".

The BRICS Summit, held in Kazan, Russia, last month saw the participation of more than 30 national delegations and six international organizations. About 30 countries have expressed their interest in joining BRICS.

BRICS member states have different social systems and cultures, and are at different stages of development. Yet under the framework of BRICS, they can reach consensus on many issues, by seeking common ground and shelving differences.

BRICS is an open and inclusive family, not an exclusive club targeting others. Its operation is flexible, and the "BRICS Plus" model is a new mechanism that encourages developing countries, even though they are not full members, to work together to overcome common global challenges. Joining BRICS can help bring tangible benefits to developing countries and boost their development.

The global economy was yet to fully recover from the devastating impact of the 2008 global financial crisis when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Such was

The increasing instability, uncertainty and even chaos the world has been facing make the reform of the world order a necessity, because it will enable the Global South to have its due representation on the global stage.

the impact of the pandemic that for the first time in 32 years the UN Human Development Index declined for two consecutive years in 2020 and 2021.

While the world was still struggling to emerge from the double shock of the global financial crisis and the pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out followed by the Israel-Palestine conflict. To make matters worse, the US-led West has intensified the geopolitical competition,

further impacting global development. While the United States is busy playing its zero-sum games, about 1.1 billion people around the world are living in extreme poverty.

Amid all this, BRICS has emerged as a platform promoting sustainable development and helping countries to pursue green development. Balew Demissie, a consultant at the Ethiopian Policy Studies Institute, said that joining BRICS will create more opportunities for Ethiopia in the fields of trade, investment and development.

BRICS attaches great importance to green development and green cooperation. And China, as President Xi Jinping emphasized at the BRICS Summit in Kazan, is willing to expand cooperation with BRICS member states in the green economy.

By joining BRICS, developing countries can strengthen the representation and voice of the Global South at global forums and international organizations, and help reform the US-led world order.

The increasing instability, uncertainty and even chaos the world has been facing make the reform of the world order a necessity, because it will enable the Global South to have its due representation on the global stage.

The Global South is becoming increasingly independent and wants to exert more influence on international affairs.

Faced with the crises in Ukraine and Gaza, and global challenges such as climate change, poverty and refugees, the world needs new ideas and new measures to pursue common development. This is where BRICS comes in. As the Kazan Declaration indicates, having reached consensus and decided on measures on a wide range of issues, BRICS will continue to promote peace and development to make the world a better place.

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LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL VIEWS



ZHANG YUJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

TARIQ H. MALIK

Standing like a rock

The BRI will face even stronger resistance in the times to come, but it cannot be contained because it has the potential to become a cornerstone of global progress in the 21st century

As the Belt and Road Initiative marks its 11th anniversary in 2024, it has evolved into a global framework aiming to foster sustainable development and shared prosperity among participating nations. At its core, the BRI embodies the wisdom of fostering connections between diverse nations, encouraging collaborative economic growth, and addressing mutual challenges through shared technology and infrastructure projects.



In principle, the initiative's emphasis on inclusivity and balance is evident in its goal to create a community with a shared future for mankind. This vision extends beyond mere economic cooperation. It aspires to interlink trade routes, enhance technological prowess and build economic partnerships that benefit all parties involved. By focusing on sharing the know-how rather than merely exporting technologies, the BRI aims to empower nations, particularly those traditionally marginalized in the global economy, to achieve sustainable development through capacity-building and knowledge transfer. This thinking, when combined with learning, will be different from the principle that we have seen in all these years.

Despite its principled aspirations, the BRI has faced significant resistance in the form of criticism, especially from leading Western publications such as *The Economist*, the *Financial Times* and *Foreign Affairs*. An analysis of 500 articles from four leading English magazines between 2013 and 2023 shows that negative sentiments embedded into variegated writings have increased as the BRI approached its 10th anniversary. Political magazines tend to focus on the geopolitical ramifications of the BRI innovation, and its critics argue that the initiative is a strategic move to extend China's influence across continents, potentially reshaping global power dynamics and challenging existing institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

They have diffused an impactful concept called the "debt trap", which has been a recurring theme in Western media narratives. Skeptics assert that the BRI's financing mechanisms could burden participating countries with unsustainable debts, compromising their sovereignty.

However, the facts are that the BRI is focused on helping countries and regions with access to technology, resources and distribution. Economist Amartya Sen was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics because he explained that India was not poor in resources but the absence of infra-

structure and flow of resources are keeping it poor. If such links are good for the Western world and they are good for India, then they should be good for the nations that have subscribed to the BRI's benefits.

Western critics have often overlooked China's genuine developmental goals and efforts to foster regional stability and prosperity. Because Western capitalism is based on "capital above the human well-being", they are unable to see that the BRI offers much-needed infrastructure development and economic opportunities to countries that have long been neglected by traditional Western-led financial institutions because of their transaction principles to transform host countries' cultures and ideologies.

Then there are some environmental critiques, with apprehensions about the impact of large-scale infrastructure projects on fragile ecosystems. Western media outlets have questioned whether China's environmental commitments are consistently upheld, pointing to the carbon footprint associated with the Belt and Road construction projects. In response, China has increasingly argued that it has incorporated sustainability as a fundamental component of the initiative. Efforts to align projects with environmental standards and invest in green infrastructure reflect an intention to balance development with ecological responsibility. While these measures indicate progress, critics emphasize the need for greater transparency and consistent implementation across all projects.

Despite such criticism, there are tangible examples that highlight that the BRI's positive impact goes beyond physical infrastructure to digital infrastructure to alleviate the burden of carbon emissions. The recent high technology exhibition in Dubai displayed China's growing role in supporting Middle Eastern countries' desire to diversify their economies beyond oil and building a digital future. Chinese technological companies are leading projects to develop local talents and infrastructure, demonstrating the initiative's potential to foster innovation and economic diversification.

This divergence in perspectives underscores a broader issue: the lack of understanding and, at times, misrepresentation of China's intentions in Western narratives. The tendency to view the Belt and Road projects through a prism of skepticism and protectionism can lead to missed opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit for all. The exclusivity in the Western version of capitalism benefits a few at the cost of most others. History has shown that nations often prosper together through promoting openness and cooperation

rather than isolation and protectionism.

Contrary to the negative sentiments of the Western media toward the BRI's intended goals, the developing nations participating in the initiative generally exhibit a more positive stance, appreciating the opportunities for infrastructure improvement, industrial growth, cultural exchange and employment. An analysis of the narratives and rhetoric in news articles during the last 10 years shows that this disparity in perceptions reflects varying economic needs and political perspectives across global landscapes. For many of these countries in the developing world, the BRI represents not just an economic venture but a visionary statement underscoring global development and collective well-being. The bridging rather than buffering in inter-country relationships toward the narrative of mutual understanding is the desire of the initiative's partners.

One can easily go beyond the concept of the assumption of "an instrument of dominance and hegemony", as promulgated by the leading Western media to serve some specific interest. Instead, it is an instrument of collective well-being. The BRI's portrayal in the Western media reveals the unnecessary, unvalidated and uncalled-for apprehensions of the United States and its partners.

As the BRI continues to expand and evolve, mutual understanding and balanced narratives become crucial. The initiative's potential as a driver of global well-being hinges on its ability to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development. It is ignorance of the highest level if someone assumes there will be no natural challenges such as pandemics, weather anomalies and earthquakes or human-made challenges such as negative sentiments and resistance to change. Every innovative activity may be viewed as a threat to the existing systems, and biased Western critics always see it through the prism of fear, risk and threat regardless of how beneficial something new is to the overall socioeconomic well-being. Thus, the initiative will face even stronger resistance in the times to come, but it will not be able to stop its expansion because the opposite wind is necessary for any type of flight. By embracing openness and cooperation, the BRI has the potential to become a cornerstone of global progress in the 21st century.

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MUHAMMAD HABIB ABIYAN DZAKWAN AND FARHAN JULIANTO

Don't take the upgraded CAFTA for granted

ASEAN and China must carefully address all participants' concerns and ensure the free trade area remains resilient enough to navigate through current geopolitical uncertainties

Although the ASEAN-China summit ended in Vientiane, Laos, in October, it is never too late to celebrate what it achieved. The highlight was the substantial conclusion of negotiations on the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0. Through this upgrading, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China expanded the agreement to include the digital economy, green economy, supply chain connectivity and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as competition and consumer protection.



Muhammad Habib Abiyon Dzakwan



Farhan Julianto

They also broadened their commitment to customs procedures, trade facilitation, standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical cooperation.

While the upgrading might not seem extraordinary at first glance, it is significant to note that amid global efforts to decouple or de-risk from China, ASEAN chose to move even closer to China, sharing a spirit of solidarity as fellow emerging economies. Among a list of dialogue partners interested in establishing or upgrading FTAs with ASEAN, ASEAN prioritized the conclusion of the CAFTA, as it was the first FTA ASEAN established with an external partner. Amid declining faith in regionalism, particularly after Brexit, ASEAN remains committed to the idea of open East Asian regionalism. ASEAN and China believe a prosperous and thriving Asia-Pacific is a shared destiny.

According to China's General Administration of Customs, China-ASEAN trade amounted to 4.5 trillion yuan (\$633 billion) in the first eight months of 2024, surging 10 percent and accounting

for 15.7 percent of China's total foreign trade value. Since we cannot take the upgraded FTA for granted, it is imperative not to be complacent or ignore participants' concerns.

The first and foremost concern is supply chain concentration. It will be impossible to realize the East Asian regionalism dream if its supply chain relies on only one or two neighboring countries. Diversification is necessary, but it shouldn't mean that each country specializes on a single product. Instead, our diversification agenda should enable different countries to contribute to various stages of the supply chain for the same product. Currently, some ASEAN countries compete for the same Chinese investments in identical supply chain stages, primarily in assembly. With this FTA, China and individual ASEAN member countries can hopefully distribute opportunities across different stages of the supply chain.

The second concern is e-commerce. While we recognize the tremendous opportunities presented by new digital technologies, we cannot overlook the concerns of local MSMEs. They question whether these opportunities to boost profit are genuine or if foreign firms will dominate and threaten their business. The upgraded FTA does emphasize closer cooperation between MSME authorities in ASEAN and China, but this alone is not enough. China may need to support ASEAN-based MSMEs by providing access to capital, market insights, and integration with Chinese e-commerce platforms. It would be appreciated if China's e-commerce platforms promoted products from ASEAN MSMEs to Chinese consumers and beyond, rather than viewing ASEAN merely as a marketplace.

The third concern is the green economy. We cannot continue to criticize developed countries for failing to meet climate finance commitments without taking responsibility ourselves. The upgraded FTA offers a promising avenue for China to assist ASEAN countries in adopting and researching clean energy technologies. However, this must be only the beginning. Our green

economy principles must align with those of the broader international community, including neighbors across the "Indo-Pacific" region.

The fourth concern is harmonization. The annual China-ASEAN Expo and the China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit have supplemented the upgraded FTA for decades, which is commendable. Expanding the China-ASEAN Expo Secretariat's global roadshow to different ASEAN cities would help promote the benefits of the upgraded FTA to broader stakeholders. We also need alignment between the upgraded FTA and our aspiration to deepen financial cooperation. Businesses in ASEAN and China are likely to enjoy lower transaction costs if frameworks for local currency transactions are robustly in place.

Looking beyond the region, both ASEAN and China must remain vigilant regarding future US trade and industrial policies. There is no guarantee or interest from Washington to reinvigorate open economy principles.

One thing we could be certain about is that geopolitical competition apparently continues to influence the top economic priority of both Republicans and Democrats. Global trade in dual-use technologies will likely face increased national security scrutiny, while non-sensitive goods and services may also encounter different non-tariff barriers such as human rights prerequisite. In that regard, ASEAN and China must carefully address these concerns and ensure our FTA remains resilient enough to navigate the geopolitical uncertainties of this century.

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SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Embracing mortality

What happens after you leave this world? Nowadays, more and more young people are contemplating how to handle their affairs after death.

A 32-year-old first aid trainer shared her experience of creating a will with the China Will Registration Center, a public welfare project initiated by the China Aging Development Foundation.

At first, her parents saw drafting a will at such a young age as a bad omen. However, she convinced them by explaining how it can prevent unnecessary disputes and troubles. "Chinese families are often reluctant to discuss death, but I believe it's important to sit down and talk about how we should face it," she told the tech news platform Huxiu.

She also mentioned that while regular wills typically address only property distribution, the center offers the additional service of "future mail" — letters to be delivered with the will in case of her passing. She admitted that she cried while writing it, saying, "I asked my dad to listen to my mom and take his medication on time."

Another young netizen who drafted a will raised the issue of virtual property, such as social media accounts. She made a list of her accounts and passwords, specifying in her will that her partner would assume responsibility for them if she passes. "The process of writing a will is actually a way of sorting through the most important people in your life," she told Huxiu.



A growing number of young people are considering the issue of writing a will. TUCHONG

Affordable adventures

Spending weekends on a low budget has become a popular trend among Chinese youth.

According to data from Meituan and Dianping, popular lifestyle and review platforms in China, searches for "trial classes" saw an impressive 364 percent increase from July to September this year compared to the previous three months.

These classes range from sports like tennis and street dance to niche activities like candle making and drama performances. Many netizens refer to these affordable trial classes as "economical alternatives to night schools" — a new way to enrich their weekends.

On Dianping, trial classes priced at 9.9 yuan (\$1.4) are generally available for first-time customers by reservation, limited to one-time use. Some restrictions may apply, such as weekday-only availability or specific time slots.

Although low-cost, these trial classes are often high quality, as businesses aim to attract new customers and encourage them to enroll in regular courses or memberships.

A manager at a dance studio in Shanghai told DT Business Observation, the digital account of financial news magazine Yicai, "With an average monthly turnout of over 200 for trial classes, 30 to 40 percent of these new customers eventually sign up for regular courses."

Businesses know that pushing young people too hard can backfire — they may feel pressured and decide not to return. But a great first experience, even if it doesn't lead to a membership, can turn them into unofficial brand ambassadors, spreading favorable feedback on review and lifestyle platforms.

LI XINRAN



Taking affordable trial classes has become a popular way for young people to spend their weekends. TUCHONG

Discovering Guangxi

Gen Z delegates from around the world explore Guangxi's lesser-known cities, experiencing their rich cultural heritage, modernization efforts, and commitment to environmental protection.



Delegates attending the "Opportunities in China: Magnificent Guangxi — Guangxi in the Eyes of International Media 2024" event visit the Qinzhou automated container terminal at Beibu Gulf Port in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Oct 26. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By GUI QIAN
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"When one thinks of Guangxi, Guilin typically springs to mind. However, this time, we are exploring a broader array of cities — some lesser-known yet equally captivating," said Gloria Tsang, a Gen Zer from the United States.

Tsang took part in the "Opportunities in China: Magnificent Guangxi — Guangxi in the Eyes of International Media 2024" event, held from Oct 26 to 30, co-hosted by the Publicity Department of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and China Daily.

This event gathered Gen Z delegates from seven countries — the US, Russia, Italy, Denmark, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Vietnam — alongside journalists and editors from six international media outlets.

As Li Pan, deputy director of the Publicity Department of the CPC Guangxi Committee, introduced at the event's opening ceremony, these young global participants and media professionals would embark on an immersive journey to Guangxi's cities of Qinzhou, Beihai, and Fangchenggang.

"A dynamic representation of modernization with Chinese characteristics in Guangxi will be brought to life through your words and lenses, allowing friends both at home and abroad to appreciate a China that is credible, appealing, and respectable," he said.

Wang Hao, China Daily's deputy editor-in-chief, underscored the pivotal role young people play in global communication.

"Dear young friends, we aspire for you to serve as ambassadors of Guangxi's stories, contributors to the revitalization of the Asia-Pacific

region, and pioneers of human advancement," he said at the opening ceremony.

Tsang was impressed by Guangxi's unique cultural heritage. At the Maritime Silk Road Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience Hall in Hepu, Beihai, she was captivated by a traditional horn carving masterpiece titled *Ode to Spring*, marveling at its intricate depiction of a shrimp within waves, symbolizing nature's anticipation of warmer days.

"As a coastal area, Guangxi's traditional art often revolves around sea animals and maritime themes. It's unique," she said. "The way they've polished that horn — it's almost like glass. How amazing."

The ocean not only enriches Guangxi with abundant tourism resources but also contributes to its economic growth. The region is strategically establishing industrial parks near its borders and ports while developing a robust transportation network that connects waterways, ports, railways, and air travel.

The Beibu Gulf International Cruise Homeport in Beihai is a prime example of this vision in action. It has gradually launched domestic and international cruise routes, including one from Beihai to Halong Bay in Vietnam.

Tran Phuong Linh, a college student from Vietnam, expressed excitement about the cruise route. "Halong Bay is a famous tourist attraction in Vietnam, and now it can be conveniently reached from Guangxi," she said. "Tourism activities can also promote trade between the two countries. I hope this port can become a cornerstone for more economic exchanges between China and Vietnam in the future."

In fact, Guangxi's external exchanges date back thousands of

"I believe that environmental protection is the most important issue of this era. The whole world should find ways to address it. Guangxi is doing a great job."

Romantsova Ksenia, a Gen Zer from Russia

As early as the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), Hepu served as the starting port for the Maritime Silk Road.

At the Hepu Maritime Silk Road Cultural Relics Exhibition in the Hepu Han Dynasty Culture Museum, Raja Saadatullah Khan from Pakistan recognized his homeland on an ancient map. He hadn't expected that Pakistan had established contact and trade with China so long ago, with it all beginning right beneath his feet.

Guangxi's growing international presence also left a strong impression on Zhao Jingnan, deputy chief editor of Sing Sian Daily Newspaper in Thailand.

Zhao was surprised by a local tour guide's fluency in multiple languages, including Chinese, Cantonese, English, and Vietnamese. "This ensures a seamless experience for international visitors, highlighting Guangxi's role as an emerging global hub that welcomes people from all over the world, fostering cultural exchange and international cooperation."

While advancing in modernization and development, Guangxi has also placed great emphasis on environmental protection.

When visiting the Qingnian Water Control Project on the Pinglu Canal in Qinzhou, Rajendra Prasad Rimal, a journalist from Nepal's Jana Aastha News, was deeply moved by Guangxi's efforts to carry out such a major construction project while preserving the local ecosystem.

The project includes animal passageways and fish ladders, ensuring the safe migration of local wildlife.

Romantsova Ksenia, a young woman from Russia, chose the Beihai Golden Gulf Mangrove Ecological Tourism Area as her favorite place in Guangxi. Covering over 3,000 acres (1,214.57 hectares), this area is home to an extensive mangrove ecosystem, known for its resilience against strong winds and waves, earning it the titles of "sea forest" and "coastal guardians".

Learning that these rare plants are now under national key protection, Ksenia felt reassured and delighted. "I believe that environmental protection is the most important issue of this era. The whole world should find ways to address it. Guangxi is doing a great job," she said.

From the ecosystem to its infrastructure and cultural heritage, visitors from around the world are gaining a multifaceted perspective on Guangxi's evolving story in modern times.

"Everything here gives me amazing feelings. Guangxi is a great example of how people can care about everything and shows the hard work of the Chinese government and Chinese people," said Marina Dinaeva from Russia, one of the young participants.

Z WEEKLY

Unique animal obsession

A growing fascination with exotic pets is drawing young enthusiasts to pet cafes and social media, despite the challenges of raising unconventional animals.

By MENG WENJIE
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Even on a regular weekday, Kitty Zoo, a pet cafe in Changzhou, Jiangsu, attracts a crowd of visitors, all eager to meet its star, a capybara named Jilizhazha.

Founded just two months ago by Tang Rong, 35, and Li Xiaohan, 32, the cafe quickly rose to the top of Meituan, a major online services platform in China, within days of its opening.

"Most of our customers are young people in their early 20s," Li said.

Tang, who has over a decade of experience in the pet industry, reflected on a time when keeping unconventional pets like lizards and snakes was a niche hobby. However, the surging popularity of alpacas on social media in recent years has led to greater acceptance of exotic pets. Even many cat cafes now feature exotic animals to attract more customers.

The term "exotic pets" refers to animals beyond traditional companions like cats and dogs, including insects, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. On the lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu, the tag "exotic pets" has amassed over 360 million views, showcasing pet owners caring for popular animals such as capybaras, raccoons, meerkats, and alpacas.

One such enthusiast, 23-year-old Jiaotou (pseudonym), began raising raccoons at home last April, inspired by their classic imagery on a popular childhood snack in China and characters like Rocket Raccoon from Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014).

Jiaotou's first attention-grabbing video was a vlog of him taking Guozi, one of his raccoons, for a stroll, which captured the interest of passersby. Today, Jiaotou boasts over 500,000 followers on Douyin, with his most engaging content centered on his raccoons.

While new animal stars gain popularity, classic favorites like alpacas continue to shine on social media.

Ma Lin, a 30-year-old pet vlogger on Douyin, often livestreams her interactions with her alpacas, particularly a standout named Luobodun.

"An alpaca's intelligence is similar to that of a 2- to 3-year-old child, but Luobodun is even smarter," Ma said. For example, alpacas are known for their spitting behavior, a quirky trait often seen as a humorous form of emotional expression. Ma once discovered that Luobodun could spit on command, turning this into a playful trick featured in her videos.

Behind the screen

While raising exotic pets brings unique experiences, owners advise caution before bringing these animals home.

For Jiaotou, the primary cost of raising raccoons comes from their destructive tendencies. "One of them knocked over my TV, costing me 2,000 yuan (\$281)," he recalled with a laugh.

Raccoons, with their five flexible fingers, can create chaos if left unsupervised, leading owners to often keep them in cages when they are away from home. "I have to use complex locks since raccoons can open simple latches," Jiaotou added.

According to him, raccoons are naturally timid and can become aggressive when stressed or frightened, so they need socialization from a young age. Even experienced owners like himself find it takes two to three months for these animals to become comfortable with human interaction.

"It requires patience and dedication," Jiaotou explained, noting that their sharp teeth and claws can cause injuries during the training process. "Despite these efforts, it's still rare to get a docile raccoon because their genetics heavily influence their behavior."

Among the raccoons Jiaotou raises, only Guozi has a relatively gentle personality. "The well-behaved raccoons on social media only show one side of their nature," he said.

In addition to managing their innate wild instincts, pet owners must also create specific living environments and provide tailored daily care for these unique animals. Capybaras, for instance, need regular baths in designated pools, and their living spaces must be heated during winter, according to Tang.

She explained that a typical male capybara can weigh up to 50 kg and has a large appetite, producing a considerable amount of waste.

"Unless you have a large yard or ample space, keeping a capybara indoors isn't practical," she advised.

Capybaras also need socialization training to adapt to human environments. Although they may appear calm on social media, they are wild animals by nature and are not as emotionally stable as they seem — they actually have a strong instinct to flee at the slightest sense of danger.

Additionally, capybaras need to be raised in pairs or with other animals to ensure their psychological well-being. "Because these animals don't easily express distress, owners must be patient and attentive to their health to catch potential issues early," Tang explained.

Alpacas also demand substantial time and companionship. "This is why they're not suitable pets for people with full-time jobs," Ma said, adding that their droppings have a strong odor, and bathing them also requires significant effort. "Professional grooming can be costly, and doing it at home can take at least half a day," she said.

When her followers seek advice on caring for alpacas, Ma often emphasizes the importance of long-term commitment. She explained that while alpacas may not show immediate affection toward humans like cats and dogs, they develop strong loyalty once a bond is formed.

"Alpacas can live over 20 years, so if you can't commit to long-term companionship, it's best not to keep them," she said.

Huang Yuan, a PhD student at Huazhong Agricultural University and a senior veterinarian at a pet hospital chain in Wuhan, Hubei province, also advises those considering an exotic pet to think carefully before making a decision.

"Humans often impose their expectations on animals with a sense of

superiority, yet these animals have no choice in becoming pets. This is inherently unfair," he said.

Huang recalled treating a capybara found wandering the streets, likely abandoned by its owner. "Many young people may be attracted by the appealing images of these animals on social media, but the reality of caring for them can differ significantly from their expectations," he said.

Beyond fluffy

Huang highlighted another important consideration for prospective exotic pet owners: the limited access to veterinarians and hospitals equipped to treat exotic animals. Although regular veterinary clinics are available, they often lack the specialized facilities tailored to the needs of these unique animals.

Huang has noticed a rise in exotic pet cases at the hospital where he works. While dogs and cats remain his primary patients, exotic pets now account for 30 to 40 percent of his clientele.

"The exotic pet industry has grown rapidly over the past two years, promoting veterinarians to adapt their practices," he explained, noting ongoing developments in treatment methods.

However, despite this growth, only about 20 out of the 300 to 400 pet hospitals in Wuhan are currently equipped to treat exotic animals professionally, according to Huang.

While breeding facilities for various exotic pets are now available in China, it is crucial to choose reputable sources to avoid risks such as illegal transactions, infectious diseases, and ecological threats.

For this reason, private owners of certain exotic animals, like capybaras, must obtain specific qualifications, including a government-issued quarantine compliance certificate.

So while Jilizhazha charms visitors, his fans must remember: behind every adorable exotic pet lies a commitment few are ready for.



“Humans often impose their expectations on animals with a sense of superiority, yet these animals have no choice in becoming pets. This is inherently unfair.”

Huang Yuan, a PhD student at Huazhong Agricultural University

Top right: Guozi, a raccoon raised by Jiaotou (pseudonym). Left: Ma Lin with her alpaca, Luobodun. Right: Jilizhazha, the star animal at Kitty Zoo, the pet cafe owned by Tang Rong and Li Xiaohan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Z WEEKLY

Finding her voice in the media

STEM student discovers a passion for storytelling and is dedicated to creating impactful journalism that resonates with her audience.



Top right: Liu (first from left) receives awards in a speech and writing contest. **Above:** Liu works on the livestream for a sports event at Huazhong University of Science and Technology. **Right:** Liu reports at an event where students from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan explore the suspended monorail line in Wuhan, Hubei. **Bottom:** Liu participates in a traditional Chinese-style costume show at HUST. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By MENG WENJIE and LIU KUN in Wuhan

During her sophomore year, Liu Fang, a student from Taiwan studying at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan, Hubei, made a significant decision: she changed her major from math to journalism.

Although her university is recognized for its STEM programs, Liu felt inspired to take a different path.

The turning point came when Liu participated in a school event that required attendees to plan, film, and edit a short video centered on life at HUST. That was her first experience with video production.

Inspired by HUST's nickname as the "University in the Forest" due to its lush greenery, Liu decided to create a campus vlog titled *Green at HUST*. The video not only showcased the campus environment but also conveyed the vibrant spirit of the students through the metaphor of green.

Despite lacking formal training, Liu managed to sketch a storyboard and film in various locations around campus.

"Before, while I had many ideas, I would often put them off," Liu said. "But when I was filming and editing a video, I acted on my ideas right away. That made me feel accomplished and confirmed my love for this work."



“Preparing in advance, creating a comfortable environment for the interviewee, and having the courage to try can lead to unexpected results.”

Liu Fang, a student at Huazhong University of Science and Technology

Now 21, Liu is studying at HUST's School of Journalism and Information Communication. "As I began my studies, my interest in video production gradually evolved into a deeper understanding of what the journalism industry is all about," she said.

Still, Liu often questioned whether she was truly suited for the media industry. Would her love for it endure once it became her job? This was a recurring concern for her.

To find answers, Liu interned for a month at a local media outlet as an emerging journalist. However, this advancement came with its own set of challenges.

Early in her internship, Liu was fortunate to have the opportunity to report on several events.

Throughout the month, she gained valuable experience with each reporting task,

continually applying what she learned in the classroom to the real world.

One of Liu's most memorable interviews was with a 12-year-old girl from Taiwan, whom she interviewed twice.

They first met during a cultural exchange event between young people from Taiwan and Wuhan. The girl surprised the audience with an impromptu piano performance at the opening ceremony, which Liu thought would make a good news story.

Unfortunately, since the performance wasn't included in the program guide, Liu hadn't prepared adequately. The girl was also nervous during their first conversation, and due to the rushed timing, Liu wasn't able to gather enough content.

When they met again just a few days later at another music event, Liu approached the second interview with a more relaxed mindset. To her delight, the girl was much more open and expressive this time.

This experience taught Liu the importance of thorough preparation before an interview — something she hadn't done on her first attempt.

"Preparing in advance, creating a comfortable environment for the interviewee, and having the courage to try can lead to unexpected results," Liu said.

Another challenge Liu faces as a novice reporter is learning to ask her questions with confidence.

Liu admitted that she only feels comfortable discussing topics she is familiar with and can easily get anxious when conversations enter areas that are new to her.

She recalled an interview with a Taiwan law student at Wuhan University, where her limited legal knowledge left her feeling out of her depth, and she struggled to articulate her questions.

In another instance, when an important figure was surround-

ed by reporters, Liu's mentor encouraged her to ask a question. However, worried about making a mistake, Liu hesitated and didn't step forward.

These experiences left Liu feeling frustrated but also inspired her to approach future interviews more boldly.

"It's really important not to be afraid to ask questions, even if they seem silly — don't let any opportunity pass you by," she said.

From preparation to wrapping up an interview, the final step in completing a report is making the video.

For Liu, condensing a wealth of interview material into a concise video was a significant challenge. At first, she struggled with deciding what to include, feeling uneasy about omitting the voices of her interviewees.

However, she soon realized that as a journalist, she had a responsibility to her audience as well. "When I focused on the quality and coherence of the report, making decisions became much easier," she said.

Liu observed that with the rise of new media, the ways content is shared have changed significantly, with more viewers drawn to short, engaging videos. Yet, she has found that while these videos can quickly capture attention, they often fail to create a lasting impact.

This is why Liu aspires to produce more in-depth reports in the future. "I hope my work can truly make a difference or leave a lasting impression," she said.

Following her monthlong internship, Liu has gained clarity: she is both well-suited for and passionate about journalism. "I believe a qualified journalist should think critically, stay curious and sensitive to the world around them, and approach each interviewee with sincerity," she said.

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Global Insights



Anayat Ali poses for a photo at Lujiazui, the financial center of Shanghai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“For the first time, I felt what it was like to trust a city itself, letting it cradle me without the reflexive caution I'd long carried.”

Anayat Ali, an Indian student at Tongji University

Discovering trust in Shanghai's embrace

I come from Kashmir, a place renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and complex history. Growing up beneath chinar trees, I learned to see them as symbols of endurance, each branch a witness to centuries of conflict, suffering, and resilience.

In Kashmir, carrying identification is as routine as carrying one's keys — a daily ritual that acknowledges the underlying tension woven into our lives.

When I moved to Shanghai for my PhD at Tongji University in 2022, I anticipated that this same instinct for caution would linger — a reflex that had long become second nature. But Shanghai offered something unexpected: a life shaped not by caution but by trust — a trust so seamlessly woven into daily life that it flows through the city like an invisible current.

Here in Shanghai, people leave bicycles unlocked, bags unattended, and walk freely without a second thought about their safety. You pick up deliveries without flashing receipts, and people treat you not as an outsider but as someone who belongs. The first time I left my laptop unattended in a university cafe, it felt almost rebellious. I hesitated, but returning to find my belongings untouched was not just a relief — it was humbling.

It revealed a truth about human nature I had not fully understood: that trust could be a foundation, a quiet norm rather than something rare. For the first time, I felt what it was like to trust a city itself, letting it cradle me without the reflexive caution I'd long carried.

In Kashmir, safety is something we manage cautiously. We carry identification not as an option but as an unspoken rule, and we navigate life with an awareness sharpened by necessity. But in Shanghai, safety is an unspoken promise rather than a guarded privilege. I can walk alone at night without looking over my shoulder or even thinking to bring my ID — a freedom that felt almost surreal at first.

On my first day on campus, I noticed chinar trees lining the walkways. While these trees symbolize resilience in Kashmir, bearing the weight of history and memory, they seemed lighter here in Shanghai, adapted to a calmer and more peaceful environment.

These chinar trees became a metaphor for my transformation — a reminder of where I come from, but also a symbol of the freedom I was discovering.

Living in Shanghai has reshaped not only my understanding of trust and safety but also my understanding of home. For so long, home was bound to Kashmir, to its chinar trees and its vigilant routines. But Shanghai has shown me that home can be found in a sense of peace and freedom, in the ability to walk through life unburdened by caution.

Under the chinar trees of this distant city, I've found echoes of my origins, as well as a sense of belonging that invites me to be part of something larger.

In the end, home is not merely a place; it's a feeling rooted in safety, comfort, and the freedom to be oneself without restraint. Sometimes, to truly understand what home means, we must journey far from it and experience what it's like to feel completely and quietly safe. Shanghai, with its calm reassurances and familiar chinar trees, has given me that understanding.

Written by Anayat Ali, 30, from India-controlled Kashmir, currently a PhD student at Tongji University in Shanghai. Last year, he served as the president of the International Students Association at Tongji, promoting cross-cultural understanding. Through his experiences, he reflects on finding a sense of home and safety in Shanghai, bridging his roots in Kashmir with his life in China.