



APEC PERU 2024

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Visit aims to fuel growth, solidify ties

Trip expected to forge consensus on shared goals for development

By XU WEI and ZHAO JIA

President Xi Jinping's trip to Latin America for multilateral gatherings and bilateral talks has fueled expectations that China will continue championing inclusive growth and better global governance and further solidify ties with key partners in the vibrant region.

Xi embarked on the landmark trip to Peru and Brazil on Wednesday, his sixth visit to the region since 2013, for the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima and the 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro. He will also make state visits to the two nations.

Inside Analysts said Xi's visit will provide a key opportunity to deepen collaboration with major economies, forge consensus on shared development goals, and foster new momentum for global economic integration, while contributing to the evolving multipolar world order.

Cui Shoujun, founder and director of the Center for Latin American Studies at Renmin University of China, said the presence of the Chinese president at the two key economic forums showcases Beijing's unequivocal support for multilateralism.

"China advocates addressing global issues through consultation and cooperation and opposing unilateralism and protectionism. This approach fosters unity between developing and developed countries, prompting them to jointly seek a win-win solution for global governance," Cui said.

Analysts said Beijing's position will resonate strongly with the theme of the APEC Economic Leaders' Week this year, which named trade and investment for inclusive

PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA

APEC PERU 2024 **G20 BRASIL 2024**

Nov 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

Nov 13 to 17

- Attends the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima
- Pays a state visit to Peru
- Holds talks with Peruvian President Dina ERCILLA Boluarte Zegarra

Nov 17 to 21

- Attends the 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro
- Pays a state visit to Brazil
- Holds talks with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva

PERU **BRAZIL**

growth, digital innovation and sustainable and resilient development as its priorities.

In his remarks at the 30th APEC leaders' meeting in 2023, Xi emphasized the importance of innovation, openness, green development and inclusive growth as key drivers to usher in another "golden 30 years" for the region.

Cui said that China "promotes economic integration within the Asia-Pacific region through APEC, providing practical solutions for issues such as connectivity, digital

economy and green development among member economies."

Carlos Vasquez, the 2024 chair of the APEC Senior Officials' Meeting, said in a statement that the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting aims to provide greater policy direction for APEC members to deliver an environment that facilitates trade, harnesses regional economic integration and technologically driven growth, and sparks business innovation and employment.

As for the G20 Summit, expectations are running high for Beijing to

continue advocating reform in global economic governance and proposing to enhance the voice and participation of developing countries within the international financial system.

"China's inclusive proposals have now won the backing of the developing world and further enhanced the balance and stability of the global governance system," said Cui, from Renmin University of China.

Brazil, the host of the G20 Summit this year, has listed the fight against hunger, poverty and inequality, as well as the sustainable

development of economy, society and environment and the reform of global governance, as priorities.

The opening of the summit on Monday will be marked by the launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, a Brazilian initiative that will mobilize countries and international organizations to accelerate efforts to combat hunger and poverty by 2030, according to a statement released by the Brazilian government.

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WORLD WATCH
By Jean-Paul Vargas Cespedes

How an Asia-Pacific miracle is taking shape

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Lima, Peru, sets out to ensure greater prosperity in the region through the implementation of the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, which is based on the three pillars of trade and investment, innovation and digitalization, and strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth. This meeting is the annual economic dialogue among countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific region, with the combined economies representing about 60 percent of the world's GDP.

This forum takes place as the world witnesses significant shifts in the economic and technological competitions promoted by the United States through sanctions and the logic of zero-sum games, an elaborate fabric of narratives in which economic security becomes part of national security and free trade comes shackled with protectionist measures and conditions that limit — if not stifle — development. The price being paid for ensuring such kind of economic and technological hegemony is indeed high.

The APEC forum thus cannot be studied in isolation from this reality, a duality in which the US denies access to its most advanced technologies in the name of economic and global security, while China promotes the digital empowerment of different countries through infrastructure and connectivity projects and global initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative. China understands that the growing interconnection and economic integration with other countries can benefit itself, and when China prospers, the rest of the world will be better off.

From this perspective, innovation and digitalization as one of the key themes of the APEC forum is the bridge to promote the transition to a digital global economy. It is necessary to advance the governance models required for the development of policy frameworks and strategies for the formal transition. It requires, in particular, the development of technological and logistical infrastructures to facilitate the connectivity of goods, merchandise, financial and data flows, where China is setting good examples by helping developing countries to construct their own connectivity projects through the digital Belt and Road program and other cooperation.

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Brazilian youths feel encouraged to deepen friendship with China

By YANG RAN
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Students and teachers at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil have shared their excitement over receiving a reply letter from President Xi Jinping, expressing their wish for strengthened understanding and enduring friendship between the two countries and their peoples.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Brazil.

In anticipation of Xi's upcoming state visit to Brazil, where he will also attend the 19th G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 21 students and teachers from the university, who participated in the "Looking China"

international youth film project, wrote a letter to him, expressing their delight over his visit.

In their letter, the students and teachers shared how the project provided them with deep cultural experiences, insights into China's development, and lasting friendships with Chinese peers, all of which they documented through short films. They said they believe that President Xi's visit symbolizes a significant moment for the two nations that will have global implications.

Recently, Xi replied to letters from more than 100 friendly individuals from all walks of life in Brazil, including teachers and students from the university, encouraging them to continuously contribute to China-Brazil friendship.

In his reply letter, Xi welcomed

Brazilian friends to visit China more often and witness firsthand the myriad facets of Chinese modernization.

He expressed the hope that people from all walks of life in both countries will play a positive role in advancing the continuous growth of China-Brazil relations and making China-Brazil friendship "flow unceasingly like the Yangtze River and the Amazon River".

Cecilia Mello, a professor at the University of Sao Paulo, who initiated the university's letter to the Chinese president, expressed her joy and honor at receiving Xi's reply.

The film professor, who is also the university's coordinator for the "Looking China" project, said that during their visit to China, they were captivated by the country's stunning landscapes and deeply

moved by the warmth, resilience and strength of the Chinese people. She also expressed the wish for an everlasting friendship between the two nations.

She made the remarks on Tuesday during the "China-Brazil Youth Storytelling" event at the university, where over 200 participants from the two countries discussed the significance of youth and cultural exchanges.

Carlos Gilberto Carlotti Junior, rector of the university, highlighted many similarities between China and Brazil and also their vast potential for cooperation in areas such as the economy, agriculture, green energy, culture and film.

He thanked the "Looking China" project for its contributions to youth exchanges, and announced

the establishment of a China Center at the university to facilitate future collaboration.

Kang Zhen, vice-president of Beijing Normal University, the host of the project, said that Xi's letter has helped people better understand the importance and responsibility of fostering cultural exchanges between China and Brazil.

The letter has inspired continued efforts in fostering communication and enhancing friendship between the two nations, he added.

The "Looking China" project has seen 14 successful editions since its inception in 2011. Since 2016, young people from Brazil have participated in the project for nine consecutive years. They visited 11 cities and provincial-level regions in China and made a total of 36 short films.

Olympic bond



Visitors watch a calligraphy presentation during the opening of an exhibition in Athens, Greece, on Monday. The exhibition is themed on the cultural legacy of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics and 2022 Winter Olympics. Athens hosted the first modern Olympics in 1896. MARIOS LOLOS / XINHUA

DIGITAL WIZARDRY BRINGS CHARMS OF ANCIENT CULTURAL HERITAGE TO LIFE

From floating wine vessels to traditional village fairs, viewers immersed in virtual experiences

By YANG FEIYUE
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A three-dimensional ancient wine vessel suddenly appears above a screen, floats in the air, and moves in various directions under the instructions of controller Su Gaofeng.

Members of the crowd gathered in front of a computer screen at the eighth China Intangible Cultural

Heritage Expo in Jinan, Shandong province, in mid-October, let out exclamations of delight and awe.

However, the amazing spectacle hasn't been achieved with the help of wearable devices such as virtual reality glasses.

Thanks to 3D technology, viewers only need to adjust their distance from the screen for built-in cameras to capture their eye movements. The system uses algorithms to make the *zun*, an ancient Chinese wine vessel commonly used in ceremonies, come alive, explained Su, a faculty member from the College of Art at Beijing Union University.

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Climate governance may face bleak future
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XI'S VISIT

Decked up city

People walk by a pedestrian lane decorated with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, or APEC elements in Lima, capital of Peru, on Tuesday. Government leaders and high-ranking officials, representatives from private enterprises, experts, scholars and media personnel from 21 economies in the Asia-Pacific region are attending the annual meeting. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



Sister cities plan joint efforts in tourism development

By CHENG SI in Beijing and SHI BAOYIN in Zhengzhou

Zhongmu county in Henan province of central China and Peru's Machupicchu have reached a consensus to develop sister city relations. The two intend to make joint efforts to push forward tourism development in the future.

A delegation led by Machupicchu's mayor Elvis Lexin La Torre Unacori visited Henan's capital city Zhengzhou and Zhongmu county in late September, during which Zhongmu and Machupicchu agreed to establish friendly relations. The two sides plan to sign a letter of intent and a letter of agreement in the near future.

The two cities both have longstanding history and rich tourism resources. The Machupicchu district in Peru's Province of Urubamba, South America, is home to the well-preserved relics of Machu Picchu. Built in the 15th century and known as the "lost city of the Incas", it was listed in 1983 as a

UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Zhongmu county has a history of over 2,700 years, dating back to the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476 BC). The county boasts diversified intangible cultural heritages including black pottery, clay sculpture and paper cutting arts, and is the origin of Chinese traditional instrument of *Konghou*.

Based on the rich cultural and tourism resources, Zhongmu has made efforts to develop its tourism in recent years. Establishing sister city relations with Machupicchu is one of the explorative steps the county has taken to raise its global reputation, said the county's officials.

Zhongmu, which used to rely on agriculture for economic income, has channeled increasing investment and efforts to shape it into an attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists. It has made full use of its rich cultural resources to develop theme parks, leisure resorts and launch night tour routes.

The county received over 80 overseas delegations and around 30.8 million tourist visits last year, with these tourism visits generating a revenue of 15.14 billion yuan (\$2.1 billion), up 155.7 percent year-on-year.

Ding Wenxia, Party secretary of Zhongmu, said that the county has taken all-around steps to transform from a major agricultural county into a tourism power by releasing supportive policies and introducing sustainable investment to turn the existing cultural resources into tourism attractions.

She said that the county-level government has made great efforts to optimize the tourism-related infrastructure and facilities on transportation and accommodation, and give stronger support to some smart tourism development events to give tourists immersive and futuristic experiences.

In addition to the promising tourism cooperation prospects between Henan and Peru, the two

places have established very deep and strong economic relations in recent years, especially in the automobile sector.

Zhengzhou Yutong Group Co, a manufacturer of commercial vehicles and electric buses headquartered in Henan's Zhengzhou, has so far taken a market share of 20 percent of Peru's vehicle market.

In June, Yutong signed a contract with Pluz Peru, a distribution of electric energy company, to introduce two electric buses connecting Machupicchu district and Machu Picchu, with each of the buses expected to carry 300 passengers and a maximum battery range of 250 km. The introduction and future operation of electric buses will help Peru to reduce carbon emissions of 40 tons each year, maintaining sustainable tourism development in Peru.

Qi Xin contributed to this story.

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Photos display deepening friendship with Brazil

By YANG RAN yangran@chinadaily.com.cn

The launch ceremony of the photo album "Beautiful China, Beautiful Brazil" and the accompanying photo exhibition was held on Monday in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The photo album themed on the friendly collaboration between China and Brazil, features over a hundred photographs, highlighting the natural beauty, culture, economic and trade exchanges, cultural interactions and cooperative achievements between the two nations.

Chinese ambassador to Brazil Zhu Qingqiao wrote in the forewords for the album that the photo album vividly captures the magnificent scenery, diverse cultures and social traditions of both countries, reflecting the fruitful outcomes of their pragmatic cooperation and vibrant people-to-people exchanges. Zhu said he hoped that the collaboration in all sectors with Brazil would inject fresh energy into

developing bilateral ties.

Brazilian ambassador to China Marcos Galvao highlighted in the foreword that the album demonstrates how China and Brazil are connected through their similarities and differences. Despite the many differences in the two nations' history, culture and geography, the two sides have jointly explored a path to a more prosperous future through dialogue and the development of partnerships, he said.

Gao Anming, editor-in-chief of the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration, delivered a speech at the launch ceremony, emphasizing that over the past 50 years, China and Brazil have achieved significant cooperation in various fields, injecting new vitality into their economic and social development and bringing tangible benefits to their peoples.

Each photo in the album and exhibition reflects the deep friendship and shared memories of the Chinese and Brazilian people, high-

lighting the diverse natural landscapes and cultural scenes of both countries, as well as their common aspirations for a better life, said Gao.

Tia Ju, the second vice-president of the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro and president of the Brazil-China Parliamentary Front, remarked that since the establishment of diplomatic relations, China and Brazil have strengthened their ties, achieving remarkable results in key areas such as economy, culture and education. In this process, cultural exchange has played a crucial role in helping to foster mutual understanding and trust between our two countries, allowing Brazilians and Chinese to better appreciate the richness and beauty of each other's cultures, she said.

Henrique Nobrega, president of the Brazil-China Friendship Association, stated that the photo album not only showcases the landscapes and the peoples of China and Brazil but also conveys an important message: their friendship transcends

geographical and cultural boundaries. This deepening partnership is not just about trade but also strategic collaboration in technology, renewable energy, and sustainable development, Nobrega noted.

The beauty of Brazil's tropical rainforests and China's majestic mountains reminds us of our shared goals of sustainable development and environmental protection, he said, adding that this album underscores in an interconnected world, no country can prosper alone. The solidarity between Brazil and China is a commitment to shared prosperity and a future global community based on peace and unity, he said.

Over 150 representatives from politics, media, think tanks, culture and business from both countries attended the launch ceremony.

The event was guided by the Information Office of the State Council of China and hosted by the China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration and the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro.

All eyes on China at APEC event

Hosted by Peru, forum signifies Asian giant's growing influence in the region

By JIMENA ESTEBAN in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Thanks to significant investments and growing trade, China is expanding its presence throughout Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation markets. This is particularly true in Peru, where the Asian giant has become the top mining investor.

China now accounts for a big part of Peru's mining investment portfolio. China's investment is particularly focused on copper, of which Peru is the world's third-largest producer.

These links have gained added significance alongside the growing importance of the APEC forum, the annual meeting of which is being held in Peru and attended by leaders from its 21 member economies.

China's growing presence in Peru is significant not only for the country but also for its neighbors in South America and other partners in Asia, said Carlos Aquino, a professor of economics at Peru's National University of San Marcos, which is located in the capital, Lima.

"Peru lacks sufficient roads, railways and ports, and these are precisely the sectors where Chinese investment has increased in recent years," Aquino told China Daily.

Aquino added that China's investment in the country increased initially in mining, and later, its influence grew in Peru's hydroelectric plants, road construction and other infrastructure.

A particularly important example is China's large investment in the Chancay mega port, which will begin trial operations in November and with ships traveling to and from Shanghai. The port is expected to emerge as a more efficient hub for trade among APEC economies in Asia and South America, economist Juan Carlos Mathews said.

Chancay is jointly owned by China's COSCO Shipping and Volcan, a Peruvian mining firm.

China's investments in Peru's mining sector reach about \$11.4 billion across seven mining projects in Peru. These investments are distributed across Peru's key

mining regions including Apurimac, Cajamarca, Ancash, Arequipa and Moquegua. Copper projects account for 73 percent of the total investment in mining.

And along with growing investment in mining and infrastructure, trade between China and Peru has expanded. Last year, trade volume between the two countries reached \$37.69 billion, up 0.8 percent year-on-year, according to the statistics published on the official website of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Fishmeal and blueberries are key products besides copper. This is partly facilitated by a free trade agreement, or FTA, signed in 2009. Chile and Costa Rica also have FTAs with China.

As it is, Peru is the second-largest destination for Chinese investment in Latin America after Brazil.

Last April, Peru and China met to promote cooperation in fields such as minerals, energy, manufacturing and agriculture. During the meeting, Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra said China's investment is key for national development plans.

"Beyond the thematic focuses related to trade, investment, digitalization and inclusive sustainable growth, Peru uses these spaces for cooperation, technology transfer, benchmarking, and learning from other experiences, such as special economic zones," said Mathews. "It also capitalizes on one-on-one negotiations, something Peru has effectively leveraged, becoming one of the most open economies in Latin America."

Aquino said APEC members anticipate signing trade and modernization deals at the meeting in mid-November.

"China has a significant impact because it is the largest trading partner of almost all the APEC economies, especially Peru and Chile, and it is also a major investor," Aquino said.

In addition, the APEC meeting aims to continue to increase trade, investment and economic cooperation among members.

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.



View of the Chancay port in Chancay, 76 kilometers north of the Peruvian capital Lima, on Oct 29. CRIS BOURNOCLE / AFP

Experiencing deja vu on streets of Peruvian capital

Seated in the middle row of an economy class, I flew from Beijing to Madrid, then to Sao Paulo, thinking about my final destination as the window-seat passengers changed from a young man in black T-shirt to a woman in a red coat, and finally to an elegant lady with pink nail polish and a pink-cased iPad.

Taking three connection flights and having twenty-five hours of flight, I finally arrived at Lima, the capital of Peru, where this year's APEC Economic Leaders' Week is being held.

The long journey left me feeling dizzy, and the hair I had freshly washed before boarding became



Mo Jingxi Reporter's log

frizzy halfway through the flight.

If I were to dig a hole straight down from China, through the Earth's core, I would probably emerge in the country on the western coast of South America. In another word, it's one of the farthest places I could reach from China.

Yet this place doesn't feel entirely foreign. Along the roads, I occasionally spotted Chinese

restaurant signs in Mandarin. The Peruvian Spanish word for "Chinese restaurant" is *chifa*, a term derived from the Chinese pronunciation for "eating", brought over by Chinese migrants who braved the Pacific Ocean to reach Peru more than a century ago.

Beyond culinary culture, those early Chinese immigrants also brought them with skills and trades, contributing to Peru's social and economic development. Today, about 10 percent of the country's population has Chinese ancestry.

In an interview in June, Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra told me, "The Chinese-Peruvian community, also known as Tusan, has left its mark on national culture."

"Moreover, we have prominent figures within the Tusan community who have contributed to our country's development," she said, giving the example of Teresa Joo de Siu, whom she said played a key role in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Peru and China.

As I was writing this log, I surprisingly realized that Teresa Joo de Siu was also a journalist, like me. Her passion for sharing China's progress led her to work as a translator and reporter for La Voz de la Colonia China, the oldest Chinese

newspaper in South America.

In 1971, as the manager of this heritage newspaper, Teresa Joo de Siu carried a confidential letter from Peru's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Chinese Embassy in Chile, helping to establish a diplomatic bridge between China and Peru that has only strengthened over time.

On the way from the airport to my hotel, I also felt a sense of deja vu in the dilapidated red-brick buildings and narrow lanes I passed.

Born in a small town in central China in the late 1980s, I grew up with similar sights. But in the past few decades, China has undergone dramatic changes in socioeconomic development.

It was at that moment that I truly understood what the Peruvian Ambassador to China, Marco V.

Balarezo, meant in a recent interview when he said, "Infrastructure has been a fundamental pillar of China's development, and Peru could benefit from its experience in planning and executing large projects, such as the Chancay Port."

The Chancay Port, a project with Chinese investment, is scheduled to begin trial operations in mid-to-late November, establishing a direct maritime route from Peru to China.

I believe that this route, like the ancient maritime Silk Road opened by Chinese migrants heading to Peru all those years ago, will contribute to Peru's economic and social development.

Hopefully, the Peruvian people will witness their country's growth in the coming decades, just as I have witnessed mine.



XI'S VISIT

Ready for gathering

A child wearing a traditional costume walks past booths showcasing handicraft items on Tuesday at the APEC 2024 International Media Center in Lima, Peru.

FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



Peru looking to expand cooperation with China

Agreements in a range of fields expected to be signed during Xi's visit

By MO JINGXI
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The win-win cooperation between China and Peru is to be deepened and expanded to cover more areas, as an array of agreements are expected to be signed during President Xi Jinping's state visit to the Latin American country, Peruvian Ambassador to China Marco V. Balarezo said.



Marco V. Balarezo

Xi's trip, starting on Wednesday, will be his second visit to Peru in eight years. During the visit, he will hold talks with Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra for an in-depth exchange of views on bilateral relations and cooperation in priority areas.

Balarezo told China Daily in a written interview that high-level exchanges are essential for strengthening mutual trust and friendship and expanding areas of cooperation.

"In recent years, Peru and China have engaged in a very fruitful political dialogue with many meetings at

the ministerial level, involving sectors such as infrastructure, health, agriculture, housing, sanitation, finance, economy and foreign relations," Balarezo said.

The most crucial meetings have been the two between both presidents — one in San Francisco last year and the other in Beijing in June — during which important consensus was reached on international, regional and bilateral issues, he said.

Xi's visit to Lima will mark the third meeting between the two presidents within just one year. "Our goal is to strengthen bilateral cooperation in infrastructure, digital economy, green development, digital health and education, and industrialization, among others," the ambassador said.

According to Balarezo, the high frequency of political contact has also contributed to an increase in bilateral trade and Chinese investment.

It was during the Peruvian president's visit to China in June that the two sides announced the conclusion

of substantial negotiations to upgrade Peru's free trade agreement with China, aiming to expand bilateral trade by incorporating new areas, such as environmental protection, e-commerce and global supply chains.

"With this upgrade, significant increases in transaction volume are anticipated, as well as greater diversification of Peruvian exports into nontraditional sectors like agriculture and high-value fisheries, among other sectors," he said.

China and Peru enjoy a strong economic and trade relationship. For 10 consecutive years, China has been Peru's biggest trading partner, while Peru has been China's second-largest investment destination in Latin America.

Balarezo said that Chancay Port, a landmark project under the two countries' Belt and Road cooperation, is considered one of the largest port investments in South America.

The inauguration of the port on Thursday by both presidents will establish a direct route from Shanghai to Chancay across the Pacific, reducing dependence on intermediary routes and positioning Peru as a

gateway for South American trade with Asia, and China in particular, the ambassador said.

"With this infrastructure, Peru will become a logistics hub for international trade in the Pacific," he said, adding that the two countries are also negotiating an action plan to establish a road map for implementing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, which was elaborated on by President Xi last year.

Balarezo said that Peru, as the host of APEC this year, is committed to strengthening its ties with the Asia-Pacific region, particularly with China.

In this context, APEC 2024 represents a key platform for promoting new cooperation initiatives, especially in areas such as digital economy integration, green energy transition and inclusive growth, he said.

The ambassador said that China's experience in infrastructure development, digital transformation and poverty reduction is highly valuable for Peru.

Noting that infrastructure has been a fundamental pillar of China's development, Balarezo said that Peru could benefit from the nation's experience in planning and executing large projects that are crucial to improving the country's connectivity, productivity and competitiveness.

China's advancements in digital transformation also offer a road map for closing social and development gaps in Peru, particularly regarding rural communities' access to technology and digital services, he said.

APEC meetings gateway to Sino-Latin American trade

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong and JIMENA ESTEBAN in Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation will remain vital for globalization, with the group's meetings in Peru aiming to highlight its role as the gateway for trade and investment from China and Asia to Latin America, experts said.

Michael Walsh, executive director of the Pacific Basin Economic Council, an organization of CEOs and business leaders, said this year's gathering serves as a pivotal platform for fostering inclusive economic growth across the Asia-Pacific region, especially against the backdrop of changing political winds with regard to trans-Pacific trade.

In the face of economic challenges and the attack on free trade, APEC is seeking to reinforce regional cooperation and globalization while supporting a sustainable recovery, he said.

The priorities for this year's meetings include trade and investment for inclusive and interconnected growth, innovation and digitalization to promote the transition to a formal and global economy, and sustainable growth for resilient development.

"We anticipate that the discussions will lead to actionable strategies that facilitate efficient implementation initiatives and interoperability in cross-border trade, allowing for a more equitable redistribution of resources and opportunities throughout the region," Walsh added.

Alejandro Indacochea, president of law firm Indacochea Asociados, said the APEC gathering is a significant event for Peru, which could become the hub of Latin American integration with Asia.

"The 21st century belongs to the Pacific Basin, where the fastest-growing economies are found," said Indacochea, who is also founding professor of the Centrum Business School at Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

He said the upcoming inauguration of Chancay Port, a key project in Peru under the Belt and Road Initiative, will be a historic event for both the country and Latin America. Ships from Asia weighing 50,000 tons, which previously could not dock in Peru, can now arrive at the new port, he said, adding that the shipping time could also be reduced by 12 to 15 days.

Renzo Burotto, a historian from Chile, said the 21 APEC economies vary widely in size, capacity and comparative advantages, but all members are treated as equals on the platform.

"China, as an APEC member, has traditionally emphasized Asia-Pacific cooperation as an area of opportu-

nity for development, and calls for deepening and continuing the dialogue and friendship," he said.

Burotto said that China's unique capabilities could significantly contribute to jointly finding solutions to socioeconomic development challenges.

The APEC meetings will serve as a catalyst for deeper economic integration between China and Latin America, fostering increased trade and investment by air and sea, as well as virtually, in a mutually beneficial relationship that promotes trade, investment and shared prosperity, he added.

Walsh, from the Pacific Basin Economic Council, highlighted APEC's efforts in improving trade facilitation, investing in green technology and fostering the digital economy.

Streamlining customs procedures and reducing tariffs can significantly boost the flow of trade, and APEC members should also prioritize initiatives that enhance digital infrastructure and regulatory coherence, he said.

Robson Cardoch Valdez, a professor of international relations at the Brazilian Institute of Education, Development and Research, said that economic and trade cooperation should be tools to foster dialogue and bridge cultural, religious and governance differences.

Greater APEC participation will create more possibilities for different economic players to benefit from energy transition and from sectors such as electric vehicles and semiconductors, he said.

These opportunities will allow nonmember economies to access trade networks and technological advancements and participate in green infrastructure, aligning them with global sustainability standards and facilitating their integration into global trade, Valdez said.

He added that APEC as a forum for cooperation based on consensus gives the group the flexibility to adapt to different conditions and accommodate the interests of its current members, as well as those of prospective members.

Kim Heung-chong, a professor by special appointment at the Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University in Seoul, South Korea, said the Asia-Pacific region could better promote globalization.

To do so, it needs to make greater use of existing regional trade agreements and initiate new preferential trade agreements, such as the proposed China-South Korea-Japan free trade agreement, he added.

Jimena Esteban is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

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Forum: Strengthening high-level dialogues necessary

From page 1

Examples set by such shared development will allow us to be at the forefront of openness and global development.

That is why, despite a healthy turnout of different international leaders at the APEC forum, Latin American countries are waiting with great expectations for the participation of China. This platform allows many nations to get closely acquainted with and engage in the Chinese dream.

The APEC forum's original potential as a multilateral mechanism of dialogue and cooperation to take on global challenges and consolidate an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community has expanded to become a platform to promote scientific and techno-

logical exchanges and cooperation, sharing digital empowerment, corporate digital identity and the transition to a green economy.

However, the APEC forum also faces challenges in integrating its member economies and reaching an agreement about the present and future global reality. Member economies will be tested with the question of what to do to ensure that the Asia-Pacific remains the world's most dynamic and interconnected regional economy. Most urgently and importantly, they need to strike a consensus on the significance of maintaining and upholding the rules and working functions of the existing multilateral organizations of trade and economic cooperation in delivering an orderly and well-functioning multilateral trading system.

While the APEC forum has been imbued with a great collaborative spirit reflected in the multiple consensus agreements, it is necessary to strengthen high-level political dialogues. There are no winners in zero-sum games, and protectionism cannot solve the US' problems. Neither does an all-but-China mentality. The forum serves as an invitation to dialogue on solutions to current challenges and confrontations, jointly promoting mutually beneficial cooperation, and strengthening scientific and technological exchanges to advance the prosperity of civilizations.

The construction of a long-term temporal vision of the APEC forum depends on at least three factors, namely, ensuring shared benefits, mutual dependence and reciprocity among all parties, and a common

ground of interests, benefits and commitments to guarantee its universal shared values.

China's dynamic, innovative and fresh spirit at the APEC forum will leave a deep imprint. In the face of the challenges posed by the West, China's wisdom, solution and strength show the potential of an independent path to progress and prosperity of mankind, offering hope and viable alternatives to nations seeking to expedite development without compromising their autonomy and dignity.

The author is director of the Doctorate Program in Public and Business Management at the Costa Rica-based Central American Institute of Public Administration. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Visitors shop for Warmpaca alpaca dolls on Nov 5 during the seventh China International Import Expo in Shanghai. The brand is now available in over 30 shopping malls in China. JIN MAMENGINI / XINHUA

Visit: Nations' ties 'pivotal for the Global South'

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Zhou Zhiwei, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Latin American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that China and Brazil share a wide range of consensus points on global governance, and the unified stance between the two emerging countries is essential for formulating joint proposals for the Global South.

"The alignment between China and Brazil on the upcoming G20 Summit's three priority issues is not only pivotal for the Global South, but also for the future of global economic governance," he said.

The two nations have also jointly issued a six-point proposal on pushing for the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis and calling for the de-escalation of the situation. The proposal has received widespread support from the international community.

China is the first major country to support the accession of the African Union to the G20, while Beijing has also long advocated bridging the "digital divide" between the Global North and the Global South, and advancing reforms in the international financial structure.

The trip is also expected to inject fresh impetus into the building of a

China-Latin America community with a shared future.

China stands as the region's second-largest trading partner as well as the largest trading partner for many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, having signed free trade agreements with five nations and now engaging in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with 22 countries.

The areas of collaboration have steadily expanded beyond traditional sectors such as trade, finance and infrastructure, to now include emerging fields such as energy, digital technology and aerospace, Lin Jian, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, told a news briefing on Tuesday.

"China has always been a trusted true friend and good partner to Latin American and Caribbean countries and their people, and the relationships have entered a new era of equality, mutual benefit, innovation, openness and people-centered development," he said.

Analysts also highlighted the win-win nature of cooperation with Peru and Brazil and the immense potential for China to scale up the cooperation.

Xi will be making his second state visit to Peru, a country with robust trading ties with China. China is Peru's largest global trading partner, its largest export market, and its largest source of imports, while Peru

is China's fourth-largest trading partner in Latin America.

"China has consistently taken a proactive approach to promoting mutually beneficial cooperation with Peru," said Cui, from Renmin University of China. "Bilateral cooperation has developed into a comprehensive, multilevel and wide-ranging framework, with the relationship serving as a model for friendly cooperation between China and Latin America."

During talks with visiting Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra in June, Xi named Chancay Port, a mega port constructed by a Chinese company, as a new maritime hub linking Latin America with Asia, aiming to make the "Chancay-to-Shanghai" route a true path to shared prosperity and development for China and Peru.

of Social Sciences, said the port, another landmark project under the Belt and Road Initiative, will significantly cut logistics costs, elevate ties between Beijing and Lima, and make Peru a key hub for China's cooperation with Latin America.

He also pointed out that cooperation on science and technology could emerge as a new growth engine for ties between China and Brazil.

"The frequent interactions between President Xi and the leaders of Brazil and Peru demonstrate strong political mutual trust," he said. "This latest round of high-level diplomacy is expected to further enhance China's ties and cooperation with both countries."

Contact the writers at xuxwei@chinadaily.com.cn

CHINA

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The visual display is intended to help expo visitors gain a better appreciation of the artwork and its intricate cloisonne craftsmanship, which was named a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006.

"In the virtual world, we've set up the entire process of cloisonne production, from blueprints, mold making, wire inlays, enamel painting, firing, and polishing to gilding," said Su, who specializes in 3D-animation design, 3D-digital sculpture, and VR development.

"Now, with the aid of technology, the audience can experience this in a very short amount of time," he said, explaining it's difficult for the public to gain access to the art form due to its high level of craftsmanship and the complex production process involved.

"It requires a high level of expertise and dozens of artisans to participate and work together, and the production cycle is long," Su said.

"Especially the enamel firing process, which requires a temperature above 800 degrees, making it hard for ordinary people to experience or appreciate it directly," Su added.

The 3D modeling and rendering can give a realistic depiction of the form, colors, textures, and details of the objects, and immerse viewers in the craftsman's environment.

"We have enhanced interactivity by using augmented reality, and visitors can use AR spatial interactive pens to explore the full production process of cloisonne, including steps such as making the base, applying the wirework, adding enamel, and firing," Su added.

Enamel veneer

Cloisonne production was one of the many subjects explained through high-tech methods at the expo, which was hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, to bring intangible cultural heritage items closer to the public.

The expo, which ran from Oct 17 to 21, showcased the achievements of China's intangible cultural heritage protection over the 20 years since it joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, according to the ministry.

More cultural items have made their presence felt in the modern age with the aid of technology.

Tai chi has recently increased in popularity among young people, and some of them have practiced the martial art with the help of a virtual instructor. The virtual guide was developed by the Henan Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative and Intelligent Design Lab at Zhengzhou University of Light Industry based in Henan province.

Tai chi originated in Henan's Wenxian county and is characterized by relaxed, circular movements that work in concert with regulated breathing and the cultivation of a righteous and neutral mind.

The virtual system immerses users in various tai chi practice sites, including the ancestral hall of its founders, a peaceful natural environment, and a modern martial arts training center. It intends to give them insight into the profound culture behind tai chi and provide an ideal learning environment.

"You can see them in action dressed in cosplay costumes," Zhang Qian, director of the lab, said.

"During the initial stage of scene design, our team conducted research and found that many tai

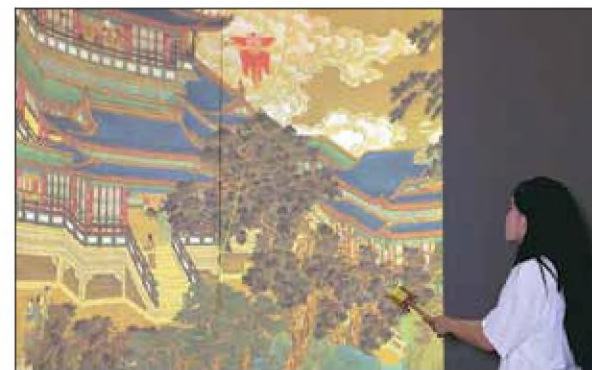


Children view digitalized shadow puppets at the Science and Technology Museum in Luoyang, Henan province, on June 29. The interactive exhibits showcased the origins, evolution and inheritance of shadow puppets. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Digital: Tech-infused heritage dazzles visitors to expos



Left: Visitors interact with a digital shadow puppetry device during the eighth China Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo in Jinan, Shandong province, in October. Right: A visitor experiences virtual kite flying at a digital cultural center in Beijing. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



chi enthusiasts prefer practicing in specific environments," Zhang added.

His team wrote computer code for each function, covering real-time user movement detection, gesture recognition, and evaluations. "We adopted Kinect technology to achieve motion-sensing interaction, providing users with a real experience," Zhang said.

Users begin the immersive tai chi experience by standing inside a blue circle and raising their right hand. So far, the system offers eight classic tai chi movements.

"It guides users through each movement using on-screen text, voice prompts, and real video demonstrations. Using Kinect's skeletal tracking, the system compares users' movements to the preset standard movements and provides real-time feedback such as 'perfect' or 'good' or 'try again', helping users adjust their movements," Zhang explained.

A rating system encourages users to work their way through levels of

difficulty and hone their skills.

Before the interactive program's launch in July, Zhang said his team had conducted extensive surveys on different age groups and careers, and optimized the design according to the feedback.

The goal was to enable more people to experience the unique charm of tai chi firsthand, he said.

In 2020, tai chi was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Fairground attractions

Expo visitors were also able to experience the Majie Quyi fair through an AR program developed by the lab.

The fair was named a national intangible cultural heritage in 2006. Boasting a history of more than 700 years, it was traditionally hosted during Spring Festival in Baofeng county, Henan, and featured various Chinese folk arts, including ballad singing, comic dialogues, clapper

talk, and crosstalk, all of which remain popular among Chinese people.

"Using technologies such as 3D modeling and spatial positioning, we have brought the grand scenes of the fair into an AR virtual environment," Zhang said.

Through motion-sensing devices, visitors can touch and "play" the instruments of the performing artists and read their scripts, he added.

Expo visitors also had the opportunity to experience flying a kite indoors through the Kite Travels program developed by Shanghai-based digital technology firm ALight, and artist Chen Hailan.

"By pulling a kite string on a screen, an audience member can not only control the rise and fall of the digital kite, but also feel the tension in the string," said Chen, who was born in Yangjiang, Guangdong province.

Yangjiang's kite craftsmanship was named a provincial intangible cultural heritage in Guangdong in 2006.

Each time a kite is launched, its design changes within the confines of a digital painting that features a Chinese garden and traditional architecture.

"We not only want the audience to see and experience it, but convey the culture embedded within it," Chen said, adding that the kites are not just a cultural symbol, but also carry joyful childhood memories.

She said she focused on the kite in the hope of preserving traditional cultural elements through modern technology, including interactive technology and VR, to give it new life and expression.

Chen and ALight decided the background should be a classical painting by Zhao Boju, an artist during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The work features historical pavilions, and mountains touched by floating clouds.

"It was selected due to its rich elements that suit the spatial design of the whole exhibit, transitioning from distant to near elements. The

network's content and style also fit well with the narrative of traditional kite culture," Chen explained.

To provide the user with a real sense of interaction, the creation team used a mechanical device to simulate the pulling of the kite string. Algorithms were also used to simulate aerodynamics, with the kite swaying as it flies through the air, Chen said.

To better engage users, a new kite style is randomly generated every new flight.

"This not only allows each visitor to experience different kites, but also ensures that every interaction is unique," she added.

This digital kite flying experience has already been displayed at several cultural and digital art exhibitions. Chen said she has been overwhelmed by the positive and enthusiastic response of visitors.

"Many of them said the interactive experience brought back the pure joy of their childhood memories associated with flying kites, and the digital interaction provided them with a fresh perspective and experience of traditional culture," Chen said.

Rapid progress

After the formulation of the traditional craft revitalization plan in 2017, and the promise to advance the national cultural digitalization implementation strategy in 2022, the digitalization of intangible cultural heritage has advanced at an unprecedented speed, said Liu Xinchen, a faculty member with the Zhejiang Guangsha Vocational and Technical University of Construction.

These laid a solid foundation for the widespread dissemination of, and innovative measures introduced in intangible cultural heritage, Liu added.

Immersive experiences show great development potential and have a broad range of applications, she added. They accurately reproduce historical scenes involving intangible cultural heritage that resonate with participants and allow them to experience their charms and deepen understanding, Liu explained.

"Through the integration of interactive devices and the 'gamification' of design elements, immersive experiences transform visitors from passive spectators into active participants in the transmission of intangible cultural heritage techniques, helping enhance public cultural engagement and awareness of preservation," she said.

"This deep engagement opens up highly effective communication paths for the transmission and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage."

Su, from Beijing Union University, said 3D displays are more engaging than traditional text and image-based displays. They leave a stronger impression on viewers and attract more interest in intangible cultural heritage, he said.

"Digital technology breaks the limitations of time and space, offering more people the opportunity to learn and inherit these traditional arts," Su said.

It also sparks the interest of younger generations, and better promotes the development and evolution of intangible cultural heritage, he added.

"I believe that with the development of technology and the iteration of techniques, more display scenarios will emerge to interpret the culture behind intangible cultural heritage," Su said.



Left: A child is immersed, via a digital device, in the process of cloisonne craft at the expo in October. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Above: Students from Beijing University of Technology showcase their design mechanism for Danzhou Diaosheng puppets, a national intangible cultural heritage, during a science festival in Beijing on Oct 9. LI MUYI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Right: A visitor tries a virtual-reality experience at the Suzhou Museum of Imperial Kiln Brick. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



CHINA

'Order' to halt sales of chips raises tensions

By ZHANG YI
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The United States is escalating tensions in the Taiwan Strait, a Chinese mainland spokeswoman said on Wednesday following reports that the US had "ordered" Taiwan to cease sales of advanced chips to the mainland.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co reportedly followed instructions from the US Department of Commerce, who told the company to halt shipments of advanced chips used in artificial intelligence accelerators and graphics processing units to customers on the mainland.

The move came after US President-elect Donald Trump, in an interview, accused Taiwan of stealing the US chip industry and said he'd put a tariff on Taiwan's chips.

Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said that the recent reports once again demonstrate that the US' intention is to use Taiwan to contain the mainland.



Paying 'protection money' cannot buy security. The deeper the reliance on the US, the greater the harm to Taiwan, which will only bring profound disaster to the Taiwan people."

Zhu Fenglian, spokeswoman for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office

She criticized the Democratic Progressive Party authorities for increasingly creating obstacles to cross-strait industrial cooperation, ultimately harming the interests of businesses on the island and weakening Taiwan's industrial advantages, causing Taiwan to miss out on further opportunities for development.

Zhu condemned the island authorities, who warned Taiwan businesses on the mainland to plan well, as doing business will become more challenging if more tariffs are imposed under the incoming Trump administration.

Noting that the trade volume between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland reached \$212.44 billion from January to September, a 9 percent year-on-year increase, Zhu said that pushing for the economic decoupling between the two sides would defy market principles and harm the well-being of compatriots.

Trump said in an interview during his election campaign that Taiwan should pay the US for its "defense", as it does not give his country anything. Recent media reports said that Taiwan is considering a massive \$15 billion military package to show the incoming Trump administration that it is serious about strengthening its own "defense".

"The US always prioritizes its own interests," Zhu said, adding that "Paying 'protection money' cannot buy security. The deeper the reliance on the US, the greater the harm to Taiwan, which will only bring profound disaster to the Taiwan people."

Taiwan's Labor Party said in a statement that Taiwan is not the US' "cash machine", and the fate of Taiwan should be in the hands of the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait. Being a "pawn" in the US' competition with the mainland will not change the legal and historical fact that both sides belong to one China. Rather, it will only further highlight Taiwan's development dilemma as a tool and may even turn it into a high-risk area, it said.



A CH-9 combat drone attracts visitors at the ongoing 15th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition (Airshow China) in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, on Wednesday. CHEN JIMIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

New combat drone developed

By ZHAO LEI in Zhuhai, Guangdong
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The China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics, one of the country's largest makers of military drones, has developed a new advanced unmanned combat plane — the CH-9.

According to the Beijing-based academy, a subsidiary of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the CH-9 is the new member of the CH — which stands for Calhoun, or Rainbow — family, and features a large body, strong carrying capacity and long flight range.

Technical specifications published by the academy show that the drone is about 12 meters long, with a wingspan of nearly 25 meters.

Propelled by a turboprop engine, the plane has a maximum takeoff weight of 5 metric tons. It has eight external weapon pylons under its wings and is able to carry a total of 490 kilograms of ammunition, including air-to-air and anti-ship missiles, bombs, torpedoes and loitering munitions.

When loaded with weapons, it is

able to fly as far as 11,500 kilometers and remain in the air for up to 40 hours. It can also generate battlefield intelligence in real time, autonomously identify targets and adjust its flight route by itself.

These features enable the CH-9 to carry a large amount of munitions to patrol areas with potential targets, including submarines, according to the academy.

In addition to surveillance, reconnaissance and attack, the aircraft is also capable of performing regional early-warning tasks, it noted.

Song Fangchao, an engineer in the CH-9 project, said on Wednesday that the new type is larger than its predecessors in the CH fleet, and that means it is able to carry out more kinds of missions.

"Globally, combat drones have begun to face new challenges, including the fact that many of their targets now have air-defense missiles," he explained.

"Therefore new models of combat drones will need larger bodies and mightier weapons so they can fire outside the hit range of an enemy's air-defense missiles."

The Beijing academy started researching and developing the CH drones in 1999 after its researchers realized that their expertise in aerodynamics and missile design could also be used on unmanned aircraft.

Since then, the research complex has established a large portfolio of military drones, ranging from small models for battlefield reconnaissance to a big stealth version capable of penetrating an enemy's air defense network.

It began to export combat drones to foreign militaries in 2003 and has since then sold them to more than 10 nations in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Those planes have accumulated nearly 70,000 hours in combat actions and have fired more than 2,000 munitions, boasting a 98.2-percent successful hit rate.

"We have more types of military drones than any of our competitors in China," Song said.

"The CH-series planes have been called 'sharp weapons for counterterrorism operations' by our foreign clients."

Influencer returns from 3-year hiatus

By CUI JIA
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Li Ziqi, one of China's most popular influencers, made a surprising comeback on Tuesday afternoon after a three-year hiatus, capturing widespread attention from home and abroad.

Li resumed posting online with two new videos showing how she transformed a shed into a woodland cloakroom and made wardrobe doors using Chinese lacquerware techniques — an intangible cultural heritage — on several Chinese social media platforms, including Sina Weibo and Douyin.

Her return quickly became a top trending topic on various platforms. As of 10 am Wednesday, her lacquerware video had garnered 120 million views on Sina Weibo and more than 1.94 million interactions, including shares, comments and likes.

The last time she posted new content was July 14, 2021, but during her absence, she continued to receive requests for new videos and saw the number of her followers increase. Many wondered where she was or whether she had retired from posting.

After her new videos were posted, the number of her followers quickly shot up to more than 26.77 million on Sina Weibo and 50.51 million on Douyin by noon on



Li Ziqi (right) receives a plaque for her intangible cultural heritage workstation in Chengdu on Wednesday. XIANG YU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Wednesday. Many people have flooded her comment sections with messages of support, saying it was such a surprise to see her posting updates again. She replied saying she also missed her viewers and followers.

"There is no time for me to write a small essay today. I will make it up to you when I am not that busy. Miss you!" she wrote.

Li, who is also a popular influencer on overseas social media platforms, also uploaded the two videos on YouTube on Tuesday. In 2020, she set a Guinness World Record for having the most subscribers on a Chinese-language YouTube channel, with 11.4 million followers at the time. Currently, her YouTube account has more than 20 million followers.

Li's overseas followers have

praised her videos for showing the amazingly picturesque, simple and elegant side of China's rural life.

"Li Ziqi posting two new videos after three long, hard years is the equivalent of the sun breaking through and warming a frigid desolate frozen wasteland. And I feel like I'm being enveloped in a warm comforting hug," one enthusiastic viewer wrote via social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Li started posting short videos on Sina Weibo in 2016, featuring poetic portrayals of rural life with her grandmother in the rural parts of Sichuan province. In the videos, Li, often dressed in graceful traditional garments, rises at sunrise, rests at sunset, plants seeds and harvests flowers, cooks Chinese dishes and crafts bamboo furniture.

Her return follows a legal dispute with her former multi-channel network partner company, Weinian Brand Management Company.

Although the dispute was resolved in December 2022, she didn't resume video production until Tuesday.

In an interview with Xinhua published on Wednesday, Li said she mainly relaxed and spent time with her grandmother over the past three years.

She also visited more than 100 intangible cultural heritage inheritors in 20 provinces to get inspiration for new videos in the future, she said.

Molecule may help plants fight disease

By YAN DONGJIE
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Chinese scientists have discovered a small molecule in plant cells that can trigger immunity.

The molecule, which has been patented, can potentially be developed into a broad-spectrum biopesticide, helping plants such as crops resist diseases.

"Once this biopesticide is put into use, it can function when it's sprayed on a plant's surface and is absorbed by the plant. Based on existing sci-

entific knowledge, it potentially can be applied to different plants and combat many diseases," said Wan Li, a researcher at the Center for Excellence in Molecular Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

"This small molecule originates from the plant itself, hence it's safe. It can inhibit the invasion of pathogens without causing harm to plants, humans or the ecosystem when properly used," he added.

His team's research findings, titled "Activation of a helper NLR by plant and bacterial TIR immune sig-

naling", were published in the journal Science on Friday.

Wan's team conducted their research using the laboratory model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*, which has nearly 150 such immune sensors in its cells. Different sensors react to corresponding pathogens and produce the same small molecule, 2cADPR, which triggers the plant's disease resistance.

"Since specific sensors can only defend plants against specific pathogens, achieving effective broad-spectrum disease resistance against

Wealthy nations urged to lead climate action

Vice-premier calls for increased carbon reduction efforts at COP29 summit

By HOU LIQIANG
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Emphasizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as the foundation of global climate governance, Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang has called on developed nations to take the lead in reducing carbon emissions and enhancing climate finance support for developing economies.

"Developed countries should demonstrate greater ambition and action," and should take the initiative to reach carbon neutrality ahead of schedule, he stressed.

Addressing the World Leaders Climate Action Summit on Tuesday during the ongoing COP29 climate change conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, he said developing countries should also do the best they can to meet global climate goals.

At the core of the matter, combating climate change demands a profound shift in development paradigms, and China's robust capabilities in the production of electric vehicles, lithium batteries and photovoltaic products have greatly bolstered worldwide green development progress, the vice-premier noted.

He advocated for a collaborative push from the global community to hasten the energy transition in a fair and orderly manner.

Joint efforts should also be made to ensure the stability of new energy industry supply chains and advance the availability and advancement of green products and technologies, Ding added.

He underlined the pivotal roles of funding and technology in tackling climate change and urged developed countries to beef up their support for developing nations in this regard.

"We call on developed countries to increase financial support and technology transfer to developing countries," he noted, adding that he looked forward to seeing a stronger climate financing commitment from developed economies to developing states at the Baku climate gathering.

Since 2016, China has provided more than 177 billion yuan (\$24.5 billion) to support other developing countries' efforts to fight climate change, he shared.

While participating in other events held on the sidelines of the annual UN climate gathering, the vice-premier vowed China would give more climate support to countries in the Global South.

In a high-level meeting about early warning weather systems on Tuesday, Ding announced that China will spearhead a flagship South-South cooperation project focused on establishing such systems, which would help nations better anticipate natural disasters.

The initiative aims to support other developing nations by providing meteorological observation equipment, early warning facilities and capacity-building training, he elaborated.

In an event that saw China launch an International Zero-Carbon Island Cooperation Initiative on Wednesday, Ding recalled measures China has rolled out to help Small Island Developing States address global warming and also pledged consistent support.

He said, for instance, China has collaborated with these countries to establish low-carbon demonstration zones, and has also set up the China-Pacific Island Countries Climate Change Cooperation Center as it actively assists SIDS in dealing with climate change and improving the well-being of their people.

China, together with SIDS, will explore establishing an international zero carbon islands cooperation organization to facilitate the sharing of resources, exchange of technologies and mutual learning, he announced.

Discussing zero carbon islands, Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu said: "The need to reduce emissions and protect our environment has never been more urgent. China is being an exemplary leader in this movement."

The commitment of China to going carbon neutral before 2060 is "a bold and inspiring example of leadership". China's efforts to drive green energy innovation, build sustainable cities and support clean technologies are paving the way for a low-carbon future, he continued.

"The initiative today is another bold step," Muizzu said. "It shows the world what is possible when nations work together to embrace sustainability."

Moving into position



The Tianzhou 8 cargo spacecraft and the Long March 7-Y9 carrier rocket are being vertically transferred to the launch area at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province on Wednesday. The spacecraft will be launched at an appropriate time in the near future. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

multiple pathogens has become a crucial topic in plant immunity research," Wan said.

"Sensors are specific, but they all produce 2cADPR upon activation. By producing this small molecule, we bypass the specificity of the sensors, achieving broad-spectrum disease resistance," he added.

Wan noted that the small molecule discovered by his team has already been patented and put into production. The next step is to continue proving its actual broad-spectrum disease resistance in the field and hopefully put it to use soon.

Another study published concurrently in the same journal, titled "A canonical protein complex controls

immune homeostasis and multipathogen resistance", verified the broad-spectrum effectiveness of the same immune pathway in rice.

Wan said that in the past, crops' resistance to pests and diseases mainly relied on chemical pesticides, which not only harm the environment but also pose certain risks to human health.

Two teams of Chinese scientists have made breakthroughs in plant broad-spectrum disease resistance from the perspectives of enhanced immune response and biopesticides. Both solutions address the problem of pesticides causing harm to the environment and human health simultaneously.

CHINA

Young people feel pressure of gift-giving

Growing numbers shunning tradition of handing over red envelopes at weddings

By ZHANG YI
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Ou Yang, a 33-year-old engineer based in Beijing, grapples with a profound sense of unease every holiday season due to the influx of wedding invitations, which inevitably translates into a financial burden for him.

During the National Day holiday last month, he attended two weddings and gave a 1,000-yuan (\$141) red envelope at each.

There's another upcoming wedding awaiting this year.

He's meticulously recorded these expenses in his phone, with the total adding up to nearly 20,000 yuan so far. And that already excludes the money given by his parents on his behalf and the costs of attending banquets in various locations.

"I'm conflicted, but I still choose to attend because I don't want to be criticized by others for breaking this societal tradition," he said. With no plans for marriage himself, Ou is uncertain if he will ever recoup the money he has spent, jokingly suggesting, "Maybe I should throw myself a big 40th birthday party."

In stark contrast, Li Wenjing, a 26-year-old overseas study consultant in Qingdao, Shandong province, takes a bold and care-free stance when invited to weddings by friends, firmly replying, "I'm not going, and I'm not giving the *fenzhiqian*."

Literally meaning "one's portion of money," *fenzhiqian* is often wrapped in red envelopes and is given to newlyweds as a form of a congratulatory gift.

Li has grown weary of receiving wedding invitations from individuals she has lost touch with over the years. In one extreme instance, an old colleague of her father, who had been out of contact for more than two decades, somehow acquired her father's WeChat and invited Li's family to his son's wedding.

As a result, she made a daring decision to abstain from attending weddings and refraining from giving congratulatory money. Whenever a friend embarks on a romantic relationship, she preemptively informs them of her decision, sparing them the need to give her money too. Over time, this stance has become well-known among her circle.

Li said that giving money in this context makes her feel like she is funding other people's lives, when she has just started her career and doesn't have enough in her budget for herself.

She ranks among the growing number of young people in China who are becoming increasingly vocal against the long-standing tradition of handing over *fenzhiqian*.

Long tradition

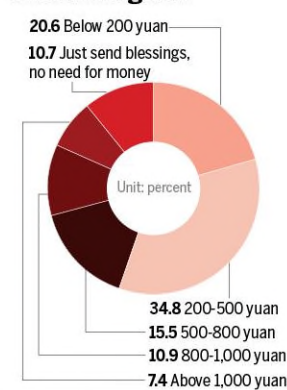
In China and some other East Asian countries, it has been a long-standing tradition to congratulate marrying couples with cash gifts. Upon arrival at the wedding reception, guests typically present envelopes containing cash to a designated friend or family member of the newlyweds.

The amount given is discreetly recorded in a register, granting guests entry to the event and allowing them to partake in the wedding banquet. In modern times, guests who are unable to attend have the option to send digital red envelopes through platforms like WeChat.

This tradition traces its origins back to ancient China, where it served as a means for communities to support one another during significant life events such as weddings, funerals and other important ceremonies. Everyone would contribute money or gifts to help cover the expenses, fostering a sense of community and mutual assistance.

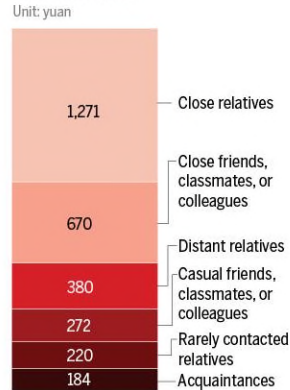
However, in contemporary society, while the practice of giving cash gifts continues to symbolize support, its role has expanded. It has become a way to reciprocate past generosity, with individuals often keeping track of the amounts they receive to ensure they give a comparable sum when attending future events hosted by the same individuals.

Ideal amount for money gifts individuals believe should be given



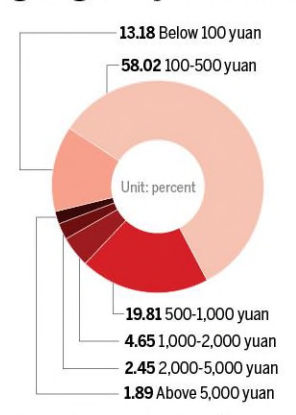
Source: Survey by 36Kr.com in November 2022 CHINA DAILY

Averages for money gifts given to different individuals



Source: Survey report released by Lovelink in November 2023 CHINA DAILY

Breakdown of money gifts given by individuals



Source: Survey report released by Zhenai.com in March 2024 CHINA DAILY

Moreover, the amount given frequently corresponds with the closeness of the relationship and societal expectations, sometimes placing pressure on individuals to give more than they can comfortably afford.

Zhu Qizhen, a professor at China Agricultural University, said in an interview with Beijing News that rural communities are inherently founded on social obligations. However, when social etiquette becomes excessively burdensome, it can impede the normal development of these communities.

During his research in Central China, Zhu was informed by local villagers that the most substantial economic expenditure for them revolves around social obligations. One farmer even calculated that the annual amount of money he gives in gifts is over 5,000 yuan, whereas the net profit from one *mu* of corn (one-fifteenth of a hectare) is merely a few hundred yuan.

To effectively alleviate the burden of social obligations, governmental actions alone are insufficient, and it necessitates concerted efforts from all sectors of society, Zhu said.

According to a survey conducted by China Youth Daily in October last year, 93 percent of young people felt burdened by having to give cash gifts. Among them, 51 percent believed that they face both financial and social pressures when giving money gifts. Additionally, 50 percent said that they should be able to say no to giving high-value money gifts.

Zhao Yixiong, a college student in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, found himself in a predicament where he had to ask for an

additional 1,000 yuan from his parents to attend a friend's wedding.

Zhao felt pressured to give this amount, representing about half of his monthly living expenses, solely because others were giving the same amount.

"I appreciate giving red envelopes as blessings, but I am against high amounts of money," he expressed, noting that local customs stipulate a minimum of 800 yuan, which poses a significant financial burden for young people like him, especially considering that the average monthly salary for recent graduates around him is approximately 4,000 yuan.

In recent years, various regions have introduced guidelines urging residents to give money gifts in moderation to alleviate the burden of social and financial obligations. Initiatives in places like Luohe, Henan province, advocate for gift amounts of around 5 percent of an individual's monthly salary. Similarly, in Quzhou, Zhejiang province, it is recommended that cash gifts for events involving individuals beyond immediate family members should be capped at 300 yuan.

China's No 1 Central Document for 2024, which charts the roadmap for rural revitalization, underscores the importance of utilizing rural service facilities to provide social services for farmers during events like weddings and funerals, aiming to reduce the burden of social obligations. The term "social obligation burden" was included in the annual document.

Changing habits

Amid overwhelming pressures, a growing number of young people in China are explor-

ing alternative ways to organize their weddings or convey congratulations to newlyweds.

According to a survey report released in March by Zhenai.com, a popular matchmaking website, nearly 70 percent of respondents indicated their willingness to accept the idea of getting married without hosting a traditional wedding banquet.

When asked their reasons, 33 percent cited the desire to save on expenses and energy, while 26 percent expressed an interest in transforming the wedding banquet into a different form of celebration, the report said.

Jiang Ting, a financial worker from Wuhan, Hubei province, opted to have a wedding trip in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region this year, breaking away from the conventional practice of hosting a wedding at home with guests primarily invited by their parents, many of whom they barely know.

Initially, negotiations with her parents were challenging, as their wedding banquet was not only viewed as a joyous occasion with family and friends but also as an opportunity to have reciprocal cash gifts given back to them. To date, her parents have given a total of approximately 80,000 to 100,000 yuan in *fenzhiqian*.

"I came to realize that my actions not only reflect on myself but also influence how my parents are perceived within our circle of relatives. Compared to our generation, they place greater emphasis on respect, honor and social status, often referred to as '*mianzi*' or 'face'," she said.

Li Wenjing, from Shandong province, has observed a shift in the practices of her colleagues who are getting married. Rather than informing others in advance, some opt to share their joy by sending out wedding candies afterward.

"It fosters healthier workplace relationships, as it maintains clear boundaries between colleagues. There is high turnover in today's workplace, and if it were different, things could get complicated. Money sent in such situations might not be returned," she said.

In a similar vein, Li Qian, a 35-year-old teacher from Dalian, Liaoning province, who got married last year, suggested a mutual exemption approach to her classmates in different cities.

Recognizing the complexities involved in attending weddings in distant locations, she chose to send wedding candies to her friends across cities to share the happiness without expecting monetary gifts in return.

While some friends attempted to offer cash gifts upon receiving the candies, she graciously declined, emphasizing her desire to simply share the good news and sincere well-wishes.

However, she cherished a gift she received from her bridesmaid — tableware set — as it resonated with her love for furniture, which was accompanied by a heartfelt letter detailing their shared experiences and expressing congratulations on her marriage that touched her deeply.

"Her care, love and concern for me are the most sincere blessing," she said.

Li Ren contributed to this story.

FIRST PERSON

Expert: A celebratory gift should return to its basic purpose

Feng Hua,
associate professor
from the School of
Public Administration
at Southwestern
University of Finance
and Economics



Giving cash gifts for newlyweds is not only a form of blessing but also an economic support for families celebrating joyous occasions. This form of support serves as an investment in future interactions, ensuring that when one's own family requires assistance in the future, there will be a potential return on this investment. It encompasses functions such as investment, financing and security.

Data released by organizations in recent years has shown that expenditure on cash gifts and its proportion within total personal expenditure has been increasing, accounting for 10 to 20 percent of a household's annual total spending, with rural areas having a slightly higher proportion compared to urban areas.

A clear observation is that about a decade ago, giving 200 yuan (\$28) as a gift was considered respectable, but now one might need to give 500 yuan or even more to feel presentable. Gift-giving has become more standardized — if one chooses to give, it should meet the generally accepted appropriate standards. Therefore, the amount of money given as gifts is increasing.

Furthermore, from the perspective of social relationships, the stronger and deeper the relationship, the more likely individuals are to use higher amounts of money to demonstrate the intimacy of the relationship.

With the increased mobility in modern society and the expansion of social circles, some young people who are not at the center of our relationships may also invite us to their weddings. This can lead to concerns such as whether it is necessary to attend the wedding. Many young people also worry that due to the lack of familiarity in the relationship, the gift given might not result in a reciprocal gesture in the future.

A rational approach to gift money should first involve returning gift-giving to its original meaning. A gift is a blessing; the amount of money is not important. What matters is the blessing we convey through the money we offer.

There are some forms of gift-giving that are worth promoting. For example, couples now share their wedding invitations on social media platforms, where friends can send their blessings through the electronic invitation, along with a gift.

Additionally, the rising trend of the mutual exemption of cash gifts among young people is commendable. This approach involves both parties communicating and mutually agreeing on a way to alleviate the pressure on each other significantly.

Furthermore, weddings entail expenses for purchasing various items. Individuals can offer their expertise as a gift. If you are a pastry chef, you could create a wedding cake. Similarly, if you are a makeup artist, you could provide your services for the wedding makeup.

Wedding gifts can come in the form of monetary gifts, services, or practical items that the couple can use immediately in their new home. These approaches aim to revive the original mutual assistance function of gift-giving, expressing blessings in a warm and sincere manner.

They aim to make weddings simple, lively and cost-effective, where everyone gives according to their ability and receives based on their needs, without using the amount of money to measure the depth of relationships.

Most importantly, these forms of gift-giving serve as evidence of our past strong relationships and contribute to fostering even better relationships in the future.

Feng Hua spoke with Zhang Yi.



LIANG LUWEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

ACROSS ASIA

Editor's note:

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



From left: Stone designs are seen at the towers of the Bayon temple at the Angkor site in Siem Reap, Cambodia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A bas-relief is seen on an Angkor temple wall. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY A worker cycles near the Bayon temple on Sept 18. TANG CHHIN SOTHY / AFP

Cambodia is receiving a slow but encouraging increase in visitors, with the lifting of international travel restrictions following the COVID-19 pandemic.

With foreign arrival numbers yet to rebound to pre-pandemic heights, local tourism has unexpectedly become a lifeline.

The scene at the famous Angkor Wat temple site has been transformed, with busy guides and their domestic visitors forming a new alliance and breathing new life into the appreciation of Cambodia's rich historical tapestry.

Meas Sovannaroth, a tour guide based in Siem Reap, found himself exploring different career paths after the pandemic brought the tourism industry shuddering to a stop.

He ventured into real estate and the sale of agricultural machinery, but his passion for sharing his knowledge never waned — in 2022, as visitors began to trickle back, he returned to his roots and reconnected with the heritage he loves.

Sovannaroth now balances his tour guiding work with a part-time job as a driver for ride-hailing platform Grab, allowing him to support his family while he waits for tourism to complete its slow comeback.

"The enthusiasm in November has been encouraging," he said. "We've seen a revival in interest for Angkor Wat and other temples, providing some stability after several challenging years."

The surge in local interest has proved beneficial to both guides and Cambodian visitors.

After many years, when historical attractions were primarily frequented by international guests, domestic tourists are becoming increasingly captivated by the kingdom's rich past.

Kea Simon, a guide with 17 years of experience, said he has observed a newfound curiosity among Cambodians.

"Many local guests now want to understand the stories behind our temple sculptures," he said.

"They're interested in our history, culture and architectural heritage ... deepening their connection to these sites."

Simon said that when he meets local tourists in front of the temple, he does not discuss prices in advance as it often depends on their interest and intent.

He said that most guides do not focus on discussing guide fees, with the opportunity to work and share knowledge with Cambodian guests more important.

The duration of each tour also depends on each temple's location at the site — larger temples need more detailed explanations, while smaller ones often require a shorter introduction. Simon said that in the past, it was rare for Cambodian visitors to hire a guide due to limited interest in history and budget constraints.

Home attraction

Angkor tour guides help locals rediscover heritage



Above: Tourists visit Cambodia's Angkor attraction. Below: A view of the Angkor temple site. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

However, since 2022, following the COVID-19 challenges, domestic tourists appear to have become more interested in the history, culture, architecture, religion and art of the temples.

"They are now part of preserving our culture by wanting to learn more about the temples," he said. "If they only came to take photos, they wouldn't understand the true depth of it, no matter how much they read in books."

Simon also acknowledged that beyond sharing knowledge, the increase in local tourists also helps sustain the tour guiding profession.

"Usually, when I'm stationed at the Bayon temple, after about an hour of guiding local visitors, they give me between 50,000 riel (\$12.30) to 60,000 riel," he told The Phnom Penh Post.

"Some guests even offer up to \$20 or \$30," he added.

Cultural pride

Cambodian tourists are increasingly filling the gaps in the industry and fueling its growth, thanks to their growing historical curiosity and national pride.

The director of the Siem Reap Provincial Department of Tourism, Thim Serey-

“Many local guests now want to understand the stories behind our temple sculptures. They're interested in our history, culture and architectural heritage ... deepening their connection to these sites.”

Kea Simon,
an Angkor tour guide

uth, highlighted the importance of educating young residents about their heritage.

"Guides now offer tours to local students, enhancing a deeper understanding of real history, including topics like the monarchy, Brahmanism, Buddhism, temple styles, architecture, mythology and the various wars that are depicted in the engravings of each temple," Sereyuth said.

This means more Cambodians are learning to understand and appreciate

their culture more deeply, he said.

While the number of tourists remains modest, tour guides are now focusing on local visitors, with many of them helping the profession survive and thrive.

The situation has allowed guides and visitors to benefit from each other. Visitors who previously were not interested in the historical narratives are now gaining a deeper understanding of temple sculptures, while the guides can continue in their work.

Khieu Thy, president of the Angkor Tour Guide Association, which has over 200 members, said he is unsure if the uptick in domestic clients will be enough. "I hope our tourism sector can grow again, but there's an overly optimistic analysis predicting that 2025 will match 2019 levels. Obviously, 2025 is just around the corner, and there's no clear sign of such an increase," he said.

"About 50 guides sit in front of Angkor without any earnings, yet they're willing to do this despite knowing it's unprofessional and inappropriate."

Their goal is to attract both national and international visitors as a group, Thy said.

Thy acknowledged the challenges in the current situation, pointing to a "high season" that felt more like the off-season.

"October was a disappointment, with demand falling short of expectations," Thy said.

"Only November showed a significant uptick in reservations. The upcoming months are unpredictable, leaving guides facing limited work opportunities."

In comparison to last year, when guides could find work for 20 days a month, they now average just 12, with many stationed at the temples daily to attract tourists.

Another indicator of the downturn, Thy said, is how Old Market area businesses like restaurants, hotels and guesthouses are seeing fewer visitors than last year.

With fewer reservations, guides are facing a tough market and must go out on their own to find guests at the temples.

"The number of guides has been declining since COVID-19, with some changing careers. A group of our guides now stands in front of Angkor, inviting both foreign and Khmer visitors to use their services as much as possible," Thy said.

Cambodia's tourism sector, which once contributed significantly to the national GDP, faced a massive downturn when the pandemic hit.

In 2019, international tourist arrivals exceeded 6.6 million but by 2021 the number had plummeted to under 200,000 due to travel restrictions and global health concerns.

The resulting closures of hotels, restaurants and other tourism and hospitality businesses affected thousands of jobs, forcing guides like Sovannaroth, Thy and Simon to find alternate sources of income.

The sector began to bounce back in 2023 as travel resumed, drawing international tourists back to iconic locations like Angkor Wat.

A report from the Ministry of Tourism said there was a 32 percent increase in international arrivals in early 2024 compared to the previous year.

"The Kingdom of Wonder" campaign, alongside Cambodia's new visa policies, has successfully highlighted the country as a secure and culturally enriching destination, appealing to tourists worldwide, according to the ministry.

The recent opening of the Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport has further boosted tourism in the region, it added.

Within its first year, the airport managed over 1.3 million passengers, improving accessibility to sites beyond the well-trodden paths.

This, combined with increased infrastructure and new accommodation options, has made Siem Reap more attractive to both foreign and local visitors, according to latest industry figures.

THE PHNOM PENH POST,
CAMBODIA



Robot avatars set for World Expo in Osaka

People who are unable to travel to the World Expo in Osaka next year may still be able to experience the global event — through the eyes of remote-controlled, human-sized robots.

The World Expo 2025 is organized and sanctioned by the Bureau International des Expositions, an intergovernmental organization overseeing and regulating the international

expositions. Next year's expo will run from April to October.

This will be the third time Osaka hosts a global expo, having previously held one in 1970 and another in 1990.

A team of researchers, mainly from the Advanced Telecommunications Research Institute International, or ATRI, plans to introduce the latest technology so people outside the Jap-

anese venue can join visitors and tour one of the pavilions at the site.

Called "avatars" by the Kyoto Prefecture-based ATRI team, the robots will be used during the expo in the "Future of Life" pavilion. Osaka University professor Hiroshi Ishiguro, who is one of Japan's foremost researchers of androids, is behind the development of the pavilion.

About 40 robots, including

androids, will be prepared for use in the pavilion, with several of them able to be controlled by outside participants as avatars.

The team developed an exclusive system for outside visitors to control the avatars with computers via the internet.

Online visitors will be able to use their computer to move the avatars where they want. They can look around the pavilion via a camera set at the chest or other part of the robot.

To date, robot avatars have been used for people who cannot go out-

side of their homes and are limited in their mobility due to medical conditions. They can attend school classes, try out serving customers at cafes and participate in social activities using their avatar.

The team of researchers regards the expo attempt as an experiment for a future society in which humans and robots will safely coexist in the same environment.

They have succeeded in improving wireless technology for the robot avatars to receive commands and have been able to make about

100 robots move in different ways at the same time.

The team said it will be the first time that robot avatars will be operated at the venue in the history of expo events.

Shogo Nishimura, a senior researcher of the ATRI team and specialist in human robot interaction, said: "By using the robot avatars, people who cannot go to the venue will also be able to enjoy the event. We want to show a barrier-free future at the expo."

THE JAPAN NEWS, JAPAN

BUSINESS

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Money supply giving off recovery signs

M1 growth implies market players spending more, breaks 8-month trend

By ZHOU LANXU
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China's key money supply indicator improved for the first time in nine months, pointing to rising spending appetites among market players and adding to signs that the raft of measures to revive confidence has shown initial results, analysts said.

The country's M1 money supply — which consists of cash in circulation and corporate demand deposits — stood at 63.34 trillion yuan (\$8.79 trillion) by the end of October, down 6.1 percent year-on-year, narrowing from a 7.4 percent contraction seen a month earlier, said the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank.

M1 growth had slowed for eight straight months till September and has lingered in negative territory since April, making October's narrower decline the first improvement in the M1 reading in the past three quarters.

Representing how much money is actively being used in the economy, M1 growth is seen as an indicator of private business confidence. Fast M1 growth suggests that market players are spending more, while slow M1 growth indicates less spending and more sluggish economic activity.

"With the continuous implementation of a raft of monetary, fiscal, real estate and capital market policies aimed at stabilizing the economy, market players have become significantly more willing to have liquid funds at their disposal," said Wen Bin, chief economist at China Minsheng Bank.

Wen attributed the M1 improvement to factors including improved property sales driving a shift of residential deposits into corporate deposits, the transfer of the proceeds from government bonds to the accounts of local government units and corporate accounts, and last year's low comparison base.

Meanwhile, the country's M2 — a broader measure of money supply that covers M1 as well as less liquid funds such as time deposits — stood at 309.71 trillion yuan by the end of last month, growing 7.5 percent year-on-year, versus 6.8 percent for September.

The gap between M2 and M1 growth thus narrowed to 13.6

percentage points in October from 14.2 percentage points a month earlier, also indicating that market entities might have become more willing to spend and invest, analysts said.

"In addition to the warming-up of the property market, the improvement in M1 growth is also attributable to an improvement in market expectations," said Wang Qing, chief macroeconomic analyst at Golden Credit Rating International.

Enterprises are now using more demand deposits for operations and investments, and the decline in such deposits has begun to narrow, Wang said.

Wang added that M1 growth may further recover as the PBOC may include residential demand deposits and prepaid funds received by nonbank payment institutions into M1 calculations.

Nevertheless, the PBOC said that new renminbi loans came in at 16.52 trillion yuan in the first 10 months.

This indicates 500 billion yuan in new renminbi loans in October, market calculations showed, down by about 238 billion yuan year-on-year, as residential lending recovered but corporate financing remained weak.

PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng said earlier this month that the central bank will adhere to a supportive monetary policy stance going forward and increase the intensity of monetary policy adjustments.

Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities, said "there is relatively high certainty" that the central bank will implement another cut to the reserve requirement ratio in the remainder of the year to accommodate the increased supply of government bonds.

Ming said that there is limited possibility for further interest rate cuts in the remainder of the year, however, given that the central bank has acknowledged the constraints from banks' net interest margins and renminbi exchange rates.

Rather, Ming said the PBOC is expected to guide commercial banks to further reduce deposit rates to alleviate their profit pressure, better ensuring that policy interest rate reductions can be effectively transmitted into lower financing costs of the real economy.



A BYD vehicle on display during a recent auto expo in Paris, France. GAO JING / XINHUA

Talks on extra EV tariffs to continue

By WANG KEJU
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The European Union and China will continue their negotiations this week seeking an alternative to the imposition of extra tariffs on electric vehicles, on the heels of talks earlier this month in Beijing, which yielded some progress, according to the European Commission, the bloc's executive branch.

While details of the potential agreement remain under wraps, a source close to the negotiations told China Daily on Tuesday that both Beijing and Brussels have demonstrated a willingness and made efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution.

The dispute, which has been simmering for months, centers around unfounded allegations that China's so-called subsidies for its domestic EV industry have created an unfair playing field.

The European Commission concluded its probe on Oct 29 by imposing extra duties on imports of Chinese-made EVs of up to 35.3 percent for a period of five years, on top of the EU's standard 10 percent car import duty.

Though the tariff hikes have already come into force, Chinese and EU technical teams held five rounds of talks in Beijing from Nov 2 to 7, exploring the possibility of a price undertaking arrangement.

Under such a scenario, China would agree to a mutually acceptable export price and volume for its

EVs in exchange for the EU refraining from imposing additional tariffs.

After a week of intensive discussions, both parties have been able to make headway in narrowing differences, particularly around the framework of the agreement and mechanisms for implementation, the source said.

On top of that, China has submitted various proposals of price undertakings and related draft texts to the EU in an effort to find a mutually acceptable solution at an early date, according to the source.

The EU's willingness to continue negotiations is an encouraging sign, suggesting that they are more inclined to find a resolution rather than escalate trade tensions with China, said Feng Zhongping, director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute of European Studies.

In a statement issued on Friday, the European Commission said that "There was technical progress on elements that will need to be addressed to ensure that a price undertaking would be equally effective and enforceable."

"Parties discussed constructively and in-depth how to establish a minimum import price for such a complex product, as well as ways to monitor and enforce the undertaking," the commission added.

The two sides agreed that discussions at the technical level will continue this week via video or other means, building on the progress made so far, the commission stated.

That said, analysts warned that

Brussels should steer clear of separate negotiations with automakers while in talks with the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, which represents the 12 largest Chinese EV makers, including Geely, BYD and SAIC Motor.

SAIC Motor and Geely said on Oct 31 in their respective statements that they have never engaged in any separate negotiations with the EU on price undertakings.

The chamber's price undertaking proposals, developed with the full authorization of different types of Chinese companies, reflect an industry-wide position. The EU's separate talks could only undermine the mutual trust between the two parties and disrupt the overall negotiation process, Feng said.

Jorge Toledo Albinana, the bloc's ambassador to China, said on Friday at the 15th Caixin Summit in Beijing that finding a solution that would create a level playing field where European EV makers can compete with their Chinese counterparts would be an acceptable alternative to tariffs.

As the EU accelerates its push toward a green transformation, China's EV exports to Europe and the growing cooperation between the two economic powerhouses in the EV sector will play a crucial role in supporting the bloc's sustainability goals, said Sang Baichuan, dean of the Institute of International Economy at the University of International Business and Economics.

Briefly

Renminbi weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 64 pips to 7.1991 against the US dollar on Wednesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

More road trials for intelligent vehicles

China will speed up piloting market access for intelligent connected vehicles and permitting them on roads. The country will promote the demonstration and application of autonomous driving and driverless vehicles in key areas, including the Yangtze River Delta region, according to an action plan jointly released by the Ministry of Trans-

port and the National Development and Reform Commission. The plan, which outlines measures to improve transport efficiency and lower logistics costs, says the country will accelerate the construction of smart highways, waterways, ports and hubs, and promote the digital transformation and upgrading of transport infrastructure.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Asian economy needs more regional cooperation

By SHI JING in Shanghai
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Export-import banks should play a more important role in further consolidating ties between Asian economies to drive economic growth against all the uncertainties and complexities in the global market and to address the most pressing tasks such as green transition, said officials and industry experts.

The comments were made on Wednesday during the 29th Asian EXIM Banks Forum annual meeting in Shanghai. Top executives from 13 international export credit agencies (ECAs) attended the meeting.

Despite its growing economic size and rapid development pace, the Asian economy still faces various risks and uncertainties as the world economic growth engine weakens and the global supply chain and industrial chain become more fragmented, Wu Fulin, chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China, said at the meeting.

"In this sense, Asian EXIMs should deepen their cooperation to mobilize more capital from the private sector so that financial institutions can serve economic growth with higher efficiency," he added.

Asian EXIMs should deepen their cooperation to mobilize more capital from the private sector ...

Wu Fulin, chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China

The new round of technology and industrial revolution concerning green transition, trade digitalization and technology innovation has also highlighted that there is room for deeper regional cooperation, said Wu.

Financial volatility has become a major challenge for Asian economies, as exports account for one-third of their economy, said Rak Vorrakitpokatorn, president of Export-Import Bank of Thailand.

Disruptions in the supply chain, including freight rate hikes, the surge in crude oil and food prices, and rising new trade barriers, have also underscored the importance of more collaboration on the regional level, he added.

Hakan Uzun, deputy general manager for the treasury department of Turk Eximbank, said that the changes in the global value chain, the nature of large projects that EXIMs mainly serve, and the increasingly sophisticated transaction methods require procurement from multiple countries. This has pointed to the rising importance of deeper regional cooperation, especially among ECAs, he said.

Climate change is one of the challenges that need strengthening connection and cooperation among Asian countries, said Hayashi Nobumitsu, governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

According to the Asia Development Report jointly released by the Export-Import Bank of China and Fudan University, balancing energy transition and economic growth will become increasingly important in Asia as it targets steady growth.

However, resource endowment, economic stages and technological capabilities among Asian countries vary. This underlines the importance of integrating resources, strengthening coordination and fostering cooperation among different economies, according to the report.

John Hopkins, managing director and CEO of Export Finance Australia, the Australian government's ECA, said they have set up a \$2 billion investment facility for Southeast Asia to support infrastructure, the supply of critical minerals to facilitate green transition, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region.

Hair loss products full steam ahead

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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In the medical product pavilion at China International Import Expo held in Shanghai recently, products that help hair grow were one of the solutions that attracted high visitor traffic, among the hundreds of innovative technologies unveiled by multinational companies.

Exhibitors said medical professionals and industry buyers showed interest beyond their expectations in such products as an increasing number of Chinese have been bothered by hair loss.

Experts say hair loss is caused by genetic factors and external reasons, including staying up late, stress, poor sleep quality, excessive mental work, smoking and a high-calorie diet.

A report released last year by the Shanghai Institute of Nutrition and Health under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, showed that the number of Chinese people troubled by hair loss was rising, and at a younger age. About 56 percent of women

and 48 percent of men suffered from persistent hair loss.

Regro, a medicine for external use for people troubled by hair loss, made its China debut at the booth of biopharmaceutical company Teva.

Regro contains minoxidil, a medication for treating hair loss. The company said the product is expected to help enrich options for hair loss sufferers on the Chinese mainland.

Linda Pang, head of commercial at Teva Greater China, said that Regro is a leading brand in this field and a word-of-mouth product that has been proven in some markets overseas, including Europe and the United States.

"The product is expected to be available to Chinese consumers on cross-border e-commerce platforms soon," said Pang.

However, individuals suffering from hair loss are recommended to adjust their lifestyles, including coping with stress, managing emotions, sleeping better, and eating a healthy diet. "Based on that, using a

suitable product may help them get twice the result with half the effort," she said.

Bayer presented Kangwang Minoxidil Liniment, a medical product applied on scalps to treat hair loss and help hair grow, at this year's CIIE for the first time. The product that has been marketed in China since June contains minoxidil as well.

Zhang Liang, a category innovation manager at Bayer Consumer Health, said the ingredient works by activating atrophic hair follicles and improving blood and oxygen supply to hair follicles, and thereby stimulating growth of new hair.

"Visitors, including some offline retail pharmacies, at CIIE expressed extraordinary interest in the product, which is sold only on e-commerce platforms currently," he said.

Local brand Kangwang joined Bayer in 2014.

When the liniment product reaches a certain level of maturity in the China market, the company will take it global, Zhang said.



Bayer's booth seen during the recent China International Import Expo held in Shanghai. QIU DAOCCN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Some buyers said that they were also interested in products that help tackle insomnia and improve memory, as a rising number of young and middle-aged people pay attention to anti-aging and maintaining good health.

Herbalife, a Los Angeles-based health and wellness company, added a section at its CIIE booth this year, exhibiting products that help

boost immunity and improve sleep quality and brain health. Many of them are not marketed in China yet.

Among these was a health drink, whose main ingredients include red ginseng extract. The product for immunity enhancement entered the China market earlier this year and marked its first presence at the CIIE.

WORLD

Hezbollah hits back after Israeli attacks

Violence shows no sign of abating, as UN official decries 'daily cruelty' in Gaza

BEIRUT/SANAA — The Israeli military pounded Beirut's southern suburbs with airstrikes on Tuesday, mounting one of its heaviest daytime attacks yet on the Hezbollah-controlled area, and struck the middle of the country, where more than 20 people were killed.

Smoke billowed over Beirut as about a dozen strikes hit the southern suburbs starting in mid-morning. After posting warnings to civilians on social media, the Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah targets in Beirut's Dahiyeh area and later claimed it dismantled most of the group's weapons and missile facilities.

Israel said it had taken steps to reduce harm to civilians and repeated its standing accusation that Hezbollah deliberately embeds itself into civilian areas to use residents as human shields, a charge Hezbollah rejects.

In northern Israel, two people were killed in the city of Nahariya when a residential building was struck, Israeli police said. Hezbollah later claimed responsibility for a drone attack that it said was aimed at a military base east of Nahariya.

In Mount Lebanon Province, in the middle of Lebanon, Israeli strikes killed eight people in the village of Baalchmay, southeast of Beirut, and 15 people in Joun village in the Chouf district, Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

In the south, five people were killed in an Israeli strike on Tefahat, two in a raid on Nabatieh and one in the coastal city of Tyre. Another person was killed in a strike in Hermel in the northeast, the ministry said.

Ignited by the Palestine-Israel conflict in Gaza, the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah had been rumbling on for nearly a year before Israel went on the offensive in September, pounding Lebanon with airstrikes and sending troops into the south.

In the besieged Gaza Strip, Israeli military strikes killed at least 14 Palestinians across the enclave on Wednesday, as its forces deepened their incursion into Beit Hanoun town in the north, forcing most remaining residents to leave.

Late on Monday, an Israeli strike hit a makeshift cafeteria used by displaced people in Muwasi, the center of an Israeli-declared "humanitarian zone".

At least 11 people were killed, including two children, according to officials at Nasser Hospital, where the casualties were taken.

The latest bombardment came as the United States said it would not reduce its military support for Israel after a deadline passed for allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

On Tuesday, Palestinian militant group Hamas condemned the US for complicity in the "war of genocide" in the Gaza Strip after



Lebanese civil defense teams begin search and rescue operations on Tuesday following an Israeli attack on the town of Abadiyeh, south of the capital Beirut. HOUSSAM SHBARO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Washington said Israel was not violating US law on the level of aid entering the territory.

Hamas condemned Washington's "claims" that Israel is "taking measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza" and said it was a "confirmation of the full partnership of President (Joe) Biden's administration in the brutal war of genocide against our people".

Joyce Msuya, interim chief of the UN humanitarian agency, OCHA, on Tuesday condemned "daily cruelty" in Gaza.

She described civilians driven from their homes and "forced to witness their family members killed, burned and buried alive" in Gaza, which she called "a wasteland of rubble".

"The daily cruelty we see in Gaza seems to have no limits," Msuya told the United Nations Security Council. "As I brief you, Israeli authorities are blocking humanitarian assistance

from entering North Gaza, where fighting continues, and around 75,000 people remain with dwindling water and food supplies."

Ahmed Bayram, a media adviser for the Middle East at the Norwegian Refugee Council, told China Daily that the evidence on the ground "is hard to dispute".

Famine catastrophe

"Northern Gaza is closer than ever to a famine catastrophe," Bayram said, adding Israel "has imposed a strict blockade on the north, leaving close to 100,000 people fighting for their very survival."

"Civilians are besieged, starved and continue to be killed," he said. "Israel must stop weaponizing aid."

Elsewhere in Yemen, the Houthi group said they launched rocket and drone attacks on Tuesday targeting US aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln* in the Arabian Sea and two US destroyers in the Red Sea.

The attacks were carried out "in response to the British-American aggression on our country (Yemen), and in support to the Palestinian and Lebanese people", Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said.

However, Pentagon spokesman Major General Pat Ryder said the *Abraham Lincoln* "was not attacked, contrary to some of the allegations ... by the Houthis".

Also on Tuesday, at least 10 Houthi operatives were killed in two separate US drone strikes in Yemen's central Al-Bayda Province, a Yemeni government military source told Xinhua news Agency.

The strikes targeted mobile rocket launchers in the As-Sawma'ah and Dhi-Na'im districts, the source said on condition of anonymity.

Jan Yumul in Hong Kong contributed to this story.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

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Fair a showcase for high-tech from around world

By HAO NAN
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Shenzhen in South China's Guangdong province is capturing the attention of the global sci-tech community as it is hosting the 26th China Hi-Tech Fair running from Thursday to Saturday.

This grand event focuses on showcasing cutting-edge technologies from around the world.

The three-day gathering has attracted over 5,000 renowned enterprises and international organizations from more than 100 countries and regions. Among them are over 180 Fortune Global 500 companies and State-owned enterprises, more than 1,000 listed companies, and 2,000-plus gazelle and unicorn firms.

This year's fair emphasizes six innovations: a new model, new function, new highlights, new brands, new empowerment, and new patterns. For instance, the new model signifies a shift from government-led to market-driven organization, with government departments providing guidance and coordination, while market-based institutions leverage their experience to drive the attraction of exhibitions and other activities.

The new function aims to enhance transactions by promoting more high-tech products that are technologically advanced, easy to trade, and have broad prospects.

An international buyer invitation plan is being implemented, encouraging greater participation from countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

This year's event seeks to enhance the long-term intellectual property influence of its brand through innovative promotion methods and formats, positioning the fair as a global launch site for new products and cutting-edge technologies, as well as the initial release venue for new policies.

A professional digital trading platform is being introduced to facilitate the digital transformation of the fair. By constructing a data trading platform, the fair will manage the entire life cycle of its data, including exhibitors, visitors, buyers, and transactions. Utilizing large



An autonomous aerial vehicle developed by EHang is displayed at the China Hi-Tech Fair held in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, in 2023. MAO SIQIAN / XINHUA

data models for analysis, it will track industry trends and market dynamics, releasing authoritative industry reports in a timely manner.

With the theme "Technology Leads Development, Industry Integrates Fusion", the 26th session highlights significant upcoming changes in areas such as national critical equipment, electronic information, artificial intelligence, green energy, and life sciences, featuring concentrated displays of new products and technologies in these fields.

It has exhibition areas for 17 major industries and 22 specialized categories, covering international technologies, major national equipment, electronic information and big data, innovation and entrepreneurship, financial services, smart agriculture and the digital countryside, future technology and smart cities, and industry-education integration.

These areas are expected to comprehensively showcase major achievements of China's new quality productive forces across various segments.

More than 4,300 new technologies, products, and achievements will be unveiled during the fair, alongside over 160 supporting activities to provide extensive opportunities for exchange and cooperation for exhibitors and visitors.

These activities include the release of national major achievements, global buyers' matchmaking conferences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences academicians' conference, the world entrepreneurs' annual conference, and international investment and financing matchmaking events.

Shenzhen's Baoan district, where the fair is located, has organized over 120 companies to attend. It has set up a 270-square-meter exhibition area in Hall 15 and planned three supporting activities.

The district's exhibition area, themed around creating an AI application and innovation cluster in Baoan, showcases the AI industry chain from foundational science to technology and application.

It highlights AI applications in Baoan, featuring products and inno-

vation platforms from over 20 local companies, covering basic computing power and technical services.

One of the district's supporting activities is the AI applications and innovative achievements release conference held on Friday.

This event, mainly hosted by the management committee of Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone and the Baoan district government, will promote the industry environment, policy framework, and service systems for AI development in the Qianhai cooperation zone and the district.

The Qianhai cooperation zone has developed a series of AI innovation and application demonstration scenarios in fields such as finance, manufacturing, logistics, and cultural creation.

Meanwhile, Baoan, with its rich industry chain and advanced manufacturing capabilities, has also become an innovation cluster for AI industrial applications and an accelerator for industrialization in the sector.

AI and aerospace leading Baoan's seven key sectors

By HAO NAN

Baoan district in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, has been strategically focusing on the development of seven key industries: artificial intelligence, aerospace technology, new materials, robotics, intelligent sensors, high-end medical devices and biopharmaceuticals.

Among these, AI stands out, driving significant industrial growth with a comprehensive industry chain already in place.

In the first half of this year, Baoan's AI industry achieved an output value of 22 billion yuan (\$3.06 billion), marking a year-on-year increase of 7.6 percent, accounting for 28 percent of Shenzhen's total AI output.

The district is home to 424 AI companies, including 267 that are above designated size. Notably, Eagle Soul's AI data center has been recognized as a national major project within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the Baoan cloud computing and data center has been designated as a national new-type data center.

Baoan has established a solid foundation in industrial machine vision and smart city algorithms. Companies such as HQVT Technology and Julong Video have been acknowledged as national specialized and innovative "little giant" businesses due to their strengths in intelligent vision technologies.

Approximately 80 percent of AI companies in Baoan operate in the technology application sector, contributing about 70 percent of the district's total AI output value. Several application demonstration scenarios have been successfully initiated in the district.

Baoan has gathered leading companies in large model technology, such as Tencent and Vivo, which are expected to deeply empower the local AI industry. Tencent, for example, offers a comprehensive range of products, including model bases, algo-

22 billion yuan

Output value generated by the artificial intelligence industry of Baoan district of Shenzhen in the first half of this year

algorithm frameworks, development platforms, and industry applications. Vivo has developed its own BlueOS operating system, enabling interconnectivity across smart home, smart wearable, and smart transportation fields.

Moreover, Baoan has formed a supportive AI industry ecosystem, featuring an "internet plus" future technology city and several innovation and demonstration parks.

The future technology city, set to become Tencent's global headquarters, will cover an area of 809,000 square meters with a total development scale of 2 million sq m.

Upon completion, it will host seven major industrial clusters and attract upstream and downstream enterprises within Tencent's industry chains and business ecosystems.

The aerospace industry is another highlight in Baoan, with a well-established industry chain that includes product research and development, manufacturing, system integration, and application services.

The district has nurtured nearly 100 key enterprises in satellite operations, aerospace materials, aircraft and component manufacturing, satellite terminals and chips, and satellite applications.

A notable achievement in Baoan's aerospace sector is the communication satellite APSTAR-6D, operated by APT Mobile SatCom Limited.

This satellite is a part of China's first global high-throughput broadband satellite communication system, boasting the largest communication capacity, highest output power, and most complex design in the sector.

WORLD

FRIENDS AFAR

Editor's note: China Daily presents the series Friends Afar to tell the stories of people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries. Through the vivid narration of the people in the stories, readers can get a better understanding of a country that is boosting openness.

Pakistani scholar plants dreams with soybeans

By XUE JINGQI in Hong Kong
idaxue@chinadailyhk.com

Hafiz Mamoan Rehman, born in a small village in Pakistan's Punjab Province, grew up surrounded by golden wheat and cotton as white as snow. Unlike the generations before him who worked the land, he chased academic excellence and sought knowledge beyond the familiar terrain of his homeland.

Rehman made a journey into the fields of biotechnology, where he grappled with the intricacies of herbicide resistance and genetically modified wheat. In 2016, while pursuing his doctorate at Chonnam National University in South Korea, he chose soybeans as the subject of his long-term research.

Later, he sent resumes to soybean experts across the globe. It was a message from Lam Hon-ming, a professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong's School of Life Sciences, that set the stage for what was to come.

Lam, a prominent expert in agricultural science, had decoded the genomes of 31 soybean varieties, bred non-genetically modified drought and salinity-tolerant germplasm, and was the first from Hong Kong to participate in a national-level space agricultural research project.

Two years later, Rehman joined Lam's lab, completing a successful three-year postdoctoral stint. Hong Kong became a dream for him, a place where he built a family and created memories, including the birth of his child at Prince of Wales Hospital.

Yet, despite the allure of the vibrant city, Rehman never lost sight of his goal — returning home and using his knowledge to help his people.

After years of learning, Rehman is now at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, developing local soybean varieties suited for the conditions in Pakistan.

Pakistan, primarily an agrarian nation, faces challenges due to limited crop diversity and the adverse effects of climate change. With most of its agricultural land dedicated to five traditional crops and suffering from low soybean yield and quality, the country relies heavily on soybean imports for animal feed.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres once said that Pakistan is one of the countries most severely affected by climate change, a fact not lost on Rehman as he sought to introduce soybeans as a sustainable crop in his homeland.

Sowing hope

Iqar Ahmad Khan, vice-chancellor of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, explained that Pakistan spent up to \$2 billion annually importing about 300,000 metric tons of soybeans. "What's important now is to bring in soybean as a mainstream green crop," he said.

Achieving this goal meant finding the right seeds, and that is where Lam's expertise came into the picture. He had already cultivated the Longhuang series soybean in China's Gansu province, which is known for its high yield and quality even in arid and saline conditions.

In 2023, Lam, for the first time, visited Pakistan, taking with him a branch of seeds. Unlike the Longhuang series, what Lam prepared for Pakistan is genetically unstable

soybean seeds, still undergoing change, with the hope of developing a variety that could thrive in the local environment.

Early this May, Lam led a team, including agricultural scientists, engineers and seed experts from Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, alongside a group of Pakistani students from two Hong Kong middle schools, that arrived in Lahore, Punjab, to make a straightforward agricultural exchange.

Lam said he hoped these students could observe their homeland from a different perspective and understand the connection between Hong Kong and Pakistan.

Punjab, Pakistan's breadbasket, is a province with more than 100 million people and the most developed agricultural sector in the country.

"Introducing soybeans to Punjab is not an easy task," said Rehman, who noted the crop's novelty to local farmers.

Zhang Guohong, a retired seasoned expert from the Gansu Academy of Agricultural Sciences, bridged language barriers through his extensive agricultural knowledge, communicating with local farmers about irrigation, fertilization and cultivation techniques.

The high temperatures of Punjab, edging close to 50 C, posed a significant challenge. "The extremely hot weather almost melted everything," Zhang said.

The resilient seeds provided by Lam sprouted, offering a glimmer of hope. "It's only by starting from a seed and birthing together that they can develop new varieties that truly belong there," said Lam.

China, with only 9 percent of the world's arable land and 6 percent of its freshwater resources, has sustained nearly one-fifth of the global population.

Lam, 64, said China's experiences in rural vitalization over the past decade or so have provided valuable lessons for other developing countries.

Official data show that China has dispatched more than 2,000 agricultural experts and technicians to more than 70 countries and regions worldwide.

At the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Iqar Ahmad Khan said the institution has signed more than 50 cooperation agreements with numerous Chinese universities and research institutions.

Rehman also has strong ties with China. He showed the shirt he was wearing, saying it was a commemorative T-shirt given to him during a previous agricultural inspection in Hainan province, and had a Chinese logo printed on it.

And this time, the seeds from Hong Kong, China, did not disappoint him.

Approximately 3.5 hectares have been planted with soybeans that are anticipated to produce an impressive yield of 2,500 kilograms per hectare come summer. Additionally, Rehman witnessed a breakthrough three months into planting, with the soybeans segregating positively toward a locally adapted variety.

The collaboration between China and Pakistan in agricultural development highlighted the enduring bonds between the two nations, he said. "Building international friendships, connecting people at the grassroots level, and using science to help those in need have always been the core values of our Hong Kong team."



Hafiz Mamoan Rehman gives a thumbs-up in the soybean field.

XUE JINGQI / CHINA DAILY

Plastic is not fantastic



Activists from Ecological Observation and Wetland Conservation Indonesia stand before a sculpture depicting the human body filled with plastic waste in Surabaya, Indonesia, on Wednesday, urging the government to tighten supervision of plastic packaging products. ROBERTUS PUDYANTO / GETTY IMAGES

Trump picks Musk to lead 'efficiency' team

Series of figures added to the incoming administration as team takes shape

WASHINGTON — US President-elect Donald Trump announced on Tuesday that the world's richest man, Elon Musk, will lead a new US government efficiency group tasked with cutting federal waste, as he added a series of figures to his incoming administration.

Musk became a key ally to Trump during his campaign, reportedly spending more than \$100 million to help Trump win and repeatedly boosting Trump's candidacy on X, the platform he owns.

Trump said Musk and another stalwart ally, businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, would co-lead a "Department of Government Efficiency".

Trump said the new department will realize long-held Republican dreams and "provide advice and guidance from outside of government", signaling the roles of Musk and Ramaswamy would be informal, without requiring Senate approval and allowing Musk to remain the head of electric car company Tesla, social media platform X and rocket company SpaceX.

In a post on X, Musk said the department's actions would be published online "for maximum transparency" and would include a "leaderboard for most insanely dumb spending of your tax dollars".

Musk already stands to benefit from Trump's victory with the billionaire entrepreneur expected to wield extraordinary influence to help his companies and secure favorable government treatment.

Adding a government portfolio to Musk's plate could benefit the market value of his companies and favored businesses such as artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency.

"It's clear that Musk will have a massive role in the Trump White House with his increasing reach clearly across many federal agen-



Elon Musk



Vivek Ramaswamy

foreign policy and harsh crackdowns on immigration.

TV host gets job

Late on Tuesday, Trump named military veteran and Fox News host Pete Hegseth as his incoming defense secretary.

Trump separately named Congressman Mike Waltz, a former special forces officer, as his incoming national security adviser. Trump also announced he was choosing his former director of national intelligence John Ratcliffe to lead the Central Intelligence Agency.

On the domestic front, Trump has signaled he will support his extreme election campaign rhetoric aimed at stirring fear and anger among illegal immigrants ahead of promised mass deportations.

After Trump's election win, the Senate's Democratic majority began a crusade on Tuesday to confirm as many new federal judges

as possible to avoid leaving vacancies that Republican Trump could fill after taking office.

With Republicans set to take control of the chamber on Jan 3, the Senate on Tuesday held a confirmation vote on one of Biden's judicial nominees, former prosecutor April Perry, for the first time since Trump won the election. The Senate voted 51-44 in favor of her becoming a US district court judge in Illinois.

In another development, the judge overseeing Trump's criminal hush money case has put off ruling on whether the president-elect's conviction should be thrown out on immunity grounds, enabling prosecutors to weigh the next steps following his election victory.

Justice Juan Merchan had been due to rule on Tuesday on Trump's argument that the US Supreme Court's decision in July that presidents are immune from prosecution involving their official acts meant the New York state case should be dismissed.

Instead, Merchan granted a request by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's office to have until Nov 19 to consider how to approach the case in light of Trump's looming inauguration in January 2025, email correspondence made public on Tuesday showed.

Trump's scheduled Nov 26 sentencing is now widely expected to be postponed.

Trump in May became the first US president, former or sitting, convicted of a crime when a jury in Manhattan found him guilty on 34 felony counts. Trump, who pleaded not guilty, vowed to appeal the verdict after sentencing.

Trump, 78, was set to make a triumphant return to Washington on Wednesday, meeting Biden in the Oval Office.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Labour hit by council losses in UK

By JULIAN SHEA in London
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Since taking power in the country for the first time in 14 years at the general election in July, the ruling Labour Party in the United Kingdom has lost more than 40 percent of the council seats it was defending in local elections across England, Scotland and Wales, new data have shown.

Although Labour increased its number of parliamentary seats from 201 in the 2019 election to 412 in 2024, its share of the vote only went up by 1.6 percentage points to 33.7 percent.

The previously ruling Conservative Party saw its seats slide from 365 in 2019 to 121 in 2024, with 23.7 percent of the vote, down by nearly 20 points, so Labour's victory was significantly fueled by public rejection of the main alternative option.

In council elections since July, Labour has defended 58 seats, retaining 34 but losing 24 others, to parties from all across the political spectrum, but most significantly the Conservatives, who have taken 14 of them. Labour has also taken five more seats that it did not previously hold.

Political analyst David Cowling, who conducted the research, told the Financial Times that the speed of the swing back from Labour to the Conservatives, who recently selected Kemi Badenoch as party leader in succession to Rishi Sunak, was remarkable.

"You would expect a governing party to take a bit of a hit after a general election, but certainly not as immediate nor as drastic as this," he said.

Another analyst, former Conservative Member of Parliament Robert Hayward, said it was "unprecedented that an incoming government has been subjected to the wrath of voters in so many councils over the last four months".

Across September and October, Labour lost 12 seats in less than a month, results that came after party leader Keir Starmer's first months as prime minister were blighted by negative publicity about gifts and hospitality he had accepted from party donors.

Although the turnout for council by-elections is usually low, and the key issues are often local rather than national concerns, the results can be unrepresentative. Luke Tryl from the More in Common think tank told the Daily Telegraph newspaper that the results should be a worry for Labour at a national level.

"Firstly, the fragmentation of our politics into a multiparty system where the Greens and Reform occupy the left and right flanks is continuing," he noted.

"Secondly, the rapid drop in Keir Starmer's approval ratings and the lack of honeymoon for this administration is so far being played out in these by-elections, with voters already showing a willingness to punish Labour."

Replying for the government, a spokesperson told the Financial Times: "This new Labour government inherited unprecedented challenges from the Conservatives, with crumbling public services and crippled public finances. We've already begun fixing the foundations and delivering change."

XINHUA

Chinese, Turkish experts plan to explore Neolithic sites

SANLIUREFA, Turkey — Chinese and Turkish experts are showing interest in collaborating on archaeological research at one of the world's oldest Neolithic sites, located in southeastern Turkey.

Archaeologists from both nations gathered at the first World Neolithic Congress, held in Sanliurfa from Nov 4 to 8, to discuss various aspects of archaeological research on the Neolithic Age.

Nearly 1,000 scholars from 63 countries took part in the event, which took place in a region that harbors globally recognized Neolithic sites such as Gobekli Tepe and Karahan Tepe. The region, steeped in history, has long played a crucial role in uncovering the mysteries of the Neolithic period, a transformative era that laid the foundation for human civilization over the past 12,000 years.

The two sites are part of the greater "Tas Tepeler" or "Stone Hills" region, where archaeologists have uncovered monumental statues and architectural elements, shedding light on the dawn of human civilization.

"We are planning a new cooperation with Chinese colleagues in the future on the Tas Tepeler Project," said Necmi Karul, the Turkish archaeologist leading excavations in the region.

He said that some 20 Chinese archaeologists participated in the congress and hailed the spirit of scientific cooperation showcased during the discussions.

Topics explored included bioarchaeology, dating methods, physical anthropology, and geoarchaeology.

One of the Chinese experts, Wang Fen, from Shandong University, said she was amazed by the Gobekli Tepe site, which, she said, may "challenge our historical cognition".

She emphasized the value of cross-

cultural communication in archaeological research and highlighted the "great prospect and space for cooperation" between China and Turkey in Neolithic archaeology.

In recent decades, archaeologists working across this Turkish region have discovered over 20 sites from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. These sites often feature monumental architecture, including T-shaped or rounded pillars, large decorated stone benches and intricate carvings of humans and animals.

Benefits of cooperation

Liu Xinyi, an associate professor and deputy director of the Department of Anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis, emphasized that significant Neolithic sites discovered in eastern Anatolia have consistently benefited from international collaboration.

"The advantage of international

cooperation is that, on the one hand, the methods are different, and everyone is good at different things," he said, emphasizing the need for international interdisciplinary cooperation.

In his view, scholars living and growing up in different cultural backgrounds can provide more diverse findings.

Gobekli Tepe, a UNESCO World Heritage site overlooking the Mesopotamian plateau, has intrigued researchers since its excavation in the 1990s. Though widely thought to be a ritual site built by hunter-gatherers, its exact purpose remains debated.

In 2023, a painted wild boar statue was uncovered, revealing the use of pigments in prehistoric art and highlighting the artistic sophistication of Gobekli Tepe's builders.

COMMENT

Editorials

EU should not accept hand-me-down judgments of China from Washington

Given the vast common ground that China and the European Union share, especially on economic globalization and free trade, there has been hope that, with a new leadership, the EU will work with China to push forward their pragmatic cooperation and resolve the differences that exist between them through dialogue.

The reelection of Donald Trump as US president has added a sense of urgency for China and the EU to work together to find a coordinated response to what is expected to be aggressive US trade policies. Trump imposed punitive tariffs on key industries in both China and the EU during his first term, and pledged in his campaign to impose hefty tariffs of more than 60 percent on Chinese imports, and a 10 percent blanket tariff on all imported goods including those from Europe.

That the US president-elect has warned the EU it will have to "pay a big price" for not buying enough US exports should have given the members of the European Parliament pause for thought in deciding who will take up posts on the European Commission's next leadership team. They should have second thoughts if they went into the hearings that began in Brussels on Nov 4 seeking to decouple the bloc from China.

Maros Sefcovic, the EU's commissioner-designate for trade and economic security, has described China as the most challenging trading partner of the 27-member bloc. Though Sefcovic advocates for removing trade barriers and promoting free and fair trade, he has taken a tough position on China, accusing the country of not providing a level playing field and fair market access to European businesses, which, in his view, is "threatening our industry in the European Union".

Such politically motivated presumptions are wrong, of course, and will only cast a shadow over future China-EU economic and trade cooperation if they are translated into policies.

The EU has already imposed hefty tariffs on made-in-China electric vehicles starting this month, and the last thing the two sides need at the moment is an escalation of trade tensions that may hamper a negotiated settlement of the trade dispute. After all, a two-front trade war, with the US and China, does not in any way serve the EU's own interests.

China and the EU, with their annual trade volume reaching nearly \$800 billion, have shared interests that far outweigh their differences, and such a mutually beneficial bond marked by interdependence should not be severed by bias or political short-sightedness.

That negotiators from the two sides are still in talks on EV price undertakings, and China and France have resumed discussions on the duties Beijing has imposed on European brandy imports indicate the two sides are committed to resolving differences through dialogue and consultations, and working for mutual benefit and common development.

Attention should be given to guard against attempts by China hawks within the EU to position the country as a major threat to the bloc's geopolitical security, which risks shaking the foundation of their comprehensive strategic partnership.

The EU's foreign policy chief-designate Kaja Kallas, in a recent confirmation hearing, claimed that "China needs to also feel a higher cost" for keeping Russia supplied with technology needed for its "special military operation" in Ukraine, arguing that "without China's support, Russia would not be able to continue its war with the same force".

Such rhetoric, which reflects the Cold-War mentality that has reared its ugly head in Europe, has no basis in facts, and only sows seeds of division and mistrust between China and the EU. It could also compromise efforts to find a political solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The remarks are also provocative as they are meant to pit China, which is not a party to the conflict, against Europe in the hope of fueling animosity against the country. This goes against the consensus the two sides have reached to strengthen communication and coordination on global affairs and oppose camp-based confrontation.

It is to be hoped that the new EU leadership team will quickly rise above such prejudiced and ill-considered judgments and look at China without using a distorted ideological lens.

Stable Sino-Japanese ties serve both sides

Shortly after Shigeru Ishiba's reelection as Japanese prime minister on Monday, he proposed a plan that the Japanese government will provide at least 10 trillion yen (\$64.5 billion) of support before the 2030 fiscal year to promote the development of the country's semiconductor and artificial intelligence industries.

The move clearly indicates the Japanese leader is well aware that whether or not his government can consolidate the backbone industries of Japan to help the country address its long-term economic woes will decide his political future.

That Ishiba was reelected hours after he and his Cabinet resigned demonstrates the division in Japan's political circle as well as the fact that neither side has the confidence that it can help the world's fourth-largest economy weather through its long-term structural problems that were aggravated during the Fumio Kishida government's time in office.

In addition to 10 trillion yen to support AI and semiconductor research and development, the new economic countermeasures proposed by the Ishiba Cabinet include financial support for low-income families to help them cope with rising prices.

During Kishida's initial tenure, although his Cabinet advocated the promotion of "new capitalism" policies, promising a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution, the yen experienced historic depreciation against the dollar and the euro, which, while good for export companies, increased the price pressure at home, where people's real wage growth has actually been negative.

These economic issues are closely related to Japan's one-sided pro-United States diplomacy, which comes at a high cost to Japan's ties with its major trading partner, China. To please the US, the Japanese government is raising large amounts of debt to cover the government's fast rising expenditure on security.

The high defense spending has forced the government to resort to printing excessive amounts of banknotes that has fueled inflation, affecting ordinary people the most, which explains the low support rate for the Kishida government. Since it is difficult for the government to overhaul its foreign policy, it is almost impossible for it to make breakthroughs in addressing the country's weak economy in the near future as evidenced by the failure of the Ishiba-led ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito to win a majority in the country's legislature. The lack of confidence and consensus would pull the rug from under the Ishiba government's feet when it comes to some crucial reforms.

Japan's outbound economy, limited natural resources and aging population mean its economy relies on relations with its major trading partners, particularly China. Reducing its economic and trade cooperation with China further squeezes the policy and financial space for Japan to overcome pressures from its labor shortage and rising labor costs caused by an aging population and a declining birthrate.

What Japan lacks most for its AI and high-end chip industries is not government subsidies or stimulus packages but international cooperation, a market and manufacturing bases to industrialize and commercialize its know-how. Maintaining the stability of the industry and supply chains between Japan and China serves the interests of both sides, and is crucial if the Ishiba government is to bail out the Japanese economy and enhance people's livelihoods.

China is ready to work with Japan to further leverage their respective comparative advantages, explore more new growth poles of cooperation, and jointly safeguard the stability and smooth flow of their industry and supply chains.

Meanwhile, the upcoming APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima, capital of Peru, followed by the G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro should provide Ishiba an opportunity to reevaluate Japan's gains and losses over the past few years and ensure Japan plays its due role as a key member of the Asia-Pacific economic community promoting free trade and economic globalization.

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Continuous opening-up benefits Asia-Pacific region and the world

A recent guideline document adopted by the State Council vowed greater efforts to promote the steady growth of foreign trade to provide strong support for sustained economic recovery.

Although China's foreign trade has maintained overall steady development, the current international economic situation remains complex, engendering many uncertainties for China's foreign trade and exerting pressures on its exports in the future.

The document is designed to provide all-round support to foreign trade enterprises, including measures to offer financial support, promote the development of cross-border e-commerce, facilitate cross-border trade, and increase customs clearance convenience. These measures will further tap the potential of China's foreign trade through institutional reforms, strengthen new forms of business and ensure the sector is on a sound footing for long-term development.

Despite rising protectionism, China's exports have maintained high growth and consolidated the country's advantages by establishing a more resilient supply chain system and sharpening its global competitiveness.

As a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, China's opening-up has made it grow from being an

early participant to a major player of APEC.

The development of China and the Asia-Pacific is based on openness, inclusiveness, and learning from each other, rather than confrontation, beggar-thy-neighbor policies and "a small yard and high fence" approach. This is why the Asia-Pacific has become the most dynamic region, contributing 70 percent to the world's economic growth.

China's development benefits from the Asia-Pacific, and will benefit the Asia-Pacific. China has never stopped opening-up to the Asia-Pacific and the regions beyond, and will never stop.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

Time to buy plane tickets and holiday longer

Starting next year, the Spring Festival and Labor Day holidays will each be longer by a day following a revision of the national festival and commemorative day holiday regulations on Tuesday. This means people will have more time to rest and enjoy the festivities.

Earlier holidays would mean longer workdays before and after, which not everyone liked. But the regulation says that the longest period of continuous work before and after statutory holidays should not exceed six days.

Since its establishment, the national regulation on holidays has been revised in 1999, 2007 and 2013 following broad social interaction and consensus.

The latest revision continues this trend, extending people's holiday time and enhancing their holiday rights.

However, while workers believe the longer the holidays the better, for the overall economy, normal functioning must be ensured. That's why debates about holidays are often part of the public discourse, while the government

fixes holidays after seeking public opinion and forming a consensus.

Following Tuesday's announcement, on social networking sites many posted comments such as "extremely happy" or "hurry up and buy plane tickets for travel".

As the economy continues to develop, holidays will be optimized too. Through timely adjustments they will better balance the rhythm of social life, and people's needs and expectations.

— BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Help developing countries cope with climate change

In recent years, climate change has had an increasing impact globally, with frequent extreme weather events posing unprecedented challenges to people's lives and property as well as to economic and social development. Strengthening early warning systems and enhancing climate adaptation capacity have become increasingly important and urgent.

To that end, countries should improve their risk assessment capabilities and promote the standardization of climate risk assessments to provide scientific support for climate governance. They should also build a global early warning network, sharing technology, enhancing system interconnectivity, and work together to improve global early warning systems, and establish a climate adaptation partnership.

China is willing to work with all countries to advance the implementation of the United Nations' Early Warnings for All initiative, and make new and greater contributions to addressing climate change, Chinese Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang said on Tuesday when addressing a high-level meeting organized by China on the issue during the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, Azerbaijan.

During the meeting, China's Action Plan on Early Warning for Climate Change Adaptation (2025-27) was published, demonstrating the country's determination to make the most of what it has to contribute to the global response to the challenge.

As part of these efforts, China intends to develop and implement a South-South cooperation flagship project for early warning in response to climate change, supporting other developing countries through the provision of meteorological observation equipment, early warning systems, and capacity-building training.

Aside from the pressing need to respond to the impacts of extreme weather, COP29 is considered a climate financing conference to address the long-term imbalanced funding problems that have been hindering global efforts to combat climate change. Its core agenda is to adopt a new climate finance target, which will be the first reassessment of the amount and type of funds received by developing countries for climate action in 15 years, and a new collective quantified target (NCQT) will be generated to replace the \$100 billion annual target set in 2009.

This new target will help vulnerable

countries adopt clean energy and other low-carbon solutions and build resilience to worsening climate impacts.

Developed and developing countries naturally have different views on issues such as the financiers, sources of funds, and scale of funds involved in addressing climate change. They should adhere to the principles, provisions and mandates of the Paris Agreement and ensure that the relevant provisions of the Paris Agreement are not renegotiated or rewritten.

Developed countries should accordingly fulfill their funding obligations and continue to take the lead in mobilizing funds, and encourage other countries to participate voluntarily.

To be specific, the developed countries should fulfill their commitment to donate \$100 billion per year to developing countries before 2025, double their adaptation funding, and further expand the funding scale after 2025 as agreed before, and implement the NCQT if it can be agreed on during the COP29.

The funding source should be mainly public funds of developed economies. Through supporting global climate actions with public funds, rather than the private sector, the developed countries can send positive and stable policy signals to the international community.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT

Carlos Aquino

China and Peru jointly building a better future

Peru is the second-largest investment destination for China in Latin America, and about 36 percent of Peru's exports of goods were destined for China last year, consolidating China's position as the biggest trade partner of Peru and further deepening the trade and investment relations between the two countries.

In 2008, Peru and China signed a strategic partnership agreement to not only boost bilateral trade but also deepen cooperation in areas such as international relations, including cooperation in global forums, and align their trade policies.

In 2009, Peru became the second country (after Chile) in Latin America to sign a free trade agreement with China, with the agreement taking effect in 2010. And in 2013, the two countries signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement that elevated bilateral relationship to a higher level.

In September 2016, then Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski visited China on his first foreign trip, which showed the growing importance of China-Peru relations for Lima. And former president Pedro Castillo, who succeeded Kuczynski, paid a visit to the Chinese embassy one week before assuming his post in July 2021.

Besides, incumbent Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra met with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the APEC Leaders Meeting in San Francisco, California, last year, and paid a visit to China in June this year with a



Peru's geographical location in the center of South America's Pacific coast makes it the gateway to Latin American markets for Asian economies, and the port of departure to Asia for Latin American countries.

large delegation of ministers and businessmen during which the two sides signed several agreements.

According to figures given by Chinese Ambassador to Peru Song Yang during an interview in September, about 200 Chinese companies have invested about \$30 billion in Peru. But according to a study by the American Enterprise Institute published in July, between 2005 and June 2024, China has invested about \$31.8 billion in Peru.

More importantly, President Xi will attend the APEC Leaders Meeting in Lima and also pay a state visit to Peru from Thursday to Sunday. Since Peru joined the Belt and Road

Initiative in 2019, Chinese investments in Peru's infrastructure sector have significantly increased. In particular, China is building a seaport in Chancay, about 55 kilometers north of Lima, which will be the most modern port on the South Pacific coast of Latin America. Owned 60 percent by China's COSCO Shipping Corporation, the port will cost more than \$3 billion and will be the gateway to Peru from Asia as well as an exchange and distribution hub for South America.

Peru's geographical location in the center of South America's Pacific coast makes it the gateway to Latin American markets for Asian economies, and the port of departure to Asia for Latin American countries.

Peru already exports more than half its goods to Asia, with over 97 percent of them being transported by ocean-going vessels. There are no direct maritime links to the Asian markets from Peru, or for that matter from any South American country. But thanks to the Chancay port, South American countries will now have a direct maritime route to Asia.

The other major Chinese investments by Chinese enterprises in Peru in recent years were made by China Three Gorges Project Corporation and China Southern Power Grid International, which separately acquired two companies which generated and supplied electricity to Lima. In 2019, China Yangtze Power International, a subsidiary of China Three Gorges Project Corporation, acquired Semptra Energy International

for \$3.59 billion, and in 2023 China Southern Power Grid International paid \$2.9 billion to acquire Enel. Chinese companies have also bought other Peruvian electricity companies.

Moreover, Peru became a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, contributing \$154.6 million, the highest amount by a Latin American country, to the bank's fund. Only five other Latin American countries have contributed to the AIIB's fund: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay. In fact, Peru's contribution to the AIIB's fund accounts for 84 percent of the total by Latin American countries.

China is also investing in training talents for 5G technology, with Chinese telecom giant Huawei setting up laboratories and research centers in universities such as San Marcos National University and National University of Engineering, two of the biggest and most prestigious universities in Peru.

Peru's railways and highways are other potential investment areas for Chinese companies. Every country needs to build modern infrastructure to boost its economic development. And Latin American countries need to improve their infrastructure to achieve higher growth — which they can achieve through the Belt and Road Initiative framework.

The author is an economist and director of the Center for Asian Studies at Peru's National University of San Marcos. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Liu Dongmei and Huang Ning

Sino-US tech ties need deepening, not 'decoupling'

With voters in the United States electing a new president, speculation on the trajectory Sino-US relations will take, particularly in the realm of technology, has increased. The new US president, with ample business experience and fewer political constraints, has the opportunity to shift away from the current administration's trial-and-error approach and adopt a more rational and pragmatic stance on China.

During the election campaign, the president-elect laced his speeches with anti-China rhetoric and accusations, and proposed to take measures that could impede bilateral relations in high-tech. However, it is important to understand that campaign rhetoric in the US often differs from the actual decisions taken by the government — an inherent feature of US electoral politics. Hopefully, the interests of the American people should guide the White House policies.

Ideally, the right thing to do for the new administration would be to abandon the emotion-driven high-tech policy toward China. Both empirical evidence and logical reasoning indicate that the ongoing restrictions on technological exchanges between the two sides are detrimental to not only China but the United States as well.

A key assumption underpinning US restrictions on technology exchanges is that China's technological progress poses a threat to the US' high-tech sector. Such assumptions, however, do not hold up to reason or scrutiny. The complementary and mutually beneficial aspects of technological research and exchanges, academic collaboration, patent sharing and intellectual property rights trade far outweigh the blind competition and confrontation elements.

Besides, Washington's policies have compelled some US companies to shift their manufacturing and other units from China to the US or other countries.

China has the highest number of doctoral candidates in the world. As a matter of fact, US multinational corporations have reaped substantial benefits from their investments and research and development operations in China, and leveraged China's human resources to acquire valuable intellectual property.

The growth of China's high-tech manufacturing is closely related to its integration with the global value chain led by the US. A significant part of China's high-tech exports involves processing, which requires substantial imports of components and intermediate goods — many of which come from the US.

Therefore, claims that China's technological development is a threat to the US are largely politically motivated, especially because evidence shows that US policies aimed at "decoupling" and "de-risking" from the Chinese economy have not yielded the intended results. For China, these policies may have caused short-term disruptions in its industry and supply chains, but in the ultimate analysis, they have fostered alternatives, by prompting the country to expedite original and innovative R&D.

Besides, Washington's policies have compelled some US companies to shift their manufacturing and other units from China to the US or other countries.

Interestingly, the US International Trade Commission has said that the cost of imposing extra tariffs on Chinese products under the provisions of Section 232 and Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 is being passed down to US businesses and consumers. Many US experts have questioned the wisdom of decoupling the US and Chinese economies, despite the chances of the two sides reaching a consensus on export control policies becoming increasingly difficult.

Also, the US' approach has inadvertently increased the burden on many global companies and consumers. For instance, US restrictions on exporting semiconductors to China have disrupted the global semiconductor supply chain, forcing companies in Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands and other economies to navigate between increased operational costs and reduced market demand, potentially leading to overcapacity in advanced countries' chip industries.

Additionally, the US is using its "long-arm jurisdiction" and political pressure to force third-country companies to join the technological blockade bloc against China, harming their interests. The inconsistency between the US' self-proclaimed commitment to free market and fair competition and its frequent use of non-market, unjust policies to target other countries has eroded the country's credibility and sowed distrust between the US-led West and developing countries.

Improving China-US tech relations is essential not only for the mutual interests of the two sides but also to invigorate economic globalization. The new US administration, therefore, should adopt a pragmatic and flexible approach to its technology policy toward China, lift the export controls and extra tariffs on Chinese products, promote cooperation in high-tech and expand personnel exchanges. And the two countries should enhance communication and collaboration, work together to steer bilateral relations toward a cooperative and mutually beneficial future.

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Wei Xinyu

Climate-smart agriculture to address climate change

Climate change is one of the most serious common challenges the world is facing today, and one of the worst impacts of climate change has been on the agriculture sector, affecting development patterns and threatening global food security.

Climate change-induced natural disasters such as floods, droughts, heat waves, rising temperatures in summer and increasingly cold winters have been more frequently hitting China. Crops in some regions have suffered heavy damage, significantly affecting the stability of agricultural production. Therefore, the country has to take more measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, so as to better safeguard agriculture.

In fact, the central government attaches great importance to adaptation to climate change, and has implemented a series of policies to enhance the resilience of agriculture to climate change. By taking such measures, China is also contributing to the global fight against climate change and helping improve global climate governance.

In terms of policy formulation, the government has used strategic planning, policies and regulations, such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2035, Implementation Plan for Agricultural and Rural Emission Reduction and Carbon Sequestration and the 14th Five-Year National Agricultural Green Development Plan, to expedite the implementation of the action plans to make the agricultural sector more resilient to climate change, and minimize the impacts of climate change on agriculture.

The government has also drafted the China Climate Change Adaptation Progress Report (2023) and China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change (2024) to systematically review the progress and effectiveness of China's climate adaptation work, and promote policy formulation and actions at all levels.

When it comes to providing scientific and technological support, China has been promoting research and development of key technologies to make the agriculture sector more resilient to climate change. China has also expedited the studies of germplasm resources adapted to climate change, because plant genetic resources underpin the security of agriculture. And while breeding high-yield, stress-resistant and high-quality varieties of grains, it has been promoting the integration of pest control and crop cultivation adapted to climate change, as well as developing dry farming and water conservation technologies, so as to comprehensively enhance the agricultural food system's resilience to climate change.

As for agricultural disaster mitigation and response, the government has taken prevention, mitigation and relief measures, while bolstering the moni-



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

These projects have effectively enhanced the climate resilience of agriculture and created models for international agricultural response to climate change.

toring, early warning and unified prevention and control systems against major pests and diseases in key areas.

The impact of natural disasters can be reduced by establishing a preliminary natural disaster monitoring and early warning system, issuing disaster prevention and mitigation plans in advance, improving the agricultural water conservancy and disaster prevention and mitigation infrastructure, and increasing the food storage capacity in

disaster-prone areas.

In terms of international cooperation, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has jointly implemented Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and the World Bank. China has also designed the Ecological and Low-Carbon Food Systems in China project under the GEF-8 framework.

By promoting climate-smart agriculture, better conserving agricultural biodiversity, remediating soil on cultivated land, facilitating the green transformation of food production and developing a diversified food supply system, China has optimized the food production system in the project areas. These projects have effectively enhanced the climate resilience of agriculture and created models for international agricultural response to climate change.

The ongoing 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Conven-

tion on Climate Change (COP29), which commenced on Monday and will conclude on Nov 22 in Baku, Azerbaijan, is expected to focus on the "Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate change on agriculture and food security" and put pressure on the UN member states to implement the consensus reached at Sharm El Sheikh.

Developed countries should fulfill their due responsibilities and delivery on climate finance commitments, while providing technical and capacity-building support to developing countries, in order to help them take policy measures to make the agricultural sector more resilient to climate change and thus ensure global food security.

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GLOBAL VIEWS

DAIFAN

Beacon of hope

US legal infrastructure and resilience of climate action at the subnational level may counter federal regression in the next four years

With Donald Trump returning to the White House, the climate policy of the United States faces renewed challenges, likely featuring regulatory rollbacks and reduced participation in global climate agreements.

Trump's previous administration demonstrated a strong aversion to federal climate regulation, dismantling numerous environmental policies and withdrawing the US from the Paris Agreement, leaving climate advocates wondering if progress could be maintained. However, despite federal pushback, state and local governments, the private sector, civil society, and more importantly, a robust legal framework provided pathways to sustain climate action.

First, key federal laws have provided a foundational framework for US climate action, although they are not without limitations. The 2007 Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) gave the EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases, categorizing them as pollutants under the Clean Air Act. This ruling enabled climate-related regulations such as the Obama-era Clean Power Plan. However, more recent rulings, particularly the 2022 *West Virginia v. EPA* decision, have constrained the EPA's regulatory reach, emphasizing that Congress must authorize sweeping climate measures. This limits the Clean Air Act's effectiveness in serving as a stand-alone tool for comprehensive climate policy under a skeptical administration.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) represents one of the most significant federal investments in clean energy and emissions reduction, with its tax credits and funding mechanisms designed to support the transition to renewable energy. Notably, the IRA's reliance on financial incentives rather than

direct mandates may make it more resistant to executive interference. Still, the extent of its impact depends on how actively federal agencies work to implement its provisions. Even with reduced federal agency support, the IRA could catalyze private investment and state-driven projects, but its effectiveness may be diluted without active federal stewardship.

Laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) mandate environmental impact assessments and provide protections that indirectly affect climate action. However, both the NEPA and the ESA could face rollbacks, as Trump's administration previously worked to streamline NEPA assessments, reducing their scope and duration. Given these challenges, the onus may fall on state and local governments to maintain stricter environmental assessments and protections.

Second, the judiciary has historically been an avenue for shaping, challenging, and upholding climate policies. However, the conservative composition of the Supreme Court presents mixed prospects for those relying on judicial intervention.

Environmental organizations, states and local governments, and affected communities are likely to continue using the courts to challenge federal actions that roll back climate protections. Examples include the numerous lawsuits filed by California and other states against Trump's environmental rollbacks in his first term, many of which succeeded in delaying or even reversing certain deregulations.

With a conservative Supreme Court majority, the judiciary may be more likely to rule in favor of



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

limited federal intervention in environmental regulation, particularly if it perceives that regulatory authority has been overstepped. This could pose significant barriers to climate litigation efforts. The *West Virginia v. EPA* ruling, for instance, was a signal of the Court's willingness to limit federal agency authority, suggesting that future challenges may be less successful at securing expansive regulatory interpretations.

Third, with federal action expected to slow or reverse, state and local governments have stepped forward as powerful climate actors, showcasing the benefits of decentralized

climate governance.

California has long been a leader in climate action, using its size and economic influence to set ambitious standards. California's vehicle emissions standards, for example, have often set de facto national standards, as auto manufacturers adapt to meet the state's requirements. Under Trump's first term, California successfully fought for its right to maintain these standards, showcasing the state's resilience.

Other states, particularly those in the US Climate Alliance, look to California's policies for guidance and support, creating a network of states committed to upholding cli-

mate commitments.

Initiatives such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in the Northeast provide a model for multistate collaboration. By creating a cap-and-trade system for power plant emissions, the initiative has not only reduced emissions but has also generated revenue for reinvestment in clean energy. Other regions could explore similar collaborative frameworks to mitigate the impact of federal rollbacks, while insulating themselves from potential federal preemption battles.

Fourth, private sector action and market dynamics are critical drivers of climate progress, and many trends are likely to persist despite federal policies.

Many US companies have pledged ambitious sustainability goals, driven by pressure from investors, customers, and international partners. For instance, corporations such as Microsoft, Amazon and Walmart have set net-zero emissions targets. These commitments reflect not only corporate responsibility but also a recognition of the economic risk climate change poses to long-term profitability.

The falling costs of solar, wind, and battery storage continue to drive the renewable energy market, making it increasingly competitive with fossil fuels. Even without federal mandates, renewable energy projects are expanding, largely supported by state policies and private investments. The IRA's financial incentives provide a substantial boost to these projects, likely enabling states to continue building out renewable infrastructure.

Climate-related financial disclosures and environmental, social, and governance standards are on the rise, often supported by state-level regulations and global market

expectations. The US Securities and Exchange Commission's ongoing development of climate disclosure requirements, though potentially stymied at the federal level, reflects a larger trend toward transparency and accountability in corporate climate impacts. This market-driven push for climate transparency could serve as a key climate lever in the private sector.

States, cities, and private enterprises increasingly engage in international climate efforts, reinforcing US commitments even when federal leadership lags. For instance, the US Climate Alliance — comprised of states committed to the Paris Agreement — engages internationally, demonstrating sustained climate ambition. Subnational entities, particularly in partnerships with countries such as China, continue to contribute expertise and resources, fostering resilience and advancing innovation across borders.

The federal climate landscape may face significant challenges under Trump's second term, but the strength of decentralized climate governance suggests a path forward. Even as federal policies regress, this distributed network of climate actors provides hope for continued progress. In an era of potential federal opposition, these decentralized efforts underscore the commitment in the US to climate action, highlighting opportunities for Sino-US cooperation on climate policy and solutions. This resilient infrastructure — grounded in innovation, collaboration, and local action — offers hope for sustained climate progress, even in a complex political environment.

The author is a researcher at the Institute for Climate and Carbon Neutrality at the University of Hong Kong and principal investigator at University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

LIU YUANLING

Keep up the good fight

The future of global climate governance under the next US administration appears bleak at first sight

Donald Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States. This will have a significant influence on global climate governance.

Trump not only questions the objectivity of climate change and the authenticity of its negative

impacts on human society, but also opposes emission reduction and mitigation, and adaptation policy measures taken

to address the climate crisis. He has indicated he will once again withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement and may even withdraw it from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Without any doubt, under the leadership of Trump, various retrogressive measures can be expected to be implemented. During his first term, he revoked or suspended countless climate policy regulations and research programs, and appointed a number of leaders with differing views on climate change to keep positions in the fields of energy and the environment.

In 2016, Trump announced his intention to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement at the time when the 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC was being held in Marrakesh, Morocco, during which the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement had just convened its first meeting.

In October, the UN Environment Programme released the "2024 Emissions Gap Report", with the theme of this year's report being "Stop empty talk". The report pointed out that "there is a huge gap between the rhetoric and reality of countries, and new climate commitments need to be formulated".

As for the US, the problem now is that they may not even have any good words to say under Trump's leadership, and even the US' old climate commitments may not be upheld any longer. Therefore, where will global climate governance go?

The COP29 is currently being held in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. There is no doubt that Trump's victory has cast a heavy and gloomy shadow over this conference, which may be difficult to dispel for at least the next four years. We cannot help but ask: What will global climate governance be like without the participation of the US?

First, it will no longer be truly global climate governance. Given its global influence as well as its fossil energy production and consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, the US plays a key role in global climate governance. The Joe Biden administration has been actively addressing climate change and proposed the goal of reducing US greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030 compared to 2005. The Biden administration has also proposed net zero emissions by 2050 and an investment of \$2 trillion in infrastructure and clean energy.

In order to achieve these goals, in 2022, the US passed the most important climate legislation in history, the Inflation Reduction Act. The detailed rules, including the list of electric vehicles eligible



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

for subsidies, were just announced on April 1, 2023. But will these rules still be implemented next April? Probably not. It is also unlikely the remaining funds in the Inflation Reduction Act will be in place. The National Clean Power

Association stated that from August 2022 to August 2023, the private sector in the US established 80 large-scale clean energy facilities with a total investment of over \$270 billion. In the future, this momentum may not be sustaina-

ble. After all, the president-elect doesn't like the bill at all and has promised to repeal it.

Second, Trump's attitude, stance and approach toward climate change may affect the trust and confidence urgently needed for global climate governance. Coping with climate change is a systematic project that requires joint consultation and cooperation from all parties around the world. Only by consolidating into a collective force can human beings be liberated from the climate crisis. Now Trump's future policies in the field of climate diplomacy may undermine everyone's confidence.

Is it the death sentence for global climate governance? Is there no future for global climate governance? Of course not, we still have hope and expectations. First, for global climate governance, the US is important, but not the only important player. Currently, Europe and China are actively promoting the development of global climate governance.

There is still a lot of room and agenda for cooperation between China and Europe, and we believe that such cooperation will have a great impact.

Second, although the president-elect is important for US climate policy, he is not the only important force. The US has always had many

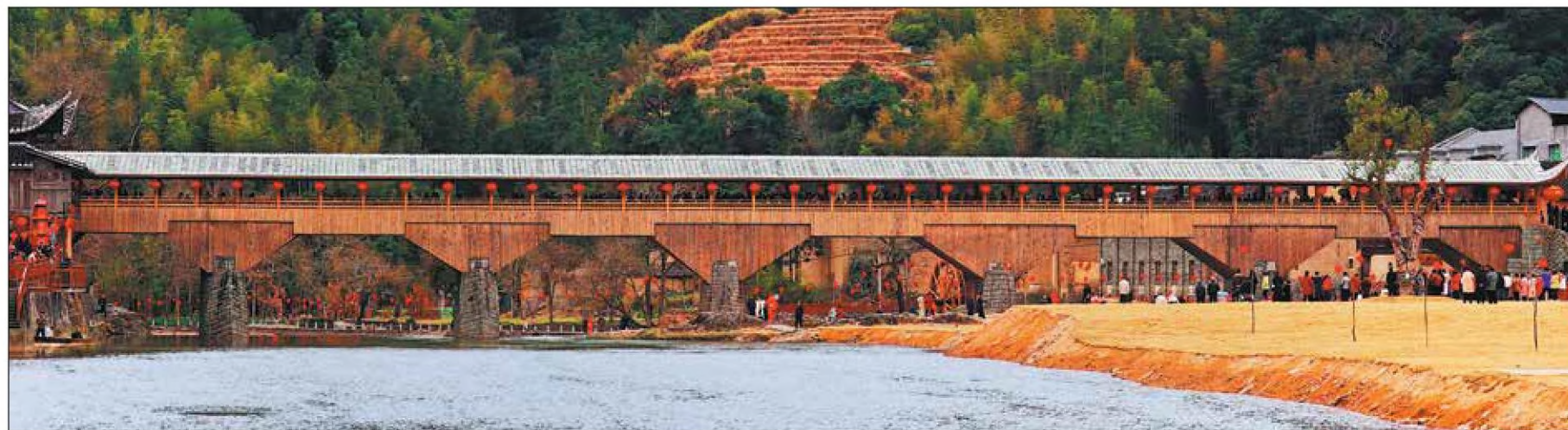
forces actively addressing the climate crisis, which transcend partisan politics. They exist in the private sector, in technology companies, and among many ordinary people who value environmental protection and care about climate change. California has always been a leader on the climate change issue. And another notable example is that Elon Musk is a good friend of Trump, but his views on electric vehicles are still very different from Trump's.

Third, there is still the possibility of joint cooperation not only between China and Europe, but also between China and the US, and between the US and Europe to address the climate crisis. Taking California as an example, Governor Gavin Newsom visited China during Trump's first term to express the necessity and importance of actively cooperating with China, and indeed both sides subsequently promoted cooperation in different ways. We should continue to maintain cooperation and contact with the US Climate Alliance.

We still believe there is hope. In the future, China will continue to take the path of climate governance through emission reduction, mitigation and adaptation from the perspective of building a community with a shared future for mankind, with the aim of establishing an ecological civilization and building a beautiful China. China will also work together with all the actors and all the forces in the world to make a difference in addressing the climate crisis.

The author is an assistant researcher at the Institute of American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CULTURAL HERITAGE



Wan'an Bridge in Pingnan county, Ningde, Fujian province, originally built in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), remains the longest covered wooden-arch bridge in China.

Bridge-building skills span generations

Expertise, knowledge of making ornate covered wooden structures still alive, **Wang Ru** reports in Ningde, Fujian province.

When Huang Minhui, 41, a city-level inheritor of wooden-arch bridge construction, heard in 2022 that Wan'an Bridge, which embodied the efforts of four generations of his family, had been damaged in a fire, he was heartbroken and his father, Huang Chuncai, 88, a national-level inheritor of the craft, had difficulty sleeping.

The Huang family has a deep bond with the old bridge, which was originally built during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and is the longest covered wooden-arch bridge in China.

The structure has suffered misfortune before and the family has always responded. In 1932, it was severely damaged in a fire, and Huang Minhui's great-grandfather and grandfather restored it. In 1952, when the bridge was partly destroyed in a flood, his grandfather and father were the main craftsmen involved in its restoration. Then in 2016, it was again restored by his father, his elder brother Huang Mingping, and Huang Minhui himself.

Then, in 2022 there was the fire. He and his brother played key roles in the six-month restoration project launched by the local government in July last year, leading to the bridge being reopened to the public.

During a meeting for the Three-Year Action Plan for the Protection of Covered Bridges (2023-25) in Pingnan county, Ningde, Fujian province, last month, Wan'an Bridge was highlighted as an example of technology meeting craftsmanship, and a drill was held to demonstrate the bridge's upgraded fire emergency mechanisms.

Spanning over the Changqiao Stream, the bridge links the villages of Changqiao and Changxing on either bank. It is an outstanding example of a wooden-arch bridge, a type of covered structure popular in northern Fujian and southern Zhejiang province, according to Lu Zeqi, an expert in cultural heritage in Pingnan.

Built out of interlocking short



After severe fire damage in 2022, Wan'an Bridge displays its extensive restoration by the Huang family last year. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

beams to create an arch without nails or rivets, its body is like an upside-down basket, and the resulting structure is able to efficiently spread weight loads.

"Using short logs, it's possible to make long bridges. This is a reflection of the skill of the people in the mountainous areas of Fujian and Zhejiang," Lu says.

Restoring the old

Chen Juan, Party secretary of Changqiao town, where the bridge is located, says that Wan'an Bridge is still an important traffic artery, and it is a meeting place for people to gather to chat, relax and have fun, and that for those who have moved away, it is an emblem of home.

Unlike some historical buildings, which were privately owned, covered bridges were always public structures. Consequently, their construction was a collaborative effort, with local communities pooling funds. The donations were viewed as "acts of prayer" and wishes for health and happiness, Chen says.

Wan'an Bridge was no exception.

A tablet inlaid in one of its stone piers details a donation made in 1090 by a man called Jiang Zhen, who donated the money and millet to build the pier.

Chen says that the restoration last year was based on information collected during a census of Pingnan's cultural heritage in 2019, construction sketches belonging to the Huang family, and the support of an ancient building institute in Zhejiang.

"Luckily, the building techniques haven't been lost and there are inheritors of the craft," Chen says. "They decided not to change the original facade and features, and restored it using traditional techniques. Modern tools help in some areas, like sawing components, but most things were still done by hand."

She says although the bridge was badly damaged, key components survived. Local residents found them in the river and fished them out. In the act of restoration, the old components were reused and became part of the restored bridge.

"From the cultural heritage protection perspective, we want to

reuse old components to preserve their history as much as possible. We make sure they are still safe enough to reuse and their inclusion symbolizes the continuation of the past, and serves as a warning to people not to neglect the safety of the bridge," Chen says.

Local residents donated 4.4 million yuan (\$614,400) to the restoration, on top of funding from the government, and were invited to a banquet after the bridge was restored.

Chen says that they have analyzed the threats to the safety of the bridge: fire, floods, human-made damage and pests, and have taken measures to respond to them.

This includes installing alarms on the bridge to monitor for fire hazards, like smoking, and arranging for it to be patrolled 24 hours a day. Additionally, the bridge is regularly disinfected and sterilized to protect against pests.

Awareness of protection has improved. According to Chen, local residents have set up a center in the hopes of protecting their hometown. Activities such as sports meetings

for farmers, poetry recitation events, and study tours, have also been held to integrate the bridge into the area's development of tourism, and Chen says that during the Spring Festival holiday between Feb 10 and 15, it received about 10,000 visits every day.

A family inheritance

The Huang family's dedication to building and restoring wooden arch bridges began with Huang Minhui's great-grandfather Huang Jinshu, who learned the craft from Zhuo Maolong, a well-known bridge builder during the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

In Pingnan, people often built wooden bridges as the area is mountainous and has an abundance of trees. Bridge-making was a way of making a living, and covered bridges also provided shelter from frequent rain, permitting people to meet outdoors in a public space and protecting the wooden bridge body.

According to Huang Minhui, Zhuo had many apprentices but most left after he fell ill. His great-grandfather, Huang Jinshu, took care of Zhuo and continued to learn bridge-building skills from him. When Zhuo was too sick to get out of bed, he continued to teach by constructing model bridges using chopsticks. When Zhuo passed away, the Huang family buried him as he had no children of his own.

"The intricate techniques for making wooden arch bridges were already well-tested when master Zhuo imparted the skills to my great-grandfather," says Huang Minhui.

On one side of the Wan'an Bridge lies Dasheng Temple, which survived the 2022 fire. The stage in it is said to have been built by Zhuo. The temple is dedicated to the Monkey King, an iconic figure in Chinese classics, who is famous for his heroic efforts to dispel evildoers, and who residents believe protects them.

The way Huang Minhui remembers it, his father Huang Chuncai was an ordinary carpenter, and the Wan'an Bridge was like an old friend. He was amazed by its struc-

ture, but had no idea of its relationship with his family, nor of his father's ability to build bridges, as wooden bridges were gradually replaced by concrete and steel in the 1960s and his father Huang Chuncai left home in search of work.

Huang Chuncai had only started learning to make wooden bridges from his father when he was 15 but by the time he was 20, he was the main designer and builder behind one local bridge, which made him a name in the trade. But after building another bridge in Ningde's Gutian county in 1969, he had no further requests, so he had to find other work.

This suspension continued until 2004, when there was a project involving the historical Jinzao Bridge. People found the name of Huang Minhui's grandfather on the bridge and set out to find his descendants. Huang Chuncai was nearly 70 at the time but he once again came to attention for his proficiency, and was made an inheritor of the craft, which was listed as a form of national-level intangible cultural heritage in 2008.

In 2005, and then working in a factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, Huang Minhui was persuaded to return home to pick up his father's skills. "He said the craft should not be lost and needed to be passed on. I returned home and learned it from him with my brother," Huang Minhui says.

In recent years, local government has placed greater importance on wooden bridges and has asked the Huang family to build and restore a series of them. Huang Minhui and his brother built almost one bridge a year between 2005 and 2015 and honed their skills.

"Now, we most often make wooden bridges in tourist attractions, features in the landscape that are not necessarily useful. But Wan'an Bridge is still one of the most functional bridges in the area," he says.

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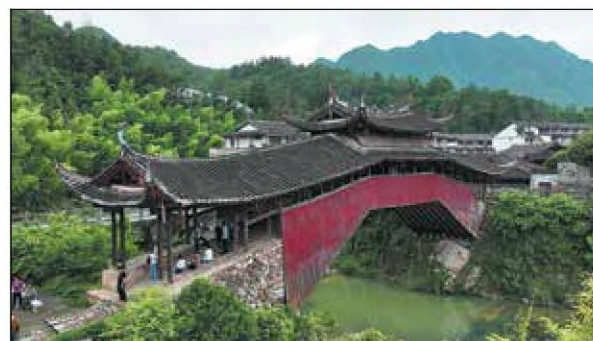
By WANG RU in Ningde, Fujian

The 12th-century monumental scroll painting *Along the River During the Qingming Festival* vividly showcases the cultural splendor and social prosperity of Bianjing (now Kaifeng, in Henan province), as the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). At the heart of this masterpiece lies the Hongqiao Bridge spanning the Bianhe River, resembling a vibrant rainbow teeming with bustling crowds.

Meticulous scrutiny by ancient practitioners of architecture reveals the intricate construction of the bridge, crafted using wooden *sun-mao* (mortise-and-tenon) joints. However, these sophisticated building techniques seemed to fade into obscurity over time.

In the 1980s, scholars were delighted to discover bridges in the mountainous areas of Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, which have similar and more advanced wooden structures. Different from the Hongqiao Bridge, they are covered with eaves.

Wooden arch covered bridges were brought into the spotlight during the meeting of the Three-Year Action Plan for the Protection of Covered Bridges (2023-25) held in Pingnan county, Ningde, Fujian province, in October.



The Wenxing Bridge in Taishun county, Wenzhou, Zhejiang province (left), and Luanfeng Bridge in Shouning county, Ningde, Fujian province, are key attractions along travel routes to integrate historical heritage into tourist development. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

The plan was issued last year by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Cultural Heritage Administration to promote the protection, research and use of historical covered bridges.

According to the plan, covered bridges are an important category in China, distinguished by their distinctive structures often made of

wood or stone. Seamlessly blending with mountainous terrain, water bodies, pastoral vistas, ancient villages and bustling streets, these bridges encapsulate the essence of public life, cultural heritage and nostalgia within the local community.

The meeting was held to examine the progress achieved since the plan's implementation, bringing together heritage professionals from 13 provinces and autonomous regions, where covered bridges are



distributed, to introduce their experience and insights.

According to Guan Qiang, then deputy director of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, an ongoing survey of the distribution of covered bridges across the country has unveiled 1,820 covered bridges, the number of which may increase.

"As shown in the current data of the survey, some provinces which we believed didn't boast many covered bridges are found to have many

more than anticipated. For example, Shanxi province found six more, Gansu province has 20 more, Chongqing 49, Hubei province 75 and Sichuan province 85. In this way, Sichuan becomes known as a province where covered bridges are vastly distributed," Guan says.

Across the country, 118 million yuan (\$16.5 million) has been invested in restoring the bridges, covering 99 projects. So far, 70 have been completed, he adds.

Efforts have also been made to promote the use of these bridges so that they can be better protected, Guan says.

Some provinces have designed new travel routes themed on covered bridges, trying to integrate them into local tourist development. For example, Zhejiang province has planned travel routes themed on covered bridges, with Lishui and Wenzhou taking the lead.

They have included 40 bridges and hope to showcase the living conditions of mountain dwellers and the cultural atmosphere of the countryside through the routes, says Zheng Jianhua, deputy director of Zhejiang's cultural heritage bureau.

Such routes often combine covered bridges with local cultural features, such as Qingyuan county, Zhejiang province, which is known as the origin of artificially cultivated *xianggu*, or shiitake mushrooms, across the world. The routes combine *xianggu* culture with that of the bridges and show the lives of people who grow them.

"Covered bridges are part of residents' lives and culture. The travel routes lead people to experience the local culture, including the bridges," says Zhou Lijun, director of Pingnan county's culture, sports and tourism bureau.

LIFE

Thirty years ago, then-24-year-old Meng Fei was a young cameraman who boarded a train from Shanghai bound for the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, enduring three days and three nights across the Chinese heartland to reach Urumqi.

What awaited him was a three-month immersion in the landscapes and lives far removed from the city rhythms he knew—a land of sweeping deserts, towering peaks and a kaleidoscope of ethnic cultures.

Today, Meng is one of China's most recognized television hosts. This summer, his return to Xinjiang stirred a deep nostalgia for a region he once knew intimately. The mountains and open skies are still there, timeless and pristine, but Meng observed the profound changes in the lives of the locals.

This time, his role is different. He's not just a visitor; he's an "unofficial tour guide" and driver, heading westward with writer Liu Zhenyun, host Li Yajuan, stand-up comedian He Guangzhi, and actress Hani Kzyz.

Together, they're retracing historic routes that bridge China and Central Asia, journeying through Xinjiang to Uzbekistan's Samarkand and Tashkent. Along the way, they're visiting the ancient paths once traversed by Chinese Buddhist monk Xuan Zang in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), unveiling the storied beauty of the western regions in a modern retelling of the ancient Silk Road.

The journey unfolds in the second season of *Must Go*, a reality travel show airing on Jiangsu TV and streaming on Youku. With a group of guests, the team traverses iconic destinations like Kashgar, Tashikurgan, the Duku Highway and Uzbekistan, cutting through Eurasia and linking snow-capped peaks, grasslands, stark deserts and verdant urban oases.

Thirty years ago in Tashikurgan, one of Meng's most memorable experiences was capturing a traditional Tajik wedding. "Their dancing was extraordinarily beautiful," he recalls. "On the plateau, their melodic singing felt boundless and vast."

"There were no cellphones; no phones at all back then," Meng remembers. "When they set off to bring back the bride, you only knew they left at the start of the month. No one knew when they'd return. We waited three days for the wedding to start. It went on for several days after, with singing, dancing and the entire village celebrating. It was deeply moving."

On this recent journey, Meng again attended a local wedding in Tashikurgan. "The same sense of wonder was still there," he says.

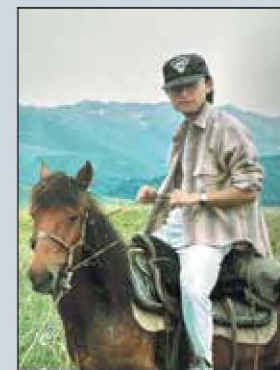
Leading the tour was He, who was on his first visit to Xinjiang. "All the 'stereotypes' I had about Xinjiang—the incredible food, scenery and the warmth of its people—were fully realized on this trip," He says. "Snow-capped mountains, deserts, the Gobi, glaciers, grasslands—I saw them all."

"At first, I expected beautiful landscapes," He shares. "But once we arrived, we gained a deeper understanding of the local ethnic cultures: their clothing, cuisine, architecture and interior designs. The beauty in these details left me speechless."

For He, Xinjiang people conveyed a profound love for life, from the intricate designs on doorways to the smallest details on the but-



Above: (From left) Writer Liu Zhenyun, host Meng Fei, actress Hani Kzyz, presenter Li Yajuan and stand-up comedian He Guangzhi in travel reality show *Must Go*. **Right:** Meng visits the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region in 1994. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



in use today, creating a moment of connection with history," Li notes.

Li shares that Meng naturally bonds with younger guests while Liu's spirited debates with him add an engaging dynamic to the show.

"Our goal is to fuse culture and travel," Li says. "It's Liu's cultural insights paired with Meng's travel expertise that create an organic blend of these two fields."

General director Zhang Long says that the decision to feature Xinjiang and Uzbekistan this season stemmed from Xinjiang's rising popularity as a tourist destination, offering a rich mix of cultural diversity and breathtaking landscapes. "Turpan in August, the thousand shades of blue in Uzbekistan—these are destinations that truly deserve to be visited," he says.

"We realized that the route we selected overlaps with Xuan Zang's historic westward journey, adding natural beauty and cultural storytelling to the trip," Zhang notes. "Xuan Zang's pilgrimage may be China's earliest example of independent travel."

The production team carefully scouted each location, curating key highlights to create a comprehensive travel guide for the guests. Zhang points out that Uzbekistan, a relatively unfamiliar destination, added an element of excitement to the journey.

In Uzbekistan, the show used *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, a book about goods that traveled from the Silk Road to the Tang Dynasty, as a framework for the guests to explore the echoes of the Tang Dynasty in Samarkand.

"In a local museum, the guests discovered a mural depicting Tang Dynasty figures rowing dragon boats, which represents the Dragon Boat Festival," Zhang shares. At another museum, they viewed an ancient map of the Silk Road, seen through the eyes of foreigners, showcasing familiar Chinese place names.

"That mural deeply moved me," Zhang says. "The exhibits in Uzbekistan highlighted the rich history of cultural exchange. I believe this is the true meaning of the Silk Road: people from different cultures coming together to trade goods and share knowledge. That was the most profound takeaway from this journey."

Zhang also observes the growing enthusiasm for learning Chinese in the region. "A significant number of young people in Uzbekistan are studying Chinese, hoping for better job potential. Many teenagers plan to attend Chinese universities," he says.

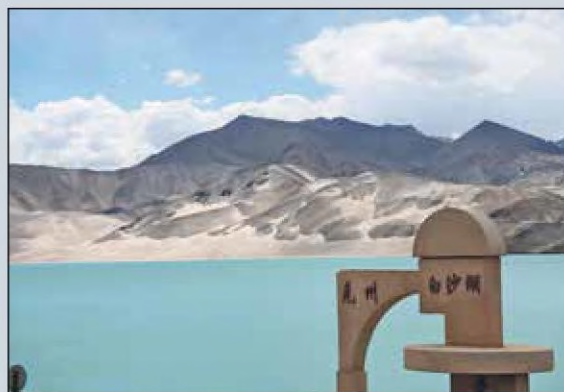
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Travel series stirs an urge to explore iconic destinations

TV host recalls visit to Xinjiang as he returns with friends to experience the region's everlasting atmosphere, **Li Yingxue** reports.



Left: Registan Square, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. **Right:** Baisha Lake in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. **Bottom:** The desert in Turpan, Xinjiang.



tions of their traditional clothing.

Usually reserved, He found himself swept up in the region's vibrant gatherings, moved by the locals' singing, dancing and hospitality. "I don't know how to dance," he admits, "but the atmosphere brought pure, simple joy. I just had to join in!"

During a flag-raising ceremony at the Khunjerab border port, He and the other guests were visibly moved. "We stood at the border, waving to the people of Pakistan across from us. Both sides greeted each other warmly. I was brought to tears. At that moment, without a shared language and different cultures, we felt a profound, shared humanity."

During the journey, He faced the challenge of balancing the needs of both guests and team members.

"Although Liu and Meng are older, they have a youthful spirit and are open to trying things that appeal to younger people," He says. "Liu was patient, repeatedly explaining Xuan Zang's story to us."

Before the trip, He's understanding of Xuan Zang was limited to *Journey to the West* and history books. By the end of the trip, he had gained a deep respect for Xuan Zang's perseverance.

"His journey was tough and required an immense belief to succeed. Seeing his achievements reminded me that hard work truly leads to reward," He reflects.

According to Wang Xin, producer of Juren Media, which produced the show, the idea for this travel variety show emerged from a gap he observed in the genre.

"Most travel programs focus on

showcasing scenery, sampling food or playing games in different locations, but few truly blend travel with local culture and human stories," Wang says.

"A good travel show allows viewers to feel the joy of exploration, discover local customs, and, through the guests' interactions, find inspiration, motivation and even a little healing for life's everyday struggles," he says.

In this second season, Wang notes, they leaned further into the travel experience by having the guests act as travel agency staff, curating custom itineraries for their clients. This twist, he adds, brings a fresh perspective and a new level of engagement for viewers.

Meng and Liu have been friends for years and their previous travels

together in the first season only strengthened their bond. This season, their exchanges, whether thoughtful discussions or lighthearted banter, have become a standout feature of the show.

The show's leading scriptwriter Li Juan likens their journey to reading a book: Meng's remarks serve as the underlined highlights while Liu's words are the lingering reflections that stay with you long after.

For example, during a visit to the Subashi Buddhist Temple in Kuqa, a county-level city in Aksu, the guests come across an inscription linked to Buddhist monk and scholar Kumarajiva (343/44-413). In a playful segment, they guess which phrases might have been translated by the Buddhist master. "Viewers may be surprised to recognize many of these words still

Events enhance students' cultural understanding

COLOMBO — The closing ceremony of "Chinese Culture Meets Students in Sri Lanka" and the award ceremony of the "China Through My Eyes" event were held in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka.

Forty-eight Sri Lankan primary and secondary school students were awarded prizes on Nov 7 for essay writing, calligraphy, paper cutting and painting competitions.

K.D.S. Ruwanchandra, secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Highways, Ports and Civil Aviation, says at the closing ceremony that the friendship between Sri Lanka and

China is long-standing and that the event provided opportunities for Sri Lankan students to understand China and Chinese culture, which is conducive to promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the two countries.

Ji Lili, counselor of the Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka, says both countries have long histories and splendid cultures, and the friendship between the two countries has grown stronger in recent years through expanding and deepening exchanges and collaborations in various fields.

"I hope all the students who par-

ticipated in the cultural events will continue to study hard and make contributions to the friendly exchanges between our two nations," says Ji.

Indrananda Abeysekera, president of the Association for Sri Lanka-China Social and Cultural Cooperation, says the activity is the largest among all the events the association has organized, with the largest number of participating students and schools.

"It is not just our elders who can dedicate themselves to strengthening Sri Lanka-China cultural relations; our student generation also

has the same responsibility," he says.

"China is one of the biggest countries in the world, with a variety of arts and cultures," says student Imashi Kavya Dasanayaka. "My dream is to study and travel in China. I'm one step closer to my dream."

The series of activities began in May at 11 Sri Lankan primary and secondary schools, showcasing traditional Chinese culture, such as calligraphy, paper-cutting, and martial arts, and featuring photo exhibitions on Chinese culture and Chinese book donations.

XINHUA



Dancers welcome guests attending the award ceremony of the "Chinese Culture Meets Students in Sri Lanka" event in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Nov 7. CHEN DONGSHU / XINHUA

LIFE



A news conference for the NCPA production of *Die Fledermaus* was held in Beijing on Nov 5, with guests including soprano Jacquelyn Wagner (left), baritone Markus Werba (second left), NCPA deputy director Zhang Yao (third left), French director and stage designer Vincent Boussard (middle), baritone Zhou Zhengzhong (third right) and soprano Song Yuanming (second right). PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Walking the path Confucius first laid

Last month, I completed my Level 2 Chinese lessons. As the class wound up and we bid fond farewells to our teacher, there was little confusion in my mind on what to do next.

The third level course would only begin next spring but before that, I decided I must visit a shrine dedicated to a man widely revered for building the foundation of the modern educational system in China a couple of millennia ago.

So, the following Sunday, I set out to spend some quality time visiting the Confucius Temple in

the heart of Beijing, a stone's throw away from

another of the city's better-known landmarks — the Yonghegong Lama Temple.

It was a bright afternoon, the streets were busy

as usual with tourists taking selfies and pictures of their significant others on the way leading up to the spot. The trees along the roadside and in the adjacent compounds were sporting autumn hues as I leisurely made my way in.

Once inside the formidable complex of buildings and museums, I quickly realized that this was actually my second visit. The first in late 2009 had been a rushed affair as I had unfortunately included it in a trip to the Yonghegong Lama Temple, which takes much longer to explore.

Since I did not remember much in the way of details from back then, this second visit, thankfully, felt as good as new.

What stood out vividly as soon as I entered the courtyard was a statue of the great man right before the doors leading up to the inner sanctum. Visitors were busy taking photographs and a middle-aged man was prodding a young boy, possibly his grandson, to pose and pray before it while another family member took pictures.

It must seem awe-inspiring for the little one, I mused. As he grows up, the schoolboy will no doubt come to appreciate what a seminal change this man from Qufu in Shandong province wrought on basic literacy by giving everyone an equal opportunity to attend school, an unheard-of thing in those days.

There is much to thank Confucius for; his remarkable contribution to the country's moral compass, his ability to almost single-handedly instill in its future generations the values of honesty, hard work, filial piety, and respect for fellow beings — in short, the Confucian ethos — that are in essence what we find in abundance in Chinese society, even today.

Modern-day China's egalitarianism, its pursuit of harmony and respect for tradition, had been codified into its national character by this man, whose unrelenting focus on virtuous living during a chaotic period might seem anachronistic for the time.

But, as is so often the case with nationalities or civilizations, societies do not always evolve organically, but through the sheer perseverance of some visionary individuals. In fact, much of China's rise today as a great power can be viewed through the prism of its ethical foundations wrought by a number of people who followed the Confucian ethic and, in turn, molded the national character.

In fact, an article on Confucius in this very paper had this to say: "Since roughly the 5th century BC, the school of thought that Confucius founded and the philosophy of Confucianism that developed from it have inspired and guided individuals across multiple generations."

As I explored every nook and corner of the temple with a multitude of well-behaved citizens, the fruits of a seed sown long ago became quite apparent to me.

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Strauss classic gets modern take

Chinese production brings beloved operetta subtly up to date to extend appeal to contemporary audiences, **Chen Nan** reports.

In addition to being the "King of the Waltz", Austrian composer Johann Strauss II was also a prolific composer of operettas. Among them, *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat) is one of his most beloved and influential. Since its premiere in Vienna in 1874, it has become a classic, often performed as a New Year's spectacle by famous opera houses around the world.

This year, the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing will stage a new production of *Die Fledermaus* between Nov 27 and Dec 1 marking its 150th anniversary, presenting audiences with an immersive audiovisual experience, ingenious stage design, and powerful cast.

According to Zhang Yao, deputy director of the NCPA and general supervisor of the production, it brings together creatives from nine countries, with 200 staff also involved.

"It continues the NCPA's commitment to fostering a global community of performing arts institutions and exploring a collaborative future for world theater," he said during a news conference at the NCPA on Nov 5.

Strauss' composition demonstrates his use of humor and irony, through lively, joyful emotions and boldly incorporates popular dance styles of the time, blending the famous Viennese waltz naturally into the score. The overture to the operetta is a compilation of several of the opera's most beautiful melodies.

French conductor Marc Minkowski is making his first appearance in a Chinese production, and international vocalists, including baritone Markus Werba, baritone Zhou Zhengzhong, soprano Jacquelyn Wagner, and soprano Song Yuanming, will be part of the performances.

The aria *Mein Herr Marquis* (Laughing Song) sung by the character of Adele, the maid, is regarded as a virtuoso showpiece, and the opera features many other notable musical moments, including the *Czardas*, *Thunder and Lightning Polka*, as well as duets, choruses, and dances that are captivating from start to finish. Sopranos Samantha Gaul and Qin Kanru will alternate in playing the role of Adele.

Set in Vienna in the late 19th



Left: French director and stage designer Vincent Boussard and actor Song Tianshuo during a rehearsal at the NCPA. Right: Set designer Domenico Franchi (left) and assistant director Gediminas Seduikis (second left) at the rehearsal.



century, the plot of *Die Fledermaus* is concise and engaging, with well-rounded, lively characters and witty, dynamic dialogue. The Viennese-style music is beautiful and moving, and the dances are varied, according to Vincent Boussard, the French director and stage designer, who seeks to reveal the complex human nature and emotions behind the joyful and hedonistic atmosphere of the operetta through minimalist stage design and the precise use of projections. Together, the aim is to break away from the traditional, realistic portrayal of Viennese style, infusing the production with a dynamic and graceful modern aesthetic.

"The operetta as a whole blends elegance with humor, intertwining classical and popular elements. It incorporates features of both grand and comic opera, with extensive use of spoken dialogue instead of sung sections," Boussard says. "The language is straightforward, and sharply satirical, and reflects the social issues of Vienna at the time. This gives it both musical artistry and social critique, making it enjoyable to a wide audience, with both

refined and popular appeal."

One of the highlights of the production is the costumes by Christian Lacroix, a designer known for work that embodies the spirit of French classical court art. His costumes are a seamless blend of modern aesthetics with traditional Vienna styles, Zhang says.

Falke, a low-ranking, drunken and disoriented comic character, known for his wit and cunning, who appears in the third act, is often played by well-known comedians. In Beijing, he will be played by beloved cross-talk, or *xiangsheng*, performer Guo Degang from Nov 29 to Dec 1, and by rising theater star Song Tianshuo on Nov 27 and 28. Both performances are highly anticipated.

"Falke has a lengthy monologue with no set text, which allows the actor to improvise a performance that demonstrates his own style," Zhang says. "It's undoubtedly a moment audiences are eagerly looking forward to."

"I've been performing *xiangsheng* for decades, and also in TV dramas and movies, but I have never performed in an opera, so I seized the opportunity immediate-

ly after the NCPA sent me the invitation," Guo said in a video played during the news conference on Nov 5. "As times evolve and society progresses, actors do too. I'm making the effort to learn."

Like Guo, who specializes in *xiangsheng*, Song grew up learning another traditional Chinese art form, Peking Opera, which combines singing, dancing, martial arts and acrobatics. He was trained by his father, a Peking Opera master, and later rose to fame by playing comic roles in reality TV shows.

"I was very surprised when I was asked to play a role in an opera. I checked the request over and over again," says Song Tianshuo. "So far, the rehearsals have gone very well. Despite the language barrier, we get the same comedy points and communicate well."

"Just as we are trying to bring Peking Opera and other traditional Chinese art forms to contemporary audiences, we are trying to tell the story of *Die Fledermaus*, which is from 150 years ago, to today's audiences," he adds.

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The operetta as a whole blends elegance with humor, intertwining classical and popular elements."

Vincent Boussard, French director



Just as we are trying to bring Peking Opera and other traditional Chinese art forms to contemporary audiences, we are trying to tell the story of *Die Fledermaus*, which is from 150 years ago, to today's audiences."

Song Tianshuo, theater star