

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

Xi: China, Brazil ties at 'best period in history'

The two nations also agree to align Belt and Road Initiative with Brazil's development strategies

By XU WEI and PENG YIXUAN
in Brasilia

China and Brazil announced on Wednesday that they would elevate their bilateral ties to a community with a shared future for a more just world and a more sustainable planet. Both sides also pledged to synergize the Belt and Road Initiative with the Latin American nation's development strategies.

President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva signed a joint declaration to advance bilateral ties after holding talks at the president's official residence on the second day of the Chinese president's state visit to Brazil.

"The China-Brazil relationship is at its best period in history," Xi said, before noting that "the most wonderful chapter" of China-Brazil relations is yet to come.

The Chinese president, on his first visit to the nation in five years, was given a grand welcome. Xi's official state car was escorted by a cavalry of 120 dragoons, and his arrival also featured a marching honor guard.

The elevation of bilateral ties marked another historic moment in China-Brazil relations, Xi said.

"It meets the expectations of both peoples, gives impetus and support to the modernization of the two countries, and demonstrates the resolve to jointly defend international fairness and justice and promote common development of the world."

He underlined Beijing's readiness to work with Brasilia to continually enrich China-Brazil relations in new era, to be "golden partners" who help each other succeed, to keep working toward the goal of building a community with a shared future for mankind and creating a more just world and a more sustainable planet.

Xi called on both nations to continue to strengthen strategic mutual trust, supporting each other on core issues such as sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

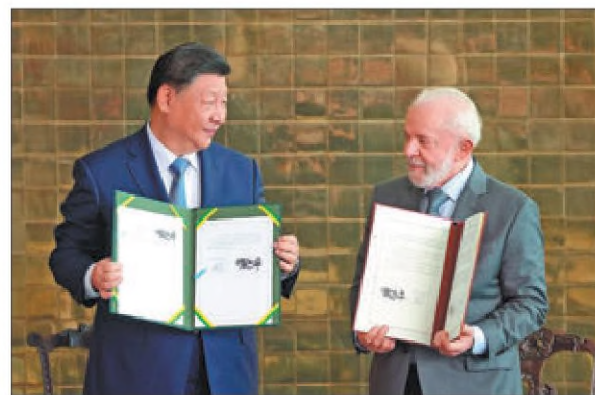
As trusted strategic partners, the two sides should set an example of solidarity, cooperation and shared development among Global South nations, he said.

Synergizing the BRI with the development strategies of Brazil should be used as a historic opportunity to deepen bilateral cooperation in key areas such as trade, infrastructure, finance, technology and environmental protection, and to expand collaboration in space exploration, agricultural technology and clean energy, he continued.

Xi also called on both sides to remain committed to multilateralism and jointly push for a fairer global governance system. He highlighted the need to ensure the continued success of the Forum of China and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, including steps to better align the BRI with the strengths and demands of Latin



President Xi Jinping holds talks with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in Brasilia on Wednesday. LIXUEREN / XINHUA



Left: President Xi Jinping and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva take part in the signing of bilateral agreements in Brasilia, Brazil, on Wednesday. SHENG JIAPENG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE Right: Brazilian cavalry that escorted President Xi Jinping's official state car on Wednesday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY



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President Xi Jinping

America and the Caribbean region.

During a joint news conference with Brazilian president, Xi mentioned the six-point proposals between China and Brazil to push for the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, calling for greater voices for peace.

On the Middle East crisis, Xi told reporters: "We're deeply concerned about the ongoing escalation of the Gaza conflict and call for an immediate cease-fire to halt the violence. Efforts must be made to implement the two-state solution and tirelessly pursue a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution to the Palestinian issue."

Lula said that the two nations will prioritize cooperation in sustainable development, infrastructure, finance, energy transition and space exploration as part of broader steps to elevate relations to new heights.

He noted that China is Brazil's largest partner for trade and investment, and that Chinese companies have strongly facilitated his country's socioeconomic development.

Brazil is China's ninth-largest trading partner. China is Brazil's largest trading partner, with trade reaching \$181.53 billion in 2023, a 6.1 percent year-on-year increase, according to China's Foreign Ministry.

Lula mentioned the two nations' highly aligned positions over major international development and security issues. "In a world marred by armed conflicts and geopolitical tensions, Brazil and China have consistently prioritized peaceful diplomacy and dialogue," he said.

Ana Celia Castro, a senior fellow at the Brazilian Center for International Relations, said it is significant for Brazil and China to align their development strategies for more concrete results. "We need an umbrella to embrace all activities together, covering various aspects including education, culture and economy," she said, adding that she believes that such an umbrella could be the BRI.

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Claim it in Rio
Xi's Visit, p2

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Xi calls for jointly striving for a brighter digital future

By CHENG YU, LI JIAYANG
and CHEN YE in Wuzhen, Zhejiang

China is willing to work with countries around the world to take the historical initiative in the information revolution and jointly build a community with a shared future in cyberspace, in order to make the internet better benefit people and the world, President Xi Jinping said on Wednesday.

Xi made the remarks via video to the 2024 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit, which opened in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province, on Wednesday.

Noting that a new wave of technological revolution and industrial transformation is rapidly advancing, Xi called for efforts to embrace

digital, internet-based and smart development trends.

He also called for accelerating innovative, safe and inclusive growth in cyberspace, and jointly striving for a brighter "digital future".

Addressing the event's opening ceremony, Vice-Premier Ding Xuexiang said that China will actively expand international cooperation in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain, and advance foundational research and innovation globally.

The country's strong determination to build a better cyberspace not just for itself but for the global community as well has energized the digital sector, with domestic as

well as international players pledging their support.

Lei Jun, founder and CEO of Chinese technology company Xiaomi, said that President Xi's call for an innovative, safe and inclusive cyberspace was greatly inspiring.

"Xiaomi has experienced every phase of China's internet development and recognizes the nation as a hub for innovation and transformation in internet technologies," Lei said.

He pledged that Xiaomi will continue to take a leading role in ensuring that technology contributes meaningfully to the real economy and the world.

That sentiment was echoed by Fang Ying, president of Swedish telecom giant Ericsson China,

which has participated in the World Internet Conference since 2015. Fang reiterated the company's commitment to cooperating with telecommunication service providers and partners in China and abroad to promote good use of technology and AI.

This year's Wuzhen summit, themed "Embracing a People-centered and AI-for-good Digital Future — Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace", is expected to facilitate exchanges on hot issues such as AI and cybersecurity.

John Hoffman, CEO of mobile communication industry group GSMA, said, "China has emerged as a major player in AI, thanks to big investments, strong govern-

ment support and a booming tech landscape.

"Chinese telecom operators are making huge strides in AI research and applications, investing significantly in computing and other latest technologies. These advancements are transforming public services, supply chains and healthcare delivery."

Guo Kaitian, senior vice-president of Tencent Holdings, said the company will continue to develop self-reliant technologies and prioritize information security to make AI "controllable, usable and reliable".

Xinhua contributed to this story.

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G20
BRASIL 2024

XI'S VISIT

YOUNES ABOUYOUB

Claim it in Rio

The G20 summit presents the Global South, including China, with a chance to play a historical role in shaping the global narrative around equitable sustainable development and collective security

The G20 summit in Brazil held significant potential for advancing regional peace and addressing pressing global challenges, particularly for the Global South. While the G20 has historically refrained from mediating geopolitical conflicts directly, the summit in Rio de Janeiro could foster dialogue on pressing regional issues.



The summit agenda emphasized sustainable development, social inclusion and global governance reform. These themes were pertinent given Brazil's focus on reducing inequality and leveraging green industrialization to drive growth and climate action. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine remains a major point of contention, with indirect implications for energy security and global trade. Brazil's role as a neutral mediator, coupled with its emphasis on multilateral cooperation, may create opportunities and open venues for a political dialogue on highly contentious issues, particularly regarding conflicts in Africa and the major violent escalations in Western Asia. What is more, the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent G20 member enhances the prospects for consensus on peace initiatives in regions heavily affected by food insecurity and debt crises.

The summit provided a platform for the Global South, including China, to contribute to shaping a unified agenda on trade, finance and development. China's growing influence in global trade and investment, allows it to play a more important role in the international order, alongside traditional economic powers such as the United States and the major Western European nations.

Meanwhile, Brazil's focus on reforming the Bretton Woods institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, aligns with China's hopes for increasing representation for emerging economies. This could lead to greater South-South cooperation on issues such as sustainable development, energy transition, and debt relief. In fact, China's role

will be particularly significant as it navigates tensions with Western economies over trade policies and industrial competition. Simultaneously, initiatives such as Brazil's push for a wealth tax on the ultra-rich and the mobilization of resources for climate action could reshape the economic landscape for Global South nations, offering new avenues for sustainable growth.

The 2024 G20 summit was thus poised to significantly impact the security and development of the Global South countries, addressing their evolving roles in a shifting global order. The security dimensions of this edition of the G20 summit were multifold and of paramount importance. In terms of geopolitical stability, the summit provided a platform to discuss global conflicts, including the Ukraine crisis and tensions in the "Indo-Pacific" region. While the G20 traditionally avoids direct conflict resolution, Brazil's emphasis on multilateral dialogue opened pathways for de-escalation, especially concerning supply chains and food security issues arising from these conflicts. For China, a major player in the Global South, the summit allowed it to reaffirm its position against protectionism and unilateral sanctions, bolstering its narrative of promoting a multipolar world. As it pertains to regional peace initiatives, the inclusion of the AU as a permanent G20 member enhances the group's ability to address regional conflicts in Africa. This is vital for the Global South, where instability, protracted conflicts, and institutional fragility



ZHANG TING / FOR CHINA DAILY

more often than not undermine development efforts. What is more, China's Belt and Road Initiative aligns with these peace-oriented goals, as regional stability is crucial for its infrastructure and trade projects in developing nations.

In terms of developmental impacts, the issue of economic representation and equity will certainly surface again. Brazil's repeated calls for reforming global financial governance structure aligns with China's push for a greater voice for emerging

economies. If successful, this could result in increased financial flows and fairer lending terms for the Global South, enabling economic growth and infrastructure development. Sustainability and green development are cornerstones of Brazil's G20 presidency. The focus on green industrialization and clean energy could benefit both China, as a leader in renewable technology, and other Global South nations seeking affordable pathways to energy transition. Last but not least, the haunting specter of debt relief remains of salient importance. Therefore, the G20 was expected to address the debt crises plaguing many Global South nations, including those in Africa and more particularly the least developed nations. Efforts to expand the Common Framework for Debt Treatments could alleviate fiscal pressures, promoting growth and social programs in several struggling economies of the Global South.

This summit also offered strategic opportunities for China, which, with its dominant share in global trade, can play an important role in trade leadership. China can leverage the G20 to challenge current trade policies and advocate for more open markets. This also supports the broader interests of the Global South, whose economies depend on equitable trade relations. This applies also to South-South cooperation. The summit offered China an opportunity to strengthen ties with fellow Global South nations, potentially through BRICS and other coalitions. Such alliances can amplify calls for

systemic reforms and foster shared development projects. Yet, despite these prospects, challenges remain.

Nevertheless, tensions between major powers, such as the US and China, and the slow pace of global governance reform could hinder substantive agreements. Tensions with Western nations over trade practices and geopolitical conflicts, particularly in the "Indo-Pacific" region and Ukraine, may limit consensus-building efforts. Achieving tangible results in governance reform and debt relief requires overcoming entrenched resistance from developed countries. However, Brazil's innovative approaches, including its "G20 Social" initiative to involve civil society in policy discussions, represent a step toward bridging divides and fostering a more inclusive decision-making processes.

In sum, the 2024 G20 summit offered a unique opportunity to address key issues affecting global security and economic stability. For the Global South, including China, it could signal a shift toward greater influence in shaping the global agenda, though achieving consensus will require navigating complex geopolitical and economic dynamics. For China and the Global South, the summit was an important platform in which they could play a historical role in shaping the global narrative around equitable sustainable development and collective security. While challenges persist, the focus on sustainability, debt relief, and multilateralism offers a chance to address systemic inequities and foster long-term peace, growth and stability. Faced with a new opportunity to address key issues haunting our world in the midst of uncertainty and tumults, it remains to be seen if the global actors will seize it for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

The author, who holds a PhD in political sociology, is a senior United Nations official and a visiting scholar at the University of New England. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations nor the China Daily.

HE YUN

At risk of irrelevancy

G20 must reform itself so it can meet its obligation to bridge the inequality gap

The G20 stands as both a symbol of hope and a reflection of our world's deep inequities. Representing two-thirds of the world's population, the forum embodies the very disparities it must address. Its membership spans the world's wealthiest nations and emerging economies, uniquely positioning it to bridge the growing chasm between



advanced and developing economies. Yet as pandemic recovery, climate challenges, and technological disruption continue to reshape our world, a crucial question emerges: Can the G20 transform itself from a club of powerful economies into a true architect of equitable global governance? The answer may determine not just the grouping's future relevance, but the future of global economic cooperation itself.

Currently, the world economic data tells a troubling story of our divided world. While the advanced economies have not only bounced back but are now practically erasing all traces of the pandemic's economic damage, the world's most vulnerable countries continue to struggle. The numbers paint a devastating picture. Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region, is only now expected to reach its pre-pandemic GDP per capita levels — a milestone that wealthy nations achieved in 2021. Even more alarming is the widening gulf between expectations and reality for emerging markets and developing economies. These nations, home to billions of people, face a brutal 5.5 percent shortfall below their pre-pandemic growth trajectory. This isn't just about statistics — it represents millions of derailed dreams, lost opportunities and deepening poverty. When we speak of a just world, we must ask ourselves: for whom?

The G20 itself embodies the paradox of our current global economic order. While its members collectively command an astounding 85 percent of the global GDP, this concentration of economic might mask a profound imbalance. Within the group,

the G7 nations alone control nearly 25.8 percent of the global economy, despite representing just 10 percent of the world's population. The remaining G20 members, home to close to 70 percent of humanity, must navigate a financial system that seems almost deliberately designed to perpetuate their subordinate status.

The Bretton Woods institutions — particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank — remain frozen in a post-World War II amber, their governance structures reflecting a world order that ceased to exist decades ago. Consider this striking disparity: Belgium, with a population of 11.8 million, holds more IMF voting rights than Indonesia, home to 277.5 million people and the world's 15th largest economy. China, despite contributing around 19 percent of global GDP, holds merely 6.08 percent of IMF voting rights, while the United States, with 25.3 percent of global GDP, maintains an effective veto with around 17 percent voting share.

This democratic deficit extends beyond mere numbers. The unwritten tradition of European and US leadership at the IMF and at the World Bank persists, despite emerging economies now accounting for over 65 percent of global growth. When India, Brazil and South Africa combined have fewer voting shares than France and Germany, the system's equability comes into question. These aren't just abstract grievances — they translate into real-world consequences for development financing, debt restructuring and crisis response.

The pandemic's early days laid bare the stark inequities in our global financial system. When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck in 2020, the advanced economies flexed their monetary muscle with an immediate fiscal arsenal that developing nations could only dream of. The numbers tell a damning story: while wealthy nations deployed budgetary measures worth 8.3 percent of their GDP — dwarfing their response to the 2008 financial crisis by 6.6 percentage points — emerging economies could muster only a meager 2.0 percent of GDP, even less than their GFC response.

The disparity becomes more glaring when we examine credit guarantees, where advanced economies provided a cushion of 6.6 percent of GDP compared to a mere 0.4 percent in emerging markets. Even in funding facilities, the gap persists: 4 percent of GDP in advanced economies versus 1.3 percent in developing nations.

These aren't just numbers on a page — they represent the difference between businesses surviving or failing, between workers keeping their jobs or joining unemployment lines, between families maintaining their dignity or falling into poverty. When we speak of global economic governance, these disparities must be addressed.

First, the G20 must push for meaningful reform of the Bretton Woods institutions. This means more than incremental adjustments to voting rights — it requires a fundamental reimagining of these institutions' governance structures. A more equitable distribution of voting power reflecting current economic realities rather than postwar hierarchies is essential. While complete restructuring may face political headwinds, establishing interim mechanisms for enhanced developing nation participation in key decisions could serve as a crucial first step.

Second, the G20 must reform key financing mechanisms. The pandemic response highlighted how existing channels fail developing nations precisely when they need them most. The G20 could pioneer a more agile crisis response fund, with governance more equally shared among members. This would ensure that future global crises don't perpetuate the same patterns of inequality we witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third, knowledge and technology transfer must become a cornerstone of G20 cooperation, not an afterthought. When advanced economies developed COVID-19 vaccines, we saw how intellectual property rights could impede global public health responses. The G20 should attempt to establish common protocols for sharing



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

critical technologies during global crises, whether they involve health climate, or financial stability.

Moreover, the G20 must address the digital divide that threatens to create new forms of global inequality. As financial systems increasingly go digital, ensuring equal access to financial technology and digital infrastructure becomes crucial for genuine economic inclusion. This means moving beyond traditional aid models toward genuine partnership in technological development.

Critics may argue that such reforms would diminish the influence of traditional powers. However, the alternative — a world where the majority of the world's population remains effectively marginalized from global economic governance — poses a far greater threat to global stability and prosperity. The G20's legitimacy depends on its ability to represent all its members effectively, not just its most powerful ones.

The G20 summit presents an opportuni-

ty to begin this transformation. The cost of maintaining the status quo — measured in lost growth, social instability, and diminished global cooperation — far exceeds the challenges of reform. As we confront unprecedented global challenges, from climate change to technological disruption, we cannot afford a system that leaves most of the world's population on the sidelines.

The choice facing the G20 is clear: embrace meaningful reform now, or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant to the challenges of our time. The world's majority is watching, and history will judge harshly those who cling to obsolete power structures at the expense of genuine global progress.

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G20
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XI'S VISIT

Embraer targets China's regional aviation sector

By ZHU WENQIAN
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When people talk about Brazil, the first thing that comes to mind is often the country's passion for samba dances and soccer, its vast rainforest and rich variety of natural resources.

Beyond that, Brazil is also home to aircraft manufacturer Embraer, often hailed as the crown jewel of the Brazilian industry, and the company is eyeing the rapidly growing regional aviation market in China's smaller cities to further drive its growth.

In the next 20 years, China is expected to show a demand of 1,630 aircraft with 150 seats and below, according to the latest market outlook that released by Embraer during the just concluded 15th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, Guangdong province.

"For China, constructing an air transport system that links trunk and regional routes, and that connects urban and remote centers requires the introduction of right-sized aircraft to optimize the network structure. Smaller-sized jets are key to establishing network connectivity on a larger scale," Martyn Holmes, chief commercial officer of Embraer Commercial Aviation, said in Zhuhai during the airshow.

"The ability of regional hubs to provide high-frequency flights connecting more cities and to improve service quality will attract greater numbers of passengers," Holmes said.

Currently, the Brazilian manufacturer operates about 80 aircraft in China. Those aircraft connect small and medium-sized airports, facilitating travel in the regional market.

A growing number of regional airports in second and third-tier Chinese cities are seeing more passenger traffic, with annual passenger throughput reaching historic highs last year.

Last year, the annual passenger throughput of Xilinhot Airport, an airport in Inner Mongolia autonomous region, was over 1 million. And passenger throughput at Altay Xuedu Airport, a regional airport in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region topped 500,000, data from the airports showed.

"Compared with Europe and the United States, the number of Chinese airlines that focus on devel-

oping business in the regional market is not much, and many carriers compete in the competitive trunk market. It is suggested that more regional carriers could give full play to their advantages and develop more regional routes," said Li Guijin, a professor at the Civil Aviation Management Institute of China, in Beijing.

By 2035, China is expected to become a leader in civil aviation transportation, and some 1.5 billion passenger trips will be handled annually, the Civil Aviation Administration of China projected.

Despite China and Brazil are located at the opposite ends of the earth, the two countries have enjoyed friendly exchanges for half a century since they established diplomatic relations in 1974.



The ability of regional hubs to provide high-frequency flights connecting more cities and to improve service quality will attract greater numbers of passengers."

Martyn Holmes, chief commercial officer of Embraer Commercial Aviation

Back to the year of 2000, China's civil aviation market began to develop rapidly, and a number of domestic airlines saw potential of the regional aviation market and began to introduce regional aircraft.

In 2000, Sichuan Airlines signed an order with Embraer for five ERJ145 regional jets. It was the first airline in China and the Asia-Pacific region to operate the aircraft model.

In 2003, Embraer and a Chinese company jointly established a factory to manufacture the ERJ145 in China, and it was the first time that China entered a joint venture with a foreign civil aircraft manufacturer to produce airplanes.

The cooperation between China and Brazil was referred to as a model of South-South cooperation in the field of high-end manufacturing, Embraer said.



A model of Embraer's E190-E2 commercial jet is on display during an exhibition at Xiamen International Conference and Exhibition Center in Fujian province on Sept 8. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Brazilian workers are seen at the construction site of the West-East Integration Railway Project in Bahia state, Brazil, on Feb 6. China Railway No 10 Engineering Co also participated in the project. WANG TIANCONG / XINHUA

LatAm fertile ground for Chinese companies

Major infrastructure, energy investments boost partnerships and mutual growth

By ZHONG NAN
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Latin America will retain its status as an appealing market and investment destination for Chinese companies, driven by its vibrant consumer base, high demand for modern infrastructure and abundant natural resources, said experts and business executives.

The ongoing urbanization and industrialization in Latin America, coupled with the economic reforms and infrastructure development plans in many countries, including Brazil, Colombia and Peru, will further enhance the region's attractiveness, said Liu Xingguo, a senior researcher at the China Enterprise Confederation in Beijing.

"With these factors, Chinese companies can find fertile ground for growth and long-term partnerships, contributing to the overall development and modernization of Latin American economies," said Liu, noting this dynamic synergy bodes well for both parties, fostering mutual economic prosperity and strategic cooperation.

Early this year, six China-developed electric and combustion dual-power trains started service on a national railway between Santiago and Curico in Chile, marking the operation of the first dual-power trains China has exported overseas.

Developed by Qingdao CRRC Sifang Rolling Stock Co Ltd, a subsidiary of the State-owned CRRC Corporation Ltd, the dual-power trains have a maximum operating speed of 160 kilometers per hour, making them the fastest of their kind in Chile and Latin America.

Wang Jingjun, a senior designer

at CRRC Qingdao Sifang, said they are equipped with internal combustion and grid-based power supply systems, and can switch power systems without stopping during operation, which improves their operational applicability and reliability.

Each of the trains is capable of carrying up to 630 passengers. They have effectively modernized Chile's railway services, greatly increased passenger transport capacity and shortened travel time between regions along the railway, said Wang.

The Panati photovoltaic power station in Brazil, backed by investment from the Beijing-headquartered State Power Investment Corp, began operations in June. The power station has an installed capacity of 292 megawatts and can provide clean energy for more than 350,000 local households annually.

Lin Guixiang, chairman of SPIC's Brazil branch, said that after the station is connected to the grid at full capacity, it will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 630,000 metric tons annually as part of efforts to help alleviate climate change.

Speaking at a seminar in Beijing last month, Zhang Shixin, deputy secretary-general of the National Development and Reform Commission, said China and Latin American countries have strong economic complementarities, a solid foundation for cooperation, tremendous potential and broad prospects for collaboration.

China is willing to work with relevant countries to advance high-quality development in China-Latin America industrial, energy

and infrastructure project cooperation, fostering diverse and mutually beneficial outcomes, said Zhang.

The China Development Bank, a State-owned development finance institution, had provided \$160 billion in financing support for over 250 projects across 21 countries in Latin America by the end of October, significantly uplifting the economic and social development of Latin American countries.

These projects have greatly advanced practical cooperation between China and Latin America in areas such as infrastructure, energy, minerals, manufacturing, electricity and telecommunications, said the Beijing-headquartered bank.

China National Offshore Oil Corp, one of the country's three major oil producers, announced in August that it had successfully secured a long-term contract for the trade of 12 million barrels of crude oil from the Mero oilfield, the third largest pre-salt ultra-deepwater oil field in the world, according to information released by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council.

This marks the first time a Chinese company has won a bid for the Brazilian government's share of oil, managed by Pre-Sal Petroleo SA, or PPSA, through an on-site public auction, said the company.

PPSA is responsible for managing production sharing contracts on behalf of the Brazilian government and commercializing the produced oil and gas. It has the authority to directly sell the government's share of oil from these contracts. The auction involved four lots, all derived from the Brazilian government's share in the Mero and Buzios oil fields, totaling 37.5 million barrels.

Sustainable practices cut prices, fuel market

By LIU YUKUN
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The synergistic strengths of China and Brazil in renewable energy promise extensive opportunities for enhanced collaboration, poised to significantly propel the worldwide shift toward sustainable energy sources, said experts.

Nestled within a tropical climate rich in sunlight, Brazil emerges as a leading force in Latin America's burgeoning photovoltaic sector. Bolstered by governmental backing, the nation emerged as the world's third-largest market for solar additions in 2023, after China and the US, according to research provider BloombergNEF.

Meanwhile, China flaunts a formidable industrial infrastructure, wielding technical prowess and cost efficiencies in the production of photovoltaic equipment. A growing number of Chinese solar firms are also exploring varied avenues for international cooperation, be it through offshore manufacturing facilities or technology licensing agreements. This may echo Brazil's drive to nurture domestic solar equipment manufacturing, fostering a mutually beneficial ecosystem, experts said.

"China and Brazil complement each other in renewable energy development, with Brazil rich in new energy resources and China leading globally in wind, solar and electric vehicle production. Cooperation between China and Brazil in renewable energy will create a win-win situation, offering significant room for future collaboration," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

"Enhanced cooperation between the two countries in renewable energy will help break barriers to capital and technology flow, making a remarkable contribution to global energy transition," he added.

Global cooperation is paramount in achieving shared climate goals. Francesco La Camera, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency, said in a recent interview with China Daily that the world is not on track to achieve the goal of tripling the installed capacity of renewable energy by 2030, a goal set at the 2023 COP28 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai, while tripling renewables is essential to cut emissions and keep the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 C within reach.

He said China is spearheading the global transition toward sustainable practices by providing affordable solar panels and wind turbines, promoting electric vehicles and charging infrastructure.

According to China's National Energy Administration, over the past decade, average power costs per kilowatt-hour of wind and solar power projects in China have fallen by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively. Globally, the country has to date contributed over 80 percent of photovoltaic modules and 70 percent of wind power equipment. Its products have been exported to over 200 countries and regions.

In the first half, Brazil became the third-largest market for Chinese photovoltaic module exports, accounting for 8.8 percent of total exports, closely following Pakistan at 8.9 percent, according to the China Photovoltaic Industry Association.

Many Chinese companies have invested in Brazil, establishing factories and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships. In June this year, a solar power station, invested and constructed by China's State Power Investment Corp's Brazil branch, commenced operation with an installed capacity of 446 kilowatts, capable of providing electricity for nearly 550,000 households annually.

Renewable energy collaborations mutually beneficial, official says

By YANG GAO
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China and Brazil enjoy a long history of climate cooperation with the launch of their first China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite in 1988 serving as a vivid example, said Ricardo Galvao, president of Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development.

The CBERS program has supported environmental monitoring, resource management and climate research, he said.

"China's plans for sustainable energy production are also very robust, and I really appreciate China's efforts in nuclear energy, as it will be an essential option for the future," he said, adding world leaders need to consider the long-term impacts of their policies.

"Short-sighted economic strate-

gies cannot solve long-term problems like climate change," he said.

Galvao, former director of the National Institute for Space Research and the Brazilian Center for Research in Physics, has been a key figure in the satellite program.

On April 14, last year, China and Brazil issued a statement emphasizing the urgent need to combat climate change and promote sustainable development. A key outcome of the agreement was the upcoming launch of CBERS-6, which will be equipped with synthetic aperture radar that can create images through cloud cover.

"This is going to be very important in Brazil because the Amazon is cloud-covered most of the year. The SAR capability is essential to track environmental changes accurately," Galvao said.

"The Amazon is critical not only for Brazil but for the entire planet," Galvao said. "Studies show that if

China's plans for sustainable energy production are also very robust."

Ricardo Galvao, president of Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development

Amazon deforestation surpasses 20 to 25 percent, the rainforest could reach an irreversible tipping point, it may not be able to sustain itself as a rainforest. The forest's moisture production would decrease."

Such losses, he noted, would have serious consequences for the stability of the global climate.



Beyond CBERS which is a flagship project, Galvao sees greater potential for cooperation between Brazil and China.

"China is a world leader in battery production and the use of rare earths, and Brazil has complementary resources and expertise in these areas," he said.

He believes that expanding cooperation can drive progress in renewable energy and sustainable technologies.

"Brazil's energy matrix is about 75 percent renewable, so it has experience and insights to share with China in the clean energy sector," he added.

Galvao also highlighted China's experience in building "smart grids", which are essential for integrating renewable energy into the national grid.

"Brazil has great potential in wind and solar power generation, and collaboration with China on

smart grids can strengthen our national energy infrastructure," he said.

Galvao emphasized the importance of comprehensive international agreements and sustainable development strategies, cautioning that isolated actions are insufficient.

"It does not help much if Brazil preserves the Amazon while other countries continue high greenhouse gas emissions, so we must collaborate with other countries," he said.

Recently, Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development allocated 3 million reais (\$518,000) for Amazon study, focusing on biodiversity, hydrology and climate vulnerability.

"This is not only about monitoring deforestation but also understanding the broader ecological and social impacts of climate change on the region," he said.



XI'S VISIT



Brazilian soccer star Kaka (center) faces local players during a Village Super League match in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on May 27. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA



Spectators welcome a Brazilian soccer player in the Village Super League stadium in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Oct 3. LUO XINGHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Soccer fans enter the Village Super League stadium during a match between a Sao Paulo team and a Guiyang team in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Oct 3. WEI GUJIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Soccer sensation

Guizhou's Village Super League shares passion with Brazilian players

By CHINA DAILY

Rongjiang, a small county in the mountains of Southwest China's Guizhou province, has been attracting global attention through its uniquely "village-style" soccer matches.

Known as *cun chao*, or the Village Super League, the games are organized and played primarily by local villagers with prizes often featuring agricultural products.

The league is now stepping onto the international stage, especially through friendly matches with teams such as those from Brazil competing alongside local players.

On the evening of Oct 3, at the Village Super League stadium in Rongjiang, a team from Brazil's Sao Paulo faced a team from Guiyang, capital of Guizhou.

More than 30,000 fans packed the stadium as Rongjiang residents dressed in matching outfits and vibrant traditional ethnic costumes formed a cheer squad for the match.

The soccer players were warmly welcomed, with fans and visitors vying for handshakes and photo opportunities.

The match was intense and in the 84th minute, a Brazilian soccer player scored a decisive goal. The team celebrated with samba dances as the crowd erupted in cheers.

Ultimately, the Sao Paulo team won 1-0 against the Guiyang team.

Eleazar Villavicencio, head coach of the Sao Paulo team, recalled, "The vibe was great."

The award ceremony was full of surprises, with the Brazilian players excited to receive a local chicken delicacy — two servings of *xiao xiang ji*.

Fireworks lit up the sky and music filled the air. Fans surrounded the soccer players, dancing and enjoying the event together.

From Oct 3 to 6, the Sao Paulo team played three games, netting eight goals in total. Their performance highlighted the appeal of Brazilian soccer, providing an exciting display for the fans.

Dong Yongheng, a top scorer in the Village Super League, said, "Their style of play is as fluid and graceful as a dance, making the match incredibly enjoyable."

Impressed by the performance, Dong waited for the opportunity to face the Brazilian team. On the evening of Oct 9, he led the Village Super League's best lineup in a friendly match against the Sao Paulo team.

Earlier in August, Eleazar and team manager Yang Shengjun visited Rongjiang. "Rongjiang is a promising land of soccer. The people are passionate about soccer, which is similar to Brazil," Yang said.

"After Eleazar returned to Brazil, we kept in touch and decided to create a youth training club in Rongjiang, implementing Brazilian coaching techniques," he said.

Yang said the club's opening would bring a group of young Brazilian players to Rongjiang, where they would play in games and teach soccer in primary and secondary schools.

"We aim to offer more children the chance to use soccer as a way to ... open up greater opportunities for their future," Yang said.

Soccer in Rongjiang extends beyond the Village Super League. In the 1990s, locals spontaneously organized matches on open-air fields. Today, Rongjiang has 14 standard soccer pitches, 35 registered teams, 14 national-level youth specialist soccer schools and 41 county-level specialist soccer schools, according to Chinese media reports.

"Kaka also came to Rongjiang once. The influence of the Village Super League just got bigger," villager Yang Zhenjiang said, referring to the Brazilian soccer star's visit in May.

Kaka said in a video earlier that he was invited by the China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development and a Chinese smartphone brand to take part in the "Chasing Dreams" charity soccer event, which aimed to promote local youth soccer and the development of the Village Super League.

After arriving in Rongjiang, Kaka experienced the local tradition of drinking homemade rice wine. He was also treated to Guizhou's ethnic performances.

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.



Soccer players from a Sao Paulo team arrive at the Village Super League stadium in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Oct 3. WEI GUJIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



Crowds watch a soccer match between a Sao Paulo team and a Guiyang team in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Oct 3. LUO XINGHAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

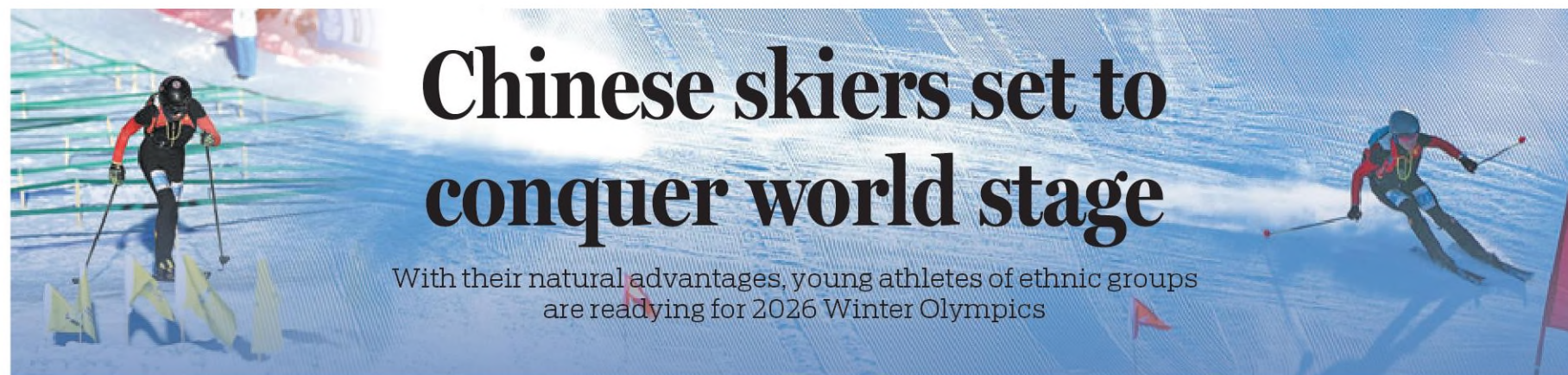


Brazilian soccer star Kaka (left) poses for a photo with locals as he takes part in a Village Super League match in Rongjiang on May 27. ZHANG HUI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Revelers celebrate at the end of a soccer match between a Sao Paulo team and a Guiyang team in Rongjiang county, Guizhou province, on Oct 3. WEI GUJIN / FOR CHINA DAILY

CHINA



Chinese skiers set to conquer world stage

With their natural advantages, young athletes of ethnic groups are readying for 2026 Winter Olympics

Gongsong Langjia (left) and Cidan Yuzhen of the Tibetan ethnic group compete in the mixed relay ski mountaineering race of the 14th National Winter Games in Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia, on Feb 1. PHOTOS BY BEI HE AND WANG KAIYAN / XINHUA

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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Born and raised at the foot of snow-capped mountains in the remote Xizang autonomous region, the natural bond Cidan Yuzhen has with the rugged terrain has helped take her to the peak of her sport on the international stage.

The shepherd's daughter is joined by Yuzhen Lamu and Buluer in the cohort of Chinese athletes from ethnic minority groups now conquering ski mountaineering.

The endurance sport will make its highly-anticipated debut at the 2026 Winter Olympics. Once included in the 1924 Games as a component of the military patrol event, ski mountaineering, or skimo, will be featured as a medal event in its own right at the 2026 Games to be held in the Italian Alps across Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo.

The elevation of ski mountaineering to the Olympics has triggered interest and greater participation in it across the world, including China. A sport with a long history, ski mountaineering combines climbing and descending and traversing alpine terrains.

Athletes from mountain villages in Xizang and the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region grew up adapting to thin air and high altitudes, and boast physical advantages in aerobic endurance. However, most of them had no idea what skimo was until talent identification scouts came knocking at their doors in November 2017.

More opportunities

A talent recruitment campaign was launched in the buildup to the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics as part of China's ambitious program to involve 300 million people in ice and snow sports leading up to the event.

With wide ethnic diversity, China's cross-country skiers qualified in all 12 disciplines for the first time at the Olympics in Beijing. Uyghur skier Dinggeer Yilamujiang, then 20, qualified in four events, the most on the women's side.

A native of Altay in Xinjiang she stole the show at Beijing 2022's opening ceremony by lighting the Olympic cauldron together with Nordic combined athlete Zhao Jiawen.

The inclusion of skimo in the Olympics is opening the door wider for skiers who wouldn't have been discovered otherwise, said Li Wenmao, manager of China's ski mountaineering national program.

"We needed some special talents, especially kids who were born with a connection to nature and are not afraid of hard work. Tough conditions are part of the sport ... The new program has opened up a window for them to be seen by us and by the world," Li said during a recent media symposium at the team's training base in Beijing.

"On top of their adaptation to altitude in alpine sports, kids we selected from Xizang and Xinjiang have grit and resilience within them. This is perhaps a bigger driver, in my opinion, for them to withstand all the tough challenges to succeed," said Li, who is a former mountain climber.

Strong start

A series of breakthroughs at the youth level augur well for the youngsters' medal potential at future Olympics, and also reaffirm Li's confidence that they are making the right progress in the sport.

Since it was established in 2022, China's ski mountaineering team, with more than half of its 17 athletes from Xizang and Xin-



Chinese ski mountaineer Cidan Yuzhen of the Tibetan ethnic group climbs during the women's U18 individual race at the ISMF Youth World Cup's Italy leg on Feb 11, 2023. PROVIDED BY ISMF TO CHINA DAILY



Left: Gongsong Langjia of the Tibetan ethnic group competes during quarterfinals in men's U18 sprint event at the ISMF Youth World Cup in Meribel, France, on Dec 9, 2023. PROVIDED BY ISMF TO CHINA DAILY Right: Tibetan skier Yuzhen Lamu at the award ceremony for the women's sprint ski mountaineering race on Jan 30 during the National Winter Games. WANG KAIYAN / XINHUA



jiang, has had an impressive medal haul from numerous international events.

The strong results include 15 gold, two silver and five bronze medals in multiple disciplines, such as individual, sprint and mixed relay, from five International Ski Mountaineering Federation World Cup events, three Youth World Cup legs, and the 2023 World Championships.

The Tibetan duo of Cidan Yuzhen and Yuzhen Lamu, as well as Buluer from the Mongolian ethnic group in Xinjiang, are among the most promising contenders for podiums at the 2026 Winter Olympics.

At the 2023 ISMF World Championships in Spain, Yuzhen Lamu dominated the U20 women's sprint discipline with wins in the qualification, semifinal and final rounds to become the first Chinese ski mountaineering world champion at the youth level.

Team China's most fruitful campaign in the Youth World Cup series came in Meribel, France, in December 2023 with a haul

of six medals. Five of the medals, including all three gold, were won by athletes from Xizang.

At the 2026 Winter Olympics, only the men's and women's sprint disciplines and a mixed-gender relay combining two sprint races will be staged, with three gold medals up for grabs in total.

Traditionally only popular in the European Alps, the growth of skimo in North America and also China has helped the sport gain more international exposure, prompting the International Olympic Committee to include the sport for the 2026 Games.

"Our goal for the Olympic debut in Italy is to finish on the podium, and to make it a true global sport," said Team China manager Li.

A long way to the top

Picked for the sport from a remote township in Konpo'gyada county in Nyingchi city, Xizang, Yuzhen Lamu was hesitant at

her first training session in 2019. She said she felt "trapped" with skis strapped to her feet and was intimidated by the steep slopes at the tryout camp.

The 20-year-old, who spent her childhood chasing her siblings in the snowy woods surrounding their village, confessed that in the early stages the rigorous challenges of skimo were not fun. "When I started to learn skiing, it felt a bit boring, and pretty exhausting when I wasn't able to ski well enough," said Yuzhen Lamu, who began her junior sports training in 2016 as a distance runner at Nyingchi's school for amateur sports.

"As much as I loved snow when I was little, I was almost sad whenever I saw it snowing again (at the beginning of skimo training).

"Yet, I was always a stubborn kid who never gave up. Gradually, I improved a lot in my skiing skills, and mental and physical strength. I began to enjoy the sport, particularly the exhilarating thrill of skiing downhill after overcoming the difficult climbs," she said.

Cidan Yuzhen was also drafted from track and field in October 2020. Then aged 13, she was a junior race walker training at a sports school in her hometown of Shannan, a city at an average altitude of 3,700 meters, located south of the autonomous region's capital, Lhasa.

Knowing nothing about skimo, she gave it a try at the training camp. She was selected from over 200 children who tried out, and eventually waved goodbye to the farmland, cattle, forests and creeks in her valley home.

She was sometimes homesick during training or competitions, but she overcame the setbacks. The ambitious young skier now says she never regretted her bold move to pursue a sports career.

"It was hard at the beginning, and I only told my parents the good news, keeping the bad stuff such as injuries from them," she said.

"After all, it was my choice, they respected it, and I didn't want them to feel worried," said Cidan Yuzhen, who claimed two U18 titles in individual and vertical events at the 2023 World Championships in Spain.

Buluer, one of the most talented skiers on the men's team, said he and his peers enjoy each other's company, and the healthy rivalry among them is pushing them to achieve their Olympic dreams.

The 19-year-old attributed Team China's inspiring mixed relay win on the Norwegian stop of the Youth World Cup on March 17 to Cidan Yuzhen's exceptionally strong opening and finishing legs. "She got me flying," said Buluer, a native of Hemu village in Altay.

However, Buluer played his part in the victory, holding off a group of opponents from alpine sports powers, such as France and Norway, during his legs. His impressive effort echoed his victory in the men's U20 individual title the previous day.

It was the first time a skier outside Europe and North America, at both youth and adult level, had claimed the men's individual race, said team manager Li.

"Racing against the best in the most intense competitions, I feel big pressure," Buluer said. "But, that also pushes me to bring out my best."

He also prides himself on growing up on "fur skis". Rock paintings discovered around Hemu depict human figures skiing thousands of years ago, and the area is believed to be one of the locations where fur skiing originated.

Ascent to Olympics

The national team is currently preparing for the 2024-25 competitive season at the Keketuohai ski resort in Altay. The young skiers are training to reach peak condition before the first World Cup event kicks off on Dec 14 in Courchevel, France.

According to ISMF rules, the two top individual finishers and teams in the men's and women's sprint and the mixed relay events at the 2025 worlds, scheduled from March 2 to 9 in Morgins, Switzerland, will earn direct qualification to the 2026 Olympics.

The rest of the quota places, barring those reserved for the host nation, will be determined by individual and relay team rankings, based on the results of 10 World Cup events at the end of December 2025.

Each National Olympic Committee is allowed to try and qualify a maximum of two men and two women for Italy.

To help Team China's youngsters take the leap from youth events to the open level, the Chinese Mountaineering Association organized an intense summer camp in New Zealand.

The athletes' weakness in downhill skiing, compared to their European rivals, were significantly improved under the watchful eyes of three experienced foreign coaches.

A similar overseas pre-season camp will involve drills in the Italian Alps early next month, to get the young skiers acclimated to course conditions for the World Cup season, said Li.

"Our young athletes have shown a lot of rapid improvement over the past two years," he said. "It's time for them to step up a gear in their final sprint to the Olympic stage. We will try to qualify as many athletes as possible through the new season and go for at least one medal in 2026," he said.



Yuzhen Lamu competes in a women's sprint event on Jan 30. BEI HE / XINHUA

CHINA

Hello, world

Children participate in an activity on Wednesday to mark World Hello Day, which falls on Thursday this year, at a kindergarten in Changxing county, Zhejiang province. The festival has been observed by people in 180 countries as an opportunity to promote world peace.

ZHOU HONGFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



China rips countries' intrusion in HK trial

By ATLAS SHAO in Hong Kong
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The Foreign Ministry on Wednesday strongly rejected other countries' interference in China's internal affairs regarding the national security case of Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, and insisted that no one should engage in illegal activities under the guise of "freedom".

After nearly four months' adjournment, Lai's trial resumed on Wednesday, during which he testified for the first time in the landmark case. The trial is expected to last for about a month.

The former media tycoon is facing two charges of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security, marking the first time that the city is prosecuting someone on such a charge. He is also charged with conspiracy to print and distribute seditious publications.

The trial resumed one day after the sentencing of 45 individuals involved in a subversive plot to paralyze the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government. It was the largest national security trial the city has held to date.

During a news conference in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said that observing and strictly enforcing the law is a basic principle in Hong Kong, and no one can engage in illegal activities under the guise of freedom and try to escape justice.

Lin pointed out that Lai is a major organizer of — and participant in — a series of events that undermined the stability of Hong Kong, acting as a proxy and pawn for anti-China forces.

The spokesman emphasized that based on Hong Kong's Basic Law and the National Security Law, the HKSAR government safeguards national security in a lawful and justified manner, and the judiciary of Hong Kong exercises judicial power independently according to the law, with fair and transparent procedures.

The central government firmly backs the HKSAR in safeguarding national security and lawfully punishing people who engage in activities that undermine it. It strongly opposes certain countries' interference in China's internal affairs through related judicial cases, as well as their attempts to smear and undermine the rule of law in Hong Kong.

Appearing in court on Wednesday, Lai admitted to giving £20,000 (\$25,350) to Hong Kong Watch, an anti-China organization that has repeatedly urged foreign countries to impose sanctions against China and the HKSAR.

Asked about his connection with Taiwan, the 76-year-old media mogul said that he went to Taiwan when he planned to publish Apple Daily there, and met Tsai Ing-wen before she became the island's leader. Lai said that he met several times with Tsai to discuss policies concerning Taiwan and the United States.

Classics references for human rights

By ZOU SHUO in Changsha
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The human rights ideals expressed in ancient Chinese classic literature are an important part of Chinese culture and the shared wisdom of human beings, experts from home and abroad said during a forum in Hunan province on Wednesday.

Exploring the human rights ideals in the classics can help Chinese people better understand and inherit Chinese culture, and provide valuable references and lessons for human rights undertakings around the world to promote their development in a more open and inclusive way, they said.

The International Academic Conference on the Ideals of Human Rights in Ancient Chinese Classics was held in Changsha, capital of Hunan, on Wednesday.

It was hosted by the China Society for Human Rights Studies, the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Hunan Provincial Committee and Hunan University.

Deng Wei, Party secretary of Hunan University, said Chinese classics contain rich philosophy, ethics, morality and political wisdom.

Confucius put forward the concept of "the benevolent love of others", while Mencius promoted the notion that "the people are the most important element in a state, then the gods of land and grain, and least is the ruler himself", Deng said.

Both concepts show respect for people and their livelihoods, which

Report on progress

A recent report released by the China Society for Human Rights Studies has highlighted the nation's progress in protecting the human rights of all demographics and social groups.

The 2024 edition of the Annual Report on China's Human Rights outlines the efforts the nation made to protect the human rights of the country's women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups in 2023, including improvements in the accessibility of public spaces and the protection of minors in cyberspace.

It also analyzes measures China introduced to protect the interests and rights of workers in emerging industries such as food delivery and ride-hailing, as well as policies rolled out to protect the right of rural residents to participate in and supervise local infrastructure projects.

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are similar to modern ideals of respect and protection of human rights, he said.

Yang Haodong, head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Hunan Provincial Committee, said the concept of targeted poverty alleviation has been introduced in Shibadong village in Hunan, which helped the country solve the problem of abject poverty.

China has offered its experience

in international poverty alleviation to other developing countries and has contributed its wisdom to the development of human society, he said.

Giuseppina Merchionne, president of the Italy-China Center for Collaboration and Cultural Exchange of the Silk Road, said as two countries with rich cultures, Italy and China have a responsibility to make use of their cultures to create peace and oppose all forms of war, as culture is the foundation of peace.

Confucius once said that all men are brothers, a human rights concept that is shared throughout the Western world, she said.

She said based on the two nations' histories and cultures, she hopes they can work together to create an exemplary and free world.

Jiang Jianguo, executive vice-president of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, China's human rights development is among the most advanced in the world and is developing at the fastest pace.

However, the country's human rights discourse still heavily depends on Western academic concepts and ideas. And some hostile Western forces have politicized human rights to meddle in other countries' internal affairs to defend their hegemony in the world, he said.

Therefore, it is important for the country to conduct thorough research on China's human rights concepts by explaining its rich culture, practical achievements, global contributions and development drive, he added.

Happy anniversary

People perform to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Luocheng Mula autonomous county in Hechi, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Wednesday. Luocheng has the largest population of people from the Mula ethnic group in China. MENG ZENGSHI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Pilot project allows foreign-invested businesses to boost CGT development

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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In a significant move toward liberalization in the healthcare sector, Shanghai's Pudong New Area witnessed the first batch of six foreign-invested biotechnology companies, including Merck Testing and Frontera Therapeutics, complete changes in their business scopes to include cell and gene therapy last week.

The changes signified a milestone in a pilot project that allowed foreign-invested enterprises to engage in the development and application of human stem cells, gene diagnostics and therapeutic technologies in Pudong.

The move aligned with a notice issued in September jointly by the Ministry of Commerce, the National Health Commission and the National Medical Products Admin-

istration that permitted foreign-invested companies to engage in such technologies in eight cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, and in Hainan province.

Companies in these areas are allowed to manufacture and register related products. Approved products can be used by patients nationwide.

The initiative showcased not only China's proactive approach toward expanding its openness, but also its commitment to offering global enterprises new opportunities.

Multinational companies said such policy relaxation enables them to bring their advanced technologies and expertise to China, and foster collaborations with local research institutions and businesses to jointly develop new technologies and products.

Cell and gene therapy, also known as CGT, represents the lat-

est generation of precision medical treatments — following small molecule and large molecule targeted therapies — offering innovative approaches to treating tumors, rare diseases, chronic illnesses and other challenging conditions.

The current negative list restricts foreign investment in the development and application of human stem cells and gene diagnostics within the CGT sector, in which China is a world leader. The exceptions are businesses that are part of the pilot project.

"The revised business scope allows for a more conducive environment for companies like us to introduce significant foreign investment, talent and technology resources. This change not only benefits individual companies, but also accelerates the progress of the domestic CGT industry," said Chen Li, executive assistant to the presi-

Monitoring ramped up at wildlife park

Tiger, leopard reserve installs system to track animals after biting incident

By ZHOU HUIYING
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Over 28,000 infrared cameras and more than 4,000 pieces of supporting equipment have been installed at the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, forming a Sky-to-Earth monitoring system to protect the wild animals and people.

The park, which was formally established in 2021 after a trial phase in August 2017, is the only protected area in China where Siberian tigers and Amur leopards can breed in the wild.

It covers an area of 14,100 square kilometers across the provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang.

"We implemented graded control measures to issue warnings about the presence of large wild animals such as Siberian tigers, leopards and bears," said Cheng Zhigang, an official from the Hunchun administration bureau of the park. "Once the system detects them within a straight-line distance of 3 to 5 km from a village, it will issue a Level 3 warning. We will notify the nearby villages' Party secretaries to inform local residents to avoid unnecessary activities in mountain areas."

"A straight-line distance of 1 to 2 km will trigger a Level 2 warning, requiring immediate notification to officials from the local government and surrounding villages, and residents will be advised to stay within their villages and avoid solitary activities," he said. "Staff members from nearby protection stations will be deployed to promote wildlife protection knowledge, prohibit all mountain entry activities and persuade villagers to return from the mountains to prevent human-wildlife conflicts."

"When the straight-line distance is within 1 km, a Level 1 warning will be activated," Cheng said. "The protection stations, local forestry police and border forces will initiate a joint warning, notifying residents to stay indoors unless necessary, and sealing off key locations and routes until the large animals leave."

The establishment and application of the monitoring system mark the entry of natural resource monitoring and supervision in national parks into the era of big data and artificial intelligence, according to the park's administration bureau.

Data from the bureau shows that as of October, the system has cumulatively monitored over 26,000 instances of Siberian tigers and over 34,000 instances of leopards approaching human habitats, issuing more than 20,000 human-tiger conflict warnings.

It has achieved day and night recognition of over 30 species,

with an accuracy rate of over 90 percent for Siberian tigers and leopards.

The system enables real-time analysis of animal activity regularities, spatial distribution trends and population activity trends, effectively reducing the risk of human-wildlife conflicts and safeguarding people's lives and property.

The Heilongjiang Forestry and Grassland Bureau on Wednesday issued a notice on the prevention of human-tiger conflicts after a villager of Changtai village in the province's Boli county was bitten on the left hand by a tiger.

At 6:38 am on Monday, the 110 command center of the county's public security bureau received a report that a tiger was spotted at around 6 am.

In areas where Siberian tigers move frequently, warning signs should be set up at important intersections to remind people to be vigilant, according to the notice.

It also reminded people to avoid entering the forest area alone.

After the incident occurred, the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park Administration Bureau activated its emergency response plan and insurance claim procedures.

If the injury is confirmed to have been caused by a Siberian tiger, the insurance claim process will be initiated immediately, according to the bureau.

The incident occurred approximately 200 km outside the park's boundaries.

According to the Compensation Measures for Losses Caused by Wild Animals in the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park (Trial), in the event of personal injury caused by Siberian tigers or leopards within Jilin and Heilongjiang, compensation will be provided after on-site verification by the insurance company.

From 2022 to 2024, more than 5,700 cases of wildlife damage were processed, and compensation of over 17.6 million yuan (\$2.4 million) was paid to people for losses related to crops, livestock and personal injuries, fully protecting the legitimate rights and interests of forest farmers and workers, the bureau said.

"According to monitoring data from Beijing Normal University, the number of wild tigers near the border in Heilongjiang's Jiamusi and Mudanjiang is increasing, some of which are entering China from Russia," Zhang Jianxu, a researcher at the Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told thecover.cn on Tuesday. "The Siberian tiger that hurt the villager may have come from Russia."

BUSINESS

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Conference aims to boost consumption

Much-anticipated meeting to chart course for 2025 economic performance

By ZHOU LANXU and OUYANG SHIJIA

The upcoming Central Economic Work Conference is expected to strengthen the focus on bolstering domestic consumer demand, a rising policy priority given potential US tariffs and the country's reform ambitions to improve its market economy system, said economists and analysts.

The much-anticipated meeting to chart the course for the Chinese economy in 2025 may imply additional consumption stimulus measures, they said, including expanded trade-in deals for consumer goods and income subsidies for targeted groups, which could possibly add up to over 1 trillion yuan (\$138 billion).

Shan Hui, Goldman Sachs' chief China economist, said that the Central Economic Work Conference is likely to see incremental policy support for 2025, with recent dynamics having indicated greater policy emphasis on boosting consumption, which requires stabilization in people's income growth to realize.

Therefore, besides expanding trade-in deals for consumer goods, Shan said China may provide income subsidies for second-child families, increase rural-area pensions and enrich unemployment insurance safety nets, which would be "very helpful in boosting people's confidence and spending willingness".

Her comments echoed vows by Han Wenxiu, executive deputy director of the Office of the Central Committee for Financial and Economic Affairs, to accelerate efforts to nurture a "complete system of domestic demand" and better secure people's livelihoods, as part of the country's top tasks to build a high-standard socialist market economy system.

In an article in Study Times, Han pledged on Wednesday to establish a system to effectively increase incomes among low-income groups, steadily expand the middle-income group and reasonably regulate excessively high incomes.

Han urged efforts to improve mechanisms to resolve structural employment issues, perfect the national coordination of basic pension insurance and enhance social protection for flexible employees, such as migrant workers and those in new forms of employment.

Shan said the pro-consumption measures might be implemented in a gradual and sustained manner to ensure maximized effects, instead of one-off payments like

those seen in Europe and the United States in emergencies.

"By raising rural pensions each month per person, for instance, one would receive the money every month, giving him or her the confidence to spend it, rather than saving it out of fear that the support might not continue."

Shan added that her team estimates sizable subsidies for second-child families and increased unemployment insurance.

"To truly boost confidence, the total stimulus for consumption should exceed 1 trillion yuan."

Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley, said that the Central Economic Work Conference, expected to be held in mid-December, may give more guidance on the possible size and mix of fiscal policy for 2025.

While past experience suggests that the specific stimulus size and mix would only be disclosed by the two sessions next March, Chinese policymakers' increased focus on guiding capital market expectations means a rising likelihood of clearer forward guidance early next year.

Xing said the upcoming stimulus for 2025 may be of "moderate intensity" with 2-3 trillion yuan in a fiscal package to support infrastructure investment, government expenditure, housing inventory buybacks, consumer goods trade-in programs and modest social welfare spending.

"The package will include some consumption-oriented measures, but their proportion might not be significant. More stimulus may still be directed toward infrastructure, real estate and other sectors."

China has stepped up efforts to boost consumption by adding 150 billion yuan from ultra-long term special treasury bonds to support trade-in deals of consumer goods this year, with the National Development and Reform Commission having said on Tuesday it would continue to make this policy beneficial to the public.

The country's retail sales rose 4.8 percent year-on-year in October, 1.6 percentage points higher than the month earlier, as sales of home appliances, furniture and autos accelerated.

"This suggests that the government is indeed prioritizing domestic consumer demand, an approach different than in the past," said Xiong Yi, chief China economist at Deutsche Bank.

Contact the writers at zhoulanxu@chinadaily.com.cn



An offshore wind farm seen in Fuqing, Fujian province. JIANG KEHONG / XINHUA

Nation to beef up offshore wind power

By LI JIAYING in Wuzhen, Zhejiang and LIU KUN in Wuhan

China is speeding up efforts to build a complete offshore wind power industry chain that will eventually benefit all players involved, said industry experts.

This is being done by advancing innovation and collaboration among enterprises to enhance joint competitiveness, drive technological breakthroughs and create a robust ecosystem.

"Offshore wind power represents a new frontier in global competition for advanced electricity technologies. Its development is integral to a country's maritime prowess and economic performance," said Shu Yinbiao, president of the Chinese Society for Electrical Engineering and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

Shu emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts among enterprises in the sector.

"Companies along the industry chain should strengthen coordination, leverage complementary advantages and pursue mutually beneficial cooperation," Shu said during the 2024 Offshore Wind Power Modern Industry Chain Integration Conference in Beihai, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, on Saturday, adding that it is important to establish an offshore wind power industry alliance, focusing on enhancing the industry's foundational strength, addressing technical gaps, and optimizing the industrial structure.

Themed "Innovation and integration: Driving high-quality development of China's offshore

wind power industry chain", the conference aimed to strengthen collaboration between industry leaders and businesses of all sizes along the chain and enhance competitiveness and resilience of the overall offshore wind power industry.

During the conference, a total of 34 companies, including China Three Gorges Renewables (Group) Co Ltd, Goldwind and Ningbo Orient Group signed agreements to collaborate on advancing the completion of the offshore wind power industry chain.

"Experience has proved that integrating the industry chain is not only a valuable lesson from our past successes, but also the pathway to a brighter future," said Liu Weiping, board chairman of China Three Gorges Corp, co-organizer of the conference.

The group said it will continue to boost industrial leadership through large-scale development, enhance innovation through technological breakthroughs, and strengthen synergy through integrated development. It will also work closely with upstream and downstream enterprises to establish new mechanisms, build solid foundations, and create a thriving ecosystem for shared growth and innovation, Liu said.

The country's offshore wind power industry chain has seen remarkable progress during recent years.

According to data from the National Energy Administration, China's cumulative installed offshore wind power capacity surged from less than 5 million kilowatts in 2018 to 37.7 million kW in 2023, accounting for about half of the

global total.

"The rapid development of offshore wind power is a vital step in building a new energy system, fostering integration along the industry chain, and transitioning to a cleaner energy structure. It also plays a pivotal role in securing energy independence and safety," said Zhuang Shuxin, secretary-general of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council.

Zhuang said that Guangxi boasts unique geographical advantages and significant potential for developing integrated energy and marine economies, and SASAC encourages State-owned enterprises to collaborate with local governments and businesses to expand the clean energy sector and strengthen development of the marine economy.

"By cultivating emerging industries such as renewable energy, electronic information, new materials and equipment manufacturing, we aim to attract upstream and downstream enterprises to cluster in Guangxi and engage with ASEAN markets," said Liu Ning, Party secretary of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

In this regard, China Three Gorges Corp also said it will keep investing in and developing high-quality offshore wind power projects in Guangxi. "By activating its 'blue economy' potential, we hope to position Guangxi as a hub for offshore wind power investments and innovation, not only within China, but also for ASEAN markets," Liu said.

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Briefly

Loan prime rates remain unchanged

China's one-year loan prime rate, a market-based benchmark lending rate, came in at 3.1 percent on Wednesday, unchanged from the previous month. The over-five-year LPR, on which many lenders base their mortgage rates, also remained unchanged from the pre-

vious reading of 3.6 percent, according to the National Interbank Funding Center.

Yuan weakens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, weakened 24 pips to 7.1935 against the US dollar on Wednesday, accord-

ing 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 rate 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

Petroleum demand forecast to peak by 2029

By LIU YUKUN liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

Financial services provider UBS Securities recently predicted a peak in Chinese petroleum demand by 2029 and negative growth after 2030.

Notably, China's gasoline and diesel demand, two essential products in petroleum refining, have already hit their peaks, according to UBS Securities.

Amily Guo, the China refining and chemicals analyst at UBS Securities, said factors influencing petroleum demand in China include the rapid rise of electric vehicles, liquefied natural gas powered heavy trucks, and the adoption of new energy sources like hydrogen.

"According to UBS' automotive team projections, assuming a base scenario where new energy vehicles, including hybrids, constitute 83.5 percent of China's vehicle sales by 2030 (up from around 40 percent currently), we estimate a continuous decline in gasoline demand, which peaked last year. This decline is estimated at around 3 percent annually from now on, leading to a total demand of 138 million metric tons by 2030," said Guo. "In the same base scenario, we believe that diesel demand also reached its peak at 203 million tons in 2019, and will decline to around 157 million tons by 2030, a 22 percent reduction from 2013."

83.5 percent

anticipated share of new energy vehicles in China's vehicle sales by 2030

Breaking down petroleum demand further, Guo said that aside from diesel and gasoline which account for nearly half of total demand, some other petroleum products such as aviation kerosene, liquefied petroleum gas and naphtha are anticipated to become new growth drivers for overall petroleum demand. This shift is primarily attributed to the increasing aviation turnover and the expansion of new chemical production capacities.

"In summary, considering the varied growth trends of different petroleum products, we expect the overall petroleum demand to peak in 2029, and transition to a negative growth trend post-2030," Guo added.

Recent data from China's National Bureau of Statistics revealed a 2 percent year-on-year increase in industrial crude oil (unrefined petroleum) production from companies whose annual revenue exceeded 20 million yuan (\$2.76 million) in the first three quarters. On the consumption front, the proportion of petroleum in the total energy consumption has decreased by 0.9 percentage point.

The peaking of petroleum demand poses significant challenges for relevant companies and Guo recommended that these entities expedite their green transformation and actively embrace new energy sources.

Many petroleum companies in China are already making strides in this direction, with initiatives ranging from developing hydrogen energy and carbon capture, utilization and storage, to wind and solar power as well as battery materials.

China National Petroleum Corp reported substantial progress in integrating new energy ventures and promoting the construction of major new energy hubs, in its third quarter financial report.

China Petrochemical Corp also stepped up efforts on developing the hydrogen-powered transportation sector, with endeavors to expand charging and refueling networks.

China National Offshore Oil Corp, on the other hand, is actively driving the amalgamation of offshore wind power with oil and gas production, while also promoting the industrialization of CCUS.

China Unicom unveils new solution for smart connected cars

By LI JIAYING in Wuzhen, Zhejiang and LIU KUN in Wuhan

Eying in-depth integration of vehicle-road-cloud systems for smart cars, China Unicom has unveiled an integrated solution 3.0 for intelligent connected vehicles.

The intelligent solution was released at the "Integrated Development of Vehicle-Road-Cloud" forum, a side event at the 2024 China 5G+ Industrial Internet Conference in Wuhan, Hubei province, on Wednesday.

"The latest solution integrates roadside sensing, edge computing, cloud-based data fusion, and other cutting-edge communication technologies, and can enable efficient collaboration among vehicles, infrastructure and cloud systems," said Zhou Guangtao, director of the intelligent connection research institute of China Unicom Smart Connection Technology.

By establishing a multitiered com-

puting system, a unified security platform, a digital twin system and a comprehensive testing and certification framework, it leverages China Unicom's core strengths in the internet of vehicles (IoV) sector and aims to accelerate the industrialization of the vehicle-road-cloud integration for ICVs, Zhou added.

Vehicle-road-cloud integration, an autonomous driving solution led by China, will not only propel the country's ICV industry, but also drive the development of smart cities, traffic management and overall industrial upgrades, said Zhao Xiaoyu, general manager of the smart transportation division at the company.

To date, over 70 percent of connected vehicles in China use network services provided by China Unicom, covering 92 automakers. This has given the major telecom operator an edge in emerging as a key player in advancing such integration, Zhao added.

Vehicle-road-cloud integration is believed to be a key pathway to driving the large-scale industrial application of intelligent connected vehicles.

In July, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, along with four other departments, announced the first batch of pilot cities for vehicle-road-cloud integration applications. Hubei's Wuhan and Shiyuan were among the selected cities.

"The inclusion of the two cities in the list signifies a new phase in the transformation and upgrading of Hubei's automotive industry," said Ai Jinqun, an official from Hubei's bureau of economy and information technology.

"Wuhan, for example, now serves as a global leader in autonomous driving services, bringing together a large number of core enterprises in the ICV industry chain," Ai added.

As China is ramping up efforts for the large-scale application of smart connection technologies,



A visitor tries vehicle-road-cloud systems for smart cars at an expo during the 2024 China 5G+ Industrial Internet Conference in Wuhan, Hubei province. SHI WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

MIIT also launched its first batch of 10 pilot cities for the "5G+ industrial internet" integrated application during the conference on Tuesday. The cities include Wuhan; Nanjing

in Jiangsu province; and Qingdao in Shandong province.

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BUSINESS

Hongrun eyes bigger global market share

Specialized equipment maker steps up expansion with cutting-edge tech

By ZHENG XIN
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Eyeing tremendous opportunities abroad amid an accelerated transformation of the global energy landscape, Hebei Hongrun Nuclear Equipment Science and Technology Industry Co Ltd has vowed to step up its international expansion with the world's largest 50,000-metric ton vertical extrusion press.

After launching the machine 12 years ago at an investment of 500 million yuan (\$69.04 million), Hongrun Nuclear Equipment saw its revenue from overseas climb, with its total export value in 2023 reaching 130 million yuan, accounting for 30 percent of the company's total revenue.

This share is expected to increase this year, it said.

Overseas orders have mostly come from fields including oil and gas, nuclear power, as well as hydrogen energy from Japan, the Middle East, Europe and the United States, said Liu Chunhai, chairman of Hongrun Nuclear Equipment.

Orders to well-known international companies accounted for over 40 percent of the export share, including a water-cooled equipment worth \$9 million for Japanese steelmaker NKK Corp, a \$20 million pipeline project for a US boiler company, and a \$15 million pipeline project for a power plant in the United Arab Emirates, Liu said.

The machine is still currently the largest of its kind globally, breaking significant technical barriers in the production of large-diameter, thick-walled pipelines and has redefined traditional forging design concepts, achieving crucial technological advances, said the company.

This advanced extrusion machine can produce seamless steel pipes up to 1.32 meters in diameter and 13 meters in length. Designed to handle high-strength materials, it serves essential sectors such as nuclear, aerospace, and defense.

"Through more than a decade of continuous investment in equipment, the quality of domestically produced steel pipes has steadily improved, allowing us to reach new levels of quality and efficiency," said Liu.

China, despite being the world's largest steel producer by volume, has long struggled with specialized high-grade materials and had to remain dependent on imports. One of the roots of this problem remains the extrusion machine.

After decades of research and development, China finally unveiled its own 50,000-ton hot extrusion machine in July 2020, which is capable of producing high-grade steel pipes at a cost far below those of imported alternatives, with the material utilization rate increasing from 50 percent to over 70 percent.

An analyst said China is now

poised to become a major exporter of high-grade steel pipes and possibly the extrusion machines themselves as continuous technological breakthroughs could reshape global supply chains and trade relationships, particularly in industries such as oil and gas, aerospace and defense.

"This technological cross-pollination could lead to advancements in fields ranging from construction to space exploration, further amplifying the impact of China's achievement," said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

A key breakthrough of the machine is its role in manufacturing G115 and P92 steel pipes, which are essential for ultra-supercritical power units.

The domestically developed G115 steel was recently applied in the Datang Yuncheng 630 C ultra-supercritical reheat project, raising turbine inlet temperatures to 631 C. This project overcame a 620 C bottleneck, pushing coal-fired power generation efficiency above 50 percent for the first time.

The G115 high-temperature steel, jointly developed by China Baowu Steel Group and Hongrun Nuclear Equipment, is China's first domestically developed power station steel with complete intellectual property rights.

Chen Jiasheng, a senior vice-chairman of the China Energy Research Society, said the widespread application of G115 will drive the clean and efficient use of coal-fired power, which is crucial for balancing energy demands with environmental goals, especially in countries with significant coal reserves like China.

Chen said improving the efficiency of coal-fired power plants, such as through ultra-supercritical technology, allows for more energy to be generated per unit of coal, reducing both fuel costs and emissions.

Through more than a decade of continuous investment in equipment, the quality of domestically produced steel pipes has steadily improved, allowing us to reach new levels of quality and efficiency."

Liu Chunhai, chairman of Hebei Hongrun Nuclear Equipment Science and Technology Industry Co Ltd

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Employees process pine nuts at a facility in Meihokou, Jilin province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Consumers worldwide go 'nuts' for Jilin product

By LIU MINGTAI in Changchun and ZHOU HUIYING

As Northeast China welcomes the pine nut harvest season, workers at Fada Food Co in Meihokou, Jilin province, are busy processing the popular commodity in the factory.

In the company's drying facility, employees spread out pine cones, filling the air with a rich fragrance.

After being dried, the pine cones will be processed into pine nuts and sold to countries and regions in Asia, Europe and North America.

"Since late August, our employees have been going to the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang to purchase pine cones," said Xie Yu, the company's general manager.

"The pine cone harvest is in autumn, and we plan to purchase 500 metric tons of red pine cones. Meanwhile, we have received a large amount of orders, ushering in a peak season for pine nuts," she added.

Established in 2013, the company is engaged in deep processing and export of pine nuts, achieving an import and export volume of 67 million yuan (\$9.25 million) in 2023.

As the world's largest pine nut distribution center, each year, Meihokou gathers pine nut raw materials from around the world, where they are dried, processed and then sold to over 40 countries and regions worldwide.

"There are 303 pine nut processing enterprises in Meihokou, producing about 50,000 tons of nut products annually, accounting for around 80 percent of the national output," said Cui Lin, deputy secretary-general of the city's pine nut association.

"Among them, nearly 10,000 tons of finished nut products are exported, firmly holding over 60 percent of the global pine nut market share. It is estimated that around 80,000 tons of pine nut raw materials will be processed in Meihokou this year and then sold to various parts of the world," Cui said.

As one of the oldest plants on Earth, pine trees have existed for about 300 million years and the history of pine nuts being consumed in China can be traced back over 2,000 years.

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, when people in Meihokou learned about demand for pine nut

products abroad, they immediately began to establish business channels.

As the local soil was not suitable for pine trees, they started purchasing pine cones from the Changbai Mountain area, processing them by shelling and drying, and exporting them as pine nuts.

In the late 1990s, the use of pine nut processing machinery greatly increased production efficiency and more pine nut processing enterprises appeared in Meihokou, gradually making it a base for pine nut processing and trade as well as a hub for pine nut commercial information.

In recent years, with the continuous improvement of processing capabilities and the expansion of the trade market, pine nut procurement has expanded from Changbai Mountain to areas such as the Lesser Hinggan Mountains, the provinces of Yunnan, Shaanxi and Shanxi, as well as countries and regions including Russia, Mongolia, Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

Furthermore, the people of Meihokou have gradually found a way to accumulate wealth nearby by planting pine trees in the mountains surrounding Meihokou, making seed

picking more convenient and cost-effective.

This autumn, Ding Yifeng, 32, has achieved a bountiful harvest in the red pine forests of Shuangxing township.

"It is my fourth year of contracting, and now the trees are around 40 to 50 years old. I'm likely to see a harvest of around 50 tons of pine cones this year, which may bring me good economic benefits," Ding said.

"The city has introduced a series of preferential policies, such as returning farmland to forests, and I believe in the future, more pine nuts will be harvested by ourselves," he added.

So far, Meihokou has cultivated and developed over 14,666 hectares of red pine forestland.

"In the future, we will focus on developing scientific and technological innovation of the products, increase the added value and extend the industrial chain," said Cui. "We hope to bring good enterprises, ideas and products to people around the world."

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IATA to allow digital RMB in settlement system

By ZHU WENQIAN
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China is an extremely important market for the International Air Transport Association, and the IATA will continue to strengthen its presence in the Chinese and North Asian markets, a senior official of the association said in Beijing this week.

The IATA represents some 300 airlines shouldering 83 percent of global air traffic. It just celebrated the 30th anniversary of the establishment of its China office in Beijing, where it is also the regional headquarters for the North Asia region, and the association highlighted its commitment to supporting the development of China's aviation industry.

The association said it would offer digital currencies in the settlement system that it operates for the aviation industry, and the first digital currency to be offered will be digital renminbi — expected to be available in China's billing and settlement

system by the end of this year.

"China has obviously led the way. We will have trial runs taking place this week until December. We will extend the service to other countries, if they are interested in using digital currencies as well. China paves the way for the rest of the world," said Nick Careen, IATA's senior vice-president for operations, safety and security.

The move is expected to promote the internationalization of digital RMB in the global aviation industry, especially in the B2B application field, the association said.

"With China set to become the world's largest passenger market in the coming years, we look forward to deepening our partnership with the Chinese government, our member airlines and stakeholders to bring greater prosperity to the Chinese aviation market," Careen said.

With 33 member airlines in the Chinese mainland and 48 members in the North Asia region, the IATA is

also running pilot projects for digital upgrades of passenger and cargo transportation in the region.

In addition, it is analyzing the benefits of artificial intelligence technology, which is expected to benefit the industry's training, schedule optimization and revenue management, and the application of AI is likely to happen quickly in the next few years, the IATA said.

Airlines have been highly interested in exploring AI. Still, safety is the No 1 priority for the aviation industry, and it ultimately requires human beings to make the right decisions, Careen added.

Meanwhile, the international air travel market has rebounded strongly after COVID-19, recovering to about 80 percent of capacity compared with pre-COVID levels, the IATA said.

As part of positive signs, Canada eliminated pandemic-era flight restrictions on Chinese mainland airlines in late October, thus

opening the way for Chinese airlines to add more flights to Canadian destinations such as Vancouver and Toronto.

"This is a good sign. We anticipate the same taking place between China and the United States in the near future. In Europe, if things begin to settle, we will start to see rapid expansion and recovery of more international flights," Careen said.

Search volumes of flights from domestic cities to Canadian cities more than doubled after the announcement, with a one-way ticket averaging about 5,000 yuan (\$690), according to Qunar, a Beijing-based online travel agency.

"The increase in the number of flights is expected to help create further price declines. Due to multiple factors, the China-North American air routes have not yet recovered to pre-COVID levels. The lifting of the restrictions indicates a positive trend," said Xiao Peng, a Qunar researcher.

Drone deliveries take off in rural regions of Wuhan

By LIU KUN in Wuhan and ZHANG XIAOMIN

By scanning a QR code at a service station, Li Xinpeng had his parcels delivered by an unmanned vehicle, thanks to the launch of the first rural drone delivery route in Wuhan, Hubei province.

"Drone transport is really great. I guess it will be easier for my fellow villagers to shop online in the future," said Li, who lives in Lizhen village, Xinzhou district.

Li's parcels were delivered by a drone carrying over 20 postal packages. The drone is capable of flying at a speed of 70 kilometers per hour and cruising at an altitude of 120 meters.

Operated by skilled professionals, the payload hexacopter drone boasts an impressive one-hour

flight endurance and can carry as many as 300 to 500 parcels at a time.

"Sometimes a delivery journey would have taken me over 40 minutes on my motorcycle," remarked Liu Jianying, a courier from the Xinzhou subsidiary of China Post Group (CPG), adding that drone deliveries are not hindered by traffic congestion or other road conditions.

"The drones will significantly reduce transport time and enhance the efficiency of parcel distribution," he said.

In collaboration with CPG, the local government in Xinzhou pioneered Wuhan's first rural drone delivery route, which is currently undergoing validation flights across three pilot villages.

It is slated to officially commence flight operations in early December,

with plans to expand to 13 villages within the region upon the successful completion of the trial phase.

Xinzhou district is located in the residual ranges of the Dabie Mountains, featuring vast terrains of mountains, hills and forests. With a total of 582 villages scattered across the area, most of the villages are quite far apart, leading to a dispersed population.

As online shopping experiences significant growth and the demand for courier services continues to rise, this drone delivery route is expected to become an important supplement to delivery services.

According to the State Post Bureau, the volume of courier services in rural areas has increased by over 10-fold in the past decade.

"During the initial stages, the pur-

chase, maintenance and operation costs of drones might be relatively high. But in the long term, as drones become widely deployed, the unit costs will decrease, effectively addressing issues related to labor shortages and high logistics costs," Zhang Dawei, a professor from the institute of urban and rural governance at Central China Normal University, was quoted by Hubei Daily as saying.

In addition to courier services, the application of drones in Xinzhou will also extend to various other sectors such as culture, tourism, agriculture and more. The district is leveraging the advantages of hosting Wuhan's national aerospace industry base to explore and expand the applications of low-altitude flight operations.



A drone delivers parcels in Lizhen village, Wuhan, Hubei province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

In August 2016, the industry base settled in Xinzhou as China's third national-level aerospace industry base after Shanghai and Xi'an, Shaanxi province. It is also China's

first commercial aerospace industry base.

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BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Global cooperation key to climate success

International Renewable Energy Agency chief: More efforts needed to address environmental issues, reach carbon goals

By LIU YUKUN
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Accelerated global action is urgently needed to reach climate goals and cooperation is essential to advance collective efforts, as the world is currently off track in achieving the goal of tripling the installed capacity of renewable energy by 2030, set at the 2023 COP28 climate conference, said Francesco La Camera, director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency.

Tripling renewables is essential to cut emissions and keep the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 C within reach, La Camera said in a recent interview with China Daily.

Against this backdrop, the global capacity of renewable energy needs to surpass 11,174 gigawatts by 2030, with an average annual increase of 1,044 GW from 2024 to 2030, IRENA's analysis showed.

This includes 360 GW of wind power and 578 GW of solar power each year, it said.

Last year, the global addition of renewable power capacity was 473 GW.

"This puts us not on track. We really have to change rapidly the speed and the scale of this transformation, if you want to stay, again, on a pathway that's going to achieve (the Paris Agreement target)," he said.

La Camera reaffirmed that global cooperation is paramount in achieving shared climate goals. He said initiatives to promote information exchange, facilitate market functionality, and reduce tariffs on renewable energy-related goods are essential for fostering collaboration among nations.

Yet, global cooperation in the energy transition sector is facing great challenges, with trade tariffs being an issue.

"It's really difficult to accept this deal that the trade tariffs are more favorable for fossil fuels and related goods, and really not like that for renewable goods. These are really not acceptable. These kinds of things have to change if a country wants to collaborate more closely on going toward the common goal, because climate change is not the fight of one country, but is the fight of the world against this menace for the world itself," La Camera said.

Meanwhile, trade conflicts between countries are also accelerating. In May, the US government decided to impose additional tariffs on imports of Chinese products like electric vehicles, lithium-ion batteries and solar cells on top of existing tariffs. Specifically, the import tax on Chinese solar cells will rise from 25 percent to 50 percent.

Wang Bohua, honorary chairman of the China Photovoltaic Industry Association, said at a forum that in the first half, major global photovoltaic markets such as the United States, Europe,



Technicians install solar photovoltaic panels at a power station in Zigui county, Hubei province, in November. ZHENG JIAYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

India and Brazil rolled out policies that increased barriers to PV product imports and launched measures to protect local production, posing challenges to global cooperation.

In October, the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, announced the conclusion of its anti-subsidy investigation, resulting in the imposition of definitive countervailing duties on Chinese-made electric vehicles. Later, the Ministry of Commerce said China had appealed to the World Trade Organization against EU's final ruling.

"China is providing the world the panel, the blade, storage facilities at a reasonable price... the country is pushing the global energy transition," said La Camera.

Over the past decade, average power costs per kilowatt-hour of wind and solar power projects in China have fallen by over 60 percent and 80 percent, respectively, Zhang Jianhua, head of the National Energy Administration, said at a recent conference.

Such a cost reduction is meaningful in providing affordable solar panels and wind turbines to regions in need.

A report from the International Energy Agency showed that electricity consumption in emerging and developing economies is set to grow around three times the rate of advanced economies, and the low costs of wind and solar power, in particular, should make them the technologies of choice to meet

rising demand if the infrastructure and regulatory frameworks are in place.

China has to date contributed over 80 percent of photovoltaic modules and 70 percent of wind power equipment. Its products have been exported to over 200 countries and regions, Zhang of NEA said.

La Camera said China plays an indispensable role in ensuring the realization of global climate goals as it is spearheading the global transition toward sustainable practices.

"IRENA places great importance on its cooperation with China and hopes that by further leveraging the role of China-IRENA cooperation office as a bridge and hub, both sides can reap more practical outcomes in areas such as policy

dialogue, technical discussions and capacity building."

"China is currently at the forefront of renewable energy deployment worldwide... It is noteworthy that approximately 40 percent of global solar capacity is located in China. Moreover, a significant portion of renewable energy jobs can be found within the country," La Camera said.

As of end-September, installed capacity of renewable energy power generating units in China reached 1.73 billion kW, a year-on-year increase of 25 percent, accounting for approximately 54.7 percent of the total installed capacity in China, latest data from the NEA showed.

This includes hydropower installations of 430 million kW, wind power installations of 480 million



Technicians test photovoltaic modules in Zhangye, Gansu province, in October. WANG JIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

kW, solar power installations of 770 million kW, and biomass power installations of 46 million kW.

Meanwhile, renewable energy consumption has been steadily increasing. In the first three quarters, power generated from renewable energy sources reached 2.51 trillion kilowatt-hours, a 20.9 percent year-on-year increase, representing about 35.5 percent of total electricity.

Combined electricity generated from wind and solar power reached 1.349 trillion kWh, a 26.3 percent increase year-on-year, nearly matching the electricity consumption of the tertiary sector (1.395 trillion kWh) during the same period and surpassing electricity consumption for urban and rural residents (1.172 trillion kWh).

China is also stepping up efforts to promote the development of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, and actively participating in global trade despite ongoing conflicts, La Camera said.

"We see that there is an incredible progress in transport — the electric vehicles, if you go into the street, you see so many green plates, which means that there are many electric vehicles... China's technology advancement also allows for battery recharging in a very short time."

"We have seen that there is interest in hydropower, in power storage, and in hydrogen (in China). So these are all areas where the country is progressing fast. Furthermore, the country's commitment to achieving 1.2 terawatts

of renewable capacity six years ahead of schedule exemplifies its dedication to environmental stewardship, providing reference to other countries that need to accelerate its renewable deployment," he said.

"China may achieve carbon neutrality well in advance of the target year of 2060," he added.

The rapid expansion of renewable energy sources has driven the need for energy storage facilities, as such intermittent energy sources cannot be managed and dispatched like traditional fossil fuels. According to the NEA, innovative energy storage systems, distinct from traditional methods like pumped storage hydropower, have served as vital "super power banks" for renewable energy, significantly bolstering power supply during peak demand.

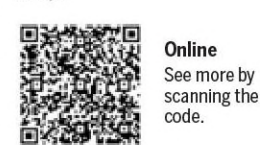
By the end of September, China had 58.52 million kW of operational innovative energy storage facilities, marking an 86 percent increase from the end of 2023. Particularly in East China, there has been notable growth in these installations, with over 9 million kW added this year. Between January and August, the total charge and discharge capacity of innovative energy storage systems nationwide reached around 26 billion kWh.

"The country may still face challenges, as in all other countries. When putting so much renewable energy capacity into the system, we need a grid system that is interconnected, flexible, moving from one direction to another, and balancing," La Camera said.

An upgrade of the grid system is necessary to efficiently transmit and balance electron flow generated from intermittent renewable sources, he added.

To tackle these challenges, China is accelerating investments in ultra-high-voltage direct current transmission projects, with related grid construction making solid progress. At the same time, China has introduced a new type of power system, with the primary goal of maximizing the integration of new energy sources, utilizing smart grid, and encouraging electricity generator-grid-power load-power storage integration.

"Building a diversified, clean and stable energy supply system is an important path for developing countries to enhance their energy security capabilities," Zhang of the NEA said. "We are willing to work with other countries around the world to develop more ambitious green energy development plans based on each country's endowments and development needs."



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HK plans power interconnection infrastructure project with mainland

By LIU YUKUN

Hong Kong is planning to strengthen its electricity interconnection with the mainland through a new infrastructure project, Wong Shuk-han, undersecretary for environment and ecology in Hong Kong, told China Daily in a recent interview.

The project will increase the share of zero-carbon energy in Hong Kong's fuel mix for power generation in the long run, she said.

"We are planning ahead for the construction of new infrastructure for receiving and processing electricity transmitted to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from other regions, with land reserved for building the project, namely Electricity Facilities in our city."

The Electricity Facilities are strategic to enhancing regional energy cooperation, and will be connected to the electricity supply systems of the two local power companies in the future.

The facilities are expected to be

commissioned by 2035, and the share of zero-carbon energy imported from the mainland in the HKSAR's fuel mix for electricity generation may further increase to around 60 percent to 70 percent by then, she added.

The HKSAR is also stepping up efforts to improve the current mainland-to-Hong Kong power interconnection project.

"Upon completion of the enhancement of the current pipeline project — Clean Energy Transmission System — connecting the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station and Hong Kong in 2025, its transmission capacity will be increased with greater flexibility to import more clean energy from the mainland, and the share of electricity imported from the mainland in our fuel mix for electricity generation could be increased from around 25 percent to 35 percent by 2025," she said.

Wong said collaboration between Hong Kong and the mainland in the energy sector will yield win-win results.

"The HKSAR cannot produce

enough zero-carbon energy to meet the electricity demand of a population of 7.5 million on its own. To move further away from reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation, the HKSAR must explore various measures including strengthening collaboration with the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, thereby developing a diversified fuel mix to increase the use of zero-carbon energy," she said.

Talking about the HKSAR's role in bridging the mainland's and the world's carbon markets, Wong said the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd launched an international voluntary carbon market, Core Climate, in 2022.

"Core Climate serves as a convergence point for capital and climate-related products from the HKSAR, the mainland and beyond. It is also the world's only carbon market to offer Hong Kong dollar and RMB settlement for trading of international voluntary carbon credits, and is poised to contribute significantly to the advancement

of sustainable practices," Wong said.

She said the HKSAR is on track to becoming an international center for green technology and finance, enhancing the development of green finance and fostering exchange and cooperation with other markets.

"Going forward, with the rapid development of top-notch green products, advanced technologies and technical expertise on the mainland, we could leverage our unique position and distinctive edge to play a pivotal role in stepping up efforts to promote new energy and green transport," she said.

"We will also further promote the development of green and low-carbon hydrogen energy by supporting the industry to establish a solar-to-hydrogen facility for demonstration, introduce a bill in 2025 to ensure the safe use of hydrogen fuel, and formulate the approach of hydrogen standard certificate suitable to our local circumstances in due course," she added.

Wong said the HKSAR will take measures to support the taxi trade



A technician shows how to climb a tower for working at heights in Hong Kong in October 2022. WEI HUADU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

and franchised bus companies to purchase electric vehicles, and encourage the installation of fast-charging facilities. The target is to have a total of 3,000 fast chargers installed by 2030.

"We will also set a target for sustainable aviation fuel consumption and develop SAF and green maritime fuel supply chains to accelerate the industries' low carbon transition," she said.

COMMENT

Editorials

Visit further strengthens Sino-Brazilian comprehensive strategic partnership

As the largest developing countries and important emerging market economies in their respective regions, China and Brazil have over the years pursued a relationship grounded in a shared vision of mutual development, viewing each other's progress as an opportunity for their own growth.

As President Xi Jinping said in a signed article published in Brazilian media outlet *Folha de S. Paulo* on Sunday, ahead of his state visit to the country, the practical cooperation between the two countries has yielded fruitful results, witnessed flourishing people-to-people and cultural exchanges and become increasingly mature and vibrant since they established diplomatic relations 50 years ago.

This year, bilateral trade has sustained a strong growth momentum, soaring 9.9 percent in the first 10 months from the same period last year, a rate which was 4.7 percentage points higher than the overall growth rate of China's foreign trade.

China has remained Brazil's largest trading partner and export destination for the past 15 consecutive years, while Brazil has long been China's top trading partner in Latin America. Statistics show the trade volume between China and Brazil reached \$181.53 billion in 2023, with Brazil becoming the first Latin American country to surpass \$100 billion in exports to China.

Obviously, Beijing and Brasilia have everything to gain by boosting the energy and vitality of this rosy picture. With their economies highly complementary and their interests deeply intertwined, further synergizing their development strategies and fostering new growth drivers for bilateral cooperation has bright prospects.

Against the backdrop of the rapidly changing international landscape, China-Brazil relations would not have withstood the test of the times if the two countries, tens of thousands of miles apart, did not share the same view on the benefits of cooperation.

The all-round strategic cooperation between China and Brazil not only serves the long-term and fundamental interests of the two peoples, but also sets a good example for the solidarity and coordination of countries in the Global South. In fact, China-Brazil ties, featuring mutual respect, equality, and win-win cooperation, have become one of the most important partnerships within the Global South. With trade protectionism and power politics raising their ugly heads and causing setbacks to globalization and international cooperation, China and Brazil have set a good example for developing countries to develop win-win cooperation and pursue a shared future.

The dynamic relationship between China and Brazil has not only boosted their respective development but also contributed significantly to world peace and stability. They have jointly amplified the voice of the Global South in the international arena and made important contributions to addressing global challenges and conflicts through upholding the spirit of multilateralism and advocating for an equal and orderly multipolar world. In particular, their joint six-point consensus on the Ukraine crisis has gained recognition from a growing number of countries.

In a rapidly changing world, China and Brazil are strengthening strategic cooperation within multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, and the World Trade Organization to safeguard the interests of emerging markets and advance global governance.

The foundation for the two countries' productive friendship has been their mutual respect and political trust. Brazil was the first country to establish a strategic partnership with China. It was also the first nation in Latin America to enter into a comprehensive strategic partnership with China.

President Xi's ongoing visit to Brazil is set to further deepen the two countries' strategic mutual trust, and promote the synergy between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Brazil's development strategies and raise their all-round strategic cooperation to an even higher level.

Standing at an important historical juncture of building on past achievements and forging ahead, China and Brazil together can pave the way for a new "golden 50 years" of friendship and reciprocal cooperation, and join hands to help build a community with a shared future.

Israel maximizing gains before US transition

That the US Navy's USS *Abraham Lincoln* aircraft carrier strike group in the Middle East left the region over the weekend after several months of operations there has been widely taken as an indication of easing of tensions between Israel and Iran following Israel's air strikes on multiple Iranian targets late last month.

It's also in line with the progress reportedly being made in cease-fire talks between Israel and Hezbollah that are being overseen by the United States. A US envoy told the media that an agreement to end the Israel-Hezbollah war is "within our grasp" after talks in Lebanon on Tuesday.

But despite that prognosis, Israel has not ceased its attacks on Hezbollah. While the cease-fire talks were going on, an Israeli air strike on what Tel Aviv claimed was a Hezbollah target slammed into a densely populated residential area in Lebanon's capital late on Monday, killing at least five people. Israel has dramatically escalated its bombardment of Lebanon since late September, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing to severely weaken the Iranian-backed militant group that is in solidarity with the Palestinians during Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

Israel has also maintained its military aggression and weaponization of humanitarian aid supplies in the Palestinian enclave. On Tuesday Israeli attack helicopters and drones opened fire on Palestinian homes in central Gaza's Bureij and Nuseirat refugee camps, with residents searching through concrete debris to find any survivors. At least 50 Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza that day alone, according to the local health department.

And the looting of 97 of 109 aid trucks in Gaza by armed men over the weekend worsened an already severe food crisis in the Palestinian enclave, as the trucks were carrying food for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the World Food Programme. Although the identity of the perpetrators remains unknown, given the fact that the convoy, which was initially scheduled for Sunday, was ordered by the Israeli military to "depart at short notice via an alternate, unfamiliar route (on Saturday)", according to UNRWA, and Israel's tight control of the region, Tel Aviv's studied silence over "one of the worst" incidents of looting humanitarian aid under its nose is thought-provoking.

Notably, after the dust settled over the US presidential election, Netanyahu made no secret of the fact that he'd ignored US President Joe Biden's counsel and threats to withhold aid.

"The US had reservations and suggested that we not enter Gaza," Netanyahu revealed to the Israeli Knesset on Monday. "President Biden told me that if we go in, we will be left alone. He also said that he would stop shipments of important weapons to us. And so he did. A few days later, (US Secretary of State Antony) Blinken appeared and repeated the same things and I told him — we will fight with our nails."

The US ultimately withheld a single shipment of 2,000-pound bombs, but allowed all other weapons transfers to go on, which has given the Israeli leader the confidence that the tail can wag the dog.

Although he emphasized the importance of Israel making its own decisions, the next US administration is an external factor the Israeli leader has to take into account.

In stressing Israel must preserve its independence, Netanyahu is trying to make the most of the US' power transition period to maximize Israel's gains, which the Israeli leader believes is conducive to further tying the US' interests to Israel's in the region.

But in which way and to what extent that can be realized will depend on how effectively the Israeli leader can keep the next US administration on his hook.

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Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Exploring the correct way for two major countries to get along

Over the past four years, despite ups and downs in China-US relations, dialogue and cooperation channels have remained open, ensuring overall stability. The countries should not let a "Thucydides Trap" upset their ties; neither can either side fight a "new Cold War" and win it. If the two sides treat each other as rivals and engage in vicious competition, China-US relations will encounter setbacks. On the contrary, if they set aside their differences and seek common ground, China-US relations can achieve significant development.

As two major powers, neither side can reshape the other as per its own wishes, nor can it deprive the other of its legitimate development rights. China and the US have some differences, but they cannot harm each other's core interests, nor engage in conflict and confrontation.

The one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiques are the political foundation for bilateral relations and must be strictly adhered to.

China and the US have deeply intertwined interests and vast potential for cooperation. The trade volume between the two exceeds \$660 billion, and more than 70,000 US companies make annual profits of \$50 billion or above in China; exports to China alone support 930,000 jobs, while Chinese goods not only enrich the choices of US consumers but also reduce their living costs. Both China and the US should focus on the well-being of the peoples of the two countries, continuously expand the cooperation list, enlarge the cooperation pie, and achieve win-win results.

The stable development of China-US

relations concerns not only the people of the two countries but also the future of humanity, which is facing unprecedented challenges from turmoil and frequent conflicts. China and the US should thus strive for world peace, provide global public goods and play a positive role in world unity.

China's policy toward the US has been consistent, and it is willing to continue to maintain communication, expand cooperation and manage differences with the incoming administration in January.

The people of both countries and the world have huge expectations for stable development of ties. We hope that the US will work with China to continue exploring ways to achieve long-term peaceful coexistence.

— PEOPLES DAILY

Gamble on Bitcoin bet bid to reduce national debt

Bitcoin prices have been rocketing in recent days, hitting \$93,000 early on Thursday morning and then remaining above \$90,000. Market analysts attribute the rapid rise in Bitcoin prices to a continued rate cut made by the US Federal Reserve in November, a number of pro-cryptocurrency measures promised by the Republican Party during the presidential campaign, and other factors. According to US media, Senator Cynthia Lummis, a Republican from Wyoming, plans to push a bill when the new Congress takes office next year to sell some of the Fed's gold to create a strategic Bitcoin reserve.

However, Bitcoin prices are influenced by a variety of factors, including supply and demand patterns, the macroeconomy and market sentiment. The Republican Party promised during the election campaign to include Bitcoin in national reserves, to make the United States the "cryptocurrency capital" of

the world, and to appoint regulators interested in digital assets, driving the increase in Bitcoin demand.

The stabilizing global economic growth trend, mitigated inflationary pressures and interest rate cuts made by major central banks across the world have also brought more liquidity to the market. In addition, the optimistic market sentiment is also driving the rise in Bitcoin prices.

Although the incoming US administration has shown interest in cryptocurrencies, Bitcoin's inclusion into the US' strategic reserve first needs to go through complex legislative procedures involving the coordination and balance of interests among multiple regulators. Opposition from traditional financial institutions, conservative lawmakers and interest groups skeptical of digital assets will also pose considerable obstacles. From the market perspective, frequent price fluctuations are an

impediment to Bitcoin's future as a national reserve asset. Also, the US' cryptocurrency regulatory system is not sound, and a more complete legal framework needs to be established.

The earlier Donald Trump administration was unfriendly toward Bitcoin. With its newfound love for Bitcoin, the US hopes it can take a leading position in the field of digital currency, so as to retain its competitive edge in the global economy. Faced with the pressure of massive national debts, it also hopes to reduce the issuance of national debt through the appreciation of Bitcoin.

As many countries have embraced "de-dollarization" following the US' abuse of the dollar's status, its excessive currency issuance and serious over-drawing of the dollar credit, the change in attitude toward Bitcoin may be a new attempt by the US to address the dollar's weakening international status.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

What They Say

Global South can be pillar of global development

The G20 summit, which concluded in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday, has underscored the important roles the Global South has assumed in different fields, as well as the urgency of reforming the global governance system to make it better reflect the Global South's voices and appeals.

The G20 countries should view each other's development as an opportunity rather than a challenge, and view each other as a partner rather than an opponent. They should work together to promote an orderly multipolar world and inclusive economic globalization that is cooperative, open, innovative and eco-friendly.

To that end, the G20 countries should be committed to strengthening global economic partnerships and macroeconomic policy coordination to help establish an inclusive and non-

discriminatory international economic cooperation environment.

The G20 countries should put development at the center of the international economic and trade agenda, continue to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, advance the reform of the World Trade Organization, and push the dispute settlement mechanism to resume normal operation as soon as possible, so as to enhance the authority, effectiveness and relevance of the multilateral trading system.

In particular, some developed economies should avoid politicizing economic issues, artificially dividing the global market, and discard their protectionism and unilateralism in the name of green development and national security.

The G20 should assume a leading role in promoting the deep integration of the digital economy and the real economy, and rule-making in emerging digital

fields, so as to strengthen international governance and cooperation in artificial intelligence, and avoid AI becoming of exclusive benefit to the rich.

Facing the challenges, the countries of the Global South should strengthen their cooperation, help each other advance their modernization, and narrow the gap between the North and the South.

China, a major member of the Global South, has always been a doer rather than a talker, supporting the cause of global development. In order to build a just world and promote common development, China has proposed eight actions to support global development, and it has actually been acting upon these to promote the Global South to become the pillar of world peace and stability, the engine of growth and the promoter of fairness, justice and equity in global governance.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

COMMENT

Chen Yuanting

Latin America partnership for better future

The fact that 2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the China-CELAC Forum and China's proposal to build a China-Latin America community with a shared future adds to the importance of President Xi Jinping's visit to Latin America from Nov 13 to 21 to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders Meeting in Peru and the G20 Summit in Brazil as well as pay state visits to the two countries.

CELAC, incidentally, stands for China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a platform that promotes cooperation between the two sides.

Over the past decade, deepening cooperation between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries has borne rich fruits in fields such as aerospace, healthcare, agriculture and energy. But cooperation between China and the Latin American countries is no longer limited to the government level; it now extends to enterprises, universities and research institutions.

In the field of aerospace, for example, the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite cooperation program has developed six Earth resource satellites, which provide valuable data for agriculture, water management and environmental monitoring. The CBERS also provides remote sensing data for developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, making it a major open Earth observation data sharing system. And while China and Argentina have established a joint deep space exploration station, China has helped launch Venez-

uela's remote sensing satellites and Bolivia's first communication satellite.

The healthcare sector, too, has seen remarkable developments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, China provided medical support, including vaccines and ventilators, for Latin American and Caribbean countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Guyana and Ecuador. And BGI Genomics, the world's leading integrated solutions provider of precision medicine, has established a clinical laboratory in Uruguay, which will help improve public healthcare services including early disease diagnosis in that country.

In the agriculture sector, China has established bilateral agricultural cooperation mechanisms with 19 CELAC members, helping expand trade from local specialties to more technology-driven products and services including agricultural mechanization and new livestock farming technology.

Moreover, the China-Latin America and the Caribbean Sustainable Food Innovation Center was established earlier this month with the aim of boosting pragmatic cooperation by, among other things, expanding joint research in livestock farming technology, crop testing and exploration of new crops, and increasing the exchange and training of personnel engaged in the science and technology sector. The center's goal is also to promote sustainable development of the food industry to ensure global food security.

Green energy cooperation, on the other hand, has become a highlight of China-CELAC cooperation. While Chinese-made electric vehicles have

entered the markets in Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, Chinese automaker BYD has built a complex in Brazil consisting of three manufacturing units which focus on making electric and hybrid vehicles, and processing lithium and iron phosphate. The BYD factory is expected to produce its first vehicle by early 2025.

China has also joined hands with Chile, Argentina and Brazil to build green energy projects such as solar photovoltaic panel-making factories, as well as hydropower stations and bio-energy plants.

Besides, Chinese investments have helped the Latin American and Caribbean states to expedite their social development, improve their logistics efficiency, increase their energy production and supply, facilitate their telecommunication development, and boost their economic growth. Not to mention that China-CELAC cooperation has also created new jobs and improved people's livelihoods.

Cooperation in the field of science and technology has not only yielded mutual benefit for China and the Latin American and Caribbean states but also facilitated the Global South's common development. In fact, by promoting high-tech development, China and the Latin American countries, rather the Global South as a whole, can drive global growth.

Green and digital technologies will be the focus of the cooperation between China and the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the science and technology sector in the next decade. As a matter of fact, by developing a green

economy, the Global South can help boost the global economic recovery and sharpen its competitiveness as well.

By deepening cooperation with China in the green energy supply chain, the Latin American and Caribbean countries can unleash the market potential of the green economy and expedite their green energy transition.

The digital economy, too, has the potential to create new opportunities for cooperation between the two sides, if they can improve the digital economy's infrastructure, strengthen the digital supply chains, increase smart manufacturing, and boost the development of smart cities, cross-border e-commerce and the digital entertainment sector.

China and the Latin American and Caribbean states have already increased special air routes for cross-border e-commerce to meet the growing demand for air cargo. And through the South-South Cooperation Trust Fund, China has initiated digital agriculture and rural e-commerce cooperation with Panama, Guyana and some other Latin American and Caribbean states. Such efforts can facilitate the sustainable transformation of their agricultural and food industry, helping them meet some of the targets of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The author is director of the Department of International Relations, the Institute of Latin American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Wang Sixin and Ling Yunfei

Good governance of facial recognition devices can better protect personal data

As the 2024 World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit unfolds in Wuzhen, a water town in East China's Zhejiang province, from November 19 to 22, with artificial intelligence as its centerpiece, the broader implications of emerging technologies, including facial recognition devices, demand attention. While this technology enhances efficiency and convenience, its rapid proliferation across public and private sectors underscores the need for robust regulations to safeguard privacy, prevent misuse, and ensure ethical deployment in a society increasingly shaped by AI.

The application of facial recognition technology increased exponentially in China during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the momentum continuing until now. Data collection, data processing and the facial recognition device business have continued to grow thanks to the fast-paced development of information and communications technology. However, this has given rise to some security problems, including increasing the risk of personal information theft and misuse.

The use of facial recognition technology can improve personnel management and help prevent incidents. But since a person's face is the most important piece of personal information, the collection of facial data of natural persons must be lawful and devoid of potential risks.

The problems related to facial data that have arisen in recent years can be mainly attributed to the lack of transparency in data collection, storage and usage.

Effective governance of facial recognition systems in public places is a pressing need.

Hence, the legality of collecting facial data in public places needs reassessment. Given the grave threat the pandemic posed to people's health and life, the installation of facial recognition devices to collect facial data in public places, including universities, government buildings, plazas, railway stations, airports and hospitals was justified.

But is it still necessary and legal to maintain and even increase the use of facial recognition devices in public places? Except for certain places where tight public security is always needed to ensure the safety of people and safeguard national security, public places such as universities, shops and communities must follow strict legal procedures for collecting and handling personal data using facial recognition devices.

The lack of transparency has prompted some to ask whether it is still necessary to collect facial data in public places. They have also questioned the manner in which facial data and other personal information are collected, stored and used. Personal data are mostly collected and handled by institutions and organizations with government consent, while individuals whose facial data are collected are rarely informed about it. This lack of transparency is not in the interest of those people whose personal data are collected. Individuals whose data are collected are exposed to higher risks given the rising commercial value of personal data and their misuse in criminal activities.

It would be a shocking irony if individuals' personal data, including facial data, are used by some to commit a cybercrime or any other crime. Private information, especially facial data, of individuals is highly sought after by both marketing experts and criminals. The latter use such information to commit crimes. Hence, it is important to prevent personal data leaks and reduce security risks.

Effective governance of facial recognition systems in public places is a pressing need. First, government agencies should issue detailed, implementable guidelines in accordance with laws including the Cybersecurity Law and the Personal Information Protection Law. This will help institutions better handle related issues.

Second, facial recognition systems should be classified by functions and locations. While facial recognition devices should continue to be used in high-security areas such as airports, and railway and bus stations, their use in other places should be restricted or prohibited.

Third, the use of facial recognition systems should be based on improved standards. And individuals should be encouraged to supervise the use of individuals' personal data or give suggestions on how to make their use less intrusive. In fact, public participation can help establish a more balanced and transparent data management framework.

And fourth, preemptive measures should be taken to prevent the leak or theft of personal data. Steps should also be taken to ensure facial recognition devices and software follow safe practices and better safeguard personal data security. And the authorities should make sure individuals and companies violating the laws related to personal data safety are penalized to deter potential violators.

By taking these measures, China can better manage facial recognition systems in public places as well as protect individual privacy and security.

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Asit K. Biswas and Cecilia Tortajada

China making the most of a rapidly changing world

The Bretton Woods institutions — the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (which was replaced by the World Trade Organization in 1995) — have dominated global trade and development policies in the post-war era, because developed countries were at the height of their power when those policies were devised.

After the end of World War II, more and more developing countries gained independence from colonial powers, and started rebuilding and improving socioeconomic structure. Consequently, countries of the Global South collectively became increasingly important.

Today, the global economic balance has shifted to the Global South. For example, the G7 countries' combined share of global GDP declined from 67 percent in 1994 to 44.2 percent in 2022. On the other hand, the fast-paced economic growth of China raised its share of global GDP by four times during this period.

Even after this major shift of economic power, the G7 countries continue to behave as if they are still as powerful as they were in the pre-1990 period.

In a rapidly changing world, the economic and political hefts of the Global South have steadily increased and the West's global dominance is being challenged, with China becoming the first serious competitor to the US.

In May 2015, aware of the importance of modernizing China's manufacturing sector, sharpening the country's global competitiveness, and increasing its market share, President Xi Jinping announced the "Made in China 2025" plan. The idea was to significantly strengthen China's manufacturing prowess by rapidly developing 10 high-tech industries within a decade. These industries include electric vehicles, energy equipment, advanced robotics and artificial intelligence, information and communications technology, telecommunications, high-speed railways and new synthetic materials.

According to Bloomberg Intelligence, in 2015, China was among the global leaders in only solar energy and new materials like graphene, and was globally competitive in high-speed railways. In all the other areas, it was behind the US. Of the 17 subcategories, Bloomberg said it was behind in 11.

But today, China is behind the US in only three categories, and is likely to be behind in only one category — semiconductor equipment manufacturing — by 2030. It is expected to become a global leader in seven categories, and globally



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

competitive in

nine. This is a great achievement by any measure, especially because China's success comes despite import restrictions by the West.

China's success is also linked to its efforts to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions. China's successes in renewable energy generation and the development of EVs and high-speed railways have gone a long way toward reducing the country's air pollution and emissions levels. For example, in 2023, it accounted for 60 percent of the added renewable energy capacity globally. The International Energy Agency estimates that by the early 2030s, China's solar power generation will exceed the current total electricity demand of the US.

Besides, when Made in China 2025 was launched in 2015, the majority of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world were in China. Today, not even a single Chinese city is on the list of the top 15 most polluted cities.

China's economic and commercial success has meant that it is now the main trading partner of more than 150 economies. Rattled by China's remarka-

ble technological progress, the United States and the European Union have imposed punitive tariffs and built trade barriers against Chinese goods.

Former US president Donald Trump launched the tariff war against China in 2018, with incumbent President Joe Biden not only maintaining them but imposing new tariffs, including 100 percent tariffs on Chinese-made EVs. Worse, president-elect Trump said during his election campaign that he would impose punitive tariffs on all Chinese goods. If Trump makes good his threat, the additional tariffs on \$500 billion worth of imported Chinese goods would affect American consumers and enterprises the most, and ripple through the global economy in unexpected ways.

Much of these tariffs, imposed on the pretext of safeguarding US national security, are aimed at checking China's incredible economic rise. But the fact is, many of the tariffs and export restrictions may be effective in the short term but are likely to be counterproductive in the medium to long term.

Take the case of Huawei for example. US enterprises have been forbidden to deal with the Chinese telecom giant on national security grounds. Huawei did struggle in the short term, but the US

sanctions prompted it to intensify efforts to become self-sufficient in advanced technology. As a result, Huawei's latest smartphone, Mate70, uses a completely new Chinese operating system HarmonyOS NEXT. And Huawei smartphones are now ubiquitous in most developing countries.

In addition, Huawei's revenue in the first half of 2024 reached 417.5 billion yuan (\$57.74 billion), up 34.3 percent year-on-year, and net profit increased to 55.1 billion yuan, its best ever performance. In the process, many US companies lost their market share in China.

The EU followed the US in imposing tariffs of up to 45 percent on Chinese-made EVs for at least five years.

In the final analysis, countries and companies are likely to do whatever they perceive to be in their best interests. While the US' pressure to restrict chip exports is likely to increase under the new Trump administration, many other Western countries and companies are having second thoughts about the punitive tariffs. For instance, the CEO of Netherlands-based ASML Holding, which has a monopoly on manufacturing machines that help companies to produce the most-advanced chips, Christophe Fouquet, said in mid-October: "The question is what is right for the Netherlands? What is right for Europe?" Still, the Dutch government is struggling to find a middle ground between keeping the US happy and securing its biggest company's largest market.

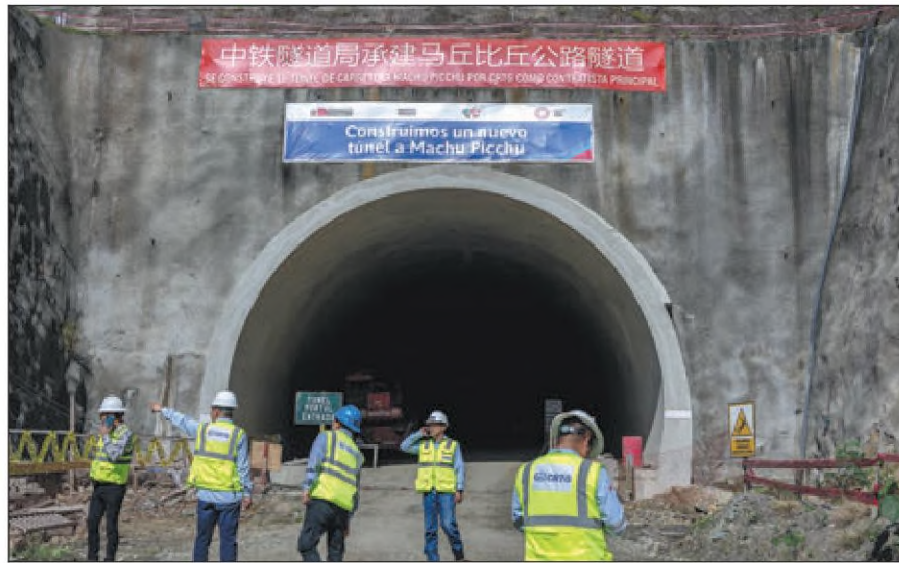
China appears to be taking a different approach to punitive tariffs. During the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in September, for example, President Xi announced China would not impose any tariffs on goods imported from developing countries that have diplomatic ties with Beijing.

The future is difficult to predict. But since the interests of different Western countries are different, the US may find it very difficult to convince all its Western allies to follow its strident anti-China policy. Some may follow the US, while the others may choose the development path that best suits their national interests.

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WORLD

TIES THAT BIND



The entrance of the Machu Picchu Highway Tunnel project in the Cusco region in Peru is seen in this photo taken on June 23. LI MUZI / XINHUA

Peru reaps dividends through BRI projects

Infrastructure helps local communities address practical development needs

By LIA ZHU in Lima, Peru
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In the highland Peruvian city of Huancayo, residents welcomed their new Liberty Hospital with a traditional Saya dance on Nov 14, while on the coast north of the capital Lima, lion dances marked the inauguration of Chanccay Port.

The local celebrations of the two major Chinese-backed projects exemplify the tangible benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative in Peru, one of the first Latin American countries to participate in the initiative.

Construction of the Liberty Hospital in Huancayo in the Junin region by Chinese infrastructure company PowerChina started in May, 2022. It is the region's largest comprehensive medical facility.

It features a five-story main building complemented by four single-story auxiliary buildings, spanning more than 12,000 square meters.

Expected to help address healthcare issues, the hospital fulfills a 45-year wait for adequate medical facilities in the region, according to Junin Governor Zosimo Cardenas Muje, who attended the ceremony.

PowerChina's Project Manager Lyu Yongqiang said the hospital project also reflected successful cross-cultural collaboration.

"Chinese teams worked seamlessly with Peruvian experts, overcoming design challenges and complex equipment installation issues," he told China Daily.

The project's success was also a result of collaboration with the local community, he added.

"As the Chinese team actively participated in local activities, the community offered their support to the project team whenever required," said Lyu.

PowerChina has undertaken numerous development projects across Peru in recent years, ranging from water conservancy and hydro-power to housing and transportation infrastructure.

"We have successfully completed and delivered multiple hospitals and schools throughout the country. Guided by our commitment to fostering 'Peru-China friendship for a shared beautiful future', we plan to expand our strategic cooperation into new areas,

"This relationship with China has been maturing over time, and has been diversifying to a certain degree."

Leolino Dourado, a researcher at Universidad del Pacifico

including clean energy, transportation networks and public infrastructure," said Lyu.

Seventy-eight kilometers north of Lima, the newly inaugurated Chanccay Port represents another milestone in Peru-China cooperation.

Carlos Aquino, director of the Asia Studies Center and an economics professor at the National University of San Marcos, highlighted the broader implications of these developments.

"The day marked a milestone for Peru, drawing unprecedented attention from both domestic and international media," he told China Daily.

Public expectations also are soaring, reflected in rising land values and anticipated investments across multiple sectors — from transportation infrastructure to commercial development, he said.

Significant acceleration

Since joining the BRI in 2019, Peru has witnessed a significant acceleration in Chinese infrastructure investment. The country's position as one of Latin America's pioneering nations in establishing a comprehensive strategic partnership with China has facilitated this growth, strengthened by free trade arrangements.

The recent years have seen the completion of several landmark projects. The Lima Green Coast Project, undertaken by China Railway Tunnel Group and completed in January 2020, marks the first large-scale public engineering project completed and delivered by a Chinese company in Peru. The project includes expressways, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways, parks and beaches, contributing to one of Peru's coastal scenic routes.

The San Gaban III Hydroelectric

Power Plant in the forest region of Puno will be the sixth-largest hydro-power project in Peru after completion and has significant environmental benefits. It will also help to alleviate power supply constraints in southern Peru, promoting local industrial and regional economic development.

Another notable achievement is Peru's first tunnel highway to the ancient Inca city ruins of Machu Picchu, completed early this year. Stretching nearly 2 kilometers through the mountainous Cusco region, this project has enhanced tourism accessibility while facilitating the transportation of agricultural products.

Cynthia Sanborn, director of the Center for China and Asia-Pacific Studies at Universidad del Pacifico and a professor of political science at the university, told China Daily that China and Peru have a long-standing formal institutional relationship.

China and Peru established diplomatic ties in 1971. "The relationship with China is constant and mutually beneficial," Sanborn said.

Sanborn said the China-Peru relationship is focused on trade and investment, although there are other forms of collaboration.

China and Peru have witnessed a remarkable surge in bilateral trade and investment over the past decade. Building on centuries of contact, their modern economic partnership has flourished, particularly since the signing of a free trade agreement in 2009. This agreement has facilitated a dynamic exchange, with China now standing as Peru's top trading partner.

"This relationship with China has been maturing over time, and has been diversifying to a certain degree," said Leolino Dourado, a researcher at Universidad del Pacifico.

Ibeth Dali Medina, a volunteer at the APEC meeting and a student at Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, said she had been studying Chinese for 10 months at the Confucius Institute.

"We know that with globalization, Chinese will give me more opportunities to do what I want, maybe in the future, than other languages ... and because of the fact that Peru has good relationships with China, they will give me more opportunities to do exchange programs."

Russia vows response against US missiles

MOSCOW/KYIV — Russia warned on Tuesday that it would respond after Ukraine fired longer-range US missiles into its territory for the first time on the 1,000th day of the conflict.

A senior official told the Agence France-Presse that a strike on Russia's Bryansk region earlier on Tuesday "was carried out by ATACMS missiles", a reference to the US-supplied Army Tactical Missile System.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the attack showed Western countries wanted to "escalate" the conflict.

"We will be taking this as a qualitatively new phase of the Western war against Russia. And we will react accordingly," Lavrov told a news conference at the G20 summit in Brazil.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree approving Russia's updated nuclear doctrine on Tuesday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Moscow's revised doctrine outlines the possibility of a

nuclear response if Kyiv uses Western-made missiles against Russia.

The spokesman further said that Russia would view the use of Western nonnuclear missiles by Ukraine as an attack by a nonnuclear state with the support of a nuclear state against the country, potentially justifying the use of nuclear weapons by Moscow.

Peskov said that the doctrine outlines that "aggression against Russia by any nonnuclear state with the participation or support of a nuclear state" would be considered a joint attack.

On Tuesday, US President Joe Biden approved the provision of anti-personnel land mines to Ukraine, a US official told Reuters.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday stressed the importance of the US support to Fox News. "If they cut ... I think we will lose," Zelensky said in an interview with the US television network.

The 1,000th day of Russia's special military operation comes at a perilous time for Ukrainian forces across the front, particularly near

the cities of Kupiansk and Pokrovsk.

Russia has also intensified strikes on Ukrainian cities in recent days. Russia's air defense systems destroyed 44 drones overnight, including 20 over the northwestern Novgorod region, Russia's defense ministry said on Wednesday.

Ukrainian lawmakers voted on Tuesday to approve the 2025 budget with more than \$50 billion, or 60 percent of all expenditures, allocated to defense and security.

Also in Kyiv, the US embassy said it received a warning of a potentially significant Russian air attack on Wednesday and would be closed as a precaution.

In a statement, the embassy also instructed employees to shelter in place and also recommended that US citizens in Kyiv be prepared to immediately shelter in the event of an air alert.

The Italian and Greek embassies also shut to the public for the day, but the UK government said that its embassy remained open.

AGENCIES — XINHUA

Trump picks more for posts in 2nd term

WASHINGTON — US President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday tapped billionaire professional wrestling mogul Linda McMahon to be secretary of the Education Department. He also selected Mehmet Oz, a former television talk show host and heart surgeon, to head the agency that oversees health insurance programs for millions of older, poor and disabled US citizens, and named Wall Street executive Howard Lutnick to lead the Commerce Department.

McMahon led the Small Business Administration during Trump's initial term from 2017 to 2019. She served on the Connecticut Board of Education for a year starting in 2009 and has spent years on the board of trustees for Sacred Heart University in Connecticut.

"Linda will use her decades of leadership experience, and deep understanding of both education and business, to empower the next generation of American students and workers," Trump said.

Oz, who ran a failed 2022 bid to represent Pennsylvania in the US Senate, has in recent days expressed support for Robert F. Kennedy Jr's nomination for the nation's top health agency, the Department of Health and Human Services.

"Oz will be a leader in incentivizing disease prevention, so we get the best results in the world for every dollar we spend on healthcare in our great country," Trump said in a statement.

As the administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Oz would report to Kennedy.

Lutnick, meanwhile, will have a key role in carrying out Trump's plan to raise and enforce tariffs as commerce secretary, Trump said.

Lutnick is a cryptocurrency enthusiast and head of brokerage and investment bank Cantor Fitzgerald.

Trump made the announcement on Truth Social. He said Lutnick "will lead our tariff and trade agenda, with additional direct responsibility for the office of the United States Trade Representative."

The nomination would put Lutnick in charge of a sprawling Cabinet agency that is involved in funding new computer chip factories, imposing trade restrictions, releasing economic data and monitoring the weather.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

ifaw 国际爱护动物基金会

AD

Between heaven and earth, together with other sentient beings, I live.

—Zhuangzi, philosopher, late fourth century BC

天地与我并生，而万物与我为一

——《庄子·齐物论》

东北虎 Amur tiger

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

Vol. 38 — No. 1463

WORLD

Riyadh and Teheran vow to elevate ties

Chinese mediation lauded as trilateral talks also call for end to Israeli attacks

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
jan@chinadaily.com

Saudi Arabia and Iran reaffirmed their commitment on Tuesday to advance bilateral ties at the second meeting of the China-Saudi Arabia-Iran Trilateral Joint Committee held in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

The two countries restored diplomatic relations through a widely hailed, China-brokered deal in March last year, followed by the first tripartite meeting in December.

Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed bin Abdulkarim Al-Khuraiji chaired the Riyadh meeting attended by Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Deng Li, who led the Chinese delegation, and Majid Takht Ravanchi, deputy foreign minister of Iran.

In a statement published on Wednesday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said China stands ready to "continue to support and encourage the steps taken by Saudi Arabia and Iran toward developing their relations in various fields."

The current escalation of tensions in the Middle East will have "serious consequences for regional and global security," it said.

"Against this backdrop, it is very important for senior officials from Saudi Arabia and Iran to engage in contacts, meetings, and mutual visits," the statement added.

Saudi Arabia and Iran reaffirmed their commitment to all provisions of the Beijing Agreement, and their continued efforts to consolidate good neighborly and friendly relations between the two countries by adhering to the United Nations Charter, the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and international law, including respecting national sovereignty, independence and security, it said.

In a post on X, Takht Ravanchi said he met Deng and discussed the "ever-growing Iran-China relations."

"The two countries continue to work together to meet worldwide challenges and create opportunities for the Iranian and Chinese people," he said.

"All aspects of cooperation among the three countries were discussed" at the Riyadh meeting, he said. "The three can do a lot together for the maintenance of international peace and security and development of the region and beyond."

According to the Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, the three nations appreciated the convening of the first meeting of the Saudi-Ira-

nian Joint Media Committee, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Prince Saud Al-Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies and the Institute of Political and International Studies of the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Saudi Arabia and Iran also expressed their readiness to sign a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, and the three countries look forward to expanding trilateral cooperation in economic, political and other fields, the statement said.

In addition, the three countries called for an immediate end to Israeli aggression in Palestine and Lebanon, condemned Israeli attacks and their violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran, and called for the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid and relief to Palestine and Lebanon.

Cycle of violence

The continuing cycle of violence and escalation poses a serious threat to the security of the region and the world, including maritime security, they stated.

On the ground, Gaza's civil defense agency said on Wednesday that at least 17 people, including a baby, were killed in Israeli airstrikes on the Palestinian territory.

The Lebanese army said Israeli fire killed a soldier on Wednesday, a day after it said three other personnel died in a strike on their positions in south Lebanon.

Dina Yulianti Sulaeman, director of the Indonesia Center for Middle East Studies, told China Daily that Saudi Arabia and Iran have many different geopolitical interests.

Under the deal brokered, they have been cooperating. Most recently, at a summit of Arab and Muslim leaders in Riyadh on Nov 11, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud said the international community should oblige Israel to respect Iran's sovereignty and not to violate its lands.

"The current regional order in the Middle East is still unbalanced, as evidenced by how Israel has committed various types of violations of international law freely under the protection of the West," Sulaeman said.

"China's success in mediating the two countries provides hope for the realization of a regional balance of power so that stability and peace in the region can be achieved."

Xu Weixue in Hong Kong and agencies contributed to this story.

Germany's Greens choose Habeck for chancellor race

By EARLE GALE in London
earle@mail.chinadaily.com

Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck will try to replace Olaf Scholz as national leader in the upcoming federal election, as he won the Greens' nomination on Sunday to run for chancellor.

For the past three years, Habeck has been a prominent member — and vice-chancellor — in Scholz's three-party ruling coalition, which collapsed two weeks ago over spending and stimulus packages for the economy.

While the Greens have only been a junior partner in the coalition government, and the prospect of Habeck becoming the next national leader is remote, he said anything could happen in the Feb 23 poll.

"A lot can change on all fronts," he was quoted by Deutsche Welle as saying after winning support from 741 of the Greens' 768 lawmakers.

The father of four, who made his name as an author of children's books, said he wants to be seen as the Greens' "candidate for the people."

He served as Germany's minister

for climate action and has overseen ambitious plans to decarbonize the heavily industrialized nation.

He has also been a strong supporter of Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and has backed Berlin in sending munitions to Kyiv.

The Greens are currently polling about 11 or 12 percent of the popular vote, but Habeck said he believes the party will do much better in February, following several months during which the coalition came unraveled and plummeted in popularity.

Habeck has said he will relish the chance to campaign ahead of February's election without having to justify decisions made by the Scholz-led coalition government.

"All the disputes, all the compromises that we had to make are now gone," he told DW. "And now the parties are stepping forward with their own ideas."

Scholz's Social Democratic Party, which is polling about 16 percent of the vote, is among the favorites to win in February, alongside front-runners the center-right Christian Democrats and the Alternative for Germany.

The last straw for farmers



Children ride toy tractors in Parliament Square in London during a farmers' rally on Tuesday. Thousands of farmers gathered to protest against recent inheritance tax changes announced in the budget, warning of risks to family farms and national food security. The government, however, maintains that the changes will likely affect only about 500 larger estate farms. CARL COURT VIA GETTY IMAGES

China-Indonesia shared growth vision hailed

By YANG RAN
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

China is a key partner in Indonesia's economic and trade landscape, says Arsjad Rasjid, chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighting the deep-rooted and complementary nature of bilateral relations and the tangible benefits they bring to both nations.

"We share aligned values, similar cultures and a history of partnership with China. This allows us to grow together," Rasjid said, adding that this is why Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto visited China before his inauguration and prioritized it for his first state visit from Nov 8 to 10.

"As Indonesia advances toward its Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision, aiming for an 8 percent annual economic growth, China, being our top trade partner, is an indispensable partner," Rasjid said.

According to official data, China has been Indonesia's largest trade partner for 11 consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching \$139.42 billion last year. In the first eight months of this year, bilateral trade grew by 1.5 percent to \$92.79 billion. China is also Indonesia's second-largest source of foreign investment, while Indonesia ranks as China's second-largest investment destination in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Rasjid expressed appreciation for China's sustained investment, particularly under the Belt and Road Initiative, which has funneled more than \$20 billion into Indonesia since 2015, significantly boosting the country's socioeconomic development.

He cited the Jakarta-Bandung



Arsjad Rasjid

High-Speed Railway — a flagship project of the BRI — linking Jakarta with the tourist hub of Bandung. Indonesia has officially relocated its capital from Jakarta, on the island of Java, to Nusantara

in East Kalimantan Province.

Launched in October last year, the railway has slashed travel time from more than three hours to just 40 minutes, speeding up the flow of people and goods and greatly improving convenience for residents.

Beyond the BRI, Chinese investments in mining and other industrial areas have also significantly boosted Indonesia's industrial development.

"Chinese investment has been instrumental in strengthening Indonesia's nickel industry," Rasjid said.

"Together, we have developed the Morowali Industrial Park, located in Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, which helped Indonesia develop a whole new energy industrial chain based on nickel.

"Such collaboration has elevated

Indonesia's nickel export revenue from \$1 billion to \$30 billion over the past decade, as more value-added processing is now done locally."

This industrial growth has not only increased revenues but also created numerous local jobs and facilitated technology transfer, he said. "In the future, we hope to replicate the Morowali model across other critical minerals and commodities, such as

palm oil and iron, expanding our downstream processing capabilities."

Rasjid also highlighted the potential for Chinese companies to support Indonesia's energy transition. "Indonesia is rich in resources like solar, wind and hydrogen power. Collaborating with China, a leading force in new energy-related sectors, presents vast opportunities. For example, Indonesia's rich silica reserves can be crucial for solar panel production," he said.

For Chinese companies, investing in Indonesia provides them with access to raw materials and a market of 281 million people, he said, adding that discussions are underway to position Indonesia as a sub-hub for Chinese electric vehicles and batteries, serving global markets.

"Overall, past collaboration between China and Indonesia has contributed to local economic development in Indonesia and there is still much more that could be done in the future, which means that we need to deepen and renew our relationship."

During Prabowo's visit to China, the two countries announced an upgrade of their "four-pillar" cooperation covering political, economic, people-to-people exchange and maritime aspects, to "five-pillar" cooperation, with the addition of security.

"Both China and Indonesia want to create prosperity for the people, but prosperity will not happen if there is no economic growth, and economic growth will only happen if there is peace," Rasjid said. "Deepened collaboration between China and Indonesia can also help pave the way for regional stability."

Saudi official commends Beijing's green efforts

By NDUMISO MLILO
in Johannesburg
For China Daily

China has done "exceptionally well" in tackling land degradation, drought and desertification, and its sharing of knowledge and experience will promote global efforts in fighting land degradation, says a senior Saudi Arabian official.

Osama Ibrahim Faqeeta, deputy minister of environment of Saudi Arabia, said his country will host the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Riyadh next month, which is a "vital and timely opportunity" to increase drought resilience, improve monitoring and enhance global commitments to land restoration.

"China's contribution to global land restoration has been significant, particularly through initiatives like the Great Green Wall Project, which has seen more than 66 billion trees planted and the reclamation of millions of hectares of desertified land," Faqeeta said, adding the scale of the project's greening is "so massive that, according to NASA it is observable from space."

The project, also known as the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, has reduced soil erosion and restored land while showcasing the effect land restoration can have on surrounding communities, he said. Chinese companies and experts are expected to share their expertise and good practices at COP16 for the good of the world, he added.

Global leader

"As a global leader in green technology and land restoration, China's participation at COP16 is valued as part of the wider international community's efforts to address land degradation," Faqeeta said. "COP16 will provide an opportunity to share learnings from these major projects as we seek to mobilize international action on land degradation, drought and desertification."

Faqeeta cited recent research by nonprofit Global Energy Monitor in San Francisco, which showed that the amount of wind and solar power under construction in China is nearly twice as much as in the rest of the world combined.

China's green technologies will help achieve long-term environmental sustainability, and its efforts to restore degraded land are in line with Saudi Arabia's visions and the two countries should work together, he said.

"Saudi Arabia and China share common challenges and opportunities in addressing climate change and land restoration. Both understand the importance of technological innovation and large-scale environmental initiatives in combating the challenges. "Clearly, the strategic priorities of landmark projects such as Saudi's Green Initiative and China's Great Green Wall Project are closely aligned."

The writer is a freelance journalist for China Daily.

SpaceX fails to repeat booster catch

WASHINGTON — Elon Musk's SpaceX launched its giant Starship rocket to space from Texas on Tuesday, advancing the ship's spaceflight abilities but botching an attempt to bring its booster back to land as US President-elect Donald Trump watched from the company's rocket facilities.

The roughly 122-meter-tall rocket system, designed to land astronauts on the moon and ferry crews to Mars, lifted off at 4 pm from SpaceX's rocket development site in Boca Chica, Texas.

The rocket's 71-meter-tall first stage booster, called Super Heavy, detached from its second stage, Starship, at

roughly 62 kilometers in altitude, sending the craft into space.

Super Heavy unexpectedly splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico instead of returning to land, where it was expected to fall into large mechanical arms attached to the tower from which it launched. The last-minute diversion to water indicated something went wrong.

Starship last month demonstrated the novel catch-and-land method for the first time, achieving a key milestone in its reusable design. Tuesday's catch-landing was supposed to be "faster/harder", Musk had written on social media before the launch.

In space, Starship traveled around

Earth for a daytime splashdown in the Indian Ocean roughly an hour later.

Trump's attendance signals a deepening alliance with Musk, who stands to benefit from Trump's election victory. The billionaire entrepreneur was a prominent supporter of Trump's election campaign, appearing with him at rallies and backing him with at least \$119 million in political support.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, US President-elect Donald Trump and guests gather at a viewing of the launch of the sixth test flight of the SpaceX Starship in Brownsville, Texas, on Tuesday. BRANDON BELL VIA REUTERS

In the matter of the Insolvency Act, 2003 (the "Act")

NOTICE OF INTENDED DIVIDEND
Power Solar System Co., Ltd.
(In Liquidation) #G37152
(the "Company")

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to section 216(1) of the Act that the Joint Liquidators of the Company intend to make an interim distribution to creditors of the Company.

Creditors who have not already done so are required to submit a claim in writing to the contact below on or before 22 December 2024. Failure to submit a claim on or before the specified date may result in exclusion from the benefit of any distribution.

Dated 21 November 2024

Alexander Lower

Joint Liquidator

Contact Details:

Name: Pippa Thompson
Telephone: +1 284 494 4100
Email: pippa.thompson@pwc.com关于 2003 年《破产法》
(以下简称“破产法”)

拟派发股息通知

电力太阳能系统有限公司
(清盘中) #G37152
(以下简称“本公司”)

根据破产法第 216(1) 条，特此发出通知：联合清盘人拟向本公司债权人派发中期清算股息。

尚未提交债权证明的债权人必须不迟于 2024 年 12 月 22 日向联系人以书面形式提交债权证明，未能在此指定日期之前提交债权证明将可能导致无法享受任何股息分配。

日期：2024 年 11 月 21 日

Alexander Lower
联合清盘人

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LIFE



Left: Xu Linlin (right) is the director-scriptwriter and lead actress of the 30-minute play *Baby Boxes*. Middle: *Amy Zhang Returns to Her Hometown* won the top prize in the category of Emerging Theatre Artists at this year's Wuzhen Theatre Festival. Right: "Giant dinosaurs" is one of this year's themes for the festival's emerging artists' competition.

Young artists look at life's dilemmas

Wuzhen Theatre Festival brings together directors, playwrights and producers to compete with themes of humanity and self-exploration, **Xing Wen** reports in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province.

One day, Huang Lei, one of the creators of the Wuzhen Theatre Festival, was lounging at home when his eyes fell upon a toy dinosaur perched on the table.

In a sudden burst of inspiration, the "giant dinosaur" became one of this year's thematic prompts for the annual theater festival's Emerging Theatre Artists Competition.

For this year's competition, participants were challenged to craft original theatrical pieces that incorporate three elements — pillows, sunlight and giant dinosaurs — with a length not exceeding half an hour.

The first two keywords were contributed by seasoned theater directors Meng Jinghui and Stan Lai, who are also among the creators of the Wuzhen Theatre Festival, set in Wuzhen, a water town in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province.

The festival received 560 submissions for this year's competition. Eighteen standout theater groups emerged to display their works for rounds throughout the Wuzhen Theatre Festival last month.

Drawing from the three seemingly disparate elements, the 18 plays explore a variety of themes, including family bonds, love, life and death, solitude, human dignity and women's rights.

The play *Amy Zhang Returns to Her Hometown*, featuring three actors who use modern dance to portray the dilemma faced by a 30-year-old woman from a small county working in the bustling city of Shanghai, won the top prize in the competition.

The play depicts protagonist Amy Zhang's journey back home, weaving together elements of reality and memory.

Zhang left her hometown following the *gaokao*, or college entrance exam, and yearned to realize her self-worth in the big city.

However, she felt trapped in a demanding job with long hours and cramped living conditions, struggling to find true joy in a fast-paced urban setting. Returning to her hometown, she discovers that years of urban life reshaped her, making her feel out of place in her familiar childhood surroundings.

Standing at the crossroads of her 30s, Zhang is unsure of the next steps as she thinks about her future. Will she stay in Shanghai or go back to her hometown?

For the play's director and scriptwriter, Zhai Bowen, this award was "redemption". Like her character, Zhai, 35, was also grappling with a dilemma before clinching the prize.

Zhai discovered her passion for theater while studying at the Shanghai International Studies University. Although her major was in the School of Journalism and Communication, she devoted much of her spare time to the university's theatrical troupe.

Instead of pursuing a job related to her field of study, Zhai started her career as a theater producer and program manager at the Shanghai 1933 Micro Theatre.



A scene from the stage play *K.I. and Abel*, directed by Bianca Thomas, a graduate from the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna, Austria. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The play about Amy Zhang features three actors who use modern dance to portray the dilemma faced by a 30-year-old woman from a small county working in the bustling city of Shanghai.

At 28, she began pursuing a master's degree in theater directing at the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts in the United Kingdom. After completing her studies, she became an indie theater director.

Last year, her first self-written and self-directed play *We're How We Eat* premiered. While the play was relatively well-received by audiences, it did not receive the industry recognition Zhai hoped for.

"I fell into self-doubt. I didn't choose a stable job that most people opt for, but it seems like I haven't made much progress on the path I've chosen," she reflects.

"Could a theater producer position with greater demand be a more suitable path for my livelihood compared to being an indie theater director?"

This conflict plagued her. Before entering the competition, she thought, "This is my last chance."

Zhai's success in the competition provided her with an answer.

"The Wuzhen Theatre Festival is one of the most prominent in the country. Because of this award, theaters have reached out to me and

producers want to meet me. This is a career breakthrough," she says.

Reflecting on her stay in Wuzhen, Zhejiang, she pinpointed two of her happiest moments.

"One day, a young man working as a service person at the theater from northeast China approached me with tears in his eyes after watching the performance and shared how deeply moved he was by it.

"Another day, during outdoor rehearsal, some elderly folks said that after watching the play, they felt that young people today have it tough and that they could better understand their own children.

"I cherish these moments of building connections with the audience through the work," she says.

She plans to expand the play to around 60 minutes and then makes touring performances in small theaters.

"I am now more convinced that I can continue on this path," she adds.

In the play *Baby Boxes*, Xu Linlin, who serves as the playwright, director and lead actress, presents a fictional story about two female dinosaurs who have been living in a dark cave and have never found the

courage to step into the sunlight.

One day, they come across an unidentified object that they believe is a dinosaur egg but is actually a pillow.

As the two dinosaurs attempt to hatch this "dinosaur egg", a tragic story about their origins emerges — they were both abandoned by their parents in this cave, never having seen the outside world and too afraid to step into the scorching sunlight.

The play combines humor and tears, discussing themes of life, love and growth. At the end of the play, clips of a documentary from 10 years ago are shown on a screen, revealing a real story. The entire play serves as a metaphor for real world.

On Children's Day on June 1, 2014, the Children's Welfare Institute of Jinan, Shandong province, opened the Baby Safety Island as a place to shelter abandoned infants.

The documentary clips shown on the screen capture scenes of the children, filmed by a friend of Xu.

On June 1 this year, Xu got the documentary from the friend, and watched the film intently on a train.

"I couldn't calm down for a long time. It's hard to blame anyone in the documentary," she says.

The 31-year-old theater teacher from Minzu University of China immediately wanted to express something through a play to think about love and responsibility.

"Bringing attention back to this story 10 years later is valuable amid the current intense discussions among young people about their reproductive choices," she says.

She adds that bringing the play to the Wuzhen Theatre Festival is a dream come true.

"All the staff here respect us and have given us a lot of creative space," Xu says. She won the special attention award during the festival.

Over the past 11 years, the Wuzhen Theatre Festival has provided a platform for young theater enthusiasts to display their talents, inspiring them to continue creating innovative works.

A total of 179 original plays have been chosen for the Emerging Theatre Artists Competition, with over 11,000 young individuals registering.

Many of these participants are now active in the theater community.

In addition to the competition, the festival aims to offer more opportunities to young people through various events, including the newly added Granary Reverie, a segment featuring experimental plays with a runtime of around one hour.

The Wuzhen Theatre Festival is also providing opportunities for young international theater artists seeking more opportunities.

For example, Bianca Thomas, who recently obtained her master's degree in directing at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna, Austria, brought her diploma production *K.I. and Abel* to the Wuzhen stage as a special invitation this year.

Exploring the role of AI in today's society and the responsibility of those who program it, she developed the script with the assistance of ChatGPT.

"I never imagined I could bring my work to Asia so soon," she says.

Reflecting on the experience, she mentions that her most memorable moment was the work's debut in Wuzhen.

"We didn't know how the Chinese audience would react. It was exciting to hear their applause and calls for 'director' after the show," she says.

Thomas says theater festivals are a chance to network with other directors, stage designers and musicians.

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Lion dance roars with shared values

KUALA LUMPUR — The powerful people-to-people bonds between China and Malaysia take many expressions considering the range of shared cultural and traditional values between the two nations.

The Malay people have taken great interest in the lion dance, a tradition that emerged over a thousand years ago in China and has many admirers in modern Malaysia.

Among them is Adzwin Puteri Faizal, a petite young woman from Rawang in Selangor state, who is part of a troupe under the locally renowned Yong Jun Lion Dance Association.

With fluid and energetic movements, the 18-year-old Adzwin plays the role of the lion's tail and moves as one with her partner, using classic springs on poles, gracefully leaping and steadily balancing.

"When the master performed at our school for the first time, I was captivated. It looked so cool," she says.

Having been part of the troupe for the past five years, Adzwin honed her skills and built up her experience in the art form along with her teammates comprising Malaysians of other ethnic groups aged 10 to 18.

The lion dance in Malaysia shares its roots with the Chinese lion dance, specifically from the southern lion dance style. It arrived in Malaysia with Chinese immigrants and took root.

Initially, the lion dance was performed during Chinese festivals and celebrations, but with the blending of Malaysia's ethnicities and cultures, it gradually crossed ethnic and religious boundaries, becoming a beloved cultural activity for all communities. Its cultural value is widely recognized by the public.

Behind Adzwin's involvement in the lion dance association lies her family's firm support, mainly through her father Faizal Salehudin's passion for the art form in his youth.

Thirty years ago, when he was still a student, Faizal was also drawn to the lion dance, but in those days financial constraints and having to travel a long distance prevented him from pursuing his interest.

"It's a culture. We want to learn about other ethnic groups' cultures, because culture is universal," Faizal says.

Now, his daughter has rekindled Faizal's love for the lion dance. As a ride-hailing driver, he takes Adzwin to the training grounds every weekend night, accompanying her throughout practice and recording her progress on his smartphone.



Members of the Malaysian Yong Jun Lion Dance Association after a rehearsal in Selangor in September. CHENG YIHENG / XINHUA

Adzwin's lion dance master, Chan Yong Zhen, started learning lion dance at age 16. It has been 17 years since Chan immersed himself in this culture. The Lion Dance Association was founded by his father and is now carried on and developed by Chan. Adzwin is one of the outstanding students he has trained, with her dedication and focus on being truly moving.

"Don't underestimate her because she's a woman; she's very strong and can lift her partner with ease to complete high-difficulty moves," says Chan.

"In earlier generations, it was difficult for people from other ethnic groups and women to learn lion dance, but things have changed. The uniqueness and inclusiveness of lion dance have allowed us to build a family here," he says.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Malaysia. Both sides celebrate the lion dance as a form of shared history, and jointly promote and safeguard the heritage.

XINHUA

LIFE

A Spanish serenade for Shenzhen

Luis Perez dazzles local audiences with passionate performance of some of his country's classics, **Chen Nan** reports.

When pianist Luis Fernando Perez gave a recital during the 12th Shenzhen Piano Music Festival on Nov 2, he captivated the audience with his passionate celebration of Spanish classical music.

Perez opened with two piano sonatas by 18th-century composer Antonio Soler, setting a tone of elegance and authenticity.

The first half of the program continued with three pieces selected from *Twelve Spanish Dances, Op 37*, by pianist and composer Enrique Granados, *Scenes d'enfants* (Scenes of Children), a nostalgic composition by Frederic Mompou, and selections from Manuel de Falla's ballet, *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

In the second half, Perez performed excerpts from Isaac Albeniz's celebrated *Suite Iberia*, followed by selections from another of De Falla's ballets, *El Amor Brujo* (Love, the Magician).

With each touch of the keys, Perez brought the essence of Spanish music alive. His skilled hands conjured its vivid textures and rhythms, evoking the lively strum of guitars, the clack of castanets, and the melodic chime of bells. His expressive and nuanced performance drew sustained applause.

"It was a very special moment. I saw my audience smiling and visibly touched. I wanted to bring music from my country, from Spain, to the Chinese audience," he says.

He also says that initially, he planned to play a mix of Chopin and some Spanish piano music but after discussing the program with Sun Yue, the deputy director of the Shenzhen Piano Music Festival, he was strongly encouraged to present an entirely Spanish program.

The pianist first performed in China around 10 years ago.

"One of my dreams is to know every beautiful place in China. China is so big. I remember beau-



Top: Spanish pianist Luis Fernando Perez gives a recital of Spanish classical music on Nov 2 as part of the 12th Shenzhen Piano Music Festival. **Above:** Yang Suxian (second left), director of the organizing committee of the festival, and Perez, along with two other committee members, talk before the concert in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Nov 2. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tiful Beijing and impressive Shanghai. This time I was able to enjoy the city of Shenzhen and its beautiful parks and buildings and amazing friends and food," Perez says. "There were both beautiful communication and silence during my recital in Shenzhen. The Chinese public is very emotional and warm.

"The pentatonic scale in Chinese music very much influenced impressionists and Spanish composers of the late 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. It was the fashion of the time for Western impressionists to borrow many things from Asian music. So impressionist music owes a lot to Chinese and Asian music, and Spanish composers were also very much influenced by this," he says. "Moreover, both Chinese and Spanish music are born out of our traditions, of our dances and our unique and special instruments. We are both very rich

countries in terms of folklore."

According to French newspaper *Le Monde*, Perez is known for his virtuosity, colorful playing and ability to clearly communicate to his public, and he is considered one of the most exceptional artists of his generation.

"The message I think music gives is much higher and stronger than we can ever describe. It is said that it cures. It puts us at peace. It comforts our solitude, our insides, our soul," he says. "I always try to bring to my audience the work of the great masters, and to allow everybody to experience its message in the particular moment, in that particular hall, and with that particular audience."

Perez began to learn to play the piano with his father, who introduced him to *Canzone Napoletana* — a traditional genre of Neapolitan song that emerged in Naples in the 19th century — when he still didn't

“Perez's playing is not only technically excellent but also deeply moving, fully displaying the beauty and depth of Spanish music.”

Yang Suxian, director of the organizing committee of the Shenzhen Piano Music Festival

know how to read music.

When Perez was 15, he was accepted into the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid where, as he says, he "had to make many decisions".

"My professor, Dmitri Bashkurov, asked me why I wanted to learn to play the piano. I, then a 15-year-old boy, answered: 'I want to be the best pianist!' He replied: 'I don't know if you'll be the best, but maybe one of the best. Will you work like crazy?'. I answered: 'Yes!'", Perez says.

He also mentions that he met the legendary pianist Alicia de Larrocha for the first time when he was 16 during a master class and went on to work with her until the end of her life.

"Alicia de Larrocha was one of the greatest pianists ever in Spain's history. I was very lucky to work with her for many years, from 1994 to 2006," he says.

"Perez's playing is not only technically excellent but also deeply moving, fully displaying the beauty and depth of Spanish music. As a universal language, music can transcend linguistic, cultural and geographical barriers, fostering closer connections between artists and audiences from different countries," says Yang Suxian, director of the organizing committee of the Shenzhen Piano Music Festival. "Through the platform of the festival, musical and cultural exchange between Shenzhen and Spain have become increasingly vibrant."

Since its inception 12 years ago, the Shenzhen Piano Music Festival has been dedicated to promoting international musical and cultural exchange.

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Distance no longer barrier to devotion of Chinese fans

NANJING — On a crisp, breezy evening in Tianjin, a young couple strolled back to their hotel, their steps light, and their hearts brimming with joy. Softly, they hummed infectious tunes from the electrifying concert they had just attended by G.E.M. They had traveled from Beijing to attend their favorite pop star's show.

"It wasn't a cheap outing," says Zhou Yi, who detailed how, in addition to the concert tickets, which totaled 2,760 yuan (\$384), their three-night hotel stay, train tickets, shopping, and other costs added a further 2,800 yuan. "But it was worth every penny."

Zhou describes the atmosphere as exhilarating, saying that they had both felt enveloped by the sea of 30,000 enthusiastic fans, united in singing and cheering. "The joy of being amid so many like-minded souls, all sharing the same passion, was nothing short of bliss," she says.

"Investing in experiences that resonate on a deeper level holds far greater value than acquiring material possessions. I cherish the idea of creating lasting memories over fleeting luxury," Zhou adds.

People like Zhou, who travel to attend live shows, are increasingly forming the core of China's vibrant performance market.

In 2023, a significant 68 percent of the audience at major concerts had journeyed from other cities, highlighting the growing trend of concert tourism, according to a report by the China Association of Performing Arts and box office analytics firm Dengta Data. The report revealed that over a quarter of enthusiasts opted to extend their trip into a brief vacation in a convergence of live entertainment and travel.



Left: The original version of *The Phantom of the Opera* at Suzhou Shishan Grand Theater in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, on Oct 22. **Right:** Audience members take selfies at the theater. PHOTOS BY GUAN YUNAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

This growing trend is adding considerable momentum to domestic tourism. For instance, fans flocking to pop star Jay Chou's four Tianjin concerts in September 2023 generated an impressive 3.3 billion yuan for the local economy, spending on things like accommodation, transport and food.

Meanwhile, the dance drama version of *A Dream of Red Mansions* drew tens of thousands from across China to Nanjing in Jiangsu province, with dedicated fans following the tour to multiple cities to see every version of the cast.

Zhao Chenlin, vice-president of the Shanghai Media Group, says that when the annual per capita GDP of a region passes \$10,000, demand for cultural and entertainment activities soars.

"With an increasing number of regions reaching this milestone, there's a significant upsurge in demand," she says, adding that con-

venient transportation has facilitated intercity travel, making performances a compelling incentive for a trip. The ease of getting from one city to another has turned attending the live shows into not just an entertainment option, but also a travel option, further fueling the cultural and economic vibrancy of the performance industry.

Seizing on new market trends, cultural and tourism agencies are working to bring some of the world's most iconic productions to the Chinese market.

At the Suzhou Shishan Grand Theater, audiences eager to watch *The Phantom of the Opera* lined up for photos in front of a sculpture of the show's famous mask.

"I learned about the show during music class in middle school and always dreamed of watching it live," said one young theatergoer, who was wearing a white dress in tribute to the musical's heroine, Christine.



Andrew Ahern, resident director of the musical, spoke highly of the enthusiasm of Chinese audiences. "They know the story very well and are incredibly supportive. The response to our last tour was so overwhelming that we decided to expand to more cities, and we've had some impressive sellouts."

According to the SMG's preliminary estimates, the cumulative receipts for the show's first three stops this year in China has already exceeded 135 million yuan.

Ahern adds that the introduction of international productions is now a hallmark of China's flourishing performance market. Beyond traditional West End and Broadway hits, and German and French musicals, stylish new productions are also gaining popularity, including the feminist-themed musical *Six*, which is slated for a domestic tour in 2025.

"Our collaboration with Chinese

partners is excellent, and their technical teams are very professional and efficient," Ahern says.

Zhao believes that the aesthetic sensibilities of Chinese audiences will continue to improve as they gain more exposure to performances.

Reviews of *The Phantom of the Opera* abound on lifestyle-sharing platform Xiaohongshu, with many fans comparing the show's domestic tour to the original London production. Such discussions not only generate online buzz but also provide theaters with valuable insight into audience preferences.

This December, the Suzhou Shishan Grand Theater will host another Andrew Lloyd Webber classic, *Cats*. The move to feature famous musicals as part of its opening season reflects the growing local appetite for high-quality international performances.

The theater's partnership with

“Investing in experiences that resonate on a deeper level holds far greater value than acquiring material possessions. I cherish the idea of creating lasting memories over fleeting luxury.”

Zhou Yi, tourist traveling to Tianjin for a pop concert

the Shanghai Grand Theater also ensures a steady influx of international performing arts projects, spurring cultural consumption.

According to estimates by the China Association of Performing Arts, revenue from commercial performances in the third quarter of 2024 is expected to hit 20.81 billion yuan, a 41 percent increase year-on-year.

"If Shanghai is becoming China's 'Broadway', we aspire to be its 'off-Broadway,'" says Hua Shuyun, general manager of the Shishan Grand Theater. "Our vision is to bolster regional collaboration, drawing the finest domestic productions to grace our stages and fostering an environment conducive to their creation. We are committed to not only presenting these masterpieces across the country, but also to propelling them to the international arena."

XINHUA

CULTURAL HERITAGE



A copy of *Chaoyuan Tu* ("the painting of the heavenly court"), the best-known mural in the Yongle Palace in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, built in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). It features about 300 Taoist figures, depicting a scene of congregation. The vibrant colors of the piece are sharpened by technology. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

AI shows true colors of iconic artwork

Ancient masterpiece restored for a modern-day audience, report **Wang Qian** and **Zhu Xingxin** in Yuncheng, Shanxi.

Technology, such as artificial intelligence and deep learning, is reshaping the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage, bringing masterpieces back to their former glory and enabling people to appreciate their beauty beyond time and space.

At the UNESCO headquarters in Paris late last month, *Fragments of Civilization — Exhibition on the Mural Art of the Yongle Palace* displayed one of the latest examples of reviving cultural heritage in the digital era.

Chaoyuan Tu, or the painting of the heavenly court, was the highlight of the exhibition. Using AI technology, experts have brought the mural close to its authentic colors that were used about 800 years ago, making the original features of the mural a present-day reality that can be admired by visitors from around the world.

"In modern times, the restoration of cultural relics is no longer about individual conservators working manually with tools," Xi Jiulong, director of the Yongle Palace mural preservation research institution, said at the exhibition opening in Paris.

"Technological advances are enabling the preservation of cultural heritage. Computing power will ultimately help us reverse time."

Divided into five sections — mural art, digital restoration, color exploration, replicas of costumes on the murals and related cultural creative products — the exhibition, which closed late last month, displayed a hand-painted replica of *Chaoyuan Tu* from the 1980s and an AI-restored version to offer a comparison on how technology has breathed new life into the viewing of ancient murals.

Karalyn Monteil, head of Programmes and Stakeholders Outreach for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in UNESCO's culture sector, encourages related parties to protect and promote culture in the digital environment, especially in the face of climate change.

Cheng Kun from the Beijing Culture Pieces Development Co, the



Clockwise from top left: Cheng Kun (left), head of the Beijing Culture Pieces Development Co, displaying a calligraphy piece with Wang Ying, deputy representative to UNESCO for China, at an exhibition on the Yongle Palace in Paris last month. Part of the original mural that depicts the Jade Emperor. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Cheng with a visitor at the Yongle Palace last week. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

company behind the exhibition, says that "technology makes it possible to re-create the authentic beauty of the *Chaoyuan Tu*. Through this exhibition, the Yongle Palace murals, with their unique artistic language, give the world a glimpse into the splendid Chinese culture."

Located in Ruicheng county in Yuncheng, Shanxi province, the mural is the best-known at the Yongle ("eternal joy") Palace, built in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Known for its approximately 1,005-square-meter frescoes, the Taoist temple complex commemorating Lyu Dongbin, one of the Baxian, the Eight Immortals of Taoism, comprises four wooden structures built along a line running from south to north.

Measuring 97 meters long and 4.4 meters high, *Chaoyuan Tu* features

about 300 Taoist figures depicting a scene of congregation, which tells a story about Taoist etiquette.

In the mural, the eight main deity figures are as tall as 3 meters. The characters are arranged in four layers from front to back, with various poses including sitting, standing, bending, and facing forward or sideways, in an orderly manner.

"*Chaoyuan Tu* is considered the crown jewel among existing Yuan Dynasty mural art," Xi says. "The strokes and lines of these murals remain awe-inspiring, but sadly their colors have decayed over time. We don't have a chance to see these murals in their original, vivid colors."

But this situation was remedied when the Beijing Culture Pieces Development Co and US chip design company Advanced Micro Devices



planned to cooperate on an AI restoration program for cultural heritage in 2019.

As a Yuncheng native, Cheng, 33, has been fascinated by the exquisite murals in Yongle Palace and, seeing the colors fading, she knew it was time to make her childhood dream come true. Cheng also stresses that human input will always be paramount in art.

Jovi Chi, senior marketing director at AMD, says as a tech company, it is their responsibility to preserve and pass down cultural heritage.

In November 2023, the Yongle Palace and AMD joint digital studio was established.

For Fan Aizhu, a mural restorer and inheritor at the palace, the studio helps break the barriers humans cannot cross.

processes the data related to the mural but also analyzes the discoloration, color fades, damage, cracks and stains that the mural has endured over the last eight centuries.

"AI is like a student and our data annotations are akin to lessons for AI. If we feed accurate information to it, AI can quickly become an expert on mural paintings. This requires that we provide as much accurate data as possible to lead us closer to the original, true colors," Xu says.

For traditional mural conservators, AI has shortened the long and dedicated duplicating period from months to hours.

"Mural restoration and conservation is traditionally done through copying and reproduction. It takes at least 10 years to train a professional mural restorer. Consider the restoration of a main deity as an example — it would take at least a few months working day and night. This can be a cruel test of endurance and patience," Xi says.

Last month, an exhibition to showcase the latest digital restoration results was launched at Yongle Palace, unveiling a virtual docent named Yu Yao whose image is that of a jade maiden beside the Queen Mother of the West, or Xiwangmu, a powerful goddess in Chinese mythology. She can answer questions and interact with visitors.

Xi is happy to see how digital technologies allow the public to access historical knowledge and engage with narratives that were once confined to textbooks and museums and help transform the preservation of cultural heritage.

"We always talk about cultural confidence. How do we build it? We must be able to see the real masterpieces. Advances in technology enable that," he adds.

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By **WANG QIAN** and **ZHU XINGXIN** in Gaoping, Shanxi

Guarding the precious past is a family affair

For 78-year-old Wang Gaiying, Tiefs Temple is not only a hidden architectural gem in Gaoping, Shanxi province, but also her home for the past 58 years. Its 24 vividly detailed statues of deities inspired *Black Myth: Wukong*, a hit video game based on the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*.

With the main hall built in 1168, the temple was renovated and expanded during the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911). It gets its name from the iron Buddha it once housed.

Thanks to the game's popularity, the once-dilapidated temple was restored and opened to the public on Aug 24, according to a notice released by the local cultural heritage protection bureau.

"Many people come to admire it every day," says Wang, who lives in the temple's western meditation room.

"I'm proud of my work and happy to see the younger generation appreciating these artifacts."

As more people visit, Wang's dedication to preserving the temple has gone viral and hit national headlines, giving a lot of publicity to these caretakers of the country's cultural heritage.

Known as a treasure of ancient Chinese architecture, Shanxi is home to 28,027 ancient buildings, according to the data from the third national cultural relics census. Among them, 531 are registered as national-level key sites. Behind this number are numerous guardians, such as Wang, who have safeguarded the buildings, sculptures and murals.

What makes Wang stand out is that her family has been guarding the temple for four generations — cleaning it, keeping people from entering and preventing theft. Since getting married at 20, Wang began assisting her mother-in-law who became the guardian of the temple in the 1950s. When she passed away in 1988, Wang took over the responsibility.

"Our family has had a close con-



Buddhist sculptures in the Tiefs Temple in Gaoping, Shanxi province, which opened to the public in August. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

nection to the temple for generations. It is my home and guarding it is my responsibility," Wang says.

With the passing years, it has been a challenge for her to preserve the

temple. After discussions with her daughter Meng Xuezheng and her son-in-law, Wang Wendong, the couple moved from their nearby home to the temple to help Wang Gaiying.

"My mother always chatted with my grandmother about stories regarding temple guarding," Meng says. "These stories have been ingrained in my heart since childhood. The temple is our root, our home, a legacy of steadfastness and faith passed down through generations. I am determined to protect it."

Just as Meng vowed, her daughter took on the role of part-time tour guide at the temple after graduating from college, joining her grandmother and mother in safeguarding it.

In 1986, the local cultural preservation authorities undertook an emergency restoration program at the temple. In 2004, the provincial government designated it as one of the province's fourth batch of key cultural heritage preservation sites. In 2017, the Gaoping authorities initiated extensive restoration work at the temple. Two years later, the State Council officially recognized it as part of the eighth batch of national key protected cultural relic units.

Shen Fei, Party secretary from the Gaoping cultural and tourism bureau, knows that preserving the temple is far from enough.

As the notice at the opening of Tiefs Temple said, the structure is a heritage protection unit with unpaired sculptures. While these sites offer a unique and enriching experience, visitors are urged to prioritize cultural preservation and cautioned not to cause any damage.

"Currently, we don't have the capacity to restore the temple and there are no future plans for renovation. What we can do is keep it as it is through the protection of Wang Gaiying's family, who are guarding it," Shen says.

In some temples that are not open to the public in the quiet mountains and countryside of Shanxi, more than 3,000 grassroots protectors like Wang Gaiying care for these ancient buildings. The locals call them temple keepers, who watch over the structures day and night.

Like unsung heroes, they have been preserving the past and ensuring that the cultural treasures of Shanxi are protected for future generations.