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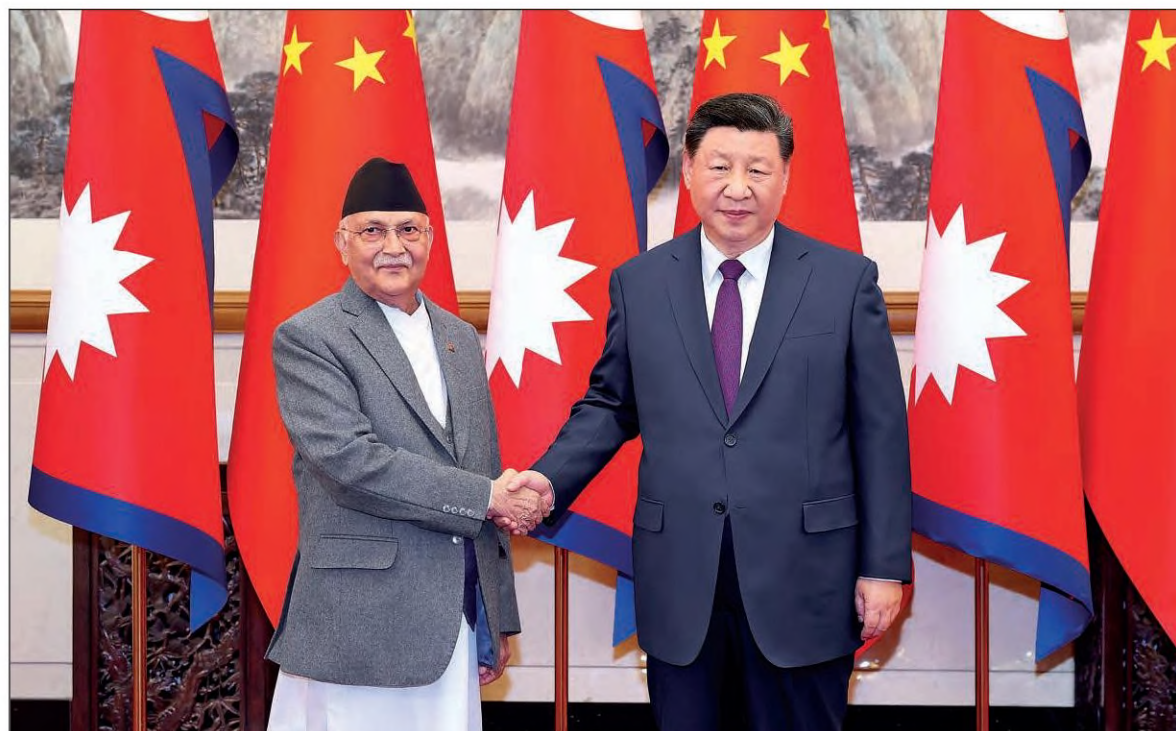
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# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024



President Xi Jinping (right) meets with Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Tuesday at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. The Nepali PM is on an official visit to China from Monday to Thursday. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

## Xi vows to help Nepal improve connectivity

Countries aim to advance strategic partnership of cooperation

By MO JINGXI  
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President Xi Jinping pledged on Tuesday to help Nepal accelerate its transformation from a landlocked nation to a land-linked one by enhancing connectivity in areas such as ports, transportation, power grids and telecommunications, as he met with Nepali Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli in Beijing.

China will keep deepening practical cooperation with Nepal, promote high-quality cooperation within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, and continue to provide support within its capacity for the neighboring country's economic and social development, Xi said, adding that Chinese enterprises are encouraged to invest and start businesses in Nepal.

Xi appreciated Oli's long-standing dedication to China-Nepal friendship, saying that the two nations have treated each other with sincerity, mutual respect and mutual support, and maintained sound and steady development of bilateral ties.

The president emphasized that China respects Nepal's choice of development path based on its national conditions and supports Nepal in defending its independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The two countries will firmly support each other on issues concerning their respective core interests, he noted.

As next year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Xi said that China places high importance on its ties with Nepal in its neighborhood diplomacy and will work with the South Asian nation to push for greater progress of the China-Nepal strategic partnership of cooperation, featuring everlasting friendship for development and prosperity.

China supports Nepal's declaration of 2025 as the "Visit Nepal Year in China" and also welcomes Nepali friends to visit China for business, tourism and study, Xi added.

Oli said that as China's friend, Nepal feels proud of and inspired by China's tremendous development accomplishments and hopes to learn from China how to achieve its own development and prosperity.

Noting that there are no differences and only friendship between Nepal and China, Oli said his country appreciates the valuable support provided by China and is willing to continue its active participation in jointly building the Belt and Road.

Nepal firmly adheres to the one-China principle and will by no means allow any anti-China activities on Nepali soil, Oli added.

The two sides issued a joint statement after the meeting.

On Tuesday, Nepal and China also signed cooperation documents in areas such as connectivity, medical collaboration, and industrial

and infrastructure development, following a meeting between Oli and Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

During the talks, Li said that China is ready to work with Nepal to better align their development strategies, expand two-way trade and investment, and strengthen connectivity through roads, railways and air routes, in order to drive Nepal's transformation from a landlocked nation to a land-linked one.

Oli, who previously visited China in 2016 and 2018, told his Chinese counterpart that Nepal is highly inspired by China's continued reform and opening-up to build a great modern socialist country and rejuvenate the Chinese nation.

Zhao Leji, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, also met with Oli on Tuesday.

Zhang Shubin, director of the Nepal Study Center at Hebei University of Economics and Business, said the bilateral agreements signed during Oli's visit cover a wide range of areas — from economic cooperation to a volunteer program of Chinese-language teachers.

Zhang, former Chinese director at Kathmandu University's Confucius Institute, said the newly signed agreements are expected to play a significant role in promoting China-Nepal friendship and cooperation and in bolstering Nepal's national development.

## Nation tightens control on dual-use items export

By ZHONG NAN in Beijing and HENG WEILI in New York

China has announced measures to tighten controls on the export of specific dual-use items to the United States, in order to safeguard its national security and interests, according to information released on Tuesday by the Ministry of Commerce.

On the basis of Chinese laws, the measures include a ban on exporting such items to US military users or for military purposes, as well as stricter regulations on exports to the US of items related to gallium, germanium, antimony, superhard materials and graphite.

These materials can be used in semiconductors, infrared technology, optical fiber module and communication equipment, solar cells and lithium batteries.

The term "dual-use items" refers to goods, technologies and services that can be used for both civil and military purposes.

The ministry said in an online statement that any organization or individual in any country or region found violating relevant regulations will be held accountable in accordance with the law.

The statement said that in recent years, the US has overgeneralized the concept of national security, politicized and weaponized economic, trade and technological issues, abused export control measures, and imposed unwarranted restrictions on the export of certain products to China.

China remains firmly committed to advancing high-level opening-up and strongly opposes any misuse of the concept of national security, according to the statement.

The country is willing to strengthen dialogue with relevant countries and regions in the field of export control to jointly promote the security and stability of global industrial and supply chains, the statement added.

The US Department of Commerce announced updated semiconductor export controls on Monday, and has imposed tighter export controls on China involving semiconductor manufacturing equipment, storage chips and related items.

The US government has also added 136 Chinese entities to its export control list, disrupting trade between China and third-party countries.

In response to the US move, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that China firmly opposes the unjust imposition by the US of unilateral sanctions and extraterritorial jurisdiction on Chinese companies.

China will take decisive actions to safeguard its security and development interests, the spokesman said.

Gong Ting, an associate research fellow on American studies at the Beijing-based China Institute of International Studies, said the US policy measures do not benefit US companies. The measures will only push Chinese companies to become more self-reliant, therefore accelerating the growth of China's technology sector, Gong added.

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## Syria on the boil



Displaced Syrian Kurds drive their tractors loaded with belongings on a highway connecting Aleppo with Raqqa on Monday as they flee from the outskirts of Aleppo. The northern city, which was formerly controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, was seized by opposition forces on Friday. RAMI AL SAYED / AFP See more, page 7

## HONG KONG EYES GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETIREES

City's seniors ramp up volunteer work, look to share job skills

By SHADOW LI in Hong Kong  
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Tina Chan Yuk-ting defies the stereotypes about someone her age, with her gray hair the only visible clue she is 72 years old.

She stands without the slightest hint of a stoop, and speaks and moves in a lively manner.

Pushing a trolley stacked with paint cans, brushes, and a new handrail, she is on her way to do volunteer repair work for elderly residents living in public housing in Hong Kong's Tsuen Wan district.

She was one of the three volunteers assigned to the project by Repairgivers, an NGO dedicated to assisting the elderly, particularly those living alone, with home repairs.



A former healthcare assistant at the city's Princess Margaret Hospital, Chan learned to paint walls and install handrails last year, and volunteered for Repairgivers.

Since retiring in 2003 at the relatively young age of 51, Chan has dedicated herself to two decades of volunteer work. This has included guiding a blind runner on a 5-kilometer run, visiting the elderly and taking them to hospital for treatment and helping them cut their hair.

See Volunteers, page 2

## China, Asian partners set to jointly drive green transition

Since the adoption of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015, green and low-carbon development has emerged as a global trend. The ongoing 13th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, which runs from Monday through Wednesday, focuses on sustainable energy development and transformation of energy systems. The forum is of great significance for advancing global green and sustainable development.

Climate change poses a real threat to human society. Accelerating the rate of energy transition is one of the most important measures in addressing the climate crisis.

At COP28, the States Parties launched the global energy transi-



By Liu Zhenmin

tion process, with the aim to "transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner". At COP29, which concluded on Nov 24, the Parties agreed on a package of outcomes, including the climate finance arrangement for the next decade.

Although there is a huge gap between what this finance arrangement offers and the pressing needs of the majority of developing countries, COP29 provided an important impetus to global green development and energy transition. China stands ready to join all the parties to implement the outcomes of

COP28 and COP29 fully and effectively, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Global energy transition is accelerating, and the development of new energy industries is booming, which also serves as a new source of economic growth for all countries.

In 2023, the installed capacity of new renewable energy globally exceeded 560 gigawatts, while investment in clean energy averaged nearly \$2 trillion annually, marking a doubling in total investments compared to fossil fuels.

Asia stands as the engine of the world economy and a crucial region in the process of global energy transition. However, it is also characterized by a vast population and high emissions, posing formidable challenges on the path to eco-

nomic transformation and energy transition.

Asia remains a significant driver of global growth, with its energy demand maintaining an increasing trend. The consumption of electricity in the region today accounts for almost half of that of the world. In the process of green energy transition, ensuring energy security is a huge challenge for most Asian countries.

Due to rapid industrialization and urbanization, many Asian cities are facing dual challenges: how to control air pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Most Asian countries are developing economies, which lack sufficient capital, technology and stable supply chains.

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INSIDE Waves of change for shipping industry Global Views, page 13

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## PAGE TWO

From page 1

While there is no official tally of volunteers in Hong Kong, the Agency for Volunteer Service provides a glimpse into the city's robust volunteer culture. As of March 2023, the AVS had 8,352 registered volunteers, with approximately 11 percent, or 925 individuals, over the age of 65.

A study by the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong's Department of Marketing in July, which was commissioned by the AVS, found that 8.9 percent of the city's elderly have participated in volunteer work.

The survey also found that one in every two Hong Kong residents participated in some form of volunteerism.

The study further revealed that volunteers contributed 158 million hours in 2023, marking an 80 percent increase from 15 years earlier, and equating to economic output of HK\$1.09 billion (\$130 million).

Melissa Kaye Pang, chairwoman of the Hong Kong Agency for Volunteer Service, attributes the city's enduring tradition of volunteerism to the joy it brings participants.

Chan is the epitome of this tradition. She said when she retired she didn't expect to become a "full-time" volunteer, but is busy almost every day helping people across the city. Her phone's step counter indicates she clocks up almost 10,000 steps a day.

She said volunteering keeps her occupied and leaves little time for any self-pity, despite living alone. Instead of idling away her time sitting in parks, Chan said she finds comfort in devoting time to helping other people.

Philip Wai Bo-wah, who recruited Chan as a volunteer, is a co-founder of Repairgivers.

The NGO has over 100 volunteers on its list who provide repair services to elderly people living alone and those on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance subsidies. Volunteers like Chan are usually involved in two to three repair projects every week.

In 2023, Repairgivers handled 526 cases, with 453 of them elderly people. This year, their goal is to complete 600 cases, with 80 percent of them households receiving the CSSA government subsidy.

For non-CSSA recipients, a nominal fee of HK\$300 is charged to cover transportation and material costs, which is much cheaper than commercial prices for repair works.

Hong Kong Executive Councilor Lam Ching-choi, who also serves on the advisory panel on the silver economy, said the participation rate of Hong Kong's elderly people in volunteer work is not low when compared with other developed regions, but, it has room to grow.

With the population continuing to age, silver volunteers can join volunteer work in a more organized and broader way, allowing their voices to be heard in society, Lam said.

Beyond the traditional roles of volunteers, Lam said many elderly volunteers with professional skills can offer assistance to grassroots people in areas such as financial management and medical advice.

### Sharing skills

With an increasing number of well-educated seniors retiring, Lam also suggested greater utilization of retirees' skills in the workforce.

Many of them are financially secure, but may be willing to work for half or a quarter of a full-time salary, in exchange for a meaningful role in an organization's operations.

This way, the organization doesn't need to commit to a costly full-time job to get professional services, he noted.

Such a model has been adopted overseas.

Terry Lum, a professor at the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong, said the United States government provides a platform that matches retirees' skills with small organizations that can't afford to hire full-time employees for certain jobs, such as specialized accounting or bookkeeping.

These organizations' need for such services might only arise once or twice, which makes the platform an ideal solution for both retirees and the organizations, he said.

Lum, who is also a member of the Hong Kong Chief Executive's Policy Unit Expert Group, suggested that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government, or an organization like the Hong Kong Jockey Club, could take the lead in establishing a similar platform.

Project GrandMove, a program that trains retirees to become exercise instructors for the elderly, is one of



Members of Project GrandMove, a program that trains retirees to become exercise instructors for the elderly led by the University of Hong Kong, pose on March 9 after a training session. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Volunteers: Social engagement imperative for elderly



Philip Wai Bo-wah (left), co-founder of Repairgivers, visits a household in Hong Kong with two other silver volunteers.



Left: Terry Lum, a professor at University of Hong Kong's Department of Social Work and Social Administration, gives a speech at a peer supporter graduation ceremony. Above: Elderly people are guided to do exercises in Project GrandMove. Right: Tina Chan Yuk-ting, a silver volunteer, drills a hole in a wall tile.



the new choices open to volunteers.

Lum, who heads the project, said that apart from the chairman of the board, all the board members are volunteers. Meetings are convened, and board members are fully involved in the decision-making process.

So far, the project has trained about 230 volunteer coaches, with 80 percent of them aged over 60. A total of 1,964 elderly people have participated in the exercise program.

Many of the volunteers are retired civil servants and college teachers. "These retirees are in pursuit of self-improvement through their volunteer work," Lum said.

### Lifelong learning

Volunteers in Hong Kong are involved in various projects, but

“We offer the elderly (volunteers) the opportunity to give it a try and if they like what they are doing, we will provide them different choices ..., thus making them realize that volunteerism can be a lifelong learning process.”

Terry Lum, a professor at the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong

there seems to be no structured pathway for personal development.

"Traditionally, the less-educated elderly, who used to be blue-collar workers, could only take on easy-to-learn volunteer work that required minimal training," Lum said.

The emerging generation of seniors, however, has higher expectations for their involvement in volunteer work.

Another program led by Lum — JC JoyAge: Jockey Club Holistic Support Project for Elderly Mental

Wellness — is making changes in this regard. JC JoyAge has trained more than 6,600 elderly volunteer "ambassadors" to promote mental health in the community. A total of 920 have been trained as peer supporters — a role that requires an additional 80 hours of mental health training.

Peer supporters are assigned for nine-month periods to assist elderly people experiencing mental distress, providing one-on-one support through their recovery. The support work involves checking on the elderly person and accompanying them to medical appointments.

"We offer the elderly (volunteers) the opportunity to give it a try and if they like what they are doing, we will provide them different choices

to get their skills up to standard, thus making them realize that volunteerism can be a lifelong learning process," Lum said.

After spending a lifetime working in the same job or industry, most individuals enter retirement with a clear idea of what they want to learn and accomplish in their volunteer endeavors, he said.

Lum cited a case of a retired nurse who joined the JC JoyAge program as a peer supporter.

She had spent almost her entire career within the confines of a hospital ward, contending with a monotonous work environment. Her demanding job left her with little time to socialize with peers, or participate in activities outside work.

In her role as a peer supporter, however, she has found happiness and satisfaction. She has had the opportunity to better interact with her peers, and gained insights on how to improve her relationships with family members.

The need for skilled volunteers is compounded by Hong Kong's rapidly aging population.

The HKSAR government's latest projection showed the number of people aged 65 and over will increase to 2.74 million by 2046, accounting for 36 percent of the city's population, and up from 1.45 million, or 20.5 percent, in 2021.

If each senior dedicates half a day per week to volunteer work, the impact could be substantial. "Many people fail to recognize that social engagement is actually more crucial for retirees than for those who are still employed," Lum said.

Hong Kong Executive Councilor Lam said being a volunteer could significantly benefit the mental health of the elderly, especially those who are starting retirement, by reducing loneliness and depression and improving emotional well-being.

### Better engagement

In 2014, the HKSAR government tasked the Elderly Commission to come up with a holistic plan for elderly services in the city. The "Elderly Services Programme Plan" was unveiled in 2017 and contains a list of short, and medium- to long-term recommendations.

Empowering the elderly to live to their full potential and promoting an active lifestyle were highlighted as central to elderly services. One suggestion was for the elderly to form a group to initiate, organize and manage their own learning and volunteer programs.

Lam, who headed the commission at the time, said the elderly group could have greater flexibility in identifying the diverse needs in society and make their own plans to address these needs. This would give them a greater sense of satisfaction and involvement, he added.

The plan also proposed the use of a social enterprise model to engage the elderly in working for gainful employment.

Wai, the co-founder of Repairgivers, is a good example of this. He retired from his job as a sales manager at the age of 54 and started regular participation in volunteerism.

He accompanied the elderly or those with disabilities to medical appointments. He also still teaches *Yi Jin Bang* — a Chinese *qigong* exercise that uses a short stick to relieve shoulder and neck pains.

In 2018, Wai's volunteerism journey took another turn when a proposal he and seven other retirees made won seed money of HK\$60,000 in a Jockey Club entrepreneurship competition for the over-50s.

In September of that year, their idea to set up Co-Creative Partners, a social enterprise to accompany elderly people in need, came to fruition.

The social enterprise morphed into Repairgivers, and in 2023 it received funding from the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund.

Of the Jockey Club competition winners, Repairgivers is one of the only two that have survived and continued to grow.

Despite having yet to find sponsors for next year, Wai is already making plans and is hoping to work with the city's elderly centers to provide a service desk to recruit or provide consultations for community volunteers.

Most of the retirees nowadays are young and energetic and can still achieve many things, Wai said.

On a personal level, Wai is content with his busy life in retirement. At the age of 65, he has seen his ideas come to fruition, which he said has given him a greater sense of accomplishment that goes beyond his previous work.

## TOP NEWS

## Washington urged to stabilize ties

By ZHAO JIA  
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Beijing urged Washington on Tuesday to take more actions conducive to stabilizing bilateral ties, and expressed the hope that the new United States government will make a good start in China-US interactions over the next four years.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi made the remarks as he met in Beijing with President and CEO of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy Susan Elliott and her delegation. The NCAFP is a US nonprofit, nonpartisan activist organization.

As the US government is in a transitional period, Wang said the direction of bilateral ties depends on the choice of the US and requires efforts from both sides.

The meeting came after the US announced on Saturday its approval of the latest arms sales worth \$385 million to China's Taiwan region, and two days later introduced fresh curbs on the sale of two dozen types of semiconductor-making equipment and restrictions on numerous Chinese companies' access to US technology.

During the talks, Wang reiterated resolute opposition to US arms sales to the island and the expansion of illegal unilateral sanctions, calling on the US to have a correct strategic perception toward China.

He emphasized that Beijing has no intention of challenging or replacing Washington, while the US should not fall into the misconception of outcompeting China.

China's development and revitalization have a clear historical logic and strong endogenous driving force, which constitute an unstoppable and inevitable trend, he said.

On the Taiwan question, Wang said it is China's internal affair and reaffirmed China's determination to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He called on the US to adhere to the commitment to the one-China policy and respect the develop-

ment path chosen by the Chinese people and their legitimate right to development.

He also underlined the importance of communication and dialogue, saying that dialogue may not solve all problems, but it helps enhance understanding, avoid misjudgments and promote cooperation.

He added that China will continue to facilitate and support the exchange of personnel between the two countries, welcoming more individuals from various sectors in the US to visit the country.

China will remain committed to improving and developing bilateral ties in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, regardless of changes within the US, Wang said.

The three principles align with the practical needs of the two countries' relationship, the trends of the times, and the common expectations of the international community, he added.

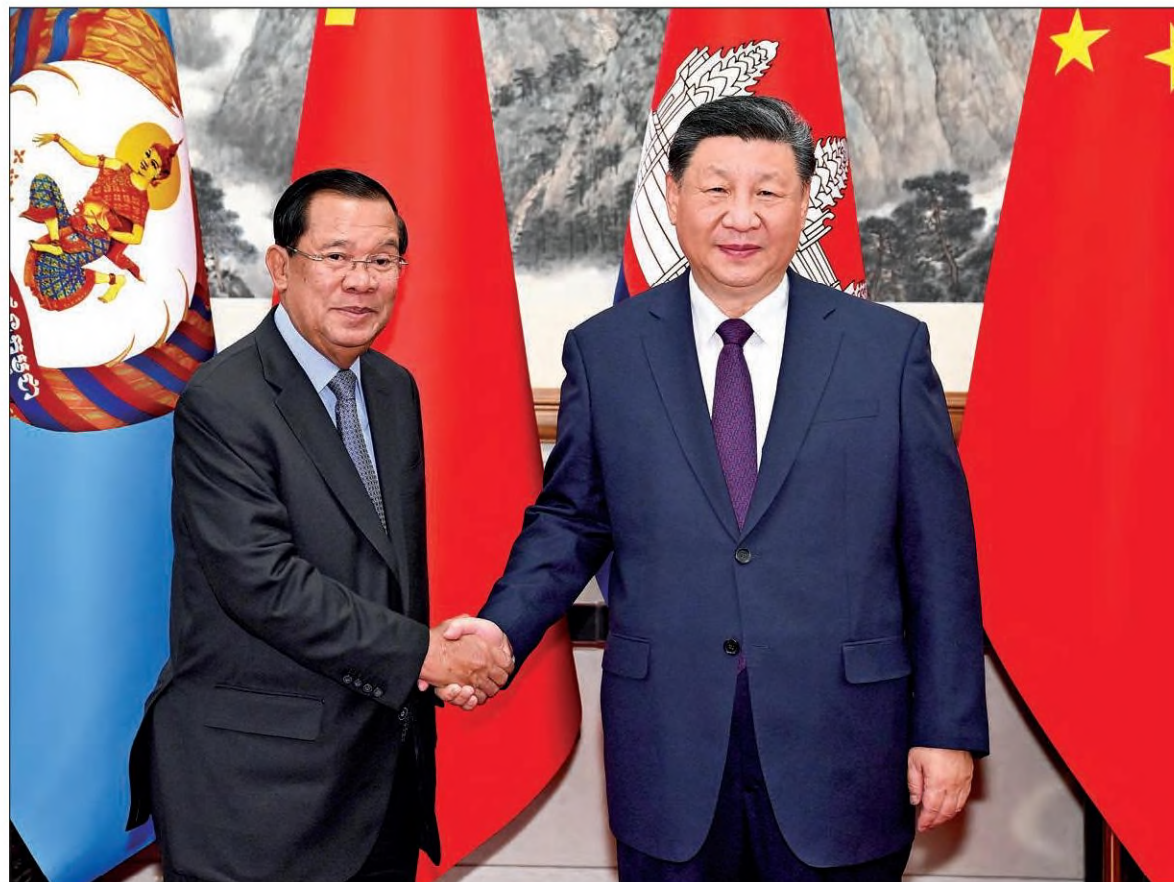
Wang mentioned that during the China-US meeting held in Lima, Peru, last month, President Xi Jinping put forward seven experiences and inspirations drawn from the journey of bilateral ties over the past four years.

Xi emphasized that China's goal of stable, healthy and sustainable Sino-US ties remains unchanged; its commitment to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation as principles for handling bilateral ties remains unchanged; its position of resolutely safeguarding sovereignty, security and development interests remains unchanged; and its desire to carry forward the traditional friendship between the Chinese and American peoples remains unchanged.

Those not only represent an authoritative interpretation of China's policy toward the US, but also reflect expectations for future bilateral relations, Wang said.

A news release quoted the US side as saying that as the US government is in a period of transition, it is hoped that both sides will maintain effective communication, continue strategic dialogues and enhance cultural exchanges, as stabilizing bilateral ties is crucial for both countries and the world.

The committee is willing to play a bridging role as always and make efforts to promote the development of US-China relations in a positive direction, the release said.



President Xi Jinping (right) shakes hands with Cambodian People's Party President and Senate President Samdech Techo Hun Sen in Beijing on Tuesday. XIE HUANCHI / XINHUA

## Sino-Cambodia friendship hailed

Xi emphasizes strong bilateral relations, strategic communication and mutual exchanges

By ZHOU JIN  
zhoujin@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping stressed on Tuesday Beijing's commitment to building a high-quality, high-standard and high-level China-Cambodia community with a shared future in the new era, saying that the Southeast Asian country has always been a priority in the nation's neighborhood diplomacy.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks during talks in Beijing with Cambodian People's Party President and Senate President Samdech Techo Hun Sen, who is currently on a three-day visit to China that started on Monday.

The visit marks Hun Sen's first trip to China in his capacity as president of the Cambodian Senate since he stepped down as prime minister in August 2023.

Xi highlighted the enduring iron-clad friendship between China and

Cambodia, noting that the relationship aligns closely with the shared interests of both peoples.

He called on the two countries to enhance mutual exchanges, saying that the CPC is willing to strengthen cooperation with the CPP in strategic communication and the training of officials, and help Cambodia explore a development path suited to its national conditions.

China stands ready to work with Cambodia to enrich the Diamond Hexagon bilateral cooperation framework and formulate cooperation plans on the development of the Industrial Development Corridor and the Fish and Rice Corridor, Xi said.

He also stressed the need to ensure the successful implementation of key cooperation projects, in order to foster high-quality alignment between the Belt and Road Initiative and Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategy.

China has been Cambodia's largest trading partner and largest source of investment for many years.

A bilateral free-trade agreement signed between the two countries, which took effect on Jan 1, 2022, was the first bilateral free-trade arrangement that Cambodia signed with another country.

Customs statistics showed that from January to August, bilateral trade grew by 19.9 percent year-on-year to \$11.81 billion.

During their talks, Xi pledged continuous support to Cambodia in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs, in order to enhance the strength of the Global South.

Beijing supports the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in upholding its strategic autonomy and maintaining its centrality, he said, adding that China firmly opposes the introduction of a Cold War mentality into the region by external forces.

China is ready to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Cambodia to jointly deal with various risks, he added.

Hun Sen underscored that

friendship with China is the firm political consensus of the CPP and will remain unchanged despite the transition of the Cambodian leadership.

Stressing that China is Cambodia's most trusted friend, he said that Cambodia appreciates China's long-term support and assistance for the country's political, economic and social development.

Cambodia is willing to strengthen party-to-party exchanges with China, deepen political mutual trust, promote practical cooperation in various fields, and enhance youth and people-to-people exchanges, he said.

Ties between China and Cambodia reached new heights under Hun Sen's tenure as Cambodian prime minister, becoming an "all-weather, ironclad partnership". Cambodia is one of the earliest participants in the Belt and Road Initiative and the first nation to sign an action plan with China to build a bilateral community with a shared future.

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## List: US moves not expected to have big impact on companies

From page 1

Chinese semiconductor developers and manufacturers, including Skyverse Technology, Naura Technology Group and Hwatsung Technology, which have been added to the US export control list, responded on Tuesday.

In separate statements, they emphasized that their key components are now fully self-produced, with sales primarily focused on the domestic market. They added that the latest external restrictions are not expected to have a significant impact on their operations.

Jiangsu Nata Opto-electronic Material, an electronic materials supplier based in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, said the new restrictions won't have a substantial impact on the company. Although there may be some curbs on procuring certain components, the company has already secured adequate stock and plans to

adopt domestic alternatives, it said.

Anthony Moretti, an associate professor in the Communication and Organizational Leadership Department at Robert Morris University in Pennsylvania, told China Daily that "the news from a few days ago that Huawei's newest smartphone was created with the most sophisticated products was another reminder that China's biggest companies can take any tariff or import-punch and remain standing".

This sentiment aligns with the latest trade data. China's foreign trade in chip products totaled \$447.41 billion between January and October, a year-on-year increase of 13.6 percent. In the same period, the nation's exports in this category amounted to \$131.32 billion, a 19.6 percent year-on-year surge, according to statistics from the General Administration of Customs.

Dutch chip manufacturing equipment provider ASML Holding said in a statement on Monday that the latest export controls by the US government have expanded the scope of restricted technologies to include measurement and software technologies.

If Dutch authorities conduct a similar security assessment like the US has, exports of deep ultraviolet immersion lithography systems to these specific locations could also be affected, the statement said.

## Transition: New tech, platform needed

From page 1

Asian countries have to achieve carbon neutrality within a shorter time frame compared to Western countries. The United States will reach carbon neutrality in 40 years after carbon peaking. For European countries, this will take more than 60 years. But for most Asian countries, this will happen in about 30 years. Taking into account the fact that most Asian countries are still in the process of industrialization, the window of opportunity for energy transition is relatively narrow.

To facilitate energy transition within Asia, we should, in the first place, foster a just transition of energy. We should adhere to the principle of "establishing the new before abolishing the old", ensuring that the transition is grounded in maintaining energy security and accessibility. We should embrace the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respect the right of each country to choose its own energy development model tailored to its own national circumstances and resource endowments.

For energy security and development needs, Asian countries should prioritize the deployment of renewable energy in new energy consumption. For the portion of fossil fuels to be retained, clean and efficient use should be actively promoted. Meanwhile, new technologies, such as carbon capture, utilization and storage, should be

## China adheres to the concept of harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature, and has witnessed development in renewable energy.

vigorously pursued to minimize the adverse impacts of fossil fuel utilization.

Second, we should join hands to reduce pollution and carbon emissions. Greenhouse gases and atmospheric pollutants are mostly of the same origin. By addressing both issues together, we could avoid policy fragmentation, minimize obstacles in implementation, mobilize public support and achieve an effect of "one plus one being greater than two". China has been exploring the dual reduction of pollution and carbon emissions. By strengthening policy coordination, China's urban sky has become bluer and the air cleaner. We are eager to share our efforts and good experiences with other Asian countries in this regard.

Third, we should consider building a regional cooperation platform for energy transition. Such a platform should foster regional cooperation and overcome challenges in energy transition, such as shortage of green technology, climate finance and

production supply. This platform should be composed of all stakeholders including governments, international or regional organizations, and the business sector. It should promote knowledge sharing and technological cooperation, assisting regional countries in finding the right path to energy transition that suits their unique national circumstances. It should facilitate cooperation among business sectors. China stands ready to cooperate with other countries on technologies and experiences under this platform, as well as relevant initiatives like the Global Clean Energy Partnership, to jointly promote regional energy transition and economic development.

China adheres to the concept of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, and has witnessed leapfrog development in renewable energy. It is committed to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. We are determined to promote global energy transition as well as green and low-carbon development.

Over the past 10 years, the proportion of nonfossil energy consumption in China has risen from 10.2 percent to 17.9 percent. For many consecutive years, China ranked first in the world in terms of installed capacity of new energy, accounting for about 40 percent of the world's total. In 2023, the new installations accounted for more

than half of the world's total. Currently, renewable energy power generation accounts for about 35.5 percent of all power generation in China, which means that for every three kilowatt-hours of electricity consumed in China, one kilowatt-hour is green power.

China also ensures technological innovation to meet the needs of the energy market. New energy technologies such as wind power and photovoltaic power generation are at internationally advanced levels.

China has developed a complete new energy industry chain, supplying 70 percent of the wind power equipment and more than 80 percent of photovoltaic modules to the world. This has contributed to reducing the average cost of electricity derived from wind power and photovoltaics by more than 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

We are determined to maintain this manufacturing chain to help keep the cost of renewable energy for developing countries affordable.

China will join hands with other Asian countries and all the partners, in a collective effort to further promote regional energy transition and reshape the regional energy system. Together, we shall make new contributions to global energy and sustainable development.

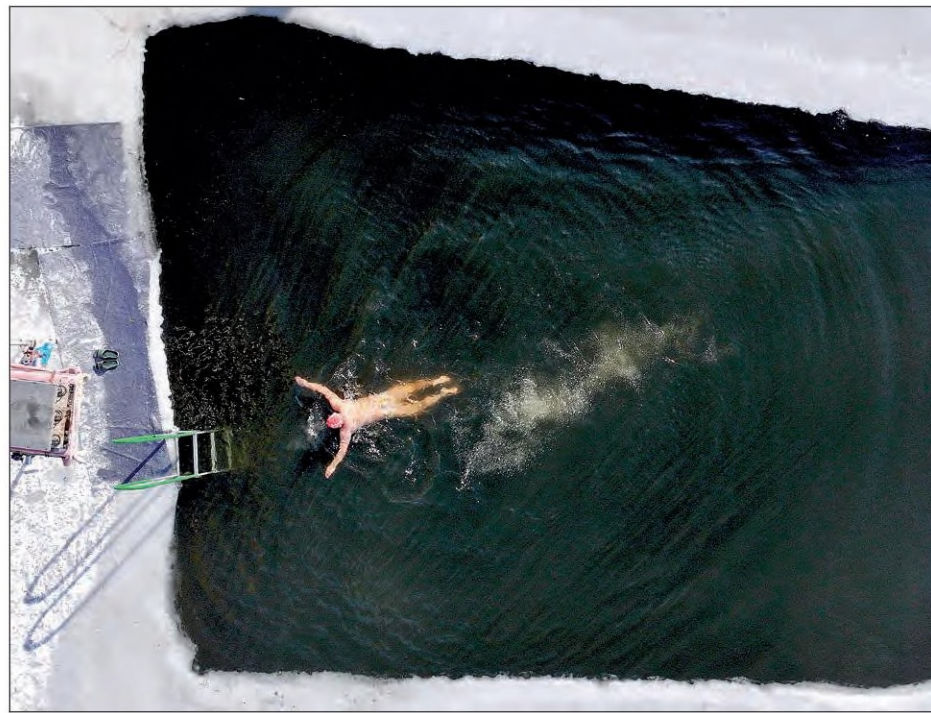
The author is China special envoy for climate change. The article is based on his speech delivered at the 13th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA

## Chilly dip

A winter swimming enthusiast takes a refreshing dip in a pool in the Songhua River in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, where temperatures dropped to nearly -20 C on Monday. Winter swimmers broke the ice to create a 12-meter-long, 8-meter-wide pool, and took turns leaping from a 2.8-meter-high platform into the icy waters.

ZHANG SHU / FOR CHINA DAILY



## Briefly

## Home renovations benefit the disabled

China had supported approximately 1.18 million families with disabled members in renovating their homes to incorporate barrier-free facilities by the end of November this year, according to the China Disabled Persons' Federation. The renovations outfitted the homes of the disabled with assistive devices and smart safety systems, enhancing mobility and ensuring safer bathrooms and kitchens. From 2021 to 2023, China helped almost 1.24 million disabled children receive rehabilitation services. From January to October this year, 443,000 children were assisted, covering nearly all those in need. By the end of last year, China had established 12,463 rehabilitation centers employing 360,000 staff members, significantly improving service quality through standardized training for rehabilitation professionals.

## Veterans' pensions up for 20th straight year

In a move that underscores its commitment to supporting military veterans, China raised the pensions and living allowances enjoyed by certain retired service members and other eligible recipients. China has been working to better protect the rights and interests of the country's ex-servicemen and improve their well-being. The announcement marks the 20th consecutive year that China has increased allowances for veterans, reflecting a sustained emphasis on honoring their service, according to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs.

## Panda star found healthy after checkup

Giant panda star Fu Bao's physical appearance shows no abnormalities, and the animal is in good spirits with a normal appetite, according to the results of a physical examination conducted by veterinarians and keepers on Tuesday after the panda was found to be uncomfortable earlier in the day. The China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda has posted the latest videos of Fu Bao eating bamboo and walking around after the examination in the panda base in Sichuan province, bringing relief to the panda's fans. Visitors to the center on Tuesday morning noticed Fu Bao's unusual behavior and alerted the staff. The center said it will continue to ensure that the panda is properly cared for and monitored. Fu Bao was born at the Samsung Everland Park in South Korea in July 2020 and returned to Sichuan in April. The panda began meeting the public in June at the Wolong Shenshuping Base, which is operated by the giant panda center.

XINHUA—CHINA DAILY

## Ministry promotes AI education in schools

Guideline aims to cultivate future talent in primary and secondary institutions

By CHINA DAILY

The Ministry of Education has recently issued a guideline calling for increased efforts to strengthen artificial intelligence education in primary and secondary schools.

According to the guideline, the overall objectives of strengthening AI education in primary and secondary schools include: cultivating future-oriented talent; enhancing students' problem-solving abilities, as well as their digital literacy and skills; fostering the spirit of innovation; and guiding students to correctly deal with the relationship between humanity, technologies and society.

By 2030, AI education will be prevalent in primary and secondary schools, it said.

The guideline underscored the need to develop a systematic AI curriculum and implement regular AI education.

It specified requirements of AI education at different phases: for lower-level primary students, the emphasis is on perceiving and experiencing AI technologies; while for those in higher grade levels, the focus is on understanding and applying AI technologies.

Senior high school students are supposed to experiment with

developing AI projects and exploring frontier AI applications.

The guideline advocated task-based, project-based and question-based AI education and integration with information technology and labor courses, scientific and practice activities and after-school services.

It urged the development of AI teaching resources tailored to the needs of students and making AI education ubiquitous. Efforts should be stepped up to pool quality teaching resources and promote mutual sharing through the AI education section on an online smart education platform called Smart Education of China, according to the guideline.

It also stressed that AI education bases in primary and middle schools should be established with an eye on equitable allocation of resources, and AI laboratories and exhibition halls at universities, scientific research institutes and high-tech enterprises are encouraged to open to primary and secondary schools.

Furthermore, there's a need to increase the number of AI teachers and beef up teacher training, the guideline said. Qualified experts at universities, scientific research institutes and high-tech enterprises are welcomed to serve as part-

time AI teachers in schools.

The guideline came as part of China's efforts to steer AI technologies toward revolutionizing education. In 2017, the State Council issued a guideline on developing artificial intelligence, which stipulated that primary and secondary schools should offer AI courses.

"Artificial intelligence is the golden key for the education system which affects the future of education. There are intertwined opportunities and challenges," Minister of Education Huai Jinping has said.

In February, the ministry announced a list of 184 primary and secondary schools selected as AI education bases, with the aim of facilitating the implementation of AI education.

Wang Geng, director of the information department of the Tianjin-based Attached High School to Nankai University, was quoted by Outlook Weekly news magazine as saying that students should understand the basic functions of intelligent machines, including how they learn, perceive, interact and infer, to understand the similarities and differences between AI and humans in solving problems.

"On top of this, they can explore simple AI applications and cultivate interest, which are the top priority of AI education in primary and secondary schools," he said.

Xu Nuo contributed to this story.

## Top university limits use of AI tools

By CHINA DAILY

Fudan University, a top-notch university in Shanghai, has recently issued a regulation on the use of AI tools in writing undergraduate graduation theses, detailing areas where AI is permitted to facilitate research and where AI is banned.

The university announced in its regulation that Generative AI and other AI-empowered tools are not allowed to be used in choosing research topics, designing research methods, building algorithms and models, analyzing data, presenting results, discussions and conclusions, or summarizing implications in the thesis-writing process.

It also bans AI tools from generating or changing raw data and creating figures based on the results of experiments. The main body, acknowledgments and other sections of the theses cannot be written by AI, nor can AI be used to polish up the language or do translation work.

Moreover, members of thesis defense committees and reviewers are prohibited from using AI tools to review undergraduates' graduation theses.

The document also specified conditions where AI can be leveraged: when the supervisor consents to the use of AI and when the AI-generated content doesn't affect

evaluations of students' innovating capabilities. Under these premises, AI tools can be used to help retrieve and review literature, make charts and figures based on already-existing ones and collate references.

The stipulation clearly stated that students should disclose unequivocally in their undergraduate theses what AI tools were used, when and for what purposes, what content and suggestions were generated by such tools, and which parts of their theses were completed using them.

The university said violations of relevant regulations could result in a deduction in graduation thesis scores or disqualification for oral defense. If the improper use of AI constitutes academic misconduct, students will either be unable to apply for the degree, or their already obtained degree will be annulled.

The regulation was introduced as many university students and professors have turned to AI to aid their academic research, while the credibility and academic integrity of such AI-facilitated papers have not yet been fully determined.

In March, a research paper published in a Science Citation Index journal by a professor and colleagues at a university in Beijing was found to contain a commonly used ChatGPT prompt in the article's introduction.

The paper was later retracted due to the "duplication of text and image data" and "concerns that the authors appear to have used a Generative AI source in the writing process without disclosure", which, according to a notice by the journal Surfaces and Interfaces, "is a breach of journal policy".

This year, many universities have announced that they will pilot monitoring the use of Generative AI in undergraduates' graduation theses.

North China Electric Power University has developed an AI detection system to screen the theses of graduate students, the results of which will be provided to the supervisors and the defense committee as a reference, said Zhang Lei, a staff member of the university's graduate school, in an interview with China Youth Daily.

According to Fudan University, the writers are ultimately responsible for the content generated by AI, and AI tools cannot be listed as co-authors of theses.

The regulation aims to stress students' role in ensuring the proper use of AI tools in line with research codes of conduct and preserving the originality and academic integrity emphasized in academic research, Fudan University said.

Xu Nuo contributed to this story.

## Efforts on to put nagging macaques under control

By ZHANG LI in Nanning  
zhangli@chinadaily.com.cn

A troop of macaques has been caught on camera raiding a village in southern China recently, sparking concerns about the balance between wildlife conservation and human-wildlife coexistence.

Videos shared on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, show dozens of monkeys swinging from power lines, scaling walls and feasting on crops laid out to dry in the sun in Baoxian village in Chongzuo, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

The macaque is a national second-class protected wild animal in China. They primarily inhabit dense forests or rocky mountains with sparse vegetation near cliffs, valleys alongside streams and riverbanks. Their diet consists of leaves, tender branches and wild vegetables.

"I've seen dozens of them at once, old ones leading the younger ones," said a villager surnamed Zhao, who has witnessed the macaque invasion firsthand.

"They dig up yams and sugarcane, steal oranges and eat the corn. We can only chase them away since they are under protection."

Baoxian is situated near the Encheng National Nature Reserve in Daxin county, which is known for its diverse wildlife.

Some netizens speculated that the macaques originated from the reserve. However, Nong Xiaoyue, deputy director of the Daxin county forestry bureau, clarified that the reserve's flagship species is the endangered white-headed langur, not macaques.

Investigations show that the troop of macaques has been residing in the mountains near the village for sever-

al years and rarely ventures down to disturb residents, according to Nong.

"The macaque population has indeed grown due to environmental improvements and enhanced wildlife protection efforts. While they may enter the village to forage for fruits or corn, the damage inflicted upon villagers is minimal," Nong said.

"We are encouraging residents to follow these principles — do not be afraid, do not touch, do not feed and do not harm. Avoid approaching or provoking the macaques, and refrain from intimidating or feeding them. If necessary, dogs can be used to deter them."

Nevertheless, local authorities announced a series of measures to address the situation and ensure the well-being of both the villagers and the macaques, including enhancing monitoring of the macaque population and their movements.

In addition, they will develop comprehensive response plans, including potential relocation strategies if the population exceeds the environment's carrying capacity, and will establish a compensation mechanism for villagers whose crops were damaged by the macaques.

The government is also exploring agricultural insurance programs to mitigate financial losses.

While Guangxi currently lacks specific compensation standards for monkey-related damage, authorities have assured villagers that they can report losses through the village committee. To date, no damage claims have been filed in Baoxian.

"The government is subsidizing 80 percent of agricultural insurance premiums for sugarcane farmers," Nong said. "If monkeys damage their crops, farmers can claim compensation as well."

## Rescued monkey joins ranger team after recovery

By CHINA DAILY

A little rhesus monkey has become a new member of the ranger team after being rescued, joining the forest patrol in the Shennongjia National Park, Hubei province.

The Shennongjia National Park, covering over 3,000 square kilometers, is a protected primary forest renowned for its biodiversity. With 96 percent forest coverage, the park is home to over 5,000 species of wild animals.

To protect the forest and its wildlife, rangers from different stations are assigned to patrol various forestry areas.

The young rhesus monkey was found alone in August during a routine patrol by Zhuang Youyi, a ranger at the Longxi ranger station. It had severe injuries to its hind legs and was unable to climb. Zhuang took it to the park's national key protected wildlife monitoring station located at the Baicaooyuan ranger station in the Wenshui forestry area.

Over the past three months, Tan Mingkuan, a ranger at the Baicaooyuan station, has been caring for the monkey. It has been given a name: Houjian. "The name carries the hope for good health and no sickness," Tan said.

Tan has learned wildlife rescue techniques through online resources and has worked tirelessly to aid Houjian's recovery. He has been giv-

ing the monkey medicine, massaging its legs and teaching it to walk. He feeds it a diet of milk, goji berries and dried berries to ensure it receives proper nutrition.

Thanks to Tan's care, Houjian has now recovered and joins him on daily patrols. While patrolling the forests, the ranger has been teaching the monkey essential survival skills, including how to get wild fruits to eat, how to climb trees and how to escape predators.

"Since the monkey is still too young and lacks the ability to escape predators, releasing it now would be dangerous," Tan explained. "It is essential to continue strengthening its survival skills until it is ready to live independently in the wild."

The Shennongjia national key protected wildlife monitoring station and the wildlife rescue and release adaptation field project, located at the Baicaooyuan ranger station, were launched earlier this year.

So far, the station has captured over 50 images of golden monkeys and has rescued more than 10 species of wildlife, including golden eagles, rhesus monkeys and sika deer. Rescued animals there undergo pre-release acclimatization training. They are released into the wild when they meet the necessary conditions for survival.

Li Shangyi in Beijing and Liu Kun in Wuhan contributed to this story.

## Adding color to life



Students from No 8 primary school in Huichang county, Jiangxi province, joyfully open their watercolor pen boxes that were packed in the "warm package" donated by nongovernmental organization One Foundation on Tuesday. The warm package project is a public welfare program established in 2011 to address the living and psychological needs of children in underdeveloped and disaster-affected areas. As of last winter, it has benefited more than 1 million children nationwide. HUANG QINGYUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## CHINA

## Spotlight on country's key role in global agriculture

By CHEN BOWEN in Sanya, Hainan  
chenbowen@chinadaily.com.cn

Experts at the 2024 Asian Seed Congress underscored China's pivotal role in global agriculture, highlighting the unique contributions of Hainan province and the importance of seed-friendly policies to foster innovation and international collaboration in the agricultural sector.

The conference in Sanya, Hainan, began on Monday and will conclude on Friday. It has drawn over 1,500 attendees from 52 countries and regions.

Manish Patel, president of the Asia and Pacific Seed Association, emphasized China's irreplaceable role in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation region and the global agricultural landscape.

"We cannot think of the APEC region without China. And I think even the world cannot survive without China," he said, highlighting the country's substantial agricultural economy.

Describing the island province as a distinctive region in China, Patel noted its unique agroclimatic conditions and supportive policies.

"With its exceptional attributes, Hainan is positioned to introduce numerous innovations not only to the domestic market, but also to the broader APEC market," he remarked.

Recognizing the crucial role of policies and regulations in the seed industry, Patel lauded the Hainan Free Trade Port for its supportive import and export policies and thriving scientific and technological innovation environment for the seed sector, stressing the necessity of robust regulations for nurturing growth within the seed business.

Seed trade and technological exchange within the APEC region are witnessing growing significance.

"The Asia-Pacific market not only showcases relatively rapid growth within the global seed industry but also distinguishes itself for its pro-



Participating guests engage in discussions and exchanges during an activity at the ongoing 2024 Asian Seed Congress in Sanya, Hainan province, on Monday. WANG CHENGLONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

active involvement in seed technology applications," said Zhang Xiaoli, director of strategy and government affairs at China Seed Group, the largest seed company in China.

Last year, the Asia-Pacific region's market value of \$29.7 billion represented 32 percent of the global seed market value. The region also accounted for a substantial portion of global seed consumption — about 26.9 billion metric tons, nearly 40 percent of worldwide consumption, according to the APSA.

Francine Sayoc, executive director of the APSA, underscored the seed industry's dependence on cross-border partnerships and trade, stressing the value of free trade efforts in Hainan and how the island has promoted innovation and germ plasm exchanges essential for research.

Wu Jingxuan, deputy director of the Yazhou Bay Science and Technology City administration, also

commended the advantages of favorable policies. She spotlighted the city's establishment of a specialized zone to protect intellectual property rights for seeds resulting from new scientific and technological breakthroughs, ensuring swift industrial gains.

Yazhou has been regarded as the "Silicon Valley" of China's seed industry. International research collaboration within the seed industry here has yielded multiple achievements, helping the city become a global research hub and gateway, she said.

Amid a networking opportunity at the conference, many foreign companies have shown interest in increasing cooperation, considering the conference as a platform for engaging with a range of individuals, companies, technology developers and distributors.

Surendra Uttamrao Deshmukh, representing Ajeet Seeds Private

Limited from India, underscored India's thriving market for hot peppers and expressed keen interest in procuring top-tier produce such as peppers, cabbages, cauliflower, watermelons and cucumbers from China.

Acknowledging China's cutting-edge agricultural technology, Deshmukh highlighted the potential for collaboration to unlock a multitude of opportunities for mutual growth and innovation within the agricultural sector.

In a similar vein to Deshmukh's sentiments, Moustafa Gaara from Egypt, representing the Thai Seed Trade Association, shared his enthusiasm for cauliflower, tomatoes and pepper varieties.

"I truly appreciate strong breeding initiatives and an eagerness to acquire a range of diverse varieties from both this conference and China to introduce to my home country," he said.

## China lauded for combating desertification

Nation's pavilion at COP 16 exhibits progress made in greening its lands

By YAN DONGJIE  
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China has made significant scientific advancements in combating desertification while achieving substantial economic benefits at the same time, and these experiences are worth sharing with the world, foreign experts said.

They made the remarks after visiting the China Pavilion that opened on Monday at the venue for the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

"Scientists in China have taken on issues that in the past seemed to be very difficult to solve," said Barron Joseph Orr, chief scientist of the UNCCD.

For example, the country has not only implemented new technologies to reduce soil erosion, it is making dedicated efforts to share these methods with the world, Orr added.

In methods such as soil implementation that can reduce erosion, he said, "China is very strong in this regard in terms of how that's applicable elsewhere. Those techniques are transferable, and there's a very big effort in China to get it out to the world."

The China Pavilion is showcasing the country's history and achievements in sand control, including the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program. An exhibit of the program, which has built a "green Great Wall" in 13 provincial-level regions in northern China, opened on Monday at the COP 16 gathering.

China's efforts in combating desertification date back over 50 years. According to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, 53 percent of China's treatable desertified land has been managed. By the end of last year, China's forest coverage rate exceeded 25 percent.

China joined the UNCCD in 1994 as one of its first signatories, and has been honored twice by the organization for its "outstanding contribution to combating desertification".

Chinese people have developed various methods to fight desertification — including creating the straw checkboard barrier-fixing sand dune, conducting aerial seeding and closing sandy areas for revegetation — overcoming technical challenges in the restoration of forests and grass coverage in arid and semiarid areas and significantly improving plants' survival rates, said Guan Zhiou, head of the Chinese delegation to the COP16 and director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

"In recent years, mechanized and intelligent technologies such as sand fixation machinery, data monitoring and drone seeding have been widely adopted," he said.

These technologies and methods are also being showcased at the China Pavilion. Other exhibits include information about China's ecological civilization concept, typical character stories related to the history of desert control, and

crops such as sea buckthorn and goji berries, which bring benefits to the people in desertified areas.

Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene toured the China Pavilion on Monday and said he was impressed by the new technologies displayed, including some AI-related land monitoring devices and data analysis equipment.

Jia Xiaoxia, deputy director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration's Department of Desertification Control, guided Oyun-Erdene during the visit.

"There has been a lot of cooperation with neighboring countries — including Mongolia — in sand control, and we'd love to share our new technology experience in the future," Jia said.

Orr, the UNCCD official, said that he feels the Chinese scientific community's eagerness to engage.

"We need far more scientists that are able to bridge society, science, policy and practice," he said.

When talking about challenges such as understanding wind erosion and how it contributes to sand and dust storms, as well as issues such as modeling and projecting datasets and the ability to integrate economic and biophysical data, Orr said that "China has been central to these kinds of analyses, and that's been very positive to the global agenda on addressing land degradation, drought and desertification."

Andrea Meza Murillo, deputy executive-secretary of the UNCCD, said she was impressed with China's experience in the combination of sand control efforts and economic outcomes, as well as green energy.

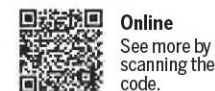
In the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, regions use the unique resources of sandy areas to develop industries such as traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, high-quality forage grass, economic orchards and desert tourism to support poverty alleviation efforts and rural revitalization, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

"So the China model is really showing that you can have development with these green ways," she said.

Chinese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Chang Hua said that in recent years, China has collaborated with the Middle Eastern country on projects such as solar energy and new energy vehicles, continuously exchanging experiences to prevent desertification.

He said that near Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, one of the largest solar power plants in the Middle East is being built by a Chinese company. Chinese renewable energy companies, especially those specializing in solar power generation, are highly popular in Saudi Arabia as well.

Nathan Williams in Riyadh and Shi Yude in Beijing contributed to this story.



## Life-saving drones deliver blood for Wuhan hospital

By LIU KUN in Wuhan  
and CHEN MEILING

As the saying goes: Time is life. And it's especially true when it comes to the medical sector.

This has been effectively put into practice by medical workers at a hospital in Wuhan, Hubei province. They have started using drones to transport blood, wasting no time in saving lives.

During rush hour on Monday morning, the Wuhan Blood Center received a call from Wuhan Asia General Hospital for surgical blood. Workers from the center, about 11 kilometers away, retrieved 800 milliliters of the blood type needed. Together with the drone company staff, they sealed the blood before placing the blood transport box into the drone delivery box.

At 10 am, the drone set off. It flew about 300 meters above the ground and arrived at its destination after 19 minutes, marking the launch of Wuhan's first low-altitude blood distribution route.

The drone is a product of Phoenix Wings, a cargo drone company under China's delivery giant SF Express. While approaching its destination, the drone can scan a QR code at the center of the parking apron to help it make a precise landing.

"In cases of emergency blood needs, we used to send an ambulance to the center to fetch the blood.



A drone carrying blood departs from the Wuhan Blood Center in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Monday. SHI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

The round trip distance is about 22 km, taking us about one hour. And during peak traffic, it would take about 1.5 hours," said Du Weiwei, director of the medical administration department at the hospital.

Chen Hongtao, who is in charge of the government and enterprises project of the Hubei branch of SF Express, said the drone has a carrying capacity of 10 kilograms. It can transport 8,000 ml of blood at one time, which can meet the daily demand for a large or medium-sized hospital, he said.

He added the drone can operate normally during nighttime and on days with light rain or snow. Its flying speed is about 12 meters per second.

Drone transport features advantages such as controllable transport frequency, punctual delivery and minimal human interference. It addresses problems in medical resources transport such as traffic

congestion, long delivery time and high labor involvement. Particularly in emergency and nighttime blood delivery, drone transport possesses inherent advantages, Chen said.

"Airflow disturbance and sound from the drone's propellers hinder birds from approaching," he added.

The Wuhan Blood Center controls the temperature of the blood to ensure that every step complies with safety and hygiene standards. The company also trains staff following regulations of the health department, according to Chen.

Wuhan was approved for 18 low-altitude commercial trial routes in mid-October, including 12 drone logistics routes. They include blood-delivery routes from the center to Wuhan Asia General Hospital and to Tongji Hospital, which is affiliated to the Tongji Medical College of the Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

Once in regular operation, these routes can run twice a day in the morning and afternoon. And evening flights can be determined based on actual circumstances.

According to Chen, the drone has a flight range of 10 to 15 km, making it ideal for small and urgent item deliveries within cities.

"We hope to collaborate with more medical institutions and testing facilities with low-altitude delivery needs," he said, adding that the drone only needs a parking apron of

10 square meters.

Xu Bing, deputy director of the Hubei Provincial Postal Administration, said the launch of drone blood delivery services will greatly reduce the transportation time from blood collection points to patients, improving the efficiency and safety of the services.

"For patients in urgent need of blood transfusions, this is undoubtedly a hope for life," Xu said.

In Shenzhen, Guangdong province, the Shenzhen Blood Center cooperated with the Shenzhen branch of China Telecom to build a 5G drone blood transport intelligent airport platform in January. The service covers several hospitals in the city.

For example, the route connecting the center and the Luohu People's Hospital can shorten the delivery time of 60 minutes on the road to nine minutes by air, chinanews.com reported. Supported by 5G and artificial intelligence technology, real-time information such as location, temperature and flying conditions can be recorded to ensure transport safety.

Blood-delivery services by drones are also available in cities such as Guangzhou in Guangdong, Nanjing in Jiangsu province and Hefei in Anhui province.

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## Long March 3B rocket blasts off for 100th time

By ZHAO LEI  
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China launched a Long March 3B carrier rocket on Tuesday afternoon from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province to place an experimental satellite in space, according to China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

The rocket blasted off at 1:56 pm and soon deployed the satellite, named Communication Technology Demonstrator 13, into its preset orbit, the State-owned space contractor said in a news release.

The flight marked the 100th launch of the Long March 3B model, making it the first of all Chinese rocket types to achieve this feat. All

100 of its missions were conducted from the Xichang spaceport.

The Long March 3B, a mid-lift model developed by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, a CASC subsidiary, stands at 56.3 meters and has a diameter of 3.35 meters. Propelled by liquid-propellant engines, the rocket has three stages and four 2.25-meter-wide side boosters, and weighs 456 metric tons when filled with fuel.

It is mainly used to launch satellites into geostationary transfer orbit and can transport 5.5 tons of payloads to such an orbit. It can also send spacecraft to other kinds of orbits such as medium-Earth and lunar transfer orbits.

Research and development of the

Long March 3B started in July 1989, and it began to receive governmental funding in 1993.

The model's first launch took place in February 1996, tasked with placing a communications satellite in orbit. However, the rocket suffered a guidance failure and soon crashed into a mountain near the Xichang center.

The second launch happened in August 1997, successfully transporting the first satellite owned by a Filipino aerospace company to orbit.

The model has since participated in a host of national space programs, including ferrying most Beidou satellites to their orbits and placing the Chang'e 3 and Chang'e 4 lunar probes on their moon-bound trajectory.

Beidou is one of China's largest

civilian satellite systems and is also one of four global navigation networks, along with the United States' GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.

Since 2000, 64 Beidou satellites have been carried into space on 47 Long March 3 series rockets from Xichang.

Tuesday's mission marked China's 60th space launch this year and the 549th flight of the Long March family.

Designed and built by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, another CASC subsidiary, the Communication Technology Demonstrator 13 satellite will be used for satellite communication, radio and television signal relay, data transmission and technological tests.



Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene (second from left) visits the China Pavilion during COP 16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Monday. YAN DONGJIE / CHINA DAILY

# CHINA

## Smart system helps farmers battle insects

Facial recognition technology used in monitoring app

By GUO JUN in Nanjing and ZHENG CAIXIONG

Facial recognition technology is being used to identify what type and how many pests there are in the fields of East China's Jiangsu province.

When Zhu Youli, deputy head of Zhenjiang Plant Protection and Inspection Station in the province, opens a special app on his mobile phone, an interface with text and images immediately pops up showing not only the real-time photos of insects, but also detailed data about them.

It is one of the achievements of an intelligent monitoring system for crop diseases and pests developed by the station, and plays a big part in ensuring a good harvest.

"To make disease and pest control more effective, it is necessary to provide more accurate forecasts," he said.

Facial recognition technologies have widely been applied in people's lives on the Chinese mainland, especially for mobile phone unlocking and payment.

"Applying this facial recognition technology to 'insect and worm facial recognition' is a powerful exploration for us to develop an intelligent monitoring system for crop diseases and pests," Zhu said.

Insect facial recognition is a pest detection method based on image recognition and detection technology, which enables machines to automatically identify the types and quantities of pests.

Through filming, uploading, analysis, feedback and other processes, plant protection personnel and farmers can quickly grasp the situation of pests and diseases in



Left: A technician from the Zhenjiang Plant Protection and Inspection Station checks equipment at an insect monitoring post on the outskirts of Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province. Right: A weather station monitors conditions in paddy fields. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



farmlands, according to Zhu.

Agricultural experts said that through intelligent induction, the moth population of rice-leaf rollers in the fields in local townships and villages can be monitored in real time.

Meanwhile, the peak of egg hatching and the population of the next generation can be predicted based on the number of insect eggs in the field, rice growth period and meteorological conditions.

The plant protection and inspection station is mainly responsible

for monitoring plant diseases and pests within its area.

"Previously, we had to pick up tools and go deep into the fields every morning at about 5 am, shake plants on the edge of the field to startle the insects, then estimate the number of pests through observation," Zhu said.

"This method has significant errors in identifying the number and variety of pests."

A rural township crop protection and inspection station often has only three to four local staff avail-

able for testing the types and quantities of insects across hundreds of square kilometers of farmland, he said.

Zhenjiang city began to introduce intelligent detection equipment for crop disease and pest control in 2019.

"The intelligent detection equipment has greatly improved our efficiency," he said.

"Now, instead of picking up tools and going out to the fields, our farmers' daily habits are just opening mobile apps to view real-time data."

Intelligent equipment is not only highly efficient, but can also refine data.

"Through the intelligent equipment, we can accurately provide pest warnings to specific towns and villages, which is more conducive to local pest control," Zhu said, adding that more than 30 townships in Zhenjiang have already used this type of equipment.

"At the moment the intelligent equipment and devices are mainly used for detecting rice related pests, but we plan to expand them to tea

planting next year," he said.

However, some pests look highly similar, which makes it difficult to distinguish and classify them, and some are so small that they are difficult to spot. Moreover, backlighting and shadows caused by shooting techniques may increase the difficulty of recognition.

"In this case, manual monitoring is needed to make corrections," he said.

In order to safeguard food security, agricultural and related departments actively promote the intelligent monitoring of pests and diseases through administrative measures, coordinated funding and strengthened training programs, he added.

Zhuang Jintang, a farmer in Zhenjiang's Shangdang township, said the use of intelligent recognition has greatly improved his planting efficiency.

Zhuang and his wife grow rice and wheat on an 18.6 hectare field, with an annual output of about 196 metric tons.

Previously, he had to manually drive away insects from his fields, and the types and quantities of insects had to be determined based on observation, Zhuang said. During the busy farming season, two or three people must be hired to help do the work, he added.

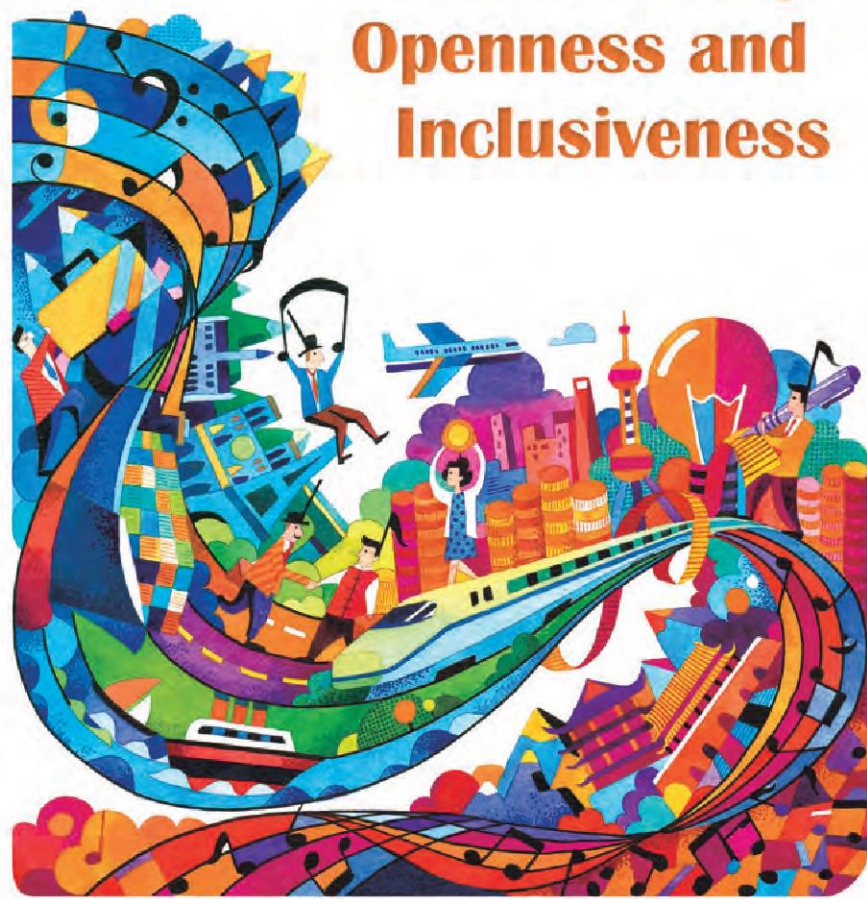
"Last year, after we introduced intelligent equipment and devices that can recognize pests, we could accurately grasp both the variety and quantity of pests, which made the work much simpler," Zhuang said.

"With the accurate data, we can manage chemicals more precisely. And with the drones for spraying, the entire process from disease and pest monitoring to management can be completed on my mobile phone."

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# The Belt and Road Initiative

## Connectivity, Openness and Inclusiveness



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## Students find creative outlet in poetry

KUNMING — Teenage poet Li Ling hails from a mountainous town in Southwest China's Yunnan province.

Yet her poem *Dark Night* has transcended geographical limitations to reach readers across the world, displayed in the bright lights of Times Square in New York.

"Dark night I embrace, For all it prevails, So as love does," the poem reads. Li said that she finds solace in writing poetry.

Wang Chunlin is another young poet from Yunnan who is finding success outside the province. When she was invited to participate in poetry events in Beijing, she visited Tian'anmen Square and the Forbidden City — two places she had only seen on television and in books. "I want to study hard and explore a bigger world when I grow up," she said.

Both Li and Wang are from Mangshui town in Yunnan's Changning county. Nestled in the mountains, the town has been promoting poetry education for over eight years.

In the autumn of 2016, volunteer teacher Kang Yu was teaching calligraphy to the children at Mangshui Town Central School when it began to rain heavily. At the same time, the children looked out of the window, she remembers. "I told the children that we were going to write something, something shorter than an essay or a diary, with line breaks, something that can express your true feelings and emotions. It's called poetry," Kang said.

She suggested the children put down their pens and move their chairs aside to appreciate the rain. Then she guided them to express themselves through poetry, making use of the scenery.

Kang said that almost every student in the class wrote their first poem that day. Thereafter, regardless of the weather, the children would raise their hands and say they wanted to write poems.

After discovering the children's interest, Mangshui Town Central School and Mangshui Junior High School started incorporating poetry into their lessons.

Poetry classes are held in various locations, with teachers sometimes arranging "classrooms" under trees or by rice fields. "I love writ-



Yang Deli (front) teaches a poetry class to her students from Mangshui Town Central School in a field in Changning county, Yunnan province, on Sept 2. XINHUA

ing poems in the fields, where inspiration is everywhere," said Wang Yuanjiao, a sixth grader at Mangshui Town Central School.

Before this year's Mid-Autumn Festival, a cherished occasion for family reunions, some students at the Mangshui school had their first poetry class of the autumn semester in the fields, under the guidance of their teacher, Yang Deli.

Li Mingxi, a sixth grader at the school, wrote: "I wrote a letter, Just two sentences, Though, it encapsulates three years of missing. Silently, I placed the letter by my bedside, Hoping the moon would deliver it to my grandma in heaven."

Yang said, "The poems written by the children always make me feel sad." She noted that many of the students' parents have migrated from the town in search of work, and some of the children are left at home under the care of their grandparents. Some have not seen their parents for two to three years.

Through poetry the children have found an emotional outlet, as well as happiness and confidence, and the teachers have gained a way to understand their students better.

"Every student enjoys the poetry classes. Even those who are usually silent during other classes participate eagerly," Yang said.

During classes, students share their poems with one another. Particularly masterful lines are read eagerly by everyone, posted on display boards and compiled into booklets that are placed in the school's reading room.

Mu Jianxing, principal of the primary school, said that students

have found opportunities and platforms to showcase their talent through poetry. "We encourage students to pen poems, and we cherish every creation from our students. Every year, the school holds activities themed around poetry and music, where students can take the stage to proudly recite their own poems," Mu added.

Student Weng Jiadai said that she cherishes the memory of a day in fourth grade when she recited two of her poems on the campus radio. When her name was announced as the author, she remembers feeling immense pride.

Nowadays, multiple light boxes in Mangshui display poems authored by local students.

Thanks to their poetry education, the town's children have expanded their horizons, discovered the better versions of themselves and gained recognition across China.

Wang Chunlin, a ninth grader at Mangshui Junior High School, has penned over 200 poems since the third grade. She said that she had once felt insecure, but the energy she draws from poetry and the friends she has made through poetry have made her more optimistic.

Poetry has also broadened her world, she said. Wang, who had never left her home county before she found poetry, has now traveled to Beijing twice to participate in poetry events. "I will keep on writing poems," she said, adding that her dream is to become a teacher and share the beauty of poetry with more students.

XINHUA

## WORLD

## China and Zambia initiate UN group to boost AI cooperation

By MINLU ZHANG  
at the United Nations  
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A new Group of Friends, initiated by China and Zambia, was launched at the United Nations on Tuesday to promote international cooperation in building artificial intelligence (AI) capacity.

The Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity Building held its first meeting at the UN, with representatives from more than 80 countries, including Egypt, Pakistan, Brazil, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Russia, the United States, France and the UK in attendance.

The UN's Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology also was represented.

Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, emphasized the need to harness AI for good, promote fairness and inclusivity, uphold multilateralism and focus on capacity-building.

He said that the Group of Friends aims to foster broad partnerships, implement practical actions, and support sustainable development worldwide through AI.

"We hope this Group of Friends can play a role in helping the international community seize the immense opportunities presented by digital development, build partnerships, and undertake actions for a brighter and smarter future," Fu said. "We must promote AI for good."

AI can play a crucial role in implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda, enhancing people's well-being and addressing global challenges, but he said the development of AI also could bring conflicting rules, social risks and ethical challenges.

"We must always keep in mind that high-quality AI development can only be possible when robust security guardrails are in place. AI must always be under human

control," he said.

"We must uphold fairness and inclusiveness," said Fu. He called for ensuring that all nations have equal opportunities to develop and benefit from AI, in an open and nondiscriminatory environment.

Fu also called for "championing multilateralism" and advocating collaborative global efforts to make AI a tool for the collective benefit of humanity rather than a privilege for a select few.

Emmanuel Pamu, Zambia's permanent secretary for budget and economic affairs in the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, stressed the importance of bridging the AI divide and supporting the UN's role in global AI governance.

He called on all parties to back the Group of Friends and strengthen international cooperation.

China has increasingly focused on AI development in recent years. Last year, President Xi Jinping introduced the Global Initiative on AI Governance, aiming to address key challenges in AI governance and promote global cooperation.

In July, under the guidance of the Global Initiative on AI Governance, China led the unanimous adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution on AI capacity-building co-sponsored by 143 countries, including the US.

The Group of Friends is rooted in the resolution that aims to enhance international collaboration on AI capacity-building and promote "an open, fair and nondiscriminatory business environment".

The resolution "encourages international cooperation to help countries, especially developing ones, strengthen AI capacity, enhance their representation in global AI governance, and advocate for an open, fair and nondiscriminatory business environment", Fu said at the General Assembly.

## Steps of hope



A technician helps a man put on a prosthetic limb donated by the Indonesian government to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on Tuesday in Banda Aceh, the capital and largest city in Aceh Province, Indonesia. STELOS MISINAS / REUTERS

## Briefly

## CHINA

## Fukushima seawater samples being tested

Seawater samples collected by Chinese experts near Fukushima have arrived in China, and are being tested and analyzed by Chinese research institutions, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said on Tuesday. China will release the progress of the tests promptly, Lin said. The samples were collected near the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in October, when experts from China and other countries, organized by the International Atomic Energy Agency, went to Fukushima for independent seawater sample collection, the spokesman said. Lin said Japan has agreed to ensure that China and other stakeholders collect samples and conduct monitoring independently.

## SOUTH KOREA

## President declares emergency martial law

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol on Tuesday declared martial law in an unannounced late-night address broadcast live on YTN television. Yoon said he had no choice but to resort to such a measure in order to safeguard free and consti-

tutional order, saying opposition parties have taken hostage of the parliamentary process to throw the country into a crisis. He did not say in the address what specific measures will be taken. Yonhap reported that the entrance to the parliament building was blocked. The move drew immediate opposition from politicians, including the leader of his own party, Han Dong-hoon, who called the decision "wrong" and vowed to "stop it with the people". Opposition leader Lee Jae-myung called Yoon's announcement "unconstitutional".

## IRELAND

## Incumbent parties retain power in polls

Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, members of Ireland's incumbent governing coalition, have held on to power after the final votes were counted in the country's general election on Monday night. With all 174 legislative seats filled Fianna Fail had won 48 seats and Fine Gael 38. The two parties fell just short of the 88 needed to achieve a majority without third-party support. The main opposition party Sinn Fein won 39 seats.

CHINA DAILY—XINHUA—AGENCIES

## Cyclone heroes



Volunteers rescue residents through a flooded street after heavy rainfall in Puducherry, India, on Monday, following the landfall of Cyclone Fengal in the state of Tamil Nadu. The death toll from the cyclone's fierce push through Sri Lanka and southern India reached 20 on Monday as downpours and flooding followed the storm's wake after its winds calmed. AFP

## Xi's books published in Cyrillic Mongolian

## Event celebrates strategic partnership, promotes exchange and understanding

ULAN BATOR — The Cyrillic Mongolian editions of two books by Chinese President Xi Jinping were unveiled in Mongolia on Monday along with a seminar on governance, marking a significant cultural and political exchange between China and Mongolia.

At the ceremony, guests from both nations jointly introduced the second volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* and *Xi Jinping's Excerpts on Poverty Alleviation* in Cyrillic Mongolian. Following the unveiling, a seminar on state governance brought together experts and scholars from both countries to share insights on governance practices in China and Mongolia.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Mongolia and the 10th anniversary of the China-Mongolia comprehensive strategic partnership, participants said it is of great significance for the two countries to strengthen bilateral cooperation in governance and poverty alleviation, explore modernization paths suited to their unique national contexts, deepen the friendship and mutual trust, integrate interests, and promote the building of a community with a shared future for the two countries.

The organizers of the event said *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* reflects the development context and main content of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and is

an authoritative work for the international community to understand contemporary China.

Meanwhile, *Xi Jinping's Excerpts on Poverty Alleviation* systematically expounds on the guiding philosophy and great practice of China's poverty alleviation, and contributes the Chinese solution to global poverty governance.

The publication of the Cyrillic Mongolian version of the two important works is expected to help the Mongolian people better understand China, and open a new chapter for the traditional friendship and mutual learning of civilizations between China and Mongolia.

Khurelbaatar Bulgantuya, deputy chairman of Mongolia's parliament, the State Great Hural, said during the ceremony that, under President Xi's leadership, China is striving to comprehensively build a modern socialist country after achieving a moderately prosperous society, and Mongolia admires these efforts.

"Over the past 40 years, China has made significant contributions to global poverty reduction. These two works provide valuable references for countries around the world by sharing China's successful experiences," she said.

Shen Minjuan, Chinese ambassador to Mongolia, said the two countries share similar development goals and interconnected futures. Shen expressed hope that the Chinese solutions and wisdom

contained in the two books would inspire Mongolia, boost motivation and enhance confidence in achieving greater development while deepening bilateral cooperation across various fields.

Adiyasuren Davaajargal, state secretary of Mongolia's Ministry of Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth, said cooperation between Mongolia and China has grown increasingly close in recent years, yielding remarkable results.

Xi's works serve as a vital bridge for deepening bilateral exchange of governance experiences, he added.

The second volume of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* was translated and published in Cyrillic Mongolian by the Foreign Languages Press in collaboration with Mongolia's Admon Publishing House.

To date, *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China* has been translated into 42 languages, and *Xi Jinping's Excerpts on Poverty Alleviation* has been made available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and other languages. Cyrillic Mongolian is the first language in which this book has been translated and published through international collaboration.

The events, co-organized by the Chinese State Council Information Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, the China International Publishing Group and the Chinese embassy in Mongolia, were attended by more than 300 representatives from political parties, media outlets and think tanks from both countries, and diplomatic missions in Mongolia.

XINHUA

## Cessation of hostilities in Syria urged

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities amid the recent escalation of violence in Syria, his spokesman said on Monday.

Guterres is alarmed by the recent escalation of violence across northwest Syria, Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN chief, said in a daily news briefing.

The UN secretary-general called for immediate cessation of hostilities, reminding all parties of their obligations under international law, including humanitarian law, and urged an immediate return to the UN-facilitated political process in line with Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015).

Guterres' statement came after Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a group designated as terrorist group by the Security Council, and its allied opposition factions launched a major rebel offensive last week in northwest Syria's Aleppo and shifted front-lines that had been static since 2020.

According to the UN spokes-

man, there are reports of civilian casualties, displacement of tens of thousands of people, damage to civilian infrastructure and interruption in essential services and humanitarian aid.

"Over 48,500 people have been displaced as of 30 November," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement on Monday.

Guterres urged all parties to protect civilians and civilian objects, including by allowing safe passage to civilians fleeing hostilities.

"Syrians have endured conflict for nearly 14 years. They deserve a political horizon that will deliver a peaceful future — not more bloodshed," he said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Monday highlighted the necessity to cooperate to help the Syrian government in its fight against the "terrorist" groups in its territory.

In a phone call, the two sides described the recent actions by the "terrorists" in northern Syria as a

serious threat to the stability and security of the country and the West Asia region, according to a statement by Iranian president's office.

Pezeshkian said Iran maintained that the recent events were part of the "dangerous" US-Israeli plot to manipulate the region's political geography in Israel's favor.

Putin stressed that Russia believed the "terrorists" were not the main decision-makers behind the ongoing developments in northern Syria, but their supporters.

He added that Moscow was determined to work with Iran to assist Syria's official and legitimate government in its fight against the "terrorist" groups.

Also on Monday, Turkish and Iranian foreign ministers had a meeting in Ankara, discussing ways of defusing tensions in Syria.

Russia, Iran and Türkiye launched the process in January 2017 in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, which aims for a peaceful settlement in Syria.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Western countries' 'bloc politics' condemned

By YANG RAN  
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Cold War mentality is not in the best interest of the West, and countries around the world should seek mutually beneficial cooperation, a senior Hungarian official said, adding that his country hopes to enhance relations with China.

Balazs Orban, the political director in the office of the Prime Minister of Hungary, highlighted the shifting global power dynamics, noting the decline of Western dominance and the emergence of new power centers. He emphasized the need for a balanced approach to maintain global peace and prosperity in addressing the changing world order.

"Unfortunately, some Western countries and politicians choose to advocate a 'bloc formation' logic, which is a new type of Cold War logic. This approach suggests that Western countries should get closer to each other in all terms, cut ties with the rest of the world, and prepare for potential further confrontation with those countries not part of their bloc," Orban said.

He made the remarks at the launch event for the Chinese edition of his book *Hussar Cut: The Hungarian Strategy for Connectivity*, organized by the Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the China Social Sciences Press on Thursday in Beijing.

Orban argued in his book that the



Balazs Orban speaks at the launch event for the Chinese edition of his book on Thursday. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

resurgence of Cold War rhetoric is actually not in the best interest of the Western world, as it creates unnecessary conflicts within the West and heightens the risk of military clashes. Additionally, economic decoupling and de-risking will be extremely costly, essentially amounting to "winning a battle but losing the war," he wrote in the book.

At the launch event, the EU's recent decision to increase tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles was singled out by Orban as particularly misguided.

He described the move as a "terrible decision" that undermines the interests of European companies. European car manufacturers, whom the EU claims to protect, are openly opposing the idea of introducing tariffs, Orban said. "It's a very irrational statement from the European side."

Orban called for Europe to resolve trade tensions with China and embark on a new phase of peaceful and prosperous cooperation.

"What we are waiting for is to change the strategy, launch a different course where the fruitful and peaceful, mutually beneficial and stable EU-China cooperation can play a very important role," he said.

He said Hungary has a long-standing relationship of cooperation with China, emphasizing the two sides see the changing world order in a very similar way and both want to avoid confrontations.

"We don't see the rise of China as a threat. We do see it as an opportunity for everyone to get involved in the modernization of China. In many sectors, China possesses the most advanced technologies, providing opportunities to learn from Chinese companies and their know-how, thereby boosting one's own economy," he said.

Orban concluded by advocating strategies based on connectivity rather than decoupling, suggesting that countries adopting such approaches would avoid economic stagnation and emerge as economic winners in the 21st century.

## BUSINESS

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## Agricultural machinery production on fast track

By ZOU SHUO and ZHU YOUFANG in Shuangfeng, Hunan

In hilly Shuangfeng county, Hunan province, the development of agricultural machinery suitable for the local landscape has helped it to become a leading producer in the sector in China.

The rugged land makes it almost impossible for machines to operate in farmland. However, thanks to continuous research, development and technological innovation, the county has established itself as a key base of China's agricultural machines.

There are 85 enterprises in the county working in the sector, employing tens of thousands of people. The total industrial output of agricultural machinery enterprises from January to October this year reached 4.28 billion yuan (\$587 million), up 18.5 percent year-on-year.

Liu Yaqu, director of the Shuangfeng agricultural machinery affairs center, said agricultural machines manufactured in the county focus on hilly regions and are mainly small and medium-sized. There are about 300 types, including harvesters, rotary tillers, transplanters, drones and dryers.

The machines used to be low-end and less competitive, but after decades of innovation and reform, they have become more intelligent, automated, personalized and versatile, winning wide market recognition, he said.

Liu Ruoqiao, the president of Nongyou Group, said the company has made different kinds of agricultural machines based on extended market research.

One of its most distinctive products is an automated camellia seed collector, which collects the seeds into an umbrella-like container through vibrations.

Liu said the country has 5.33 million hectares of camellia oil trees, which are grown in hills and moun-



An employee works on the assembly line of a harvester manufacturing company in Shuangfeng county, Hunan province. CHEN SIHAN / XINHUA

tain. It is very hard for big machines to operate in such areas, so collecting the seeds has relied heavily on manual labor which is costly and inefficient, he said.

The company worked with Central South University of Forestry and Technology in Changsha to develop the camellia seed collector, which can work 10 times faster than humans, Liu added.

In 2019, the dryers made by the company reached No 1 in the country in sales revenue and have remained in the top three in the past two years. However, as production capacity could not keep up with demand, clients withdrew almost 10

million yuan's worth of orders this year, he said.

The company has invested more than 60 million yuan in intelligent production, which can increase production capacity threefold, he added.

Through technological strength in the sector, agricultural machinery enterprises in the county have actively expanded into overseas markets.

A total of 2,000 solar powered water pumps made by Nongyou were exported to Africa last month. Orders from Nigeria have reached more than 10 million units this year and the company still cannot keep up with demand, Liu said.

Seventeen enterprises in the county have exported their machines to Africa, with strong momentum in exporting business.

According to data from the Shuangfeng agricultural machinery affairs center, the county exported 207 million yuan of agricultural machines from January to October this year, up by 62 percent year-on-year.

The growth rate has remained above 60 percent for 10 consecutive months, with their products being most competitive in Southeast Asia, Africa and South America.

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## Over horizon policy to help boost demand

PBOC to ensure ample liquidity while reducing overall financing costs

By SHI JING in Shanghai shijing@chinadaily.com.cn

While supportive monetary policies can be expected in 2025, experts anticipate more incremental policies to stabilize China's economic growth and boost domestic demand.

They made such comments after Pan Gongsheng, governor of the People's Bank of China — the central bank — said on Monday that the PBOC will continue to adhere to a supportive monetary policy stance in the upcoming year and use a mix of policy tools to strengthen countercyclical adjustments.

The PBOC will work to ensure reasonable and ample liquidity while reducing overall financing costs for businesses and households, said Pan when addressing a financial forum in Beijing.

The central bank announced on Monday the inclusion of residential demand deposits and prepaid funds received by nonbank payment institutions into M1 calculations, which are now made up of currency in circulation (M0) and corporate demand deposits.

Scheduled to take effect in 2025, M1 — the most liquid portion of money supply — will see its growth rate fluctuate more moderately, said experts from CITIC Securities.

This change, which is in line with changes of payment habits, will help to provide better interpretations of China's economic activity and restructuring trends, they said.

A top-level meeting aiming to set the tone for next year's macroeconomic policies, which will be held later this month, will provide more active guidance for 2025, said Ming Ming, chief economist at CITIC Securities.

While the PBOC has been quite clear about a supportive monetary policy, Ming said that quantity-focused monetary tools may work better than pricing-focused tools in terms of boosting economic growth over the short run.

Open market operations with repurchase agreements and purchase of government bonds may be options for the PBOC to further stabilize liquidity fluctuations, he said.

Wei Jie, a professor at the School of Economics and Management at Tsinghua University, said that there should be ample money supply to ensure China's economic growth. In other words, the growth rate of M2 and that of social retail (social media interactions with buyers facilitating

simultaneous transactions on both physical and digital channels) should outperform that of the nominal GDP.

Pan also said at the Monday forum that structural monetary tools should play a bigger role in supporting technological innovation, green finance and consumer finance.

Incremental supportive monetary policies should facilitate fiscal policies, of which issuing bonds will be a focal point in the future. The PBOC can buy bonds — including government bonds — to support the stable implementation of fiscal measures, said Wei.

On top of that, low interest rates should be a big part of incremental supportive monetary policies. This will not only help lower consumption and investment costs, but is also conducive to the development of green finance, fintech and digital finance, said Wei.

Shan Hui, Goldman Sachs' chief China economist, said that there is room for the PBOC to conduct a 50 basis point cut in the reserve requirement rate by the end of this year.

Shan expects the central bank to conduct two RRR cuts in 2025, one every six months.

The room for interest rate cuts is 40 basis points for next year if inflation remains low in China, she added.

When it comes to increased tariffs on China as possibly planned by the incoming United States' administration, Goldman Sachs' basic estimation uses a weighted average of a potential 20 percent increase on Chinese imports.

Based on past experience, the yuan would depreciate to some extent after a tariff increase policy was announced. Therefore, the USD/CNY rate will reach a 7.5 level in the six to 12 months' time span, according to Goldman Sachs.

The exchange rate for offshore renminbi, which reflects international investors' expectations, fell below 7.31 per US dollar on Tuesday morning, the lowest level since November last year.

As explained by experts from China International Capital Corp Ltd, market risk appetite has been affected by president-elect Donald Trump's statements on tariffs and trade policies, supporting a stronger US dollar in the short run. But such an impact has already been priced in over the past month and will weaken in December, they said.

Zhou Lanxun in Beijing contributed to this story.

## Mohe emerges as key cold-weather test ground

By ZHOU HUIYING in Harbin zhohuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

As temperatures drop to -30 C in Mohe, Heilongjiang province, a group of engineers from across the country have arrived at the nation's most northerly city to conduct tests of automobiles in frigid conditions.

The engineers are braving the extreme cold to conduct comprehensive evaluations of vehicle performance in high-latitude environments, and are driving the development of the ice and snow economy as well as the new energy industry.

At the Mohe Honghe Valley Frigid Car Testing Base, vehicles are racing freely, stirring up bursts of snow, adding a touch of speed and passion to the magnificent northern scenery, as the engineers dedicate themselves to cold-weather tests of automobiles.

During the 2023-24 testing season, over 170 cooperating enterprises had settled in at the base. In preparation for the new testing season, the base is continuing to improve its support services.

"We have built a new 13.33-hectare testing ground and equipped it with European-standard charging stations," said Ma Xiangdong, the customer manager of the base.

"We are also preparing to install a 960-kilowatt supercharger to provide faster and more efficient charging, striving to offer the highest quality service to more automotive companies and component manu-



Two cars seen undergoing cold-weather testing in Mohe, Heilongjiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

facturers," Ma said.

"So far, only Mohe can meet the temperature requirements we need," said Yu Meiling, a development engineer from Xiaomi Auto. "They provide excellent workshop services, the debugging of charging stations and the professional testing grounds for us to conduct low-temperature performance testing."

Mohe is known as the "Arctic of China" and the "City of Extreme Cold", with an ice and snow period lasting over 240 days each year. Its lowest recorded temperature was -53 C, maintaining the record for the lowest temperature reading in China's meteorological history.

The prolonged cold, ice and snow environment from late October to April of the following year provides an extended validation period and excellent testing environment for vehicle power, endur-

ance and performance.

Since late October, over 200 engineers from companies such as Geely, BYD and NIO, along with over 100 vehicles, have gradually arrived in Mohe to begin testing, heralding the start of a new testing season in the city.

As early as mid-October, 23 engineers and staff members from BYD, along with 17 test vehicles, arrived in Mohe to kick off a new round of cold-weather tests.

"We chose Mohe for winter testing because its natural environment can simulate extreme low-temperature conditions, which are crucial for verifying the performance of our vehicles in cold environments," according to the head of its testing team.

"In addition, the local government has provided us with a lot of help and support. They have actively improved the testing

environment, such as snow clearing on roads, which is of great significance for the safe transportation and operation of our test vehicles."

In recent years, Mohe has comprehensively promoted the cold-weather testing industry and established the Mohe City Cold Region Testing Service Center, attracting multiple testing companies to settle in the city.

"This winter, in addition to the existing 40 plus testing roads, we have constructed new special seasonal testing roads for special vehicles and durable roads in forest areas, providing more professional and diversified testing environments for automotive companies," said Wang Dongling, director of the city's industry and information technology bureau.

"Meanwhile, we will continue to ensure the security of cold-weather testing services, contributing our share of strength from Mohe to the development of our country's new energy vehicle industry."

So far, the cold-weather testing industry in Mohe is flourishing, with six testing enterprises in operation.

Projects for testing aircraft, automobiles, electric power, new materials, and more in cold-weather conditions are steadily progressing with over 1,200 test vehicles and a total of 23,000 pieces of testing categories, including new materials, electronic components, vehicle clothing and films, undergoing tests in the city every year.

## Sanofi to invest in new insulin production base in Beijing

French pharma giant Sanofi will invest some 1 billion euros (\$1.05 billion) to establish a new insulin production base in Beijing, according to the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area (BDA).

Sanofi signed a memorandum of cooperation on Monday with the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology and the BDA Administrative Committee to build the facility in the city's southern area of Yizhuang. This will be Sanofi's fourth produc-

tion-and-supply base in China and represents its largest single investment in the country to date.

Sanofi Chief Executive Paul Hudson noted that the new production base featuring advanced automated production technologies, cutting-edge digital integrated management systems and sustainable environmental standards will further enhance the company's supply chain resilience and efficiently address the growing needs of diabetes patients.

Frederic Oudea, chairman of the

board of directors of Sanofi, expressed the company's confidence in the long-term growth prospects of the Chinese market.

He highlighted that China's policies of opening-up and encouraging innovation, as well as the sound business environment for foreign enterprises, have strengthened Sanofi's commitment to participating in China's economic growth and advancing the high-quality development of its pharmaceutical industry.

Headquartered in Paris, Sanofi

has had a presence in China since establishing its office in 1982. The company operates multiple production and R&D facilities across the country.

Its first production base in the BDA, built in 1995, has since become Sanofi's largest insulin injection production site in the Asia-Pacific region, serving therapeutic areas such as diabetes, cardiovascular health, internal medicine and oncology.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## Briefly

## Railway spurs economic growth

The China-Laos Railway has emerged as a catalyst for regional economic growth three years after its launch, China's railway operator said on Tuesday. The railway has handled over 43 million passenger trips and transported 48.3 million metric tons of cargo as of Monday, according to the China State Railway Group Co Ltd. The 1,035-km railway connects Kunming, capital of Yunnan province, with the Laotian capital of Vientiane.

## Air freight volume hits record high

The volume of China's air cargo has reached a historic peak, fueled by robust growth in international air freight, an official with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) said on Tuesday. Between January and October, the country's aviation sector handled nearly 7.3

million metric tons of cargo and mail, marking a 19.3 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019. Notably, international routes carried about 2.93 million tons of cargo and mail, up 48.5 percent from the same period in 2019.

## Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 131 pips to 7.1996 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

## BUSINESS



Dongfeng Motor employees work on an assembly line in Xiangyang, Hubei province, in August. WU XIAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Dongfeng Motor launches major die-casting project

By LIU KUN in Wuhan and TAN GUOLING

With the domestic new energy vehicle business on the rise, Dongfeng Motor recently launched a project to enhance its strength in car body construction.

The project will introduce the world's largest integrated die-casting machine—a 16,000-metric-ton behemoth—to produce chassis components and battery housings for NEVs.

Integrated die-casting technology enables consolidation of hundreds of autoparts into a single and large aluminum component through a one-time die-casting process, which helps reduce costs and improve efficiency, said the company, adding that many automakers have applied this

technology, including Tesla, Aito and Xiaomi.

Compared with traditional manufacturing, integrated die-casting technology can reduce the number of parts and welding points, simplify the body assembly process and reduce manufacturing costs, said Wu Xiaofei, general manager of Dongfeng Electronic Technology Co's Wuhan branch.

"The technology can not only reduce the overall weight of vehicles through streamlining stamping and welding processes, but also strengthens rigidity of car bodies, extending the duration and enhancing the safety of NEVs," Wu said during the signing and groundbreaking ceremony for the Dongfeng Integrated Die-casting Industrialization project

in the Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone on Nov 22.

Citing the tonnage of the introduced die-casting machine, the manager said the larger the machine is, the higher precision the production can achieve.

According to the company, there are only about 100 die-casting machines above 6,000 tons in China at present, indicating an insufficient supply of such heavy machines in the country.

The project will be developed in two phases. The initial comprehensive plan is to build six ultra-large intelligent die-casting production lines which will be capable of producing integrated front cabins, rear floors and battery housings for vehicle models.

The project aims to produce

600,000 units annually, Dongfeng Motor said.

The total investment of the first phase of the project is expected to be 1 billion yuan (\$137.25 million), Wu said.

Wuhan Economic and Technological Development Zone said implementation of the technology will improve the capacity and efficiency of NEV production, help upgrade and further expand the trillion-yuan automobile industry.

Looking ahead, Dongfeng Motor said that it will continue to develop key technologies of its own and reduce reliance on imported solutions in the next three years through cooperation with research partners.

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## China seen as fertile land for pharma firms

Astellas exec highlights nation's massive consumer base and strong IP protection

By WANG KEJU [wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn)

China's massive consumer base, strengthened intellectual property protection, and enhanced innovation climate are converging to foster a fertile landscape for pharmaceutical companies to bring their cutting-edge drugs to the market, said a senior executive of a multinational pharmaceutical company.

What sets China apart from many other markets, to begin with, is the sheer scale of its consumer base. With the world's second-largest population, China represents a super-sized opportunity for the pharma sector, said Claus Zieler, chief commercial officer of Tokyo-headquartered Astellas.

This massive demand pool is further enhanced by the shifting dynamic in the country's demographic, Zieler said, adding that an aging population comes with rising needs for innovative medicine.

Data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs showed that China's elderly population, aged 60 and above, accounted for more than one-fifth of the nation's total population last year, and the aging trend may intensify in the future.

The strengthening of China's IP regime has also been of vital importance for the pharma sector, according to Zieler.

Developing new drugs requires massive upfront investments in research and clinical trials. Strong IP rights provide pharmaceutical companies with the ability to recoup these substantial costs through exclusive market access for a period of time, Zieler said.

The promise of patent protections and the potential for high returns incentivize pharmaceutical companies to continually invest in developing new drugs. This will fuel a cycle of ongoing innovation, he added.

China has treated domestic and foreign companies with an equal footing in terms of protecting patents and intellectual properties, Zieler said, stressing that China should continue on that path because it gives certainty of planning and expectation for companies investing in China.

In addition to the market size and IP framework, China has a culture that is "very ready to accept innovation," Zieler said.

In the last decade, China has been

intensifying its health reform and ramping up efforts to refine its regulatory landscape. This includes streamlining the review and approval of new drugs and scaling up support for clinical trials, creating a favorable policy environment for both global innovators like Astellas, as well as local innovators, Zieler said.

The company is introducing two innovative cancer treatments to China, focusing on bladder and gastric oncology. These novel products, which are designed to improve patient outcomes and offer new hope, will soon enter the Chinese market, according to Zieler.

For example, noting that there are tremendous patient needs related to gastric cancer in China,

Zieler said that Astellas engaged China in the global multicenter clinical trial for gastric cancer, and achieved global simultaneous development and biologics license application submission.

China is expected to become one of the first wave of markets to adopt this therapy, and this is expected to benefit Chinese gastric cancer patients who account for nearly 40 percent of global cases, Zieler said.

Meanwhile, a novel treatment from Astellas for menopause hot flashes has been available on a trial basis in Boao, Hainan province. It has also been filed with Hong Kong authorities and is waiting for approval, said Shirley Zhao, president of Astellas China.

"China is the world's second-largest pharmaceutical market with a large population. It presents us with great development potential in tremendous unmet medical needs. Astellas has been rooted in China for 30 years, and we appreciate China's unwavering efforts in deepening its reform and opening-up over the past decades," Zieler said.

"As a global pharmaceutical company which is committed to long-term investment in China, we are expecting more policies to accelerate the innovation and keep improving patient access that will not only benefit patients but also bolster high-quality development of the innovation ecosystem in China," Zhao said.

Astellas will do everything in its power to ensure these cutting-edge treatments can reach Chinese patients as quickly as possible, Zhao added.



Claus Zieler

## Chongqing mustard crop spices up rural incomes

By ZHUANG QIANG and PANG BO

Southwest China's Chongqing municipality is the country's leading producer of pickled mustard tubers, with goods carrying the Fuling Mustard brand being exported to over 50 countries and regions, as well as enjoying widespread domestic sales.

In 2023, Chongqing reaped 2.78 million metric tons of mustard tubers — whose stems are made into the famed mustard as a finished product — with a cultivation area of 1.96 million *mu* (130,666 hectares), with the output processed into 1.42 million tons of pickled mustard tuber sales, accounting for more than 70 percent of the nation's total.

Currently, Chongqing administers 38 districts and counties, including autonomous counties, as a municipality.

Dianjiang county's cultivation area of mustard tubers reached 170,000 *mu* in 2023, accounting for about 38 percent of its total vegetable cultivation area, leading to a total output exceeding 400,000 tons, and a value of fresh sales and auxiliary processing of mustard tubers hitting 400 million yuan (\$56.33 million), said Shen Jinjun, director of the functional laboratory of a mustard tuber technology system innovation team in Chongqing.

At a demonstration base of the Chongqing Yudongnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences, located in Changlong town under Dianjiang,

more than 200 *mu* of early-market mustard tubers of the "Yuzao 100" variety entered their harvest season on Nov 22, marking the first successful trial cultivation of early-market mustard tubers at low altitudes in Chongqing.

"This year, I planted 70 *mu* of early-market mustard tubers, which is expected to produce some 1,500 kilograms per *mu*. If sold at an average price of 4 yuan per kilogram, the produce can bring me a total income of around 400,000 yuan," said Xie Jianming, a grower from Changyan village at Changlong.

Developed by the academy's mustard tuber breeding innovation team, the Yuzao 100 variety can reach maturity two months earlier and double the output value

of conventional varieties.

"The successful trial not only sets a precedent for growing early-market mustard tubers in Chongqing's low-altitude areas, but also enriches the vegetable market during autumn and winter," said Shen, adding that they plan to promote its large-scale cultivation.

Yang Guangxia, deputy director of the fruit and vegetable management station in Dianjiang, said, "Next, we will collaborate with Shen's team to enhance its technology and manage cultivation scientifically, thus further extending the harvest period of mustard tubers and helping to boost farmers' incomes amid rural vitalization."

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## SKF Group to ramp up investments in China

By LIU YUKUN [liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn)

Swedish bearing manufacturer SKF Group spoke highly of China's rapid development of manufacturing in emerging sectors like electric vehicles and wind power equipment, saying the company will bring new opportunities for global industrial growth.

The group will increase investments in China, said Annika Olme, chief technology officer of SKF, adding the focus will be on localizing the complete value chain, encompassing production, procurement, technical research and development.

"We are committed to ramping up investments in research and development, crafting technologies and solutions that enhance operational efficiency, cut emissions and advance the digitalization of the entire value chain. Moreover, we will intensify investments in automation and regional growth," said Olme, who is also the company's senior vice-president for technology development.

"Being the world's second-largest economy and a pivotal single market on a global scale, China has a

China's new quality productive forces entail more disruptive innovation, better resource allocation ..."

Annika Olme, chief technology officer and senior vice-president for technology development of SKF

substantial role in the international industrial chain, influencing the advancement of diverse industries worldwide. The progress toward decarbonization within China's industrial sector also has a big influence on global industrial development ... Moreover, the nation's dedication to fostering new quality productive forces generates a multitude of new opportunities across various industries," she added.

Olme said that China's rapid advancement in new energy vehicles and wind turbines necessitates bearings and parts manufacturing

that meet elevated technical standards while maintaining cost efficiency. In line with these demands, SKF has proactively pursued partnerships within the region, exemplified by its provision of ceramic ball bearings to Nio, a prominent electric vehicle manufacturer.

SKF also supplies parts to industries like rail transportation and steel, among others. Currently, the group employs around 6,000 staff members in China, operates nine production facilities and collaborates with over 150 authorized partners.

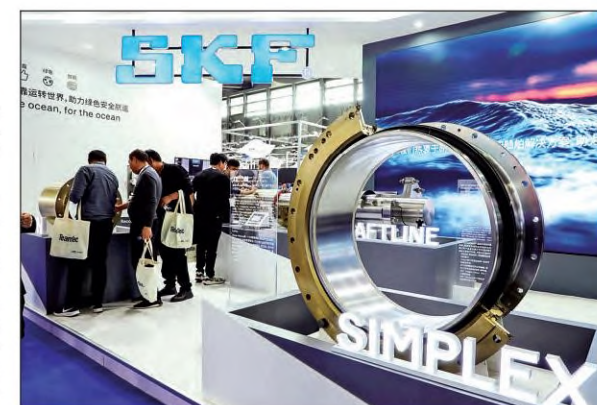
"China's new quality productive forces entail more disruptive innovation, better resource allocation, and signify more new opportunities for industries," she said, adding the group will expand its presence in China, continuing with end-to-end localization of the entire value chain.

Since becoming the world's largest manufacturing country in 2010, China's value-added manufacturing has increased from 16.98 trillion yuan (\$2.33 trillion) to 39.9 trillion yuan in 2023, according to data from the Ministry of Industry and

Information Technology. In the first half of this year, China's manufacturing value-added accounted for 27 percent of its GDP.

This year, foreign investment in China has shown a rapid growth trend, especially in the high-tech manufacturing sector, indicating a trend of further integration into the Chinese market, said the Ministry of Commerce. Data from the ministry showed that from January to October, actual foreign investment use in China amounted to 693.21 billion yuan. Within this, high-tech manufacturing drew 80.18 billion yuan, representing 11.6 percent of the total — a 0.7 percentage point increase year-on-year.

In terms of policies, efforts have been continuously made to facilitate high-standard opening-up of the manufacturing sector. In September, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce jointly updated the negative list for foreign investment, effective November, removing restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing industry.



SKF's booth during a marine tech expo in Shanghai in December 2023. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Experts believe this will help increase the supply of high-quality products and services within the manufacturing sector and provide a broader space for multinational companies to develop in China.

Zhou Mi, a senior researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that China not only lowers the threshold for foreign investment by expanding openness,

but also introduces favorable policies for key industries, in terms of research and development, as well as innovation.

"The growth of high-tech manufacturing is an inevitable trend in China. Increased foreign investment in China's high-tech manufacturing sector will yield good returns for both sides, and also serve as an important driving force for China's high-quality economic development," Zhou said.

## BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

## Butler business thriving for well-to-do families

Beijing-based training firm says 70% of candidates are female

By ZHU WENQIAN  
zhuwenqian@chinadaily.com.cn

High-net-worth families in China are showing a growing demand for private butlers, and working as a butler has become a career choice for an increasing number of college graduates, and those who have studied abroad, industry players found.

Private butlers mostly provide services for families whose heads of household work as corporate leaders or celebrities, including many foreigners who work in China.

China's high-net-worth population is growing and becoming increasingly younger, and many of them have studied or lived abroad. So it is easier for them to embrace the concept of private butler services. Such a trend has fueled the professional market of private butlers in China to experience a rapid growth.

"Private butlers usually act as senior life consultants for their employers' core family management issues. They can live at their employers' home or not. For our butlers, about 70 percent of them are females," said Zhang Ran, founder and president of Meiyinghui Family Service Co Ltd, a Beijing-based butler management company.

"The butlers we hire are mainly those aged between 28 and 48, and many of them studied abroad and have master's degrees. They graduated in different majors such as hotel management, human resources management, education and nursing care," Zhang said.

She added that the average salary of a private butler is about 400,000 yuan (\$55,000) annually, and the salary ranges from 200,000 yuan to 800,000 yuan a year. The salary level has attracted many people to engage in this profession.

Unlike ordinary housekeeping service personnel, private butlers usually need to understand about advanced family affairs, children's educational planning, risk management and other knowledge such as nutrition, luxury products and cooking of various cuisines.

In Beijing, the city has a high demand for private butler services, and there are at least five butler management companies. In addition to major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong province's Guangzhou and Shenzhen, more well-to-do families from second and third-tier Chinese cities have shown growing demand for such services.

Unlike English-style butlers, high-net-worth individuals in China have more specific and tailored demands and they would like some services that cater to the Chinese culture and different family members.

For instance, butlers usually need to know about different washing and ironing standards of different clothes, as well as knowledge about luxury products, wines and



Butler management company Meiyinghui Butler organizes a practical training session on risk management in Beijing in October. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Former Chinese taekwondo athlete Liu Xiaobo acts as the general director for a risk management training session organized by Meiyinghui Butler in Beijing in October. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

cigars — including wine opening, product areas and grape varieties of a specific kind of wine. In addition, butlers need to master skills such as risk response and first aid dressing.

Zhu Zhe, a young female who has worked for more than five years as a private butler for two families in the capital, graduated from Hebei University as an English major. Zhu said she used to manage a team of five staff members at a family, including three cleaners, a driver and a chef.

"In my daily routine, I was responsible for preparing the daily menus and selecting ingredients for the family feasts. I also helped make plans for family travel, booking flights and hotels. My other responsibilities sometimes included accompanying my employer on outings and responding to family emergencies," Zhu said.

Founded in 2013, Meiyinghui said butler services have become increasingly common in China since 2015. The company currently manages about 1,000 butlers, and

private butlers usually need to go through a training session that lasts about three to five months before starting work.

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't have an impact on demand for private butlers, and the supply has been falling short of demand over the past two to three years, Zhang said.

Zeng Jingjing has been a trainer for private butlers for two years. She studied in Melbourne and majored in business English, having worked for many years in the training sector.

"This is a sunrise sector. Private butlers usually work long term for their employers. They tend to work for at least two to three years for the same family," Zeng said.

Meanwhile, the market size of China's domestic service industry has exceeded 1 trillion yuan, with over 30 million employees, but the shortage of high-quality domestic service personnel is particularly prominent, said the National Development and Reform Commission during a recent news conference.

It is estimated that there is a shortage of over 20 million domestic workers in China. The demand for household services is no longer limited to daily chores, as online shopping and food deliveries have made it increasingly convenient for consumers, and they have indicated demand for higher-level specialized services.

For instance, demand for pet care, medical services, cultural life planning services, and other responsibilities has significantly increased, industry reports found.

So far, colleges such as Jilin Agricultural University and Hebei Normal University have established majors in home economics, while highly educated individuals who choose to major in home economics do not necessarily need to become household service personnel.

The demand for positions such as home economics managers, community service managers and project managers accounts for nearly half of the market demand, while home economics lecturers and professional teachers at voca-

tional colleges account for 25 percent of the market demand, according to the Henan Home Service Association.

In another development, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security included some 20 new occupations on the national occupational classification list in late July, and those jobs included livestreaming anchors, cloud network intelligent operation and maintenance personnel, and user growth operations specialists.

Among the newly added occupations, more than half have been closely related to new quality productive forces, and those new professions have been a reflection of the diversification and new demands in people's lives.

Other new professions include cultural and creative product planning and operational specialists, oral hygiene technicians and ski rescue personnel. And some new types of work include elderly bath assistants and leisure campsite butlers.

Recognizing new professions ahead of the curve will be beneficial to cultivate new employment growth points and expand job seekers' career development paths, the ministry said.

"The new professions we recognized are not newly emerging or created jobs. They refer to those professions that are not yet included in the dictionary, but have a certain scale of practitioners and require relatively independent and mature professional skills," said Wang Xiaojun, an official at the ministry.

## Multilingual tour guides cashing in on visitor boom

By ZHU WENQIAN

China has welcomed an increasing number of foreign tourists as the country continues to promote its inbound tourism market, and tour guides who can speak English and other languages such as Spanish, Russian and Thai have been in high demand.

Unlike Chinese-speaking tour guides, many foreign language tour guides have been working independently in China and cooperating with travel agencies. For those who don't have enough connections with travel agencies, they often join newly established organizations, and there are intermediaries who help recommend more work opportunities, industry players observed.

The salary level of foreign language tour guides mainly depends on the language they speak and the number of days they lead tour groups. Salaries for tour guides who speak lesser-

known languages are usually higher than for English tour guides, said Tongcheng Travel, a Suzhou, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency.

In addition, incomes of tour guides often include basic salary and tips, and the specific income may vary depending on the quality of service and customer satisfaction, Tongcheng Travel said.

Currently, a relatively slack season for inbound travel, the average daily income for a foreign language tour guide in China stands at about 700 yuan (\$96.2) to 800 yuan, and it is about 200 yuan higher than a tour guide who speaks Chinese and leads a domestic tour group, according to Tuniu Corp, a Nanjing, Jiangsu province-based online travel agency.

During peak travel season in summer, their average daily income is about 1,000 yuan to 1,100 yuan, and it is difficult for many tour groups to find English-speaking tour guides as the supply falls

short of demand, Tuniu said.

"In the first half of this year, demand for foreign language tour guides was higher, as a large number of foreign visitors came to China for business trips, and they also took short trips," said Zhao Linyan, business manager of Tuniu's self-operated local tour operator in Beijing.

"Demand for English-speaking tour guides has been the highest, and there is also demand for tour guides who speak Spanish and Russian," Zhao said. She added that in April, when Thailand celebrated its annual Songkran Festival, Thai people got a long holiday off from work, and many came to China for travel. Tour guides who can speak Thai in China were in hot demand at that time.

China's inbound tourism market has recovered rapidly as the country continued to implement unilateral visa-free policies for multiple countries. This year, the number of inbound tourists is expected to

rebound to over 90 percent of levels seen in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report by the China Tourism Academy.

In the first three quarters, China welcomed 950 million foreign visitors, and the figure resumed to more than 90 percent of 2019 levels. For major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province, the number of foreign visitors recovered to over 75 percent of pre-pandemic levels, the report said.

Ke Zhihong, a foreign-language tour guide who has been working for more than a decade in Xiamen, Fujian province, can speak English and French. Her daily salary is about 1,000 yuan, and when providing guide services for French visitors, her income is higher, Xiamen Daily reported.

Ke said the number of foreign language tour guides at her company accounts for about one tenth of the



A tour guide (center) communicates with foreign tourists in Xiangxi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, Hunan province, in November. CHEN SHAN / XINHUA

total. This year, the number of inbound tour groups that she has received is about 30 percent higher than last year.

As China welcomes more tour groups who speak minor language,

her company will invite foreign language tour guides from other provinces and foreign language teachers at local universities to help meet the growing inbound travel demand.

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## High-quality cooperation guarantee of bright future for shared benefits of Belt and Road

When China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, few would have expected it to become such a major global public good in such a short span of time. That it has is because of the tangible benefits it has produced for all the participants.

Under the BRI framework countries have strengthened their connectivity with the world thanks to the construction of much-needed infrastructure, and boosted their development prospects through win-win cooperation with China.

The important roles BRI projects have played in enhancing people's livelihoods and narrowing the global development gaps have made the modern Silk Road a road of hope, a road of development, a road of opportunity, and a road to a greener future. That is why the initiative has become increasingly popular around the world.

The popularity of the initiative is an incontrovertible rebuttal to the smears of some that the initiative is nothing but a geopolitical tool and Belt and Road cooperation a debt trap. Contrary to those allegations, the BRI is testament to China's perspicacity and perseverance, and its ability to turn blueprints into reality. It is evidence of its courage to pursue the greater good despite the potential pitfalls.

The fourth symposium on Belt and Road construction work held in Beijing on Monday has therefore caught widespread attention, as it offers an insight into Beijing's latest views on Belt and Road cooperation. The previous symposiums, held in 2016, 2018 and 2021, all directly guided the subsequent implementation of the BRI.

The call President Xi Jinping made at Monday's meeting for all participating parties to comprehensively advance high-quality cooperation shows that the BRI has now entered a new stage.

With the world convulsed by turbulence and change, Xi urged efforts to appropriately manage all types of risks and challenges and effectively address the impact of geopolitical conflicts, so as to effectively advance high-quality Belt and Road cooperation.

Xi urged all relevant parties to properly handle the relationship between strengthening participating countries' sense of fulfillment and ensuring the benefits for China, calling for concrete measures to safeguard China's overseas interests related to Belt and Road cooperation.

It is the well handling of this relationship and the protection of China's overseas interests that will guarantee the sustainability of relevant projects in the long run.

So far, China has signed cooperation documents under the framework of the BRI with over 150 countries and over 30 international organizations. And data from the Ministry of Commerce showed that by the end of 2023, Chinese companies had established 17,000 overseas enterprises in countries participating in the BRI, and their direct investment stock exceeded \$330 billion.

That means the participating countries should more actively fulfill their obligations and responsibilities under their Belt and Road agreements, to not only ensure relevant projects can be accomplished as planned, but also that the projects will be properly protected and well managed.

All participating parties should therefore improve the planning, coordination and management mechanisms, so as to uphold the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefiting together" and adhere to the requirement that the Belt and Road is open, green and clean.

In line with the focus on high-quality cooperation, China's future Belt and Road investments and inputs will be more results-oriented with greater attention to be paid to the actual input-output efficiency of projects. This is crucial to ensure that the high-quality BRI cooperation is sustainable.

The modern Silk Road is a road that is open to all. There is no small yard or high wall. The initiative originated in China, but it creates opportunities and good results for all participating parties, who by acting courageously and with a sense of responsibility can continuously create new space for win-win development at a higher level.

## Washington abusing restrictive measures

In a strongly worded statement, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce excoriated the United States for engaging in unilateral bullying behavior, saying that it "talks a good game while doing the opposite".

Lambasting the US for constantly expanding the concept of national security and abusing export control measures that seriously affect companies from all over the world, including the US, the ministry pilloried the US for its abuse of regulatory measures that impede normal economic and trade exchanges among countries, seriously undermine market rules and the international economic and trade order, and threaten the stability of the global industry and supply chains.

The statement came in response to the US Department of Commerce announcing on Monday new export restrictions targeting China. The package of measures includes restrictions on China-bound shipments of high bandwidth memory chips that are critical for high-end applications such as artificial intelligence training; new curbs on 24 additional chip-making tools and three software tools; and new export curbs on chip-making equipment made in countries such as Singapore and Malaysia.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce said on Tuesday it would restrict exports to the US of some key components used in making semiconductors after the US Department of Commerce announced the new curbs targeting shipments of advanced memory chips and chip-making tools to Chinese companies.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, in a statement, described the latest crackdown the US has launched on China's high-tech sector as "significant steps to protect our technology from being used by our adversaries in ways that threaten our national security", adding that Washington will keep working with its allies "to proactively and aggressively safeguard our world-leading technologies and know-how so they aren't used to undermine our national security".

Yet national security is only a pretext for the US to undermine China's tech sector. Its tech salvos are actually aimed at crippling China's overall tech development and its economic growth.

China will therefore take all necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests. Given that the semiconductor industry is highly globalized, other countries, including some of the US' allies, should stand with China in opposing the US repeatedly abusing regulatory measures to weaponize trade. Dutch and ROK companies are among those whose businesses will be harmed by the latest US restrictions.

Dutch lithography equipment maker ASML said the latest US restrictions, if enforced by the Dutch government, would affect the company's exports of deep ultraviolet lithography systems to chip-making plants in China. The company already predicts its sales will be at 30-35 billion euros (\$31.5-36.7 billion) in 2025, with only about 20 percent of sales in China — down from around 50 percent this year.

The US' attacks on Chinese tech, which are aimed at maintaining its own leadership position, are so indiscriminate that it tries to box them and tie them up in the bows of a response to national security threats when trying to sell them to its collateral-damaged partners.

Yet in spite of all their efforts, the China hawks in Washington are destined to be disillusioned if they think imposing technology sanctions on China will prevent the country from advancing its domestic semiconductor manufacturing system as it pursues modernization. Such efforts are only spurring China to intensify its quest to innovate and achieve self-reliance in high technologies.

A survey done by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute suggests that China is leading in 37 of 44 cutting-edge technologies, including nanoscale materials and synthetic biology. China is also employing industrial robots at 12 times the rate of the US. Therefore, China, with its science and innovation making rapid progress, will not easily succumb to the US attacks.

History proves that global cooperation drives development of science to benefit all humanity. The "small yard, high fence" policy that focuses on safeguarding the world-leading technologies and know-how for the exclusive benefit of an increasingly mono-fixated hubristic hegemon is a threat to global stability and progress.

The US should focus more on the benefits new technology can bring to humanity and less on trying to choke China's development.

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## Shen Tiancheng



## Opinion Line

## Dialogue and engagement way to improve Sino-US relations

The ongoing visit to China of Susan Elliott, president and CEO of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, and her delegation, has provided a good opportunity for Beijing to brief Washington about its stance on and hopes for US relations ahead of the next US administration taking office.

Beijing values the committee's role as a nonpartisan policy organization dedicated to advancing American foreign policy interests through "dialogue and engagement". In his meeting with Elliott in the Chinese capital on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expounded on the necessity of steady Sino-US relations during the power transition in the United States.

Pointing to the immediate causes of the serious damage done to China relations, Wang stressed China's strong opposition to the US' repeated arms sales to Taiwan and that the

Taiwan question is a red line that no country can cross. He also singled out the US' continuous expansion of the list of Chinese entities subject to unilateral sanctions.

His reiteration of the necessity for the US side to develop a correct strategic perception of China's development, a call Beijing has made on a number of occasions, indicates how the otherwise win-win bilateral relationship has paid a toll for the outgoing US administration's failure to do so.

If the next US administration can appreciate that China's development and revitalization have a clear historical logic and strong endogenous driving force, and its rejuvenation is an inevitable trend that cannot be stopped, and that China has no intention of challenging or replacing the US, there is no need for it to continue the Joe Biden administration's strategic misjudgment that bilateral

relations are a zero-sum game.

There are multiple functional channels for communication and dialogue that provide the means for the next US administration to engage meaningfully with the Chinese side to enhance understanding, avoid misjudgment, and promote cooperation. The US will have nothing to lose from continuing the exchanges, but much to gain.

The commitment of China to continuing to provide support and convenience for personnel exchanges between the two countries that Wang has reiterated in his meeting with Elliott should prompt the US side to act reciprocally.

The development of the China-US relationship is at a crossroads, and its future depends on the choice the US side makes and the willingness and efforts of both countries to make it work.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

## Policy easing SOE funds for start-ups a welcome move

The latest policy moves jointly issued by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council and the National Development and Reform Commission are definitely good news for those who have achieved breakthroughs in certain technological fields. It will help them use their technological breakthrough to set up enterprises.

Reports say that the latest move allows State-owned enterprises to establish venture capital funds to invest in start-ups that feature four characteristics, namely early-stage, small-scale, long-term investments and hard technology.

A nascent-stage enterprise needs funds to increase opportunities for growth. Small-scale refers to micro and small-businesses and in this category funds would be directed toward those in need rather than those already well-resourced. This is of sig-

nificant importance for various start-ups because technological innovation companies generally consist of small teams that gradually grow into companies impacting society. The technologies developed by researchers in such companies benefit the whole of society. With national-level support, more such companies will have the opportunity to grow into big enterprises.

Long-term investment means committing to invest in innovative enterprises over an extended period, encouraging State-owned assets to become long-term and patient capital. Central enterprise venture capital funds could be extended for a duration of 15 years, nearly double that of general equity investment funds. This provides start-ups with more flexibility, preventing a single mistake from burying an entire promising industry.

Raising more investment for hard technology — which are tangible

components that can be purchased and assembled into assistive-technology systems — will naturally benefit the country's long-term development. Consequently, venture capital funds will be directed toward areas where the technologies are needed for the transformation of scientific achievements and the growth of technological innovation enterprises.

Further, through market mechanisms, the central SOEs will attract commercial funds, thus promoting various types of long-term capital to focus on technological attributes, technical value, and emerging fields for effective investment. For start-ups on China's urgently needed high-end technologies, such as semiconductors, space science, and genetic science, there will be strong support and the domestic companies are expected to grow fiercely and smoothly.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## What They Say

## Germany should shed gifted blinkers on Ukraine

Sino-German relations, the European Union's "anti-subsidy" tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles and other issues of common concern were all included on German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's list of topics for discussion during her two-day visit to Beijing that concluded on Tuesday. But as expected, the Ukraine crisis was also burning a hole in her agenda.

Although the top German diplomat came primarily to co-chair the seventh round of the China-Germany Strategic Dialogue on Diplomacy and Security in Beijing with her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, as agreed by the heads of state of the two countries, she not only had in-depth talks with Wang, but also met with Liu Jianchao, head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, indicating the strategic importance Beijing attaches to relations with Berlin.

Baerbock, who maintains a tough stance on the Ukraine crisis, was informed firsthand of China's steadfast commitment to doing its part to help broker a political settlement to

the largest armed conflict Europe has seen since the end of World War II.

Europe is a significant partner to China in various fields, and China has stable relations with both Ukraine and Russia. It is not a party to the crisis, nor does it have anything to gain from it. Instead, as the world's second-largest economy, China has suffered tremendous spillover effects from the crisis.

Among them are the sustained pressure it has had to bear thanks to the unilateral sanctions the United States and its allies have imposed on Russia, and Washington's painstaking efforts to implicate China as an agent of the conflict by smearing it as an "enabler" of Russia's "special military operation". That is a misdirection as it is actually the US that has benefited from the crisis that is of its own making.

That's why both Liu and Wang have highlighted Beijing's respect for Germany as a reliable partner with the vision, wisdom and ability that match its status as a responsible major player on the world stage, in the hope that, as the valuable auto-

my it has demonstrated on the issue of the European Union's tariffs on Chinese-made EVs, it can also practice similar strategic independence in handling such burning issues as the Ukraine crisis.

Beijing is by no means calling on Berlin to make an either-or choice between China and the US, but urging it to objectively evaluate the situation faced by Germany and Europe at large and see the other side of the coin of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

If all major countries, including the US, put aside short-term selfish interests and worked together with each other for the common good of the world, crises such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict would not occur.

Germany should work together with China and other peace-loving nations to help set the table for cease-fire talks between Russia and Ukraine, discarding the you-are-either-on-the-table-or-the-menu preaching that is symptomatic of bloc confrontation and a zero-sum game.

— SHOSERVER.COM

## COMMENT

Wu Hongbo

## Working together, China and EU can improve ties

The intensifying Ukraine crisis and Israel-Palestine conflict have heightened tensions, eroded trust and raised the risk of a nuclear war. The world has come to such a pass because of the use of force and threat by some major powers on the pretext of safeguarding national security.

History tells us that the use of force or threat increases distrust and unilateral sanctions cause mutual harm, instead of resolving disputes. China believes that the security of one country cannot be safeguarded by jeopardizing other countries' security. That's why, together with Brazil, it proposed a six-point plan and established a "Friends for Peace" group to help end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. On Gaza, China has been calling for a permanent cease-fire and full withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian enclave, emphasizing that the two-state solution is the best way to restore peace in the region.

These chaotic developments have made it all the more difficult for the world to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Worse, much of the gains of poverty alleviation has been lost. The World Bank estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic pushed about 70 million people into poverty in 2020, the largest one-year increase since global monitoring began in 1990. As a result, about 719 million people subsisted on less than \$2.15 a day by the end of 2020.

To address such common challenges and meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the countries of the Global South have been calling for prioritizing development, while firmly opposing the politicization of trade and economic issues by some countries on the pretext of safeguarding national security.

This is where the importance of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative lies. The initiative prioritizes development, has already brought tangible benefits to people in more than 150 countries and regions, and is averse to politicizing trade and economic relations. Proposing 10 partnership actions for the modernization of both China and Africa at the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing in August, President Xi Jinping, in line with the Belt and Road spirit, offered zero-tariff treatment to about 33 less- and least-developed countries, including African countries.

As part of its pursuit of global peace and prosperity, China submitted a draft resolution at the 79th annual session of the UN General Assembly, saying that June 10 be designated as "International Day for Dia-

logue among Civilizations", which the UNGA adopted. China's proposal shows it is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as a major country and promoting global harmony.

In another promising sign, the China-EU goods trade volume reached about \$570 billion in the first nine months of this year, while the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and France were among the top 10 paid-in investors in China.

China approaches its relations with Europe from a strategic and long-term perspective, as it believes that China and the EU are partners, not rivals, and their relationship is underlined by cooperation rather

than competition.

Trade frictions, however, have become the biggest challenge in China-EU relations. Of the 184 trade protectionist measures adopted by the EU, two-thirds involve imports from China. In fact, the EU has initiated more than 40 trade protectionist actions against China since October 2023. Worse, the European Commission recently imposed up to 37 percent tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles on top of the already existing 10 percent duty. Ironically, the commission imposed the punitive tariffs despite the opposition of some EU automakers, violating market economy principles and international trade rules.

EU politicians should realize that imposing extra tariffs on imported EVs will not make the EU's auto industry more competitive; instead, it will increase the costs of EVs for European consumers and delay the EU's green transition, ultimately hurting the EU's own interests. We hope the European side will work constructively with China to find a solution acceptable to both sides.

On the Ukraine crisis, China understands European countries' concerns. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China right from the beginning has been calling for peace talks in an effort to help end the conflict.

And yet some Western countries have

accused China of "helping fuel" Russian threat to Ukraine by expanding bilateral trade with Russia. But the fact is, more than 140 countries, including the US and European countries, are trading with Russia. Last year, Russia's trade with the US and the EU accounted for nearly 20 percent of its foreign trade total. And according to a recent report, in the second quarter of this year, Russia overtook the US as the EU's second-largest natural gas supplier.

Despite this, the Western powers are criticizing China for allegedly "building up Moscow's war machine" for just continuing normal trade with Russia, which is consistent with World Trade Organization rules. It is worth mentioning here that China is the largest trade partner of Ukraine.

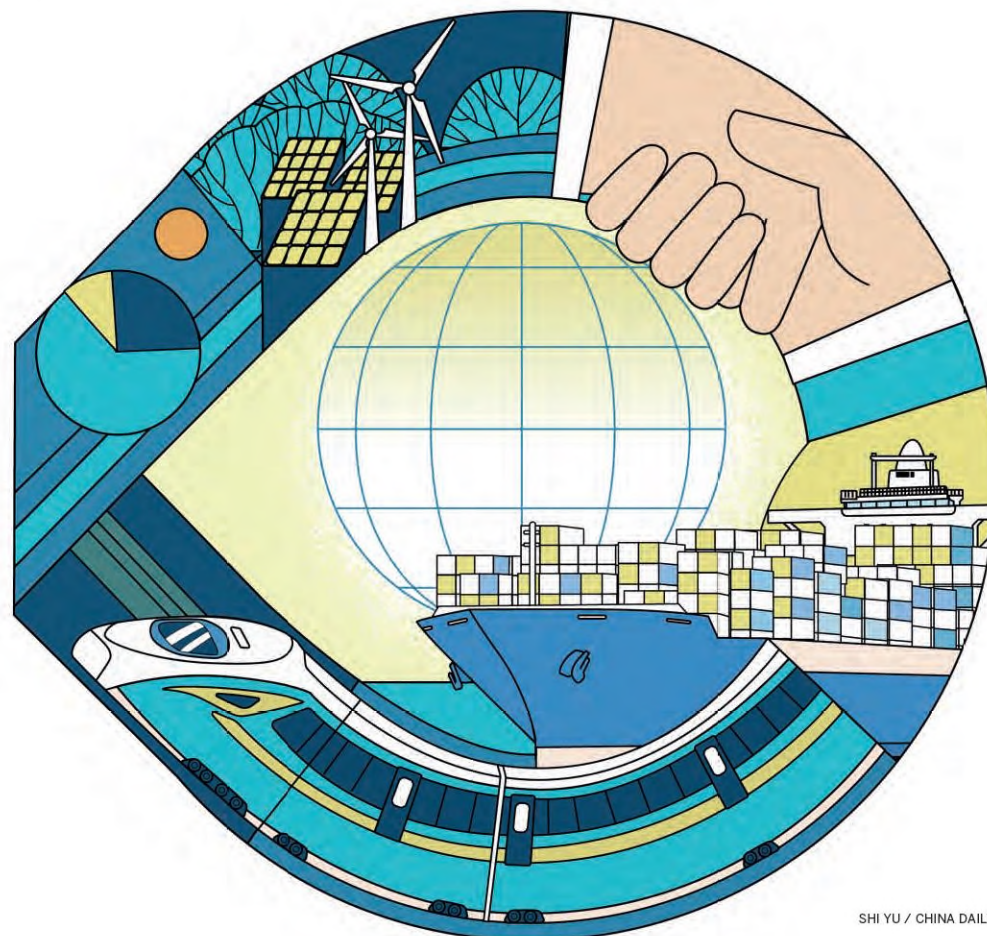
Since the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Brussels and Beijing 20 years ago, China-EU trade has increased by nearly nine times, which means on average €1.5 million (\$1.58 million) worth of trade takes place between the two sides every minute. Also, EU investment in China has grown by nearly three times, and Chinese investment has increased from virtually zero to more than \$100 billion.

Moreover, the China-Europe Railway Express operates more than 10,000 trains a year that serve more than 200 cities in 25 European countries. This symbiotic, mutually beneficial economic relationship between China and the EU and their deeply intertwined supply chains have, among other things, created millions of jobs. We should maintain this win-win relationship rather than engage in systemic rivalry or de-risking efforts.

China and the EU, as major markets, shoulder the common responsibility of acting as stabilizing forces for promoting peace and common development. China welcomes EU countries to join the "Friends for Peace" group to help resolve the Ukraine and Gaza crises.

It is to be hoped that the EU will synergize its Global Gateway initiative with the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative with an open mind so as to help developing countries boost their economic development. It is also to be hoped that the EU will rise above ideology to work with China in pursuit of common development and prosperity.

*The author is special representative of the Chinese Government on European Affairs. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.*



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

Wang Huiyao

## How to meet the Trump era's challenges

What was predicted to be the most closely contested presidential election in US history ended with former US president Donald Trump's overwhelming victory. This is expected to have profound implications for US-China relations and global governance.

Joseph Nye, American political scientist and Harvard professor, said during his discussions with me that US political cycles may follow a 10-to-20-year pattern, shaping its China policy accordingly. Current relations between China and the United States are probably at the lowest point since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. But the potential for a cyclical upswing remains where the two countries may avoid the "Thucydides trap".

Therefore, as Trump returns to power, China and the US could enhance dialogue and communication, including exploring the possibility of further consolidating and implementing the San Francisco consensus reached by the two heads of state. This would help prevent the relationship from being hijacked by hawkish elements in the US government.

## Toward a peaceful geopolitical landscape

During his presidential campaign, Trump frequently highlighted his record of not initiating wars during his first term and pledged to prioritize ending both the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts if reelected president. However, given the deep-rooted complexity of these disputes, he may need China's cooperation to help end the conflicts.

China is not only the largest trading partner of Russia and several Middle East countries but also maintains consistent diplomatic engagement and high-level dialogues with them. The China-brokered peace deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, along with its proactive infrastructure collaboration, energy partnerships and trade exchanges, has made significant contributions to the region's stability and development. And China's diplomatic principles of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation have been widely supported by Middle East countries.

As for the Korean Peninsula denuclearization issue, China has actively mediated and worked to create dialogue platforms for resolving it. This year marks the 71st anniversary of the signing of the Panmunjom Armistice Agreement, and there is potential to initiate new four-party talks between China, the US, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to explore the possibility of signing a new peace agreement between the DPRK and the ROK.

Also, China and the US could initiate dialogue on issues such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Korean Peninsula denuclearization issue. Such cooperation would align with Trump's commitment to serve as a "peace president".

However, the Taiwan question remains central to China-US relations. The two sides could consider issuing a new joint statement reaffirming their respective positions on the Taiwan question and avoid misunderstandings. Such a statement could reiterate the principles outlined in the three China-US Joint Communiqués and emphasize the importance of the US adhering to the one-China principle and resolving differences peacefully. Such an initiative could not only ease tensions but also create a framework for future interactions. Both sides could also align on issues such as trade, technology and security to make clear their differences, shared interests and cooperation goals.

## Advancing Sino-US economic cooperation

Trump is known to take a relatively open stance on Chinese investment in the US, and is likely to leverage such investments to boost domestic manufacturing. During his campaign, Trump emphasized the importance of using tools such as higher tariffs to encourage reshoring while welcoming foreign companies to establish factories in the US. While Trump aims to block Chinese car imports, he has expressed his willingness to support Chinese automakers establishing manufacturing units on US soil.

Hence, the two sides could hold discussions on how to build on a "phase one" agreement and advance "phase two" trade discussions. Reducing certain tariffs,

enhancing technological and investment cooperation, and strengthening economic ties could pave the way for a more stable trade relationship and foster long-term economic growth for both countries.

During his campaign, Trump also talked about large-scale infrastructure plans. In this context, China's extensive experience, advanced technologies and strong construction capability in infrastructure building offer a valuable opportunity for cooperation. The two countries could engage in negotiations and dialogue to enhance infrastructure cooperation, establish an investment promotion mechanism in the infrastructure sector, and facilitate the implementation of China-US infrastructure projects.

## Fostering exchanges between the two peoples

Even if people-to-people exchanges might face challenges under the Trump administration, sustaining and enhancing such interactions aligns with the broad expectations of individuals and groups in both countries.

First, Chinese government departments, institutions and non-governmental organizations can adopt a proactive approach by maintaining ties with relevant US entities and facilitating visits for more US legislators, former officials, think tank experts and scholars, who can help improve China-US relations by developing new frameworks and narratives that guide the relationship toward positive development.

The two governments could also issue visas to journalists from each other's country provided they play the role as bridges for communication between the two peoples.

Second, restoring cultural exchange programs, such as the Fulbright program and other education and cultural exchange initiatives, and extending the China-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement could help promote personnel exchanges and reduce the risk of misunderstandings and misjudgments in Sino-US relations. The China-US Fulbright Program, since its inception in 1979, has involved over 3,000 Chinese and American scholars and students, who have become prominent

academics and leaders in their fields.

In addition, the 1979 China-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement established a framework for collaboration across various fields, including agriculture, energy, aerospace, healthcare, environment, earth sciences and engineering. But after the US government decided not to fully renew it, and following two extensions, the agreement lapsed at the end of August 2024. Trump's return to office may offer an opportunity to revisit these landmark initiatives.

Third, as President Xi Jinping pointed out, the hope of the China-US relationship lies in the people, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from exchanges at sub-national levels. China could leverage the initiative to invite 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in five years as a cornerstone for enhancing people-to-people exchanges between China and the US.

In this context, a visa-free travel policy for US citizens traveling to China, or for specific groups, such as youths below 21, could be particularly significant. In the first half of this year, 14.63 million foreign nationals entered China, up 152.7 percent year-on-year. Of these, 8.54 million availed of the visa-free provision, marking an increase of 190.1 percent year-on-year. Visa-free policies have encouraged Western tourists, especially young people, to "tell China's story well" on global social media platforms such as YouTube.

## Building relations on head-of-state diplomacy

Trump is likely to adopt an approach of "strategic retrenchment" and "America first," characterized by transactional strategies to safeguard and advance US interests. In this regard, once the new US Cabinet is formed, high-level China-US dialogues could be held to make clear each side's priorities and redlines. And extending an invitation to Trump to visit China at an opportune moment could leverage head-of-state diplomacy to guide the bilateral relationship toward a new consensus.

For example, renewed cooperation between China and the US to combat the fentanyl problem and synthetic opioids in

the US, including the reestablishment of the China-US Counternarcotics Working Group, was one of the many outcomes of the head-of-state diplomacy at the November 2023 summit between President Xi and US President Joe Biden.

Fentanyl abuse has inflicted significant harm on the US, becoming a leading cause of overdose deaths and a major social challenge. Cooperation between China and the US in this area fostered constructive interactions this year, earning commendation from several US government agencies.

The US seeks to reduce short-term costs in diplomacy, security and trade by stepping back from the globalization process, relinquishing international obligations, and leveraging its power to secure tangible benefits. The new US administration's approach is likely to focus on more explicit exchanges of benefits, departing from the neoliberal ideological priorities championed by the Democratic Party. Consequently, future engagements between the US and the international community are likely to be centered on straightforward, interest-driven negotiations.

Against this backdrop, it remains to be seen whether recent tensions in China-US relations will significantly ease, given the US' explicit characterization of China's rise as a threat to its interests. Sino-US relations have entered a phase of structural competition and long-term confrontation, where the rivalry for global influence transcends short-term policy shifts and has deepened into a strategic contest.

The path forward hinges on whether the two countries can reach a new consensus on peaceful coexistence and cooperation amid competition, establishing a constructive competition-cooperation framework acceptable to both sides. While the US seeks to maximize its own interests within this dynamic, both countries must recognize that principled cooperation can help maintain the relative stability of bilateral relations, serving their mutual interests.

The metric of "interests" can serve as a practical tool to evaluate the scope and opportunities for China-US interaction and negotiations. It also holds the potential to provide a new turning point for the China-US dynamic.

*The author is president of the Center for China and Globalization, and former counselor of the State Council. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## GLOBAL VIEWS

GIORGIO PAROLINI AND HE YIRAN

## Green aviation in China taking off

To power planes in the years ahead, China must look beyond used cooking oil as its sustainable aviation fuel

With low fuel production costs, abundant feedstocks and the world's fastest-growing aviation market, China is emerging as a key player in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

The country is a major exporter of waste and residue feedstocks, such as used cooking oil, which can be used to produce SAF, jet fuel with up to 80 percent fewer life cycle carbon emissions compared to fossil fuel. Prioritizing domestic SAF production could enable China to expand SAF refineries rapidly.



Giorgio Parolini



He Yiran

China's growing renewable energy pipeline and excess electricity could accelerate green hydrogen production and in turn, eSAF, a synthetic fuel derived from renewable energy. With China's air travel market projected to be the world's largest by 2043, these fuels could support its decar-

bonization goals.

Other regions and countries, such as Europe and the United States, are also pursuing SAF but Europe's ability to scale production faces challenges due to high labor costs, limited feedstocks and global competition. While refineries are in development, some projects have been scrapped due to weak demand, technical risks and financial concerns.

Europe has long relied on imported fuels. If it struggles to meet SAF mandates domestically, could China step in to fill the gap, or will Chinese-produced fuel be reserved for local use?

The World Economic Forum's Airports of Tomorrow initiative has recently hosted regional discussions on these topics.

The 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) sets a target for the Chinese civil aviation industry to consume 50,000 tons of SAF a year by 2025.

To date, there is around 400,000 tons per year of production capacity already in operation (over 90 percent for export), with a further 3.9 million tons per year announced.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

China's ability to expand SAF production depends on the availability and prioritization of feedstocks, primarily used cooking oil, which can be used to produce hydro-processed esters and fatty acids SAF. This is currently the mainstream SAF pathway to turn vegetable oils, used cooking oils or fats into aviation fuels.

Much of this waste oil is currently exported, with major buyers including the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and more recently, the US following incentives from the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

Increasing used cooking oil collection could boost local production and export. However, per capita consumption is expected to peak by 2030 which will result in used cooking oil feedstock constraints.

With the limited long-term availability of used cooking oil, China must invest in alternative green jet fuel pathways.

One option is alcohol-to-jet, which uses feedstocks such as sugarcane, corn and

switchgrass. However, since the early 2000s, China has prioritized food security to avoid competition between fuel feedstocks and crops. This aligns with the country's aim to reduce dependence on foreign grain imports and enhance agricultural self-sufficiency.

Given this red line, feedstocks will likely limit the potential for massively scaling alcohol-to-jet SAF in the long term, yet we can still expect bio-based waste residues to be prioritized in the short term.

Power-to-liquid fuel, made from renewable electricity, water and carbon dioxide, could be a viable alternative for China in the long term. It is currently the most expensive way to produce SAF but also presents significant benefits related to carbon emissions savings and scaling potential. As the country lowers the cost of solar and wind power, it could achieve a competitive advantage in producing synthetic fuels.

The International Energy Agency pre-

dicts that by 2028, China will account for nearly two-thirds of global renewable energy capacity, with solar and wind providing nearly half of its electricity by 2030.

However, curtailment issues — where excess clean electricity is wasted due to grid limitations — present a major challenge. If curtailment were addressed, China could leverage its renewable surplus to significantly boost SAF production.

In 2023, China saw a high curtailment of 35 terawatt hours of renewable energy. If this had been used for power-to-liquid production, according to the conversion ratio from the Forum's Clean Skies for Tomorrow initiative, it could have produced nearly 20 times the volume targeted by China for 2025.

Regions such as Northwest, North and Northeast China hold the greatest potential for green hydrogen and SAF production, but these are not traditional aviation hubs. Thus, physical infrastructure to move fuel molecules where they are used and book-and-claim systems are needed to enable greater SAF use.

Scaling this pathway will also depend on reducing the costs of electrolyzers and direct air capture technology and on how the government prioritizes decarbonization across sectors given that green electrons will be needed in other industries as well.

In established SAF markets, regulators set mandates to encourage industry growth. For instance, the European Union requires increasing SAF blends in aviation fuel, starting at 2 percent in 2025 and reaching 70 percent by 2050.

China, however, is still developing SAF policy and aviation stakeholders believe that a demand mandate will only be introduced with the assurance that it can be met.

They agree that supply-side measures and dedicated policies, such as land leasing incentives or including SAF in the China Certified Emissions Reduction scheme, are also likely to build industry and investor confidence.

While government incentives could drive economies of scale and cost reductions, they may also attract international scrutiny. There are already calls for higher tariffs on Chinese products including used cooking oil in the US, which have intensified after

the presidential election, and the EU confirmed new tariffs on extra-EU biofuels in July.

Some analysts say that similar trade measures could follow for SAF if China's incentives are seen as a threat to European competitiveness, and that the timing of these trade actions is critical — too early and Europe risks missing out on China's SAF advances; too late and the European industry could struggle to stay competitive, as seen with electric vehicles.

China's ability to export SAF to the EU and other markets will also depend on the sustainability of its fuels and feedstocks. Europe enforces strict sustainability standards to prevent adverse impacts from scaling low-carbon fuels, such as land use issues.

Recognizing this, China launched a new sustainability certification body, led by the Civil Aviation Administration in Chengdu, Sichuan province, in July 2024. This SAF technical center held public consultations on three domestic standards on hydro-processed esters and fatty acids SAF and the life-cycle carbon assessment of SAF. It aims to establish industry foundations and align China's SAF standards with international markets.

China's technological advancements, feedstock availability and policy place it in a strong position to potentially reshape the global SAF market. The country is moving quickly, having launched its first SAF pilot program in September.

Twelve commercial flights from Air China, China Eastern and China Southern will use SAF at four airports, with plans to expand in 2025.

The industry is eager to find out how these early developments will shape China's mid- to long-term SAF roadmap — one that will guide not only local industry but also have geopolitical impacts on Europe and other markets.

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EDWARD LIU

## Waves of change for shipping

Innovation and collaboration are propelling transition to greener practices and shaping a decarbonized future for the maritime industry

The maritime industry is a cornerstone of global trade, responsible for transporting over 90 percent of traded goods. However, it also significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for approximately 3 percent of global emissions. As the world grapples with the urgent challenge of climate change, the shipping sector is



embarking on a transformative journey toward decarbonization. Innovation is at the heart of the maritime industry's transition to greener practices. The shipping sector is tasked not only with reducing its own emissions but also with facilitating the transport of low and zero-emission fuels critical for decarbonizing other industries. It is estimated that shipping will need to transport 50 percent of the new zero-emission fuels required globally, necessitating significant investments in new technologies and infrastructure.

Recent reports indicate that to meet future hydrogen demand alone, the maritime sector may require up to 411 new ships. This underscores the vast opportunities for innovation and investment in this area. The shift to alternative fuels such as liquefied natural gas, hydrogen, ammonia and biofuels presents notable challenges, including compatibility with existing engines and the need for robust financial mechanisms to support these transitions.

Shanghai has emerged as a front-runner in the push for alternative marine fuels, setting an ambitious goal to supply at least 1 million metric tons of green fuels by 2030. This initiative is part of a comprehensive plan that includes establishing a robust bunkering system, sourcing fuels locally and from nationwide projects. By 2030, Shanghai anticipates that 300,000 tons of green fuels, including green methanol, ammonia and bio-LNG, will be available locally. Furthermore, the city aims to secure an additional 1 million tons from projects across China.

This collaborative approach leverages regional resources and infrastructure, particularly in areas rich in renewable energy potential, thus enhancing the city's capacity to meet its ambitious targets. To achieve its goals, Shanghai is also enhancing its port infrastructure. The ongoing development of storage facilities and bunkering stations at key ports such as Yangshan and Waigaoqiao is essential for the efficient supply of alternative fuels. These initiatives align with broader national efforts to promote the use of green energy, positioning Shanghai as a vital hub for the maritime energy transition.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's commitment to green fuel bunkering has gained significant momentum with the recent promulgation of its action plan on Nov 15. This plan coincides with the ongoing Hong Kong Maritime Week and sets clear targets for reducing carbon emissions from Hong Kong-registered ships by at least 11 percent compared to 2019 levels. Additionally, it aims for 55 percent of diesel-fueled vessels in the government fleet to transition to green maritime fuels by 2026, and it seeks to achieve a 30 percent reduction in carbon emissions from the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals compared to 2021.

The government anticipates that by 2030, Hong Kong will provide bunkering services for oceangoing vessels powered by green fuels such as LNG and green methanol more than 60 times a year, involving over 200,000 tons of green maritime fuels. A key aspect of the action plan is the adoption of a multi-fuel strategy, with an inaugural LNG bunkering operation scheduled for the first half of 2025. The government also plans to draft a code of practice for green methanol bunkering by 2025 and explore future development directions for hydrogen and green ammonia bunkering in Hong Kong.

To ensure a stable supply of green maritime fuels, a Green Maritime Fuel Bunkering Incentive Scheme is set to be established in 2025. This initiative aims to foster collaboration among stakeholders and create a platform for business development in this

emerging market. A designated bunkering site in Tsing Yi South has been identified, with a streamlined approval process to expedite the development of methanol storage facilities.

In addition, the Hong Kong government is taking proactive measures to reduce carbon emissions from port operations, with plans to establish green shipping corridors in collaboration with the Chinese mainland. The goal is to identify at least one suitable port for developing a green shipping corridor by 2026.

To support these initiatives, the Marine Department will promote the use of biodiesel in suitable government vessels starting in 2026, aiming to grow a fleet of green fuel-powered vessels by 2027. Furthermore, to align competitively with regional ports, the government plans to lower costs for shipowners transitioning to new fuels by reducing port dues and registration fees for green maritime fuel-powered vessels.

Both Shanghai and Hong Kong are making significant strides in this direction. Shanghai's plans to develop a spot market for green fuel trading and introduce professional certification services echo Hong Kong's initiatives to create a vibrant green maritime fuel market. These efforts not only facilitate the transition to cleaner fuels but also promote economic growth and job creation in the region.

Moreover, the emphasis on training and upskilling the workforce is vital. As the industry adopts new technologies and fuels, ensuring that seafarers and shore-based personnel have the necessary skills will be essential for a smooth transition. Collaborative training programs involving industry stakeholders, educational institutions and governments can help prepare the workforce for the challenges ahead.

As the maritime industry navigates the complex waters of decarbonization, the actions being taken in Shanghai and Hong Kong serve as powerful examples of how innovation and collaboration can drive meaningful change. By investing in infrastructure, developing new markets for green fuels, and fostering partnerships



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

across the global shipping community, these cities are not only setting ambitious targets but also paving the way for a more sustainable future in maritime transport.

The journey toward a greener maritime industry is fraught with challenges, but with concerted efforts and shared commitments, it can lead to a resilient and sustainable global trade network. The time for action is now, and the collective resolve of the shipping industry, supported by forward-thinking policies and innovative technologies, will be pivotal in achieving the ambitious climate goals necessary for future generations.

In conclusion, the collaborative efforts of

Shanghai and Hong Kong in promoting green maritime practices illustrate the potential of innovation to drive decarbonization. With strategic initiatives and a commitment to sustainability, these cities are well-positioned to lead the maritime sector into a greener future.

The author is principal representative of International Chamber of Shipping (China) Liaison Office and Shanghai Representative Office. 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.

## Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

## Z WEEKLY

## Social Media Digest

## Brat revolution

The word "brat", once commonly associated with spoiled children, has taken on a new life, earning the title of Collins Dictionary's Word of the Year for 2024.

This unexpected choice was inspired by the release of 32-year-old British singer Charli XCX's hit album *Brat* this summer. The album, with its unapologetically raw vibe, gave new meaning to the word "brat".

Unlike the "clean girl" aesthetic, which promotes a polished, pristine version of femininity, the "brat" style revels in imperfections and self-indulgence — iconic lime-green nails, bright Y2K lip gloss, and unstudied hair loosely straggling over shoulders. It celebrates confidence and a carefree attitude.

In a viral TikTok video, Charli XCX explained her interpretation of "brat": "You're just like that girl who is a little messy and likes to party, and maybe says some dumb things sometimes, who feels herself but then also maybe has a breakdown, but parties through it. It's very honest; it's very blunt!"

The "brat" style quickly caught on, with young people embracing oversized square-rimmed sunglasses and smudged smoky makeup. But it wasn't just about the look — it was a mindset. The "brat" ethos celebrated life's chaos, encouraging people to push through challenges and heartaches alike.

In a world often dominated by anxiety and perfectionism, the "brat" aesthetic became a rallying cry for self-awareness. It urged people to face their vulnerabilities, accept their imperfections, and embrace life's contradictions.



The "brat" style celebrates imperfections, self-indulgence, and a carefree attitude in girls. vcg

## Fragile ego

The term "NPD" has sparked heated discussions following the release of season 4 of *See You Again*, a popular Chinese marriage observation reality show. Yang Zi, a prominent figure on the show, has been "diagnosed" by netizens with NPD due to his arrogant and self-centered behavior.

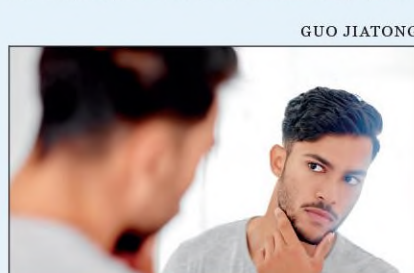
NPD, short for "narcissistic personality disorder", is defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association, as "a pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy".

In one episode, for example, Yang insisted that his wife, Huang Shengyi, accompany him to observe the Big Dipper, despite her repeated refusals to go out on a chilly night. Yang only seemed satisfied after Huang complied and complimented how bright the stars were.

This personality type has resonated deeply with netizens who have experienced toxic intimate relationships. Posts like "How to identify the NPD boyfriend" have garnered extensive attention and comments online.

According to Seth Meyers, a licensed clinical psychologist in the US, the arrogance associated with NPD stems from underlying feelings of uncertainty and insecurity in relationships.

"The superiority displayed by narcissists is actually a mask — a psychological defense — hiding the underlying root of the problem: the narcissist cannot tolerate being vulnerable," he told *Psychology Today*.



People with narcissistic personality disorder are often arrogant and self-centered. vcg

## Bilingual stories: China in 25 languages

Young participants from around the world share their personal stories of China through bilingual videos in a broadcast contest.



Two of the gold prize winners of the second Global Youth Bilingual Broadcast Announcing and Anchoring Contest — Tewele Ayubu Damiani (left) from Tanzania and Yuan Chensheng (center) from China — speak at the award ceremony held at the Communication University of China on Nov 23. CONG FANGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

By MENG WENJIE  
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For Luo Zhuobin, Beijing's subway is more than just a means of transportation — it's a window into the city's heartbeat.

Luo, a 19-year-old student at the Communication University of China (CUC), brought this perspective to life in his video for the second Global Youth Bilingual Broadcast Announcing and Anchoring Contest, where he won a gold prize.

The contest, organized by CUC's School of International Studies, invites young people worldwide to create short videos on social media platforms in Chinese and at least one other language, telling their personal stories about China.

This year, 524 participants from 26 countries and regions entered the competition, with an average age of 21. The entries were submitted in 25 languages, including English, Spanish, Bengali, and German.

"In the era of social media, young people have a unique platform to express their ideas," said Wen Chunying, president of the School of International Studies. "We encourage global young cultural ambassadors to join us, and we hope to see authentic and lively works that reflect their real experiences in China."

Luo's video, for example, is deeply rooted in his own experiences. He found inspiration at a subway station near CUC on Beijing's Line 1, which runs through the heart of the city, connecting key commercial districts and historical landmarks.

Narrating the story in Chinese, Cantonese, Korean, and Japanese, Luo chose to highlight three notable landmarks along the line: the Capital Museum, Tian'anmen Square, and Universal Beijing Resort, each representing a different aspect of Beijing's history and contemporary life.

"As young people, we need to be aware of our own lives as well as the world around us. The connection between these two perspectives is the story I want to share," Luo explained.



“As young people, we need to be aware of our own lives as well as the world around us. The connection between these two perspectives is the story I want to share.”

**Luo Zhuobin**, 19, a student at the Communication University of China

One standout feature of this competition, according to Luo, is its ability to attract many non-professional media participants.

Among them is 29-year-old Tewele Ayubu Damiani from Tanzania, who has been living in China for six years while studying at Zhejiang Normal University in Jinhua, Zhejiang province.

This is his second time participating in the contest. Last year, he won a silver prize with a bilingual video in Chinese and English, and this year, he took home a gold prize with a video in both Chinese and his native Swahili.

Tewele often posts his experiences in China on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, focusing primarily on China's emerging industries and technology sectors. "I hope my videos can inspire African audiences to improve living conditions and boost technological development in Africa," he said.

Idris Qasemi, a 24-year-old trade professional from Afghanistan, now lives in Yiwu, Zhejiang. He moved to China in



“I hope my videos can inspire African audiences to improve living conditions and boost technological development in Africa.”

**Tewele Ayubu Damiani**, 29, a Tanzanian student at Zhejiang Normal University

2004 when his father started a business there. In the competition, he offered a glimpse into his life as a foreign businessman, documenting his daily routine in both Chinese and English.

Qasemi has visited 46 cities across China due to his frequent business trips and, like many others, enjoys sharing his experiences on social media. One of his most popular videos features him and his foreign friends trying fried stinky tofu, a Chinese snack that has intrigued many young people overseas.

"I see myself as a cultural bridge," Qasemi said. "I want to show my friends abroad the cities I've explored in China so they can see its stunning scenery and unique cultural traditions."

## Cultural reconnection

The competition not only gave young people from around the world the chance to tell their stories about China, but it also provided a way for many overseas Chinese to reconnect with their roots.

Yu Junwu, director and president of the Australian Chinese Performing Artists Association, has lived in Australia for 37 years. He observed that the event resonated strongly with Chinese families there, who hope it will inspire their children to rediscover their cultural heritage.

"The deep bond that overseas Chinese have with Chinese culture is a powerful force," Yu said.

One of the participants, 10-year-old Jiang Yujun, moved to Australia with his family at the age of 2 and has always been passionate about Chinese culture. He often watches Chinese cultural TV programs like *China in the Classics* and *Readers*.

In this competition, Jiang imitated his favorite Chinese TV anchor, Sa Beining, to introduce the traditional Chinese text *Chuci* (Songs of Chu).

In his video, Jiang also showcased his kung fu skills. "I started a club at school to teach kung fu to my classmates from other countries," he said.

Jiang's mother mentioned that their family places great importance on exposing their children to Chinese culture. In turn, the children are not only eager to learn but also confidently share Chinese traditions with their foreign friends.

Yu observed that Chinese elements have naturally woven into the lives of overseas Chinese and, through mutual respect, have also been embraced by local cultures.

"This process has helped Chinese culture spread into the mainstream of local societies. The shift from grassroots adoption to broader acceptance demonstrates the unique inclusiveness of Chinese culture," Yu said.



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by scanning  
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## Z WEEKLY



# Theater reimagines *wuxia* saga

*Mysterious Lotus Casebook* reimagines a beloved TV series into a live theater experience that explores complex characters and timeless virtues.

By LI XINRAN  
lixinran@21st.cn

From page to screen, and now to the stage, an epic story of martial arts and mystery comes to life in a whole new dimension.

From Dec 6 to 7, the widely acclaimed play *Mysterious Lotus Casebook* will be presented at the CDHT CPAA Grand Theater in Chengdu, Sichuan province. Following its successful debut on Oct 25 in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, the play has continued to captivate audiences in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, this past weekend.

Last year, the TV series of the same name won the hearts of audiences both in China and overseas, with each episode averaging over 79 million views by July 2024.

Adapted from Tengping's 2019 *wuxia* (martial arts and chivalry) novel, the series was produced by iQIYI, a leading Chinese video platform, and H&R Century Pictures. It starred popular actors including Cheng Yi, Zeng Shunxi, and Xiao Shun-yao.

The narrative centers on Li Lianhua, the protagonist, a seemingly ordinary doctor with a mysterious past. Formerly known as Li Xiangyi, he was once a martial arts master who disappeared after a duel 10 years ago. Together with his companions Fang Duobing and Di Feisheng, Li embarks on a journey to uncover the truth about his past while solving enigmatic cases.

Actor Cao Enqi, 29, who portrays Li in the play, describes the character as "an unconventional protagonist", a key factor in the popularity of the franchise.

"Unlike typical protagonists who grow stronger in martial arts, Li starts at his peak and evolves through introspection and self-reconciliation," Cao explained.

## Story evolution

Director Zhang Xiao, 32, highlights both the similarities and differences between the TV drama and the play.

He believes that fans of both formats share a deep passion for traditional Chinese culture and artistry. While TV series can reach a broader audience, Zhang emphasizes the unique charm of live theater.

He envisions a mutually beneficial relationship between the two art forms. "Theatergoers may become fans of the TV series, and vice versa, as the stage adaptation offers a fresh perspective on their beloved story," he said.

Xiao Ke, the producer of the play, added that a theatrical version could help extend the life of this popular franchise because she believes that a compelling story, when presented through various art forms, can offer diverse perspectives.

"Our goal at iQIYI has always been to showcase Chinese stories," said Xiao. "The novel explores the world of *wuxia*, an integral part of Chinese culture, while also weaving in elements of mystery, suspense, and comedy."

While the TV series featured numerous cases, the play focuses on a select few narratives to illuminate different facets of the character Li Lianhua.

For example, Zhang chose the Callian Villa story from the TV series and the Longwang Coffin tale from the original novel to portray the complexity of Li's personality.

“

Many virtues, such as keeping promises and showing resilience, often portrayed in *wuxia* stories like ours, have been valued by the Chinese people throughout history.”

Zhang Xiao, 32, the director of *Mysterious Lotus Casebook*

"The Callian Villa case reveals Li's compassionate and tender side, while the Longwang Coffin case highlights his proud and somewhat arrogant nature," Zhang explained. "Much like the Marvel series, even if you're familiar with *Iron Man* and *Thor*, each *Avengers* film presents a fresh story. We aim to offer something new to TV audiences."

As for the performances, the play marks Cao's theatrical debut. He shared that acting on stage is very different from acting in front of a camera, as his gestures and delivery of lines need to be more expressive and adapted to the theatrical style.

There have also been adjustments in the costume design. For example, in the Longwang Coffin chapter, Zhang and his team added extra folds and patterns, such as tie-dye, to the costumes to better reflect the characters' personalities and situations. While such designs might appear distorted on TV, they stand out dramatically on stage.

"Costumes in theater are specially designed so that certain elements — whether it's a color representing a character's personality or the details and patterns — are visible to even those sitting in the last row," Zhang noted.

## Timeless appeal

Despite its fictional *wuxia* setting in ancient China, which may seem distant or irrelevant to modern life, *Mysterious Lotus Casebook* has resonated with young audiences both domestically and globally.

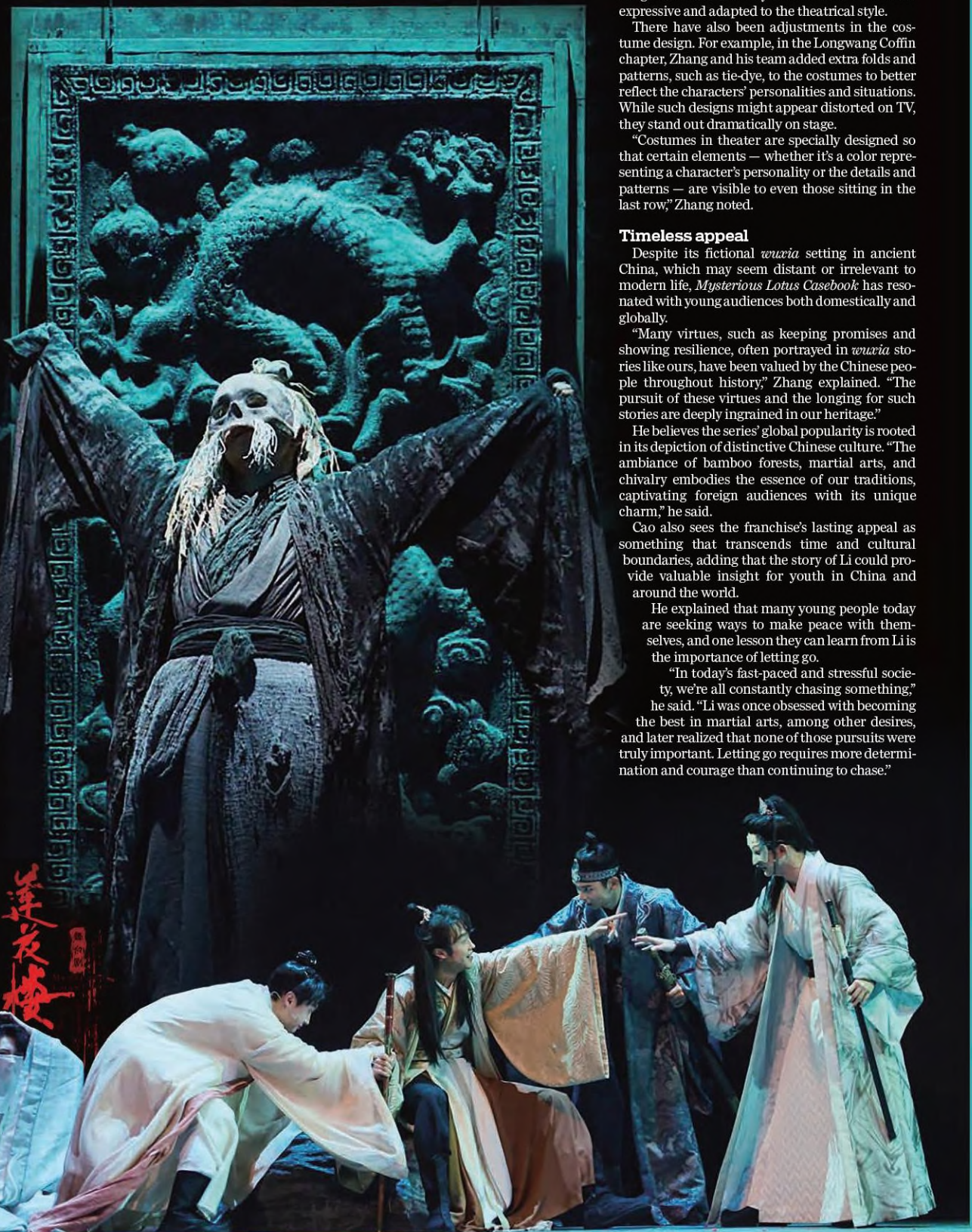
"Many virtues, such as keeping promises and showing resilience, often portrayed in *wuxia* stories like ours, have been valued by the Chinese people throughout history," Zhang explained. "The pursuit of these virtues and the longing for such stories are deeply ingrained in our heritage."

He believes the series' global popularity is rooted in its depiction of distinctive Chinese culture. "The ambiance of bamboo forests, martial arts, and chivalry embodies the essence of our traditions, captivating foreign audiences with its unique charm," he said.

Cao also sees the franchise's lasting appeal as something that transcends time and cultural boundaries, adding that the story of Li could provide valuable insight for youth in China and around the world.

He explained that many young people today are seeking ways to make peace with themselves, and one lesson they can learn from Li is the importance of letting go.

"In today's fast-paced and stressful society, we're all constantly chasing something," he said. "Li was once obsessed with becoming the best in martial arts, among other desires, and later realized that none of those pursuits were truly important. Letting go requires more determination and courage than continuing to chase."



Scenes from the play *Mysterious Lotus Casebook*. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Z WEEKLY

# Sign language meets AI

An AI-powered sign language learning app, developed by three hearing-impaired students, wins top honors at a computing contest, **Gui Qian** reports.

At the ninth China Collegiate Computing Contest Mobile Application Innovation Contest held in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, in November, a sign language learning app named *ArtfulSign* (Miaoshou in Chinese) emerged as the top winner.

Among 240 participating teams, *ArtfulSign* won the championship, the Most Innovative Award, and the Social Responsibility Innovation Award.

Developed by three hearing-impaired students from Beijing Union University, the app is designed to help hearing individuals learn sign language to communicate with those who have hearing loss.

The most notable feature of *ArtfulSign* is its use of AI models in sign language teaching.

Each sign language word is demonstrated through real-person video examples. After learning, users can activate the camera, and the app will recognize and assess the accuracy of their sign language gestures.

AI-powered video analysis and machine learning enable real-time interaction and feedback, enhancing the learning experience.

The competition was organized by the Teaching Steering Committee for Computer Majors in Higher Education under the Ministry of Education and co-hosted by Apple Inc and Zhejiang University.

On Nov 19, after the announcement of the winners, Apple Inc CEO Tim Cook posted a message on Sina Weibo praising the achievements of the student developers. "Wonderful to see how the students in this year's App Contest are creating apps that make a positive impact," he wrote, sharing a photo of the three members of the *ArtfulSign* team: Zhao Yuan, Wang Yueran, and Tan Chenglong.

Upon seeing Cook's post, Zhao typed the phrase "breaking the fourth wall" on her phone to describe her feelings at the time.

Tan also felt it was "unreal, like a dream," he signed.

Wang, who communicates with people using a hearing aid, said he was "very excited and proud" of his app's innovative performance.

Wang, a 21-year-old senior from East China's Shandong province, majors in computer science and technology. He is primarily responsible for *ArtfulSign*'s architecture design and front-end development.

According to him, most sign language teaching software on the market uses static images or dynamic animations, which results in one-way output with poor interactivity and no adaptive learning paths.

*ArtfulSign*, however, has designed the learning process in the form of answering questions and unlocking maps, which not only adds fun but



Tan Chenglong, Zhao Yuan, Yao Dengfeng, and Wang Yueran (from left to right) pose for a photo at the ninth China Collegiate Computing Contest Mobile Application Innovation Contest in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, on Nov 17. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

also better matches each user's individual progress and level.

Tan, 23, from Changchun, Northeast China's Jilin province, utilizes his expertise in visual communication to handle the user interface and user experience design.

One of his thoughtful touches is allowing users to have their own sign language names. He has created a chart for the 26 English letters, enabling users to craft their names using these signs.

The interface Tan designed for side-by-side teaching allows users to see both the real person's demonstration and their own actions simultaneously.

"It's like sitting in front of a classroom podium, listening to a teacher," he wrote.

The responsibility of forming the team and planning the development process falls on the shoulders



"We hope that one day *ArtfulSign* will become as common as accessible ramps, allowing both the hearing-impaired and hearing people to use sign language."

**Zhao Yuan**, a student at Beijing Union University



"Sign language is a truly beautiful and elegant language. We also have many sign language songs and dances."

**Yao Dengfeng**, a professor at the Special Education College of Beijing Union University

of team leader Zhao, a 25-year-old from Jiangxi, East China's Jiangsu province, and a second-year graduate student in software engineering. She also oversees the most difficult and time-consuming part of the team's work — building and training the sign language AI recognition model.

To enhance the AI's accuracy in recognition, each sign language vocabulary item needs to be trained with nearly 1,000 corresponding video clips. However, due to a shortage of readily available videos, the team has taken on the task of filming them themselves.

So far, the *ArtfulSign* team has produced thousands of standard sign language video clips.

Yao Dengfeng, a professor at the Special Education College of Beijing Union University and the mentor of the *ArtfulSign* team, specializes in

assistive technology software engineering. According to him, while computational linguistics has made significant progress, research in computational sign language is still lagging.

For example, when using AI in language translation, video clips need to be linguistically annotated. Chinese language annotations typically follow a subject-verb-object structure to help the AI understand the content. Annotating sign language videos, however, is far more complex, as it involves various elements such as hand gestures, head movements, body actions, facial expressions, and eye movements.

"Currently, there are computer based automatic annotation tools for Chinese and English, but none for sign language," explained Yao, with the assistance of a hearing aid. "As a result, AI developers need to annotate manually. One hour of video data requires 100 hours of annotation time."

Due to his own hearing impairment, Yao is committed to achieving barrier-free information access for people with disabilities.

However, there are very few researchers in China who study sign language as a natural language from a linguistic perspective; instead, it is often treated merely as a tool by those in the field of special education.

"Sign language is a truly beautiful and elegant language. We also have many sign language songs and dances," Yao said.

Zhao hopes everyone can learn some basic sign language. "Whether it's out of love and interest, a desire to help those with hearing impairments, or simply for situations where speaking is difficult due to illness, sign language can be very useful," she wrote.

She and the other two team members have spent six months developing *ArtfulSign* and are still working to optimize the interface and stabilize the AI model.

They plan to officially launch the product on the Apple App Store next spring. "We hope that one day *ArtfulSign* will become as common as accessible ramps, allowing both the hearing-impaired and hearing people to use sign language. Ultimately, there will be fewer barriers between us," she wrote.

Contact the writer at [guiqian@21st.cn](mailto:guiqian@21st.cn)



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## Shanghai's China-Brazil festival unites cultures

By LIXINRAN  
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From samba beats to language workshops, Shanghai University's first China-Brazil Cultural Festival turned its campus into a lively crossroads of rhythm, culture, and creativity.

Held from Oct 20 to 24, the festival celebrated the 50th anniversary of China and Brazil's diplomatic ties. Organized in collaboration with the Federal University of Bahia in Brazil, it brought together students, faculty, and artists from both nations for a series of interactive events.

At SHU's School of Foreign Languages, Chinese students were introduced to Portuguese, the official language of Brazil, by professors from UFBA.

Before attending the workshop, Wang Jialin, a 23-year-old graduate student in foreign language and literature, knew Brazil mainly for its soccer success. But during the event, she discovered the expressiveness of Brazilian culture.

"When they introduced themselves, they would say 'I enjoy dancing,' and the next minute, they were dancing right on the spot," she said, highlighting how Brazilians bring passion into every moment.

Wen Zixia, 23, a French major, noted cultural parallels between China and Brazil.

"Both countries are home to many ethnic groups, and both cultures are open-minded and eager to share," she said. "The professors asked each of us about our hometowns and expressed great interest in visiting them in the future."

Music is also a powerful language of culture. Guan Keyang, a graduate student in music education, participated in a guitar workshop led by Brazilian musician Mario Ulloa, reinforcing her impression of Brazil's rich musical landscape.

"Brazil is famous for samba, and the experience only confirmed it," said Guan.

She recalled a touching moment during a jam session when local artists were invited to participate.



Students from the Shanghai Film Academy at Shanghai University pose for a photo with Brazilian artists after a theater workshop on Oct 24. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"When they played the same song together with Professor Ulloa, it was moving to see how, despite coming from different parts of the world, they were all connected in that moment," she said.

The festival also introduced stu-

dents to Brazilian performance arts.

At the Shanghai Film Academy of SHU, workshops showcased expressive techniques that were eye-opening for Chinese students.

"The workshops had a liberating nature, such as using stones as

props and performing barefoot," said Liu Xinrui, a graduate student in fine arts.

For Zhu Ying, an 18-year-old freshman majoring in performing arts, the experience was both physical and creative.

"We moved around at different speeds or danced freely to the beat of samba, allowing us to consciously feel and activate our bodies. It was refreshing," said Zhu.

This new perspective also prompted her to reconsider her creative boundaries.

According to Zhu, their regular performance classes typically begin with pre-established scenarios, followed by the determination of characters, settings, and timelines. The plot is then developed and performed accordingly.

However, during one of the festival workshops, students were paired up and tasked with communicating without words, relying solely on eye contact and gestures.

"There was a magnetic interaction between us, which inspired the

creation of certain plotlines through our imagination," she explained.

Zhu believes that events like this help students reassess their performance and creative processes.

"It pushes us to step out of our usual routines and explore new possibilities for innovation," she said.

Wen emphasized that although the festival lasted only four days, this immersive experience was valuable and enlightening.

"Interacting directly with someone from Brazil allows us to truly connect with their culture," she said. "It's something that can't be replaced by simply reading about it online."

Shi Yanbing, a 23-year-old graduate student majoring in foreign language and literature, participated in promoting the event on campus and emphasized the importance of cultural exchanges.

"Understanding each other's culture helps reduce misunderstandings and biases," she said. "It allows us to better share our traditions and ideas."