

Underwater wonderland

Coral restoration gives Hainan diving paradise distinct charm

GOING GREEN, PAGE 6



Zero-tariff policy a boon for most backward countries

BUSINESS, PAGE 8



Running out of options

Yoon's 'orderly retreat' urged after failure of impeachment motion

WORLD, PAGE 10

# CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

XI'S VISION | MAJOR COUNTRY DIPLOMACY

## Xi's proposal on exchanges finds wide support

Broader context of China's diplomatic efforts includes fostering peace and understanding

By ZHANG YUNBI zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

When asked about President Xi Jinping's ambitious proposal made last year to invite a total of 50,000 young people from the United States over a period of five years to visit China on exchange and study programs, Eric Foster, nephew of legendary journalist Edgar Snow's wife, Helen Foster Snow, said he strongly supports more exchanges of this kind.

Foster, a US policy observer focused on China affairs, said that around 10 years ago, when he first came to China, the average American heard many bad things about the country because "the media in the West hardly gave any good news about China".

"So when I came here, I was just totally blown away how modern it was," he told China Daily. "If more Americans, more students can come here and see China themselves and (take part in) exchange programs, then they're gonna go back and say, 'Wow, it's so cool!'"

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the concept of major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, and Foster is one of many policy observers who have been impressed by how the country has worked hard in advancing cultural exchanges and boosting mutual learning among cultures.

As a supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative, Foster believes exchanges make peace.

"China is setting an example for the whole world, because how can there be peace when two countries can't get along, trade, and talk to each other?"

In recent years, China has scaled up and diversified its efforts in facilitating people-to-people exchanges

with developed as well as developing countries, and promoting the sharing of knowledge, technology and governing experiences, officials and observers said.

When addressing the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, in October, President Xi said, "Last year, I proposed an initiative for BRICS digital education cooperation, and I am delighted to see that it has become a reality."

At the summit, he announced that China will implement a capacity-building program for BRICS digital education.

"We will open 10 learning centers in BRICS countries in the next five years, and provide training opportunities for 1,000 local education administrators, teachers and students," he added.

Scholars from countries such as the United Kingdom and Pakistan noted that the Global Civilization Initiative, proposed by President Xi last year, marks a major philosophy focused on enshrining mutual respect among different cultures, values and political systems.

Asad Ullah Khan, a research fellow at the China-Pakistan Study Centre of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, said the Global Civilization Initiative "is an important idea aimed at shaping the future for a better world".

"Some scholars in the West, particularly in the US, are critical of this initiative, since the concept uses principles of equality, peace, prosperity, dialogue and inclusiveness among different civilizations, in contrast to the Western notion of 'clash of civilizations,'" he wrote in an article this year.

See *Diplomacy*, page 3



Cars pass by heavily damaged buildings in the central Syrian city of Homs on Saturday after it was taken over by anti-government rebels. On Sunday, Islamist-led rebels declared that they had entered and seized control of the capital, Damascus, with reports stating that President Bashar al-Assad had fled the country. AAREF WATAD / AFP

## Nations call for stability in Mideast amid Syria crisis

China said it is closely following the situation in Syria and hopes that stability will return to the country as soon as possible, after Syrian opposition forces pulled off a lightning 10-day offensive, capturing vast areas of government-held territory, and stormed into the capital, Damascus, early Sunday.

### Inside

Editorial, page 11

Several other countries joined the chorus for ending conflicts and restoring stability in the Middle East region, after Syrian state television aired a video statement of a man in military fatigues, flanked by armed fighters, who said that President Bashar al-Assad had been overthrown.

The statement came hours after a Syrian opposition war monitor said that Assad had left the country for an undisclosed location. Multiple media outlets also reported his departure from Syria.

Xinhua News Agency journalists in Damascus reported hearing intense gunfire reverberating through the streets, and said they witnessed heavy traffic with vehicles trying to leave the capital. Three powerful explosions

rocked Damascus on Sunday evening, with local media reports claiming these were Israeli airstrikes targeting abandoned military bases.

Abu Mohammed al-Golani, leader of the Islamist rebel alliance Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which engineered the offensive, said that Syrian Prime Minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali will oversee public institutions until an official transfer of authority is completed.

Jalali expressed his readiness to cooperate with any leadership chosen by the Syrian people. "We extend our hands to every Syrian citizen committed to safeguarding the country's resources," he said in a televised address. "Syria belongs to all Syrians, and I urge everyone to think rationally about the nation's best interests."

China is actively helping Chinese nationals who wish to leave Syria to do so in a safe and orderly way, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. The Chinese government is also staying in contact with those still in Syria and offering them advice on how to stay safe, the spokesperson said.

"The Chinese embassy is still up and running and carrying out its duty in Syria. We will continue to give every possible assistance to Chinese nationals in need," the spokesperson added.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Sunday that Assad resigned as Syria's president and departed from the country after calling for a peaceful transfer of power. It added that Russia did not participate in any talks related to the transfer of power.

United States President Joe Biden and his team "are closely monitoring the extraordinary events in Syria and staying in constant touch with regional partners", the White House said in a statement.

Israel said it has deployed forces in the United Nations-monitored buffer zone with Syria and in other areas deemed necessary for defense. "We will not allow any hostile force to establish itself on our border," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Iran called for "the swift end of military conflicts, the prevention of terrorist actions, and the com-

menement of national dialogue" with all sectors of Syrian society.

Turkiye called on all actors to act with prudence and to be watchful. A new Syrian administration must be established inclusively, and there should be no desire for revenge, the country's foreign minister said.

Qatar renewed its calls for ending the crisis in Syria, Jordan urged avoiding any conflict that could further destabilize the region, Saudi Arabia said it is determined to do "what is possible to avoid a chaotic outcome" for Syria, and Egypt affirmed its support for the Syrian people and the country's sovereignty and unity.

Yu Guoqing, a researcher at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told China Daily that given Syria's important geographical location, any changes in its domestic political situation are bound to have an impact on the Middle East, as well as on other strife-torn regions.

Yang Yilin and Zhao Jia in Beijing contributed to this story.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

## Rise from ashes



People walk on Saturday in front of the restored Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, ahead of its reopening on Sunday. It took more than five years of reconstruction to resurrect the cathedral after an April 2019 fire. The first Mass was held on Sunday, attended by nearly 170 bishops and over 100 priests, among others. LUDOVIC MARIN / POOL / AFP

## Setting a new course toward global unity

We are connected and must remain connected. We are like a structure that will collapse entirely if even a part of it is broken off. The same is true on a global scale — a collapse of a country or region can trigger a worldwide crisis.

Consider the 2008 financial crisis, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, or the conflict in the Middle East. Each of these began in specific places but the repercussions could be felt around the world. We cannot isolate ourselves, as every issue can and has had severe effects in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres globally.

WORLD WATCH  
By Essam Sharaf

Our world is at a crossroads. We must choose between maintaining the status quo, risking potential self-destruction, or setting a new course toward global unity by making significant changes to save our civilization.

We should plan and work toward a community with a shared future. A community with a shared future where all countries have equal sovereignty. None should interfere in

the internal affairs of the other; rather, countries should democratically manage global affairs together, instead of following the dictates of the most powerful states. Countries should pursue win-win cooperation to build a world of shared prosperity and view civilizational diversity not as a source of global conflict but as a driving force for human advancement.

We should develop a new model for major power competition, moving from military conflicts to addressing climate change, health crises and other shared issues. Major countries should promote win-win economic cooperation

rather than zero-sum trade and technology competition. They should also integrate non-Western governance practices with the Western system of universal values, managing economic growth in a way that maintains ecological balance.

So, how can we achieve a community with a shared future? The foundation lies in connectivity, trust, peace and development. Connectivity can be achieved through the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative; trust through the Global Civilization Initiative; peace through the Global Security Initiative; and development through the Global Development Initiative, all of which present a road map for global progress.

See *Vision*, page 3

## FRESH APPROACHES TO WINTER PASTURING SEE STRONG RETURNS

Keeping herds at home, use of high-tech solutions reduce environmental impact, boost incomes

By CHEN MEILING in Beijing, MA JINGNA in Lanzhou and MAO WEIHUA in Urumqi



Caring for livestock during the cold season in Northwest China has been modernized in recent years, with Beidou positioning, mobile sup-

port vehicles and real-time weather updates making the trek to winter pastures easier for herds-men and animals.

The sight of hundreds of thousands of yaks, cattle, sheep and camels migrating through high country has become one of the most colorful images marking the coming of winter.

However, in Sunan Yugur autonomous county in Zhangye, Gansu province, a rare sight

could be seen this year. About 200,000 livestock were still grazing in the area on farmland rented by the herders as the winter closed in.

The yaks and sheep were eating stalks left from the last corn harvest.

The move to keep them in the

vicinity is being adopted across the county with the aim of boosting farm incomes while reducing environmental stress.

Gao Yongdong, 53, raises 200 yaks and about 20 sheep at Kangle town near the Qilian Mountains.

See *Migration*, page 2

INSIDE  
Tried and tested  
poverty reducer  
Global Views, page 13  
www.chinadailyglobal.com  
Member of ANN  
China Daily Global  
©2024 All Rights Reserved  
Newstand prices:  
US \$1 Canada C\$1  
UK 1.5 EU 1.6  
Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling  
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120  
thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat;  
Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

## PAGE TWO

## Migration: Herding practices modernized



A police officer who helped a herder find a lost newborn lamb in the Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, pets the animal. The mass migration of sheep in Altay prefecture, Xinjiang, is seen in the background. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

From page 1

He paid 37,000 yuan (\$5,102) to farmer Gan Junzhu to rent 13.33 hectares of farmland at the foot of the mountains for his livestock to feed on from October to next spring.

"My own grassland will be undisturbed and grow naturally so that the quality of grass next year can be improved," he said.

The mountains, stretching over 800 kilometers, have a vast area of high-altitude grassland, with Yugur, Tibetan and Mongolian herders living there.

In 2000, a handful of herders in Sunan county voluntarily adopted the new model, and the practice of not moving livestock in winter has been increasing ever since.

Zhu Wenxin, head of the forage grass department of Zhangye's animal husbandry and veterinary bureau, said in the past there had been an overgrazing problem due to the limited grass production in winter pastures. This affected the regeneration of grassland and damaged vegetation, he said.

"Using the new model, the grassland has a five-month break to recover," Zhu said.

"The ample corn stalks in the fields serve as food, allowing livestock that would otherwise not have enough to eat during winter... to resist the cold and be fattened up instead. This has increased the sale price of yaks and sheep in the spring and is also good for livestock reproduction."

For farmers who grow corn, the income from renting their fields for grazing is higher than selling the stalks, he added. "More importantly, after the yaks and sheep consume the stalks, they leave manure in the fields, which becomes organic fertilizer when the fields are plowed in the spring," he said.

#### Financial windfall

Wang Dong, 55, a farmer from Majun village in Zhangye, said he starts planting corn around April 15 each year, and begins harvesting around Sept 20.

After harvesting his crops, he rents his corn fields to herders from October to March, a commercial practice he has now done for three years.

"We have few livestock of our own, and the land would otherwise be unused. Renting it out to herders brings us additional income of 150 yuan per mu (0.067 hectares)."

This year, Wang rented all his 100 mu of land to Bai Zhengyuan, a herder from Mati village, Sunan.

In the past, Wang had sold the corn stalks to large-scale livestock farmers in the village for 100 yuan per mu, so renting the land to herders brings him an extra 50 yuan.

The manure left by the animals can be used as fertilizer, which means an additional 50 yuan per mu is saved on purchasing fertilizer, he said.

Bai and his family live close to the village. They use barbed wire to fence off the land and keep the animals penned in.

Wang said having the animals so close "doesn't affect our daily lives or pose any harm to the elderly and children", adding that he and Bai are good friends who talk a lot.

#### Fatter, healthier

Since 2000, the number of livestock grazing on natural grasslands in Sunan has decreased by 93,000 sheep every year on average.

This has resulted in 1.07 million mu of natural grassland in the Qilian Mountains having a "vacation" for nearly five months from the impact of grazing herds, according to the animal husbandry and veteri-



Clockwise from top: Livestock workers provide guidance on lambing and young animal care at a herder's home in Sunan county, Gansu province; police officers help herders count and corral the sheep during the migration in Bortala; police officers and herders work together to unload the sheep, increasing the efficiency of the migration. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Cutout: An official talks to a herder about trekking livestock to winter pastures to ensure smooth operations on Nov 15 in Altay. Background: A police car guides a convoy of livestock trucks on a winding road in Xinjiang.

nary service center of Sunan county's agriculture and rural affairs bureau.

In 2022, the grass yield per mu on the county's natural grassland increased by 20.6 percent compared with 2010, and the total coverage of pasture grass reached 78.2 percent, according to the latest data from the center.

There has also been significant growth in the utilization rate of crop residues in farming areas.

"Stalks have rich nutrients to fatten the livestock, increase wool production and increase the survival rate of lambs during winter," said An Yufeng, director of the center.

"Although each sheep may incur an additional cost of 98 yuan when compared to transferring them to a winter pasture, the

overall net income can still be raised by 28 yuan," he said, adding that a herder can on average earn an extra 12,000 yuan in annual income.

The shortage of grass and lack of infrastructure at some winter pastures to keep the animals warm, as well as the risks of livestock deaths are additional costs herders can face if they shift their livestock, An said.

Last year, local farmers in the county received 68 million yuan in income by renting land to herders.

"It also reduced the problem of air pollution caused by farmers burning crop residues, as well as the use of chemical fertilizers on farmland, thereby lowering agricultural costs," An said.

Since 2014, the local government has

been recording livestock information and examining the animals' health to prevent epidemics. This year, each herder's family received a 1,000-yuan government subsidy, as well as gloves, washing powder, and disinfectants.

#### Sticking to tradition

However, some herders choose to follow the old method of trekking their herds to winter pastures, believing in the adage of "survival of the fittest".

In late November, 230,000 camels, cattle and sheep marched across snow-covered mountains from Jeminay county, Altay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, to winter pastures 100 kilometers away, forming a spectacular procession.

Azat Tospuhan and his younger brother took 200 sheep on the journey.

"We must reach our winter pasture before the heavy snow arrives to ensure a safe winter for the livestock. To prepare for this, we have stocked up on ample feed and forage and have warm shelters ready," he said.

Special service vehicles nicknamed "mobile happy stations" were sent by the government along the route. The stations carried forage for the animals, and provided herders with hot water and meals, and devices to charge their mobile phones. Doctors were also available to check the herders' physical condition and provide medication if needed.

"Along the way, we listen to the radio and check messages on our cellphones without worrying about running out of battery. We can take a rest if we want. The happy stations truly solve major problems we face during the migration," said Bardihan Narenhan, a herder.

When they arrive at their destinations, herders can move into furnished accommodation with power, water and a mobile signal. Newly-built sheds also help protect livestock from snowstorm and wild animals.

#### Tech-assisted migration

In recent years, more herders in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region have been using trucks for the migration to save time, improve efficiency, and protect both people and animals from extreme weather and other risks.

Badmal, a herder from Bayinbuluke town in Bayingolin Mongolian autonomous prefecture, was preparing to move to a pasture some 300 kilometers away in late November.

Shouting at and prodding the flock, the lambs were lined up and walked onto a truck with three decks.

In the past, it was a long and arduous journey to the pasture, but it now can be completed in a single day using trucks for transportation.

In another innovation, some sheep are fitted with positioning collars of Beidou Navigation Satellite System so that herders can check their real-time location on their mobile phones. This information can also be transmitted to the agricultural department's big data platform.

By scanning the QR code on a small orange tag on a sheep's ear, information such as its birth date and vaccination status can also be verified.

At Ili Kazak autonomous prefecture, 491 herders and about 100,000 livestock from Huocheng and Yining counties set off in trucks in mid-November for winter pastures at Yalmut village, Wenquan county, Bortala Mongolian autonomous prefecture about 320 km away.

To ensure a safe journey, police officers set up checkpoints and safety warning signs at intersections.

At border police stations "herdsmen migration service points" offered instant noodles, milk, tea, and food.

Multiple county governments have also established a real-time information exchange mechanism, which promptly releases updates on personnel and vehicle movements, weather and road conditions.

"Township staff made arrangements for our migration. Weather warnings were posted in WeChat groups. Police officers escorted the convoy and provided hot water and food. We felt a great deal of warmth as well as convenience," said Hababay Tohtibay, a herder from Yining county.

Contact the writers at chenmeiling@chinadaily.com.cn

## TOP NEWS

Diplomacy:  
Future rests  
on open  
dialogue

From page 1

Khan, noting that "in Chinese tradition, people and cultures play a significant role", said that Beijing's advocacy of people-to-people exchanges aims to drive countries to explore global civilization dialogue and cooperation, expand cooperation avenues and promote "mutual understanding among nations for the progress and prosperity of human civilization".

Upholding the mutual understanding of civilizations, further practicing the principles of the Global Civilization Initiative, and strengthening the exchange of experience in governance also were part of the outcome and consensus at the fifth China-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Chengdu, Sichuan province, this month.

In the next three years, China will offer 1,500 training opportunities for people from the five Central Asian countries and increase the scholarship quota to 600, in order to cultivate more talent of various types urgently needed for the development of the countries, Foreign Minister Wang Yi told reporters.

Stephen Bainous Kargbo, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's representative to China, said, "From my perspective and from the industry's perspective, China will continue to be a beacon of hope and also an example of what industrialization can do in any nation."

"China has demonstrated that through clean, clear and consistent industrial policy, transformation can take place. ... So my hope is that this model of development offers lessons for the rest of the world, particularly developing countries — not necessarily to copy, but to adapt to their own situations," Kargbo told China Daily.

Endorsing China's continued support for multilateralism and exchanges among nations, Kargbo added: "The future of the world rests on open, consistent dialogue between nations. Nobody has one formula that can solve all problems, but if we come together, discuss openly and fairly with mutual respect, the future is bright!"

Wang Huiyao, founder and president of the think tank Center for China and Globalization in Beijing, said: "The major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is now way richer at different levels, and the country's diplomacy does not rely solely on governmental efforts, but also on efforts in economic, cultural, subnational and think tank realms. I think this progress is noteworthy."

When reviewing China's diplomacy over the past 10 years, its wide-ranging cooperation with various regions and with Global South countries has stood out, spanning from neighboring regions such as Central Asia and Southeast Asia to Africa and Latin America, Wang noted.

"China is an important pillar supporting a multipolar world, and its major country diplomacy should play an even greater role in the future," he added.

## Seeking justice



Palestinian children who lost their limbs due to Israeli attacks sit in protest in front of the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Saturday, demanding an end to Israeli strikes and access to treatment. DOAA ALBAZ / ANADOLU / GETTY IMAGES

## China's solution to land degradation applauded

Tremendous potential for broader impact expected, technologist says

By YAN DONGJIE

in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
yandongjie@chinadaily.com.cn

Building on mature big data and artificial intelligence technologies, Chinese scientists have developed a targeted system for land degradation management on the Arabian Peninsula, which can be used to support governance decisions in the region, an expert said.

At the ongoing 16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Li Xiaosong and his team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Aerospace Information Research Institute showcased the system, garnering interest from representatives of several countries.

"We are using big data to support the achievement of sustainable development goals," he said, adding that they are generating models and algorithms to facilitate governance decisions of policymakers.

To build these models and algorithms, the scientists first generated a large database, including remote-sensing data, ground observation data and reports from various regions, and then combined it with over 40 years of China's desertification control experience and various new technologies, Li said.

Since COP16 opened in the Saudi capital on Dec 2, Li has showcased the system both at the China Pavilion and during multinational discussions.

Through a mobile application called LDN Tracker, users can select any location and the platform will provide information about the area's land status, including historical evolution, production capacity and climate conditions such as precipitation and temperature.

The system can provide precise recommendations for policymakers based on the type of degradation, whether it is wind erosion, water erosion or erosion caused by salinization, Li said.

"In August, Saudi Arabia invited us to conduct a training session to discuss how to use China's sand management experience and its science and technology," he said.

Now, in approximately one-third of Saudi Arabia's southwestern region, the system will be introduced, along with Chinese machinery and automation technology, among other things, to carry out land management and afforestation, he added.

The Chinese solution developed by Li and his team has been warmly received at COP16.

Amos T. Kabo-Bah, from the University of Energy and Natural Resources in Ghana, wrote in an email to Li that the innovative system for achieving land degradation neutrality in Saudi Arabia has made a strong impression on him.

"We are reaching out to propose a detailed discussion on potential areas for collaboration," Kabo-Bah wrote.

Cesar Luis Garcia, an innovation technologist from Argentina, said in a separate email sent to Li that he and his team are "deeply impressed" by the system and the comprehensive report on achieving land degradation neutrality in Saudi Arabia.

"Your initiative demonstrates an inspiring commitment to tackling land degradation challenges, and we believe it has tremendous potential for broader impact," Garcia wrote.

Li said he has received numerous such emails requesting cooperation since the system was presented at COP16. "To develop such a globally leading system, we have taken advantages of China's experience in desertification control over 40 years and the development in remote-sensing big data," he added.

In 1978, China initiated the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program in 13 northern provinces and regions, implementing tailored afforestation, sand fixation and ecosystem restoration methods. Currently, the forest coverage in the project area has increased

from around 5 percent in the 1980s to nearly 14 percent.

China became a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994.

Guan Zhi'ou, head of the Chinese delegation to COP16 and director of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, said that China has already achieved some of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals ahead of schedule, including achieving a double reduction in desertification and sandy land, becoming the first country to achieve the goal of zero net growth in land degradation.

"China now boasts the world's largest area of planted forests and is the biggest contributor to global greening," Guan said.

Hussein Nasrallah, an official at Lebanon's Ministry of Agriculture, said in an interview with China Daily on the sidelines of COP16 that people in his country want to transform almost desert-like and once-barren areas into green spaces, which is not an easy task.

"We have witnessed how China has addressed land degradation and other global environmental issues. China is showing the world how to effectively tackle these problems, and we can learn from its approach," he said.

Nasrallah said he hopes that more countries, Lebanon in particular, can cooperate with China to address the issue of desertification.

"China came to us and showed us how these technologies can help solve problems. In dry areas with little water, they use plants that can survive with almost no water. Some of these plants even produce flowers and fruits, bringing profits for the locals, which is amazing. These are very important and brilliant solutions," he added.

Shi Yudie contributed to this story.



Online  
See more  
by scanning  
the code.

Greater global unity key  
to sustainable growthBy SONG PING  
songping@chinadaily.com.cn

Global unity and cooperation are essential for tackling today's complex challenges and building a sustainable future for all, experts from home and abroad said at the launch of the Global Development Report 2024 in Beijing on Friday.

"All these solutions point in one direction: what is needed is greater global cooperation to achieve inclusive, fair, ecologically sustainable and people-centered development to benefit all the people on planet Earth," said Sudheendra Kulkarni, founder and chairman of the Forum for a New South Asia.

The report, released by the Center for International Knowledge on Development, analyzed the global development landscape and outlined obstacles to achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Zhang Laiming, vice-director of the Development Research Centre of the State Council, advocated the importance of accumulating experience, building consensus and sharing opportunities to address these challenges, while also managing risks collectively and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Such efforts, he stressed, are vital for creating an inclusive, balanced and cooperative global development framework.

The report indicates that technological advancements and the rise of the Global South offer new opportunities for collaboration. "Renewable energy technologies provide a feasible technical pathway to promoting a global green and low-carbon transformation," said Wang Jinzhao, the executive vice-president of CIKD.

Speaking about China's green development, Arkebe Oqubay, former senior minister and special adviser to the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, said that China, as a global green powerhouse, has reduced transformation costs by over 90 percent, significantly lowering barriers to adopting green development strategies for other countries.

Carlos Correa, executive director of the Geneva-based South Centre, emphasized the pivotal role of the Global South, which now accounts for more than 40 percent of global GDP. He said that platforms such as BRICS are key to reshaping the international system, making it more inclusive and supportive for developing nations.

The report identified key challenges in climate change, industrial and supply chains, digital transformation, poverty reduction, food security, glob-

al health and development finance.

Kulkarni from the Forum for a New South Asia highlighted the importance of investing in education for future inclusive development. He praised the success of China's smart education platform, which attracted more than 100 million registrations within a year of its launch, providing children in rural and remote areas access to classes in various disciplines.

Addressing challenges requires reconciling a fundamental contradiction in global development. "On one hand, advancements in science, technology, and productivity present promising prospects," said Wang Lei, deputy director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "On the other hand, gaps in the international order and policy frameworks cause inefficiencies and welfare losses. Effective collaboration is the only way to address this contradiction and unlock development's full potential."

"I believe the strategic partnership between developing countries is more important than ever before," said Muhammad Habib, a researcher from the Indonesian Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Osama El Gohary, assistant to the prime minister of Egypt and chairman of the Egyptian Cabinet's Information and Decision Support Center, agreed that China's Belt and Road Initiative is crucial for African countries like Egypt. He said through advanced satellite technology and support in digital sectors like communication and navigation, China has significantly boosted Egypt's digital transformation and competitiveness.

Meanwhile, global trade should play an important role in solving global challenges, not in contributing to them, said Ralph Ossa, chief economist and director of the Economic Research and Statistics Division at the World Trade Organization, adding that importing goods from countries with lower carbon emissions enhances the efficiency of global supply chains and protects the environment, providing a tangible strategy to address climate change.

Speaking via video at the event, Siddharth Chatterjee, UN resident coordinator in China, said, "No single country, including China, can achieve the SDGs alone. That is why the UN and China will continue to serve as a convener, a connector, and a catalyst for action, reinforcing partnerships, fostering dialogue, and supporting implementation."

Lu Tianyue contributed to the story.

## CHINA DAILY USA

## NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,  
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com  
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

## Follow us on:

x.com/chinadaily  
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

These materials are distributed by China Daily Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing, China. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

## WASHINGTON

National Press Bldg, Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20045  
Tel: 202-662-7249  
Fax: 202-662-7247

## SAN FRANCISCO

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: 415-348-8288  
Fax: 415-348-8388

## SEATTLE

800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Tel: 206-922-2868

## HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100  
Houston, TX 77077  
Tel: 713-595-7660

## CANADA | TORONTO

471 Yonge Street, 10th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8  
Tel: 416-481-5706

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. 1475

## Vision: Initiatives help improve connectivity, trust, peace and development

From page 1

This is the Chinese dream: the path from modernization as a local dream to a global reality. China's path from aspiration to achievement reflects a solid vision, driven by dedicated effort and a merciful approach. When someone is strong and capable, they set goals and help others achieve them — this is what's happening now. I remind you of the four initiatives: no development can happen without peace, no peace without trust, and no trust without communication.

The Belt and Road Initiative rests on two principles: connectivity — both hard connectivity, such as

infrastructure and transportation, and soft connectivity, especially people-to-people exchanges — and partnership. Hard connectivity involves physical infrastructure, but soft connectivity fosters bonds between people. Partnership means thinking, working and benefiting together, which is the essence of cooperation.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stated that our world suffers from a "trust deficit disorder". Building trust by embracing diversity is essential. Different languages, cultures, civilizations and customs coexist in this world. If we can harmonize these differences through people-to-people connections, we will create a

beautiful, diverse humanity. This is the essence of the Global Civilization Initiative, which has its roots along the ancient Silk Road that spanned thousands of years.

Now is the time to explore the past, to rediscover the valuable principles of our ancestors, and to use them as timeless treasures to shape our future. We must emphasize that the challenges we face as a global community demand inclusive cooperation.

Once more, the essence of connectivity, trust, peace and development is built into all civilizations, including the Chinese civilization. We must extract this wisdom and understand how our ancestors dealt

with these principles, bringing their solutions from ancient civilizations into the present and future.

The Global Security Initiative is offered as a public good to avoid a return to Cold War era divisions and Western bloc policies of confrontation. It reinforces the importance of adhering to the UN Charter's principles and encourages resolving differences through dialogue and consultation. Recently, I spoke with a Chinese friend and told him that China is a peaceful country. Don't expect China to go to war; instead, China will support peacekeeping efforts. China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence provide a model for peacefully

resolving international disputes through negotiation, based on the founding ideals of the UN.

The Global Development Initiative has received strong support from the international community. Over 100 countries and many international organizations, including the UN, have joined the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative, demonstrating widespread confidence in its goals. The UN Secretary-General has praised this initiative, proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, for its potential to promote global equality and balanced sustainable development. The UN fully supports it and is eager to collaborate further with China.

This initiative serves as a road map for global development, focusing on core concepts and priority areas such as poverty alleviation.

When embraced by those who advocate for peace and development, these initiatives create a path to a world in which everyone shares a common, prosperous future — a world defined by dialogue-based international relations, rules-based global governance and multilateralism.

Finally, the future is not just a time we wait for; it is a reality we create. We cannot passively await a future filled with these remarkable achievements. We must work actively to bring them about.

The author is a former Prime Minister of Egypt. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

# CHINA

## Report digs into Beijing's population

Insights gleaned into capital's shifts, growth and characteristics of residents

By WANG XU  
wangxu@chinadaily.com.cn

In its latest population report, Beijing has shared critical insights into the demographic landscape of China's capital, highlighting both challenges and opportunities as the city navigates its future.

According to the most recent data, Beijing's resident population stood at approximately 21.858 million at the end of 2023, a modest increase of 15,000 from the previous year. "This stability is noteworthy amid broader national trends of population decline in some regions," the report, issued on Saturday, noted.

A key finding from the report is that Beijing's urbanization rate has reached 87.8 percent, significantly surpassing the national average of 66.16 percent. This underscores the city's role as a critical hub of economic activity and migration.

The report, produced by the Social Work Committee of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China and other institutions, categorizes its findings into three sections: an overall analysis, detailed sub-reports and thematic studies. It identifies seven key characteristics of population development in Beijing, including stable resident population size, increased urbanization, a narrowing income gap between urban and rural residents, and a dual challenge of declining birth rates alongside an aging population.

The report indicates that children up to the age of 14 comprise 12 percent of the city's population, a slight decline from 2022. Meanwhile, the elderly population (aged 60 and above) is 4.948 million, accounting for 22.6 percent of residents. This demographic shift has led to an increase in the overall dependency ratio — the measure comparing the number of dependents (people not in the labor force) to the working-age population (typically aged 15 to 64). The ratio increased from 20.9 percent in 2010 to 38.7 percent in 2023, positioning Beijing within a "window of opportunity," as described in the report, to leverage new economic growth drivers.

Regarding education and innovation, 56.6 percent of residents aged 15 and older hold a college

degree or higher. In 2022, the city had 546,747 research and development personnel, with an R&D density of 250.3 per 10,000 residents, far above the national average. Beijing ranked fifth in per capita R&D funding and second in both invention patent applications and valid patents per capita, reinforcing its status as a national leader in technological innovation.

The report also emphasized the city's economic vitality, noting that since 2015, Beijing has seen steady improvements in this area, with a population economic coefficient of 2.23 in 2022 — the highest in the country. The economic coefficient measures how effectively a population contributes to the economy, comparing economic output, such as GDP or income, relative to population size. In Beijing's case, an economic coefficient of 2.23 means the city's economic contribution per person is 2.23 times higher than the national average, which is set at 1, highlighting the city's vibrant and productive economy.

The report showed significant progress in green development, with reductions in the annual average concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5, as well as an increase in per capita green space from 9.7 square meters in 2000 to 16.9 sq m in 2022. These advancements reflect Beijing's commitment to sustainable urban development.

Yu Qiang, a professor at Beijing Technology and Business University, suggested that to enhance the city's global competitiveness, Beijing should attract and retain talent through comprehensive policies and innovation ecosystems, invest in high-quality education and lifelong learning, and promote family-friendly environments with supportive community programs.

"Sustainable urban development should be prioritized through green infrastructure and smart technologies while improving public services like healthcare and transportation. Encouraging cultural exchange and diversity, increasing research and development funding, and optimizing population distribution will also be essential. By focusing on these areas, Beijing can strengthen its population development and appeal as a vibrant global city," Yu added.



### Exam prep

Students review learning materials in preparation for the 2025 national master's degree studies entrance exam in the library at Hunan University of Finance and Economics in Changsha, Hunan province, on Saturday. A total of 3.88 million people have registered this year to sit the exam, which will be held on Dec 21 and 22.

CAO ZHENGPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Unearthed Hualongdong fossils reveal secrets of human evolution

HEFEI — Chinese scientists have unearthed dozens of human fossils dating back 300,000 years, the earliest evidence in East Asia of the evolutionary transition toward *Homo sapiens*, the species to which all modern humans belong.

The fossils, along with animal bones and stone tools, were discovered at the Hualongdong site in Dongzhi county, Anhui province. Researchers presented their findings at a conference in Dongzhi this week, which drew nearly 100 experts, including more than a dozen international scholars.

Since its discovery in 1988, Hualongdong has produced significant finds during excavations ongoing since 2013.

These include nearly 20 ancient human fossils, a well-preserved skull, over 400 stone tools, and numerous bones with evidence of human processing. A recent excavation from April to November 2024 uncovered 11 more human fossils, including a rare metatarsal bone and skull fragments.

Wu Xiujie, a researcher at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and leader of the excavation team, said the discoveries suggest the site was home to a large family of more than 20 individuals.

"They had a 'dining hall' for food processing and likely used a now-collapsed karst cave as shelter," Wu said.

The fossils exhibit physical traits between *Homo erectus* and

“Some scholars believe modern humans may have originated in multiple regions. Hualongdong could offer support for that theory.”

Xu Xing, academican of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

modern humans, Wu said, including a skull thought to belong to a 13- or 14-year-old girl discovered in 2015. The skull showed a mix of primitive and modern features, such as a flat face, high eye sockets, and an emerging chin — a hallmark of modern humans.

"She looked very similar to us but retained ancient traits," Wu noted.

The stone tools found at the site suggest the Hualongdong inhabitants had advanced technical skills and were on the evolutionary path toward *Homo sapiens*.

The site, only the second in China after Zhoukoudian to yield such a wealth of human fossils and tools, is critical to understanding human activity during the Middle to Late Pleistocene era, experts say.

Xu Xing, a CAS academican, emphasized the global impor-

tance of the Hualongdong discoveries. "The 300,000-year timeframe is critical for understanding modern human origins," he said.

While the dominant theory holds that modern humans originated in Africa and spread globally, new evidence from sites like Hualongdong suggests the process was more complex.

"Some scholars believe modern humans may have originated in multiple regions. Hualongdong could offer support for that theory," Xu said.

International experts echoed these sentiments. Maria Martinon-Torres, director of Spain's National Research Center on Human Evolution, called the site "one of the most significant discoveries in human evolution over the past decade."

"This population shows derived traits linked to the origins of our species," she said.

Yosuke Kaifu of the University of Tokyo said the site fills a critical gap in fossil evidence from the transitional period between *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*.

Beyond its evolutionary significance, Charles Musiba of Duke University highlighted Hualongdong as a model for global scientific collaboration.

"Fossil evidence underscores the shared humanity of our species," Musiba said. "The site fosters unity in answering fundamental questions: Who are we, and where did we come from?"

XINHUA

### Briefly

#### 6 people detained for building collapse in Jilin

Six people have been detained as being responsible for a recent building collapse in Northeast China's Jilin province, the provincial authorities said during a meeting on Friday. A part of the roof of an ice skating rink in Baicheng city collapsed on Nov 18, fortunately without causing any casualties, according to a previous statement by the local emergency management bureau. The provincial authorities said the accident was caused by the substandard quality of the material used in the construction project. The local police have detained six suspects for the related crimes, while other personnel are under further investigation, a statement from the Friday meeting said. Hu Yuting, governor of Jilin province, warned at the meeting that the period around the end of the year would be a time prone to multiple accidents.

#### 9 dead in Shandong warehouse fire

Nine people who were previously reported missing in a fire that broke out at a refrigerated warehouse under construction in East China's Shandong province have been located and confirmed dead on Sunday morning. The fire occurred on Saturday afternoon at the warehouse owned by a local company called Lanrun Group in the city of Rongcheng due to the ignition of insulation materials, according to the local emergency management department. The cause of the accident is under investigation.

XINHUA



BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE 帮助最易受损害者获得更好的生命体验



## CHINA

## Colossal snow



Visitors take photos with a giant snowman in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, on Sunday. The snowman, built at the entrance of the 37th Harbin Sun Island International Snow Sculpture Art Expo Park, stands 20 meters tall and was sculpted using 4,000 cubic meters of snow, making it the tallest and largest snowman in Harbin this winter. ZHANG SHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Giant pandas An An, Ke Ke make much awaited HK debut

National treasures gifted to SAR from central government excite crowds

By LI LEI in Hong Kong  
lilei@chinadailyhk.com

Over an hour before Ocean Park opened its gates at 10 am on Sunday, a palpable sense of excitement filled the air among the large group of visitors waiting to enter Hong Kong's largest theme park.

They were united for one purpose: catching their first glimpse of An An and Ke Ke, the pair of giant pandas recently given by the central government as a gift to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The national treasures made their public debut in the city that day.

Despite a city-wide naming contest that garnered more than 22,000 suggestions, the decision was made that An An and Ke Ke would retain their original names. Excited children perched on their fathers' shoulders, tourists with hefty backpacks, and wildlife enthusiasts clutching panda-themed toys patiently waited to meet the beloved ambassadors of conservation.

"Seeing the new members of Hong Kong's panda family on their debut day is a memorable experience," said Wan Nga-ting, a 31-year-

old teaching assistant at the Hong Kong Education Center. She had proudly pinned a palm-sized panda toy to her backpack while waiting for the park's gates to open.

The two 5-year-old pandas arrived in the SAR from Sichuan province on Sept 26 as gifts from the central government to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the city's return to the motherland.

With the addition of An An and Ke Ke, along with Ying Ying and Le Le — another panda pair gifted by the central government in 2007 — and their twin cubs born this year, Hong Kong is now home to six pandas, making it the city with the largest population of pandas outside the Chinese mainland.

Wan, who has visited the park monthly to see the pandas since she was in school, said that despite expecting big crowds, she still decided to join in to celebrate her lifelong fondness for the animals.

Leonardo Li, a finance professional, and his girlfriend were among the first panda enthusiasts to enter the park at 10 am. Carrying a stuffed panda toy adorned with bamboo on his shoulder, Li said he was thrilled to finally meet the pandas after waiting months.

"The panda is a national treasure, and presenting them to the SAR is a wonderful gesture from the central government," he said.

Li added that he believes the arrival of An An and Ke Ke will boost Hong Kong's tourism industry, as there are countless enthusiastic panda lovers around the world.

Inside Ocean Park's crowded Hong Kong Jockey Club Sichuan Treasures enclosure, which houses the giant pandas, visitors inched forward, raising their phones to capture images of the animals through the glass.

The crowd shifted as one as An An explored his den, searching for bamboo and climbing up and down a gnarled tree. Gasps of anxiety filled the air when An An disappeared into his private quarters through a hole unseen by visitors, followed by cheers when he reemerged.

Ke Ke, the female panda, munched on bamboo in a separate den adjoining An An's. She maintained her composure while lounging in a giant wooden chair that resembled a queen's throne.

Anthony Mezzatesta, a visitor from the United States, shared his enthusiasm after leaving the enclosure, saying it was his first time seeing the iconic black-and-white bears in person.

"My girlfriend, who's from Shanghai and is a huge panda fan, has been following the news about the two baby pandas," he said. "She's an even bigger fan than I am."

When asked if the presence of pandas could significantly enhance Hong Kong's global appeal, Mezzatesta replied, "Absolutely," citing their limited numbers outside the Chinese mainland.

City officials said the decision to retain their original names was made to symbolize stability, safety and the boundless possibilities for the city.

In Chinese, "An" represents safety and peace, while "Ke" signifies limitless possibilities. Furthermore, "An Ke", which sounds like "encore" in French, conveys the idea that good things will come in succession, symbolizing hopes for Hong Kong's positivity and continued prosperity, the officials explained.

Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu said the SAR government would leverage the pandas to unite various sectors of society and introduce more panda-related promotional activities, offering residents and tourists unforgettable panda experiences.

Stephy Zhang contributed to this story.

# Scientists decode DNA of rare Tibetan antelope

XINING — Chinese scientists have successfully assembled the chromosome-level genome of the rare Tibetan antelope, aiming to decode the secrets behind their survival at high altitudes.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences confirmed on Friday that researchers from the Northwest Institute of Plateau Biology of the CAS and Qinghai University, both based in Xining, capital of Qinghai province in Northwest China, have made the achievement, which is currently the most accurate, complete genome of the species available.

The Tibetan antelope plays a crucial role in biodiversity conservation in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. "This achievement not only represents a technical upgrade in the field of Tibetan antelope genetics research but also provides an important genetic foundation for the conservation of plateau biodiversity," said Zhang Tongzuo, a researcher at the institute.

Zhang explained that the in-depth analysis of the Tibetan antelope genome will help predict its ability to survive under future climate change scenarios, enabling more effective conservation measures to be implemented.

It will also help identify the populations of the antelopes that require special protection to maintain or increase genetic diversity.

"It is of utmost importance for preventing and controlling the spread of diseases in wild populations," he said.

The genome can also be used to study the relationships between different Tibetan antelope populations, which is crucial for designing

appropriate protected area boundaries and planning cross-regional conservation efforts.

Starting in 2022, the joint research team has conducted extensive field surveys and monitoring of the antelopes and assembled their chromosome-level genome through third-generation sequencing technology.

The genome research of the Tibetan antelope also provides a fresh perspective on the conservation of plateau biodiversity.

From a genetic perspective, the Tibetan antelope genome data fills an important gap in the study of the subfamily Caprinae species, offering valuable resources to understand how highland species cope with extreme environmental pressures.

"Through comparative analysis of the genomes of other Caprinae species, such as the bharal and domestic sheep, we can trace the evolutionary history of Tibetan antelope and reveal how they have co-evolved with the highland environment over millions of years," said Zhang.

"These findings not only deepen our understanding of the species evolution mechanisms, but also provide references for further exploration of the adaptability of other highland species," he said.

The number of Tibetan antelope in Xizang has increased to more than 300,000, and their protection status has been downgraded from "endangered" to "near threatened," according to data from the region's ecology and environment department.

XINHUA

## Slippery catch



Visitors at Xixi National Wetland Park in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, engage in an annual folk fishing activity to celebrate the harvest on Saturday. DONG XUMING / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Rapeseed varieties tested in Xizang's high altitude

By ZHAO YIMENG in Beijing  
and QIN FENG in Xi'an

Three new rapeseed varieties developed by Northwest A&F University in Shaanxi province are undergoing trials to determine their ability to grow at high altitudes in the Xizang autonomous region.

The rapeseed breeding team, led by Huang Zhen from the College of Agronomy at the university, is testing the new varieties on agricultural land in Lhasa, capital of Xizang, at approximately 3,650 meters above sea level. The varieties include Xiyou 11, which is traditionally planted in the Yangtze River Basin and the areas between the Yellow River and the Huaihe River.

The new rapeseed varieties have so far demonstrated exceptional adaptability at the high-altitude seed industry base in Chushul county, and outperformed local main cultivar in growth and yield potential, showing the prospect for widespread adoption across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Huang said.

"Xiyou 11 shows vigorous growth with plump seeds. Expert tests indicate a yield of approximately 4,275 kilograms per hectare, achieving an optimal balance between stress resistance and high yield," said Wang Jinxiong, a researcher at the Xizang Academy of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Sciences.

Huang said Xiyou 11 is an independently bred variety with outstanding traits such as drought resistance, salinity tolerance, high yield and excellent oil quality.

"Rapeseed oil, rich in over 93 percent unsaturated fatty acids, is an ideal staple for high-altitude regions

where people require high-energy foods. Its nutritional value for cardiovascular health makes it a premium food resource," Huang said.

Huang's team started research on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in 2012, addressing challenges such as low rapeseed yields and insufficient disease-resistant varieties. By using positional cloning, they identified a key gene, uncovering a novel mechanism for enhancing salt tolerance in rapeseed. In recent years, the team has screened over 30 salt-tolerant rapeseed resources and developed 12 high-performing parent lines, which have been used to produce more than 20 high-yield rapeseed hybrids.

The team has cultivated a series of resilient varieties, including Xiyou 11, Shaanyou 1513 and Shaanyou 168, that are suitable for cold, dry and saline-alkaline regions such as the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the Ningxia Hui autonomous region and Shaanxi province.

Among them, Xiyou 11, developed by associate researcher Yu Chengyu, has shown exceptional performance. Wang said the academy is connecting with local agricultural authorities to establish over 10 demonstration farms, each exceeding 6.67 hectares, in Lhasa, Lhokha, Nyingchi and Shigatse for promoting rapeseed cultivation.

Xiyou 11 and other new rapeseed varieties will soon be widely cultivated across the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, opening a new chapter in rapeseed resource innovation and breeding applications, Wang said.

Contact the writers at zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

# Soil census to provide insight for agricultural practices

By ZHAO YIMENG  
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

The field sampling tasks for the third national soil census have been completed, just in time for the 11th World Soil Day, which fell on Thursday.

The soil census plays a critical role in supporting China's agricultural modernization and ecological sustainability, officials and experts said.

This year's World Soil Day underscored the importance of accurate soil data and information in understanding soil characteristics and supporting food security, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

To ensure national food security and support high-quality agricultural development with accurate soil data, China launched the third soil survey nationwide in 2022, and has made remarkable progress, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Yang Peng, deputy director of the ministry's department of farmland enhancement, said the soil census

has mobilized over 400,000 researchers and practitioners, covering 2,860 counties across the country.

"The team has conducted extensive soil sampling across approximately 730 million hectares of arable land, orchards, forests, grasslands and other agricultural lands," Yang said.

As of Nov 15 this year, the final sampling for the survey had been completed and 3.11 million soil samples collected. Meanwhile, 88 percent of interior laboratory testing for the samples had been processed. "The census is set to finalize data validation and result compilation in 2025, paving the way for the formulation of outcomes," he added.

The census aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of soil resources in China, including physical, chemical and biological properties. The findings will be instrumental in addressing significant shifts in land use and soil quality over the past 40 years, Yang said.

"It provides critical data to protect China's farmland and ensure

national food security by mapping the quantity and quality of arable land," he said, highlighting its role in supporting the construction of high-quality farmland.

Soil fertility will underpin efforts to modernize agriculture, enhance crop quality and optimize farming efficiency through tailored solutions such as soil-specific fertilization and crop rotation.

In addition, by identifying soil degradation issues such as nutrient loss and reduced biodiversity, the census supports measures to protect the ecological functions of soil and mitigate the impact of urbanization and industrialization on agricultural land, Yang said.

The survey also helps to optimize agricultural production and foster the development of special agricultural products to boost rural economies and improve farmers' incomes, he added.

Zhang Jiabao, head of the expert advisory group for the survey and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said the major outputs will include detailed data sets, comprehensive maps, in-depth reports on soil conditions

and an intelligent soil sample library.

The census results will play an important role in practical applications, including optimizing crop layouts and promoting rural vitalization, Zhang said.

The team analyzed the unique characteristics of local agricultural products by surveying the soil's physical properties, chemical nutrients and microbial conditions in various regions.

"This will help identify the geographical and soil conditions that contribute to the formation of local specialties, enabling us to better utilize the advantages of soil resources for future planning and development of specialty agricultural products," Zhang said.

During pilot studies, areas such as Jiangxian county in Shanxi province identified suitable planting areas for crops like deciduous shrubs and thoroughwax, while Gaozhou in Guangdong province and Yuzhong in Gansu province developed planting plans for lychee and lily production based on unique soil characteristics, he added.

Editor's note: China Daily is publishing a series illustrating the country's efforts to achieve its carbon peak and carbon neutrality goals.

CHINA'S LOW-CARBON JOURNEY

By HOU LIQIANG in Sanya, Hainan  
houliqiang@chinadaily.com.cn

Having immersed himself in marine conservation for over a decade, Wang Fengguo possesses a profound understanding of the havoc that extreme typhoons can wreak upon coral reefs, which stand as some of the planet's most diverse ecosystems, amid the escalating climate crisis.

The destructive force and powerful currents generated by such typhoons smash into the reefs, causing them to break into thousands of fragments. In the aftermath, the corals resemble puzzle pieces scattered all over the seafloor.

"When extreme typhoons occur, they trigger underwater floods," the 42-year-old said, reflecting on the devastating typhoons that struck Wuzhizhou Island in Sanya, Hainan province, around 2008. "They bored deep gullies into the coral beds."

A fervent diving enthusiast, Wang has found solace and delight beneath the ocean surface. This ardor and his sorrow for the deteriorating coral ecosystems have seamlessly evolved into his present post as head of ocean management at Wuzhizhou Island Tourism Resort, where he merges his diving skills with his unwavering commitment to coral conservation.

Through his extensive involvement in coral restoration, Wang has seen firsthand the transformative power of the collaborative endeavors of businesses, institutions and the government, yielding a mutually beneficial outcome: the revival of vibrant underwater landscapes alongside the promotion of economic growth.

A coral restoration program launched on the island in 2016 has transformed Wuzhizhou, a popular diving destination, into a model of sustainable marine tourism, where ecological improvement and tourism coexist harmoniously.

In 2009, in a move to protect the marine environment around the almost 1.5-square-kilometer island, which attracts millions of tourists every year with its stunning tropical coastal scenery, the resort established an office of ocean management.

Wang, who started work at the resort as a diving instructor in 2006, joined the office in 2011, after the island launched a marine ranching project.

"The marine ranch in Wuzhizhou differs a lot from many others," Wang said, adding that while many other ranches are for fish farming, the one in Wuzhizhou aims to conserve the marine resources the island depends on to attract tourists, especially those beneath the water, such as fish and coral reefs.

"Once the local ecosystem improves, that will be of great help to the tourism industry," he noted.

At the very beginning, a focus in the construction of the fish ranch was to establish artificial fish reefs and stock hatchery-grown fish in the wild. In 2014, the idea of restoring the damaged coral reefs by planting them came to Wang when the experimental trial of a researcher from the Hainan Academy of Ocean and Fisheries Sciences on the island achieved initial success.

In that year, he discovered that many broken corals transplanted by the researcher onto a steel frame underwater a year earlier, which works as a nursery, had not only survived but thrived, eventually spreading out.

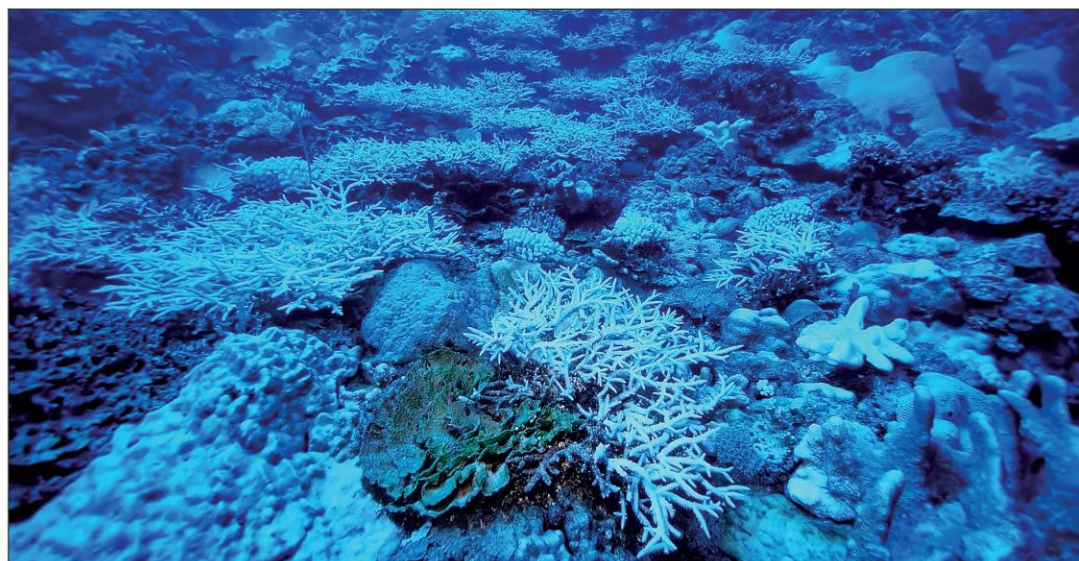
With the help of the local government, Wang got in touch with the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which has a team long dedicated to coral research.

In 2016, after more experimental planting, the Wuzhizhou resort decided to carry out large-scale planting.

Since then, in addition to maintaining their ongoing efforts in collecting marine debris and monitoring and patrolling the marine ranch, Wang's team has dedicated as many as three months each year to cultivating coral seedlings and conducting coral planting.

"It has become a regular work activity for the resort," he said, adding, in total, the resort has invested over 10 million yuan (\$1.37 million) into coral restoration.

According to the resort, as of April, with the backing of the local authorities in Hainan and



Bleaching is a major concern for coral reefs and the marine ecosystem they represent. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# Diver pieces back together smashed marine ecosystem

Improved ecology gives Hainan diving paradise distinct charm



Clockwise from above, left: A coral nursery in the ocean ranch near Wuzhizhou Island, Hainan province, in March 2016. XINHUA Wang Fengguo (right) and a fellow diver transplant corals at the ranch in May last year. YANG GUANYU / XINHUA A clown fish swims among sea anemones near Wuzhizhou in May. YANG GUANYU / XINHUA Corals are cultivated in a lab in Hainan. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sanya, as well as support from Hainan University and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the investment in the construction of the marine ranch, which covers the coral restoration program, has totaled 90 million yuan.

A total of 80,000 cubic meters of artificial fish reefs have been built, and over 51,000 coral seedlings have been transplanted, covering an area of 53,000 square meters.

Wang said 3,000 to 4,000 sq m of the seedlings were planted just a few months ago, and they still need to withstand the test of time.

"After transplanting coral seedlings from the nursery, they must grow naturally. We will regularly inspect for any casualties, conduct replenishment and address potential threats as needed," he said. "Apart from these efforts, our ability to assist further is limited."

The consistent efforts from the resort have not only resulted in an improved marine ecosystem in the area, but also have seen tourism boom on the island, according to Wang.

As a regular diver, he has witnessed a remarkable growth in the number of fish in the area, both small ones and big predators, he said. In recent years, he has frequently run into giant groupers, a creature he seldom saw before, and he believes one of them, which inhabits a boat sank on purpose to act as a reef, weighs more than 100 kilograms.

What is beyond Wang's imagination is that a seal, which is endemic to sea areas with cold water, has also been observed roaming in the area, he said.

Wang added the island's annual diving revenue now totals hundreds of millions of yuan.

Attracted by the vibrant coral reefs, You Ling, owner of the 57 Diving School in Sanya, has explored many popular diving destinations worldwide, including French Polynesia and Fiji. She considers the diving site in Wuzhizhou to be the standout choice in Sanya compared to other diving spots.

The 52-year-old emphasized the contribution of the coral restoration efforts to its distinction compared with other areas in Sanya.

"In Sanya, many underwater areas are desolate, plagued by extensive sand deposits with silt and debris, lacking the allure of overseas diving paradises," she said. "Nevertheless, Wuzhizhou defies this trend. Its vibrant corals, displaying an array of colors and formations, congregate like a naturally cultivated garden."

The diving school owner echoed Wang, saying that she has found an increase in both fish number and variety in Wuzhizhou.

Wang Aimin, a retired professor of marine biology at Hainan University, said the increase of fish in the Wuzhizhou area, a result of the marine ranch construction, has indeed facilitated coral restoration.

Fish, particularly algae-eating species, can help control diatoms, which often cover coral and compete with zooxanthellae, a crucial

symbiotic algae that lives within the tissues of coral polyps, for light, he explained.

With a mutually beneficial relationship with the coral, zooxanthellae can convert sunlight into energy through photosynthesis. Through this process, they provide the coral with essential nutrients such as glucose, glycerol and amino acids.

Wang depicted a vibrant scene in some areas around Wuzhizhou, saying "The corals there thrive abundantly, forming thick layers one upon another."

This has happened because of the abundant fish population in the region, he said, adding the Wuzhizhou resort's stringent control on fishing has significantly deterred fishermen.

Had overfishing not been brought under control, "the absence of any marine species in the ocean ecosystem can lead to problems", he stressed, adding that the depletion of fishery resources would jeopardize the living environment for corals.

The construction of the marine ranch in Wuzhizhou has effectively supplemented fish as an essential element required to uphold the delicate balance of the region's ecosystems, consequently improving the health of coral reefs, he said.

Despite the positive progress in Wuzhizhou, Zhang Yuyang, an associate professor with the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, said there remains a generally grim situation for coral reefs because of global warming, which has resulted in coral bleaching.

In total, the institute has planted over 300,000 coral fragments in the waters around Xisha and Nansha islands and near Hainan Island, the expert said.

Though over 5 hectares of coral reef have been restored in Wuzhizhou, that represents no more than 1 percent of the total area that needs to be restored. "Generally, the restored area is significantly smaller in scale than the area that still requires restoration," Zhang said.

"The situation is grim with no good solution at the moment," he added.

According to a release from the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and International Coral Reef Initiative in April, the world was experiencing its fourth global coral bleaching event, the second in the last 10 years.

"From February 2023 to April 2024, significant coral bleaching has been documented in both the northern and southern hemispheres of each major ocean basin," Derek Manzello, coordinator with NOAA's Coral Reef Watch, was quoted as saying in the release.

The mass bleaching of coral reefs since early 2023 has been confirmed in at least 53 countries, territories and local economies, the release added.

Zhang emphasized that the advancements in coral restoration in Wuzhizhou underscore the potential for safeguarding a genetic resource site amid challenges caused by climate change.

"The crucial importance of coral restoration is in maintaining a robust genetic habitat for deteriorating coral reefs. If all coral reefs degrade with no healthy ones left, then there will be not even a glimmer of hope for any potential recovery," he said.

But the glimmer of hope in Wuzhizhou could potentially grow even brighter, thanks to consistent efforts by the resort and Wang Fengguo.

According to Wang Fengguo, the resort plans to invest 20 million yuan a year in the coming five years to promote the construction of the marine ranch's second phase.

Working in the ocean poses inherent risks. He and his colleagues often suffer cuts and bruises during coral transplanting operations that often last for 3 to 4 hours. Due to prolonged periods underwater, he also experiences severe eczema.

Despite the challenges, Wang Fengguo remains dedicated to his mission as he approaches his 20th year in Wuzhizhou.

"This work is meaningful," he said. "Our work is for future generations. We might not see all the benefits now, but we are laying the foundation for a healthier ocean."

Online  
See more by scanning the code.



## Huawei helps Mauritius 'reforest' coral reefs

PORT LOUIS — Off the east coast of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, not far from Pointe aux Feuilles, sit a number of coral nurseries.

Coral fragments collected from various places are cultivated here, and when the corals have matured they will be transplanted to a degraded area of reef ecosystem, thus realizing reforestation under the sea.

The project is being jointly undertaken by Chinese technology company Huawei and the Mauritius-based nongovernmental environmental protection group EcoMode Society.

Sudheer Maudhoo, Mauritian minister of blue economy, marine resources, fisheries and shipping, said, so far, the project has raised over 25,000 coral fragments and transplanted them across an area of 1.01 square kilometers.

Mauritius has more than 150 km of its coastline surrounded by coral reefs. Coral reefs play a crucial role in the Earth's ecology, serving as vital habitats for a multitude of marine animals and plants.

Maudhoo said coral reefs also play an important economic and social role, as they not only attract tourists and provide jobs and a source of income for locals, but are also a natural barrier to protect coastal areas from tropical storms. In the past few decades, however, reef ecosystems have faced many threats, including climate change, overfishing and pollution.

Nadeem Nazurally, an assistant professor at the agriculture faculty of the University of Mauritius, has long been involved in marine protection and coral conservation. He said the coral cultivation process used to be "lengthy and cumbersome".

"Once we leave the site we don't really have any vision or knowledge of what's happening underwater," he said.

As a result, "annoying setbacks" can't be avoided, Nazurally said. For example, the crown-of-thorns starfish, known as a "killer" of coral reefs, could eat up to four square meters of coral seedlings in a single night,

only to be discovered the next day when it was too late, said Nazurally, who is also president of EcoMode Society.

Bringing Huawei on board with this project has changed this scenario.

"With Chinese technology, we can monitor from our office, even at night, and we can intervene in time," he said.

Li Jiyu, a technical engineer at Huawei Mauritius, said that monitoring at the coral reef restoration site can determine factors that disturb reproductive success. Huawei deployed a solution comprising underwater cameras, satellite navigation receivers, 5G technologies and cloud computing.

"With the support of Huawei, we have been able to scale up," said Nazurally.

While the project is in its second phase, technologies such as artificial intelligence-based data analysis will be used to guide conservation decisions, support the research of marine biologists, and educate the public on



Coral nurseries are planted near Pointe aux Feuilles, Mauritius, in July. LING XIN / XINHUA

the importance of reef conservation.

Nazurally said the data collected through Chinese technologies will be shared with researchers at the University of Mauritius to help them understand the process of coral bleaching, and the interaction patterns between corals and other marine organisms.

"The project is a perfect example on how to merge technologies and restore ecosystems," the marine scientist said. "There is a big potential for collaboration with China."

XINHUA

## BUSINESS

MORE NEWS WHENEVER YOU WANT IT · CHINADAILY.COM.CN/BUSINESS

## China's winter economy heating up rapidly

Snow tourism helps create fresh opportunities on supportive policies

By WANG ZHUOQIONG  
wangzhuoqiong@chinadaily.com.cn

China's ice and snow economy is thriving, turning its natural "cold resources" into a burgeoning "hot economy" for the nation.

From expanding ski resorts to increasing visits by skiers, the rise of snow tourism is creating fresh opportunities for regions across the country as winter takes hold, amid strong support from government policies and infrastructure development.

Zhao Yin, a 28-year-old marketing professional from Shanghai, and her friends visited Songhua Lake Ski Resort in Northeast China's Jilin province late in November.

She said the trip, along with other ski and snowboard lovers, was memorable and ended up costing only about 3,000 yuan (\$412), thanks to seasonal discounts on flights, ski fees, and local consumption coupons.

"Being in nature and focusing on the moment are a lot of fun, especially when you are with a group of friends," she said of her outing in the new snow season.

Zhao, an avid snowboarder, also hires private instructors to refine her skills, though not for every ski trip, paying an average of 500 yuan per hour.

"Each time I snowboard, I feel like I learn something new. It's all about controlling your body," she said.

Zhao's enthusiasm reflects a broader trend.

Wu Bin, founder and CEO of Beijing Snowpal Enterprise Management Co Ltd, said: "The passion to experience and participate in skiing has surged, stimulating ice and snow tourism across the country."

The winter sports industry in the country saw a 16.3 percent increase in skier visits during the fiscal year ending on April 30, 2024, with 23.08 million visits recorded compared to 19.83 million in the previous year, according to the China Ski Industry White Book (2023-24) released in November.

The number of individual skiers grew 14.5 percent to 12.8 million, and the per capita skiing frequency increased to 1.8 times from 1.77 times last year, according to the report, which has been compiled by Beijing Snowpal.

Supporting this growth has been a boom in the development of ski resorts.

Li Xiangbao, marketing manager at Keketuohai International Ski Resort in Altay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, said the resort welcomed over 3,000 visitors within just 10 days of its opening.

Since November, the daily average number of tourists has exceeded 2,000, with 90 percent traveling from other provinces, Li said.

"On weekends, hotel rooms in the resort area are nearly fully booked. As winter deepens, tourist numbers continue to climb rapidly," he said.

This strong start exemplifies the booming growth of the country's ice and snow economy, boosting



Skiers enjoy time at Beidahu Ski Resort, Jilin province, on Nov 23. YAN LINYUN / XINHUA



Left: Enthusiastic skiers snowboard at Taiwei Ski Resort in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Nov 10.

Right: Tourists participate in ice and snow fun activities at Dahewan Ski Resort in Ulaanqab, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Nov 16. PHOTOS BY WANG ZHENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

confidence in the development and upgrade of ski resorts nationwide.

Keketuohai International Ski Resort is planning extensive upgrades, including the renovation of 23 ski slopes with a combined sliding length of 61 kilometers, and the addition of ski-in, ski-out accommodations.

Other resorts are also expanding their offerings.

Jilin's Beidahu Ski Resort has added 100 snowmaking machines, increased its number of ski slopes from 64 to 74, expanded the slope area from 239 to 275 hectares, and improved its total hotel bed capacity to 9,000.

In Chongli, Hebei province, ski resorts have undergone upgrades to cableways, safety nets, and other essential facilities. Some have introduced new attractions, including night skiing and snow amusement parks, to enhance the visitor experience.

According to the white paper, this snow season, 30 new ski

resorts have opened across the country, evenly split between indoor and outdoor facilities. This has brought the total number of operational ski resorts to 719, an increase of 22 from the previous year.

The number of resorts equipped with aerial ropeways — a key infrastructure for ski tourism — has risen by 10, reaching 176, said the report.

Among these facilities, indoor ski resorts have shown major growth.

The country has added 15 new indoor ski resorts, while five were closed. With 60 operational indoor resorts, they now account for 8.34 percent of all ski resorts and attracted 4.88 million skier visits, a 33.7 percent year-on-year increase.

The rise of snow tourism is particularly evident in regions like Jilin, Xinjiang, and Heilongjiang province, which have seen significant growth in skier visits.

Jilin rose to the top spot among provinces for skier numbers, over-

taking Hebei, while Heilongjiang recorded an 88.65 percent increase in skier visits — the highest nationwide. Xinjiang followed with a 56.48 percent rise, and Beijing, though dropping to fourth place, remains a key hub for winter sports enthusiasts, said the report.

Meanwhile, Harbin in Heilongjiang came to national attention thanks to its winter attractions. The term "Erbin", a nickname of Harbin, known for its ice and snow festival, has gained popularity across the country.

Even in Changchun, capital of Jilin, the number of online discussions about "ice and snow tourism" increased 10-fold compared to the same period in 2023.

The influx of visitors is transforming local economies.

In the fourth quarter of 2023 alone, 19 national ski resorts recorded 9.43 million tourist visits, with average daily guest numbers approaching 500,000 for the first time. Revenue from these

resorts soared, with average tourism income increasing 5.43 times year-on-year, according to Li Yu, director of the ice and snow industry research center, the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research in China.

China's ski resorts cater to various customer groups, from casual tourists seeking unique experiences to enthusiasts pursuing destination vacations, said the white paper.

Among the 719 operational resorts, 29 are classified as destination vacation resorts, known for their comprehensive offerings, including skiing, accommodation, and entertainment. These resorts attracted 6.6 million skier visits during the recent season, a 52.87 percent year-on-year increase, according to the report.

Infrastructure plays a pivotal role in the efficiency and appeal of ski resorts, said the white paper. As of April 30, 2024, there were 355 aerial ropeways across 176 ski

“The passion to experience and participate in skiing has surged, stimulating ice and snow tourism across the country.”

Wu Bin, founder and CEO of Beijing Snowpal Enterprise Management Co Ltd

resorts nationwide, with 114 of these being detachable aerial ropeways, spanning 39 resorts. However, growth in other key areas, such as new magic carpets, has slowed slightly, with 110 new installations covering 18,000 meters.

Snow grooming and snowmaking equipment are also expanding, with about 60 imported snow groomers added this season and an estimated 1,200 new snowmaking machines deployed across the country.

However, ski resorts report a significant surge in demand for snowboards, highlighting a critical shortage in rental equipment to meet the needs of eager visitors, said the report.

China's ice and snow equipment industry is making strides, with domestic brands emerging as key players in both competitive sports and field equipment.

Taishan Sports Industry Group Co Ltd, a supplier for the Olympic Games, is an example of this growth.

The company has developed innovations, including a big data ski simulator, polymer ice boards, and mobile ski facilities.

Despite its rapid expansion, the winter sports industry faces challenges.

Liu Simin, vice-president of the tourism unit of the China Society for Futures Studies, highlights the high entry barriers for ice and snow sports, including costs, physical fitness, technical skills, and infrastructure.

"The construction of facilities needs to be strengthened, service levels improved, and consumer products diversified. At the same time, consumers' purchasing power must keep pace to sustain the industry's growth," Liu said.

"At present, there are very few Chinese enterprises with the technological innovation capabilities to compete at the forefront of the industry," said Song Kun, marketing head of Taishan Sports.

The government's strong support for the industry is helping address these challenges. Policies promoting winter tourism, coupled with the legacy of the 2022 Winter Olympics, have created a solid foundation for growth, Wu added.

The State Council, China's Cabinet, recently issued a circular on measures to stimulate the vitality of the ice and snow economy to promote the sector as a new growth point.

By 2027, the total scale of the ice and snow economy will reach 1.2 trillion yuan, and by 2030, the total scale of the ice and snow economy will reach 1.5 trillion yuan, it said.

## Cold Thrills or Warm Escapes?

## REPORTER'S LOG

By Wang Zhuoqiong

Every November, the debate begins anew: will it be a warm or cold winter?

This year, the China Meteorological Administration added a twist to the discussion. On Oct 29, it forecast higher-than-usual average temperatures for winter 2024-25, but warned of sharp fluctuations and the likelihood of strong cold spells.

To many, that sounds like a classic cold winter ahead.

With freezing temperatures settling in, there are two main ways to embrace the season: diving into icy adventures or seeking warmth and comfort.

For thrill-seekers, ski resorts, snow amusement parks and even indoor simulation skiing studios, offer ample opportunities to enjoy the speed and chill of the snow season.

For those leaning toward coziness, hot springs, hot pot feasts, hot milk tea and insulated winter wear — especially down jackets — are all the rage.

To start with, hot pot is the quintessential winter dining experience. Traditional Sichuan and Chongqing spicy hot pot continue to dominate, but new flavors are

catching on. Hong Kong-style hot pots and beef and mutton variations are gaining popularity, thanks to their warm, nourishing appeal. Hot pot delivery services are also thriving, making it easier for families and friends to gather around a steaming pot without leaving their homes.

Hot tea and coffee drinks have also rolled out new products with winter flavors to gain growth. Chagee, the milk tea chain, recently launched its first yellow milk tea product nationwide. This new product features yellow tea from Anhui province, paired with black rice, buckwheat and milk, and has a strong "baked rice aroma". The sales of hot tea products in November increased

by 22 percent compared to that of September. Taking Jiangsu province as an example, hot tea products of Chagee reached 50 percent of its total sales, said the company.

Beyond food and drinks, hot springs and sweat steaming are becoming top choices for relaxation. Northern cities like Shenyang, Liaoning province, and Zhengzhou, Henan province, are leading this trend, but southern cities such as Suzhou and Nanjing of Jiangsu province, are catching up, with searches for hot springs and sweat steaming increasing by over 300 percent in some areas.

For those who prefer to escape the cold altogether, warm-weather destinations like Sanya in Hainan province, Kunming and Dali in Yunnan province, are drawing "migratory birds" from across the country. These cities offer not only mild cli-

mates, but also picturesque scenery and a slower pace of life.

The rise of the "healing economy" is another development.

Practices like Zen therapy, aromatherapy and singing bowl meditation are gaining traction, with dedicated spaces and even healing-themed homestays popping up. These experiences cater to a growing desire for self-care and emotional well-being.

Even in the cold, outdoor activities with families and friends are thriving. Barbecues, strawberry picking and stove-side tea gatherings are all seeing increased interest. Parents in particular are embracing outdoor family activities, using them as an opportunity to connect with nature, breathe fresh air and strengthen bonds.

Winter travel isn't limited to traditional holidays anymore, either. More people are seizing the

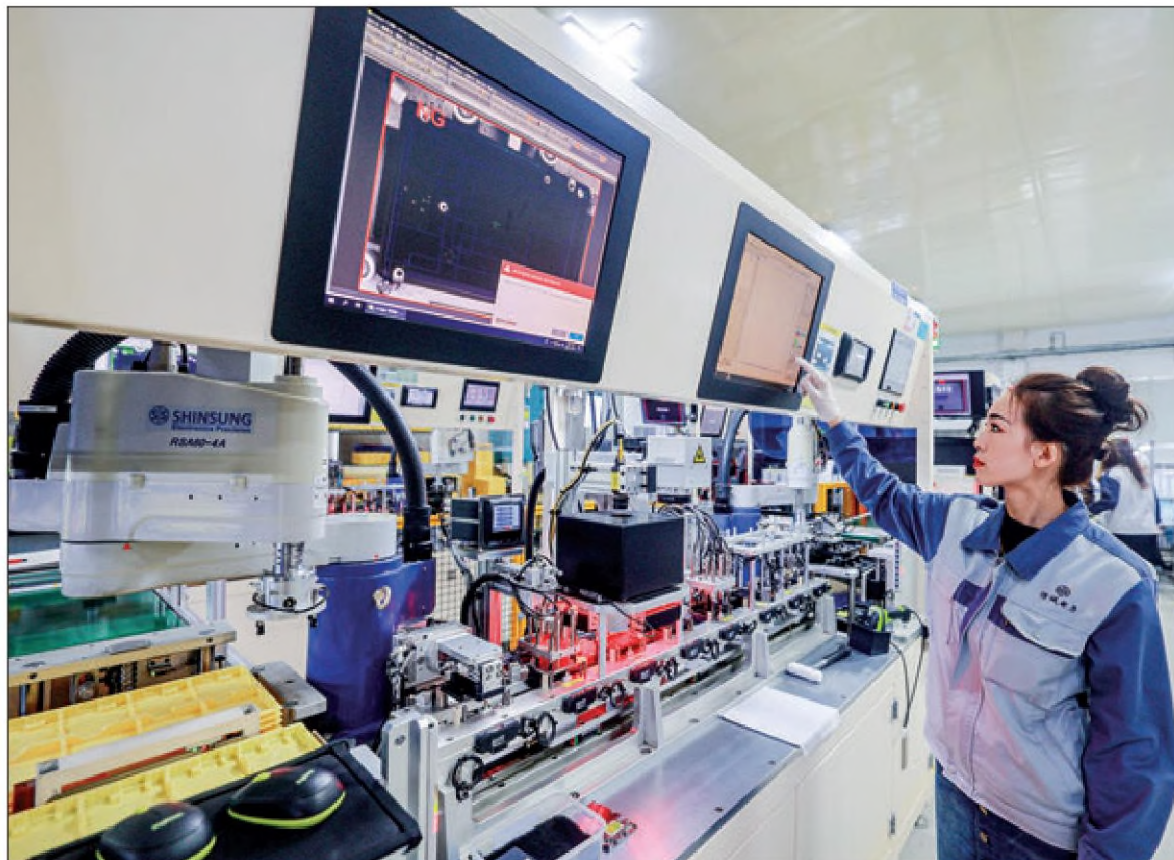
chance to turn ordinary weekends into micro-vacations, fueling demand for nearby destinations that offer both adventure and relaxation.

My friend Yuan Yuan runs a European-style boutique homestay hotel, The Long Circle in the suburbs of Yanqing district, Beijing. Recently, her phone hasn't stopped ringing, as her 26-room inn has been bustling with skiers visiting the nearby ski resorts including the National Alpine Skiing Centre.

For her, winter isn't about enduring the cold — it's more about embracing it. "This season offers something for everyone, from the adrenaline of skiing down a slope to the communal joy of a hot meal," she said.

As temperatures continue to drop, one thing is certain: winter has transformed into a season of economic vitality.

# BUSINESS



An employee operates a touch panel in a workshop at a foreign-funded electronics manufacturing enterprise in Rongcheng, Shandong province, on Feb 23. LI XINJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## China's zero-tariff policy boon for least developed countries

Nation rolling out other steps designed to draw additional foreign investment

BEIJING — Amadou Thera, a Malian businessman, takes great pleasure in showcasing the shea butter skincare creams produced by his workshop at various international fairs in China, where he always finds new clients.

"China's international fairs are really great platforms for African enterprises to find new opportunities, and purchasers usually consider our agricultural products to be good value for the money, thanks to China's zero-tariff treatment on most of them," said Thera.

More people are looking forward to sharing similar experiences like Thera's in the future, as since the beginning of December, China has been granting zero-tariff treatment for all tariff product categories to all least developed countries that have diplomatic relations with China.

The policy, which will make China the first major developing country to implement such an initiative, marks the latest move of the world's second-largest economy to open up its vast market and share growth opportunities with the rest of the world.

To advance institutional opening-up, the country issued a guideline in October to promote high-standard international economic and trade practices piloted in certain free trade zones in a wider region.

China also continues to roll out policies to nurture a more open environment for foreign investors. Last month, the country pledged to build the Suzhou Industrial Park in East China's Jiangsu province into a globally attractive two-way open hub.

Multinationals will be encouraged to establish research and development, sales and distribution centers in the industrial park. Furthermore, qualified medical institutions will be encouraged to conduct clinical research in cutting-edge biopharmaceutical fields such as cell immunity, stem cells and gene therapies.

In the same month, the new edition of the national negative list for foreign investment took effect, scrapping the two remaining items in the manufacturing

sector on the previous list.

The items on the latest negative list, which outlines fields off-limits to foreign investors, have been further reduced to 29.

This fully demonstrates China's active willingness to expand mutual benefits and its proactive policy of supporting economic globalization, said Jin Xiandong, an official with the National Development and Reform Commission, adding that further efforts will be made to improve the level of foreign investment liberalization and facilitation, and to optimize services for foreign-invested enterprises.

In addition to the manufacturing sector, China is also pushing forward broader and deeper opening-up in the services sector.

China announced in September that it would allow the establishment of wholly foreign-owned hospitals in certain cities and regions, including Shenzhen, Guangdong province; Beijing; and throughout the island province of Hainan.

In October, the country decided to allow foreign investors to operate wholly owned businesses such as internet data centers and engage in online data processing and transaction processing in certain

areas as part of a pilot program to expand opening-up in value-added telecom services.

The country's opening-up efforts have made it a magnet for foreign investors. A total of 46,893 new foreign-invested firms were established across China in the first 10 months, up 11.8 percent year-on-year. Notably, FDI inflows into medical equipment and instrument manufacturing surged 61.7 percent, while inflows into computer and office device manufacturing grew by 48.8 percent.

Opening-up to the outside world is not just a matter of "opening the door." More importantly, it requires actively aligning with international economic and trade regulations as well as other high-standard rules, said Zhang Bin, deputy director of the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Zhang underlined the need to enhance synergy between domestic and international markets, as well as resources, to constantly cultivate and consolidate new advantages in international economic cooperation and competition.

XINHUA

## County attracts biz on strong industry chain

GUIYANG — With Christmas approaching, production lines in a workshop in a remote county in Southwest China's Guizhou province are busy working to meet the increasing demand as orders keep pouring in.

Surprisingly, there are few people on the shop floor. Automated welding machines have taken over most of the work.

"The high level of equipment automation has reduced the requirement for workers. This has created job opportunities for local women who can work near home," said Gan Luo, general manager of Yidong Household Products in Changming economic development zone in Guiding county, adding female staff members account for two-thirds of the factory's employees.

The factory is now operating at full capacity to fulfill export orders from European and US markets. "We have established a trade company dedicated to dealing with overseas business. This year's orders have exceeded 20 million yuan (\$2.75 million) already," Gan said.

A Guizhou local, Gan started his own business in Ningbo, a coastal city in Zhejiang province.

Prior to relocating his operations to Guizhou, Gan's business had been thriving. However, the escalating costs associated with labor, as well as land and energy consumption had emerged as formidable obstacles to sustaining a healthy profit margin. Consequently, Gan turned his attention to his hometown, seeking a more cost-effective solution.

Located in the mountain-ringed southwest, Guizhou itself is a major province for electricity output, which is a big edge for many enterprises. With lower wages and land prices, the only obstacle for Gan seems to be the relatively higher transportation costs.

"In recent years, the enhancements to Guizhou's transportation network, along with savings accrued from other sectors, can effectively neutralize

the rise in delivery costs," Gan said.

In 2021, officials from the Changming economic development zone and a prominent local enterprise in Guiding county embarked on a business recruitment trip to Ningbo to encourage companies to relocate to their hometown. This initiative was successful in attracting businesses, including Gan, who was motivated by the local government's support and established his operations in Guiding in 2022.

Gan expressed his confidence in returning, "The promising business prospects, coupled with the local government's proactive efforts, have instilled us with confidence."

Simply attracting one or two companies is far from sufficient. The local government understands that only by establishing a complete supporting industry and forming a comprehensive industrial chain can businesses truly settle in Guiding.

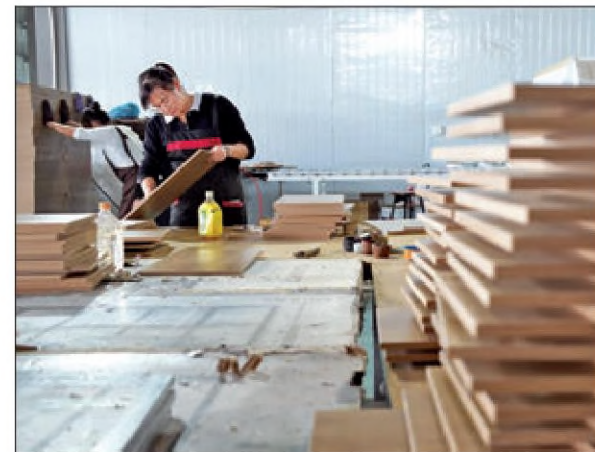
Sun Ling, deputy director of the local industry and information technology bureau, emphasized their focus on the entire aluminum industry chain, from upstream to downstream businesses, as the primary target for investment attraction. This strategic approach aims to bolster the region's economic development and create a thriving industrial ecosystem.

Gan's comeback is part of a broader trend of businesses returning to the region. "The relocation of more enterprises on the supply chain will help reduce the costs," Gan told Xinhua News Agency.

At the same recruitment event, after serious discussion with fellow partners, another Guiding native, Yang Liangyuan, who runs an aluminum accessories firm in Ningbo, also decided to relocate his factory home.

"The favorable business environment and cost savings are appealing, but it is the complete industry cluster that truly helps cut costs," Yang said.

XINHUA



Employees work on the production line at Yidong Household Products in Guiding county, Guizhou province, on Oct 17. LI HE / XINHUA

## Save and earn, value conscious buying on rise

By CHENG YU  
chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese consumers are shifting gears to more meaningful purchases as they strive to boost incomes and tighten spending to navigate economic uncertainties, said a report by global consumer and retail analytics leader NielsenIQ.

It said that although lower-income consumer groups have shown clear signs of improvement, over half of Chinese households report no significant financial improvement over the past six months. Some 34 percent of consumers believe their household finances are better than last year, down 16 percent year-on-year.

Against this backdrop, more consumers are adopting a "save and earn" strategy. A remarkable 72 percent are actively hunting for "side gigs" to supplement their primary incomes. At the same time, they're making every yuan count, with 47 percent confessing that they now only buy items necessary to avoid waste — a 7 percent increase year-on-year.

Notably, value-conscious shoppers, who routinely compare prices across platforms, have surged from 30 percent to 39 percent, and have

become the dominant consumer group in China's consumption market, said the report.

Zhou Lingqing, managing director of NielsenIQ China, said: "Chinese consumers remain resilient and cautious and are adopting more purposeful spending habits. They are redefining what value means to them by pursuing products that bring tangible happiness and fulfillment. As the world's second-largest economy, China's steady growth continues to lead globally (among major countries). Policies promoting employment, stabilizing incomes and boosting consumer welfare have effectively stimulated both online and offline consumption. We are confident in the gradual recovery of China's consumption."

The National Bureau of Statistics said there was steady economic improvement in October, with major indicators rebounding significantly.

Social retail sales for October rose 4.8 percent year-on-year, reaching 4.54 trillion yuan (\$622 billion), up 1.6 percentage points from the previous month. Sectors like cosmetics, automobiles and home appliances led the charge, with high-end and upgraded goods seeing particularly

brisk sales, the NBS said.

Despite caution from Chinese consumers, only 17 percent choose products solely based on low prices, compared to 33 percent in the Asia-Pacific region overall, according to the latest NielsenIQ report.

Chinese consumers are also more willing to pay premiums for high-efficiency or innovative products. A whopping 75 percent are willing to pay extra for items that last longer, 71 percent for innovative products with exceptional value and 65 percent for antiaging beauty products — all outpacing both Asia-Pacific and global averages.

Looking into 2025, the report predicts that new technologies — including artificial intelligence and emerging demand — will lead to transformative lifestyles and new consumption patterns.

For instance, health and wellness-related wearables and tech-driven gadgetry will accelerate the shift toward healthier living.

January-September sales of such wearables increased 14 percent year-on-year, with devices featuring heart rate, blood oxygen and blood pressure monitoring growing by 28 percent, 35 percent and 26 percent, respectively.

Additionally, 71 percent of Chinese consumers use social media to better understand new products and services, and 44 percent report switching brands based on online recommendations.

At the beginning of the year, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, along with six other departments, unveiled a guideline urging the country to grasp global opportunities in technology innovation and industrial development, especially in future industries and emerging technologies.

6G, humanoid robots, quantum computers, high-speed trains, next-generation aircraft, green intelligent ships and unmanned watercraft are among some of the key priorities, the guideline said.

Wang Peng, a researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, said in an earlier interview that no doubt, frontier technologies are expected to play an increasingly bigger role in driving economic growth.

"As new quality productive forces are highlighted this year, more innovations from emerging industries will empower more industries and the real economy in the years to come," Wang said.



## BUSINESSINSIGHT

## Boosting domestic demand key to growth

EAGLE EYE

By Li Xunlei

Amid the external uncertainty posed by the incoming administration of the United States, China should make expanding domestic demand a crucial focus for 2025, with consumption and services emerging as rising priorities as well as augmented fiscal spending being on the horizon.

The election of Donald Trump as the next US president has signaled a potential shift in US policy toward allocating more resources domestically. Trump's inclination to reduce overseas military commitments and cut fiscal expenditures abroad could enhance the growth potential of the US economy. Meanwhile, his advocacy for strict restrictions on illegal immigration and additional tariffs on imported goods may heighten US inflation.

If US inflation expectations rise, the US Federal Reserve may slow down or even halt its interest rate cuts, resulting in a further strengthening of the US dollar, which could weigh on the Chinese yuan.

Consequently, the pace of interest rate cuts by the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, may also decelerate, as PBOC has two significant monetary policy goals: to maintain exchange rate stability and to effectuate price level stability. Any pressure on the yuan exchange rate could lead to a slower pace of interest rate reductions, which, in turn, could negatively impact the country's real estate market.

After all, external demand is an uncontrollable variable. If the size of exports shrinks, the domestic market will face the pressure that many goods will shift from exports to domestic sales. Additionally, the export sector is related — directly and indirectly — to the employment of approximately 150 million in China. A reduction in export volume could hit employment in the export sector.

Internal demand, on the contrary, can be adjusted autonomously. The policy focus for the coming year should be on expanding domestic demand, including investment and consumption. I suggest reducing reliance on investment and promoting consumption growth. Policy efforts should continue to stimulate consumer spending.

We also need to further encourage the development of the services sector and absorb more labor forces. In short, China's response in the next year to the US policy uncertainty should be expanding consumption and reducing institutional constraints that impede the services sector from further development.

China's growth model over the past 30 years or so has been investment-driven. Transitioning to a more balanced growth model will face significant resistance, so it is essential to advance various reforms, especially fiscal and tax reforms.

Through income redistribution mechanisms, the country can increase the income level of low- and middle-income groups and expand fiscal spending in social welfare areas such as eldercare, employment, healthcare and public services. All these will help create more secure livelihoods for the public, shape more optimistic expectations and thereby promote consumer spending.

Meanwhile, I believe that the services sector lies at the core of stable employment, which can create significantly more jobs than the manufacturing industry when it contributes the same amount of economic growth.



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

**The expansion of the scope for special bond usage is beneficial to stabilizing the property market. Unlike traditional project-based investments, which often involve lengthy approvals and evaluation processes, allocating special bonds for land acquisitions or purchasing unsold housing can significantly improve capital efficiency and provide immediate support to the domestic economy.**

Since 2014, due to mechanization and automation, the number of employees in China's secondary industry has continued to decline. In some cases, an increase in manufacturing investment could even exacerbate the slowdown in job creation.

erbate the slowdown in job creation.

The services sector has tremendous potential to drive economic growth. A notable characteristic of the services sector is that it involves transactions between residents, leading to a variety of new service demand. The growth of such demand does not rely on the development of specific industries, but is realized as household savings rates decrease while willingness to consume increases.

Releasing service sector development potential is not something that can be done overnight, but a long, gradual process. No simple decisions can drive the rapid development of the services sector in the short term.

To develop the services sector effectively, we must increase household incomes. It can be said that the relationship between a well-developed services sector and increased household incomes is like a chicken-and-egg scenario. We must first increase the number of either eggs or chickens to kick off a virtuous cycle.

The problem facing China is that household incomes account for a relatively low proportion of the country's total GDP, making the development of the services sector somewhat challenging. Therefore, the country must increase household incomes through multiple channels — increased

social spending, job creation and tax and fiscal reform.

At present, high-income groups account for a high proportion of total household incomes, but they typically have lower marginal propensities to consume. Income redistribution through tax reforms can address this issue and boost the income level of middle- and low-income groups, narrowing the wealth gap.

Given a more challenging external environment, China's general fiscal deficit may increase to 3.5 percent to 4 percent of its GDP in 2025, with the broad fiscal deficit potentially reaching approximately 12 trillion yuan (\$1.65 trillion), up from over 9 trillion yuan this year. This broader deficit ratio could increase from 7 percent in 2024 to around 9 percent next year.

The raft of incremental policies to promote a sustained economic recovery includes increasing support for key demographic groups and enhancing overall consumption. It is anticipated that the size of consumption-promotion policies for next year will be relatively large.

To support this, the issuance of general treasury bonds will likely expand. On Oct 12, at a news conference, Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an said that the central government still has considerable space for borrowing and increasing deficits, which, in my view,

provides more policy tools for countercyclical adjustments.

Meanwhile, I predict that the size of next year's ultra-long-term special treasury bonds will be at least 2 trillion yuan, including at least 1 trillion yuan to support capital replenishment of major commercial banks.

Next year's local government special bond quota may be around 5 trillion yuan, including 2.8 trillion yuan for local government implicit debt replacement and at least 1.5 trillion to 2 trillion yuan for the acquisition of idle land and unsold housing.

The expansion of the scope for special bond usage is beneficial to stabilizing the property market. Unlike traditional project-based investments, which often involve lengthy approvals and evaluation processes, allocating special bonds for land acquisitions or purchasing unsold housing can significantly improve capital efficiency and provide immediate support to the domestic economy.

Li Xunlei is chief economist at Zhongtai Financial International Limited.

The article is compiled based on his opinions in a recent interview with 21st Century Business Herald. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## China still has further room for RRR, interest rate cuts

MAIN STREET

By Sheng Songcheng

The People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, proposed in its third quarter monetary policy implementation report that a reasonable pickup in prices should be taken as a key consideration in monetary policymaking to keep prices at a reasonable level.

However, prices are still running low at present.

In October, China's CPI, or consumer price index, increased by 0.3 percent year-on-year. The growth rate was 0.1 percentage point lower than that in September, and the cumulative year-on-year growth rate of the index in the January-October period was only 0.3 percent.

The PPI, or producer price index, fell by 2.8 percent year-on-year and 0.1 percent month-on-month in October — the second year in a row when it has recorded a negative result.

The decline further expanded from the

September level and was the lowest since last December.

These figures are a clear sign of the fact that corporate willingness to invest has yet to be restored. And with the central bank maintaining its stance on a supportive monetary policy, we believe that there is still room for further RRR, or reserve requirement ratio, and interest rate cuts.

Compared to other major economies, China still has considerable room for RRR cuts. The PBOC might share the same thoughts, as it had lowered the RRR for financial institutions by 0.5 percentage point in September, injecting around 1 trillion yuan (\$137.5 billion) of long-term liquidity into the financial markets.

After the cut, the second of this year, the weighted average reserve requirement ratio for financial institutions is about 6.6 percent. During a conference on the financial support for high-quality development in September, PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng also gave a forward-looking guidance on monetary policy, indicating that China may further reduce the reserve requirement ratio by 0.25 to 0.5 percentage point at an opportune time later this year.

In terms of liquidity support, among various monetary policy tools RRR cuts have the longest term and the lowest cost, helping reduce

funding costs for commercial banks and alleviate the pressure on interest rate spreads.

As of the end of the third quarter, the net interest margin of commercial banks had dropped to 1.53 percent, a record low. Currently, loan prime rates, or LPR, for loans of one year, as well as five years and above stand at 3.1 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively, marking the lowest levels since the LPR reform in 2019.

The central bank pays an interest rate of 1.62 percent on required reserve deposits, which also represents the cost of injecting liquidity via RRR cuts. However, from the asset side, the weighted average interest rate on RMB loans for financial institutions was 3.67 percent as of the end of the third quarter, more than twice the former.

Additionally, most of the national and local bonds are purchased by commercial banks. At present, about 70 percent of China's treasury bonds are held by commercial banks, and they also hold about 82 percent of local bonds.

According to the incremental fiscal policy announced in November, the nation is expected to directly increase local debt resources by 10 trillion yuan in the next few years. With signs clearly showing that the scale of government bond issuance will increase, the RRR cut will increase the funds that commercial

**According to the incremental fiscal policy announced in November, the nation is expected to directly increase local debt resources by 10 trillion yuan in the next few years.**

banks can use freely, so as to better support the issuance of national and local bonds.

The RRR cut, to this end, will help maintain reasonable and sufficient market liquidity during bond issuance, while interest rate cuts will facilitate swaps between central and local debts in terms of policy effectiveness.

Since the current interest rate on statutory debt is much lower than the interest rate on implicit debt, the replacement will greatly save local interest expenses — about 600 billion yuan can be saved in five years, according to official estimates.

There is also room for interest rate cuts. Based on the difference between the 10-year treasury bond yield, which is around 2.1 percent, and the core CPI — 0.2 percent in Octo-

ber — the current real interest rate is around 2 percent.

Based on previous cases of dealing with deflation, if given a minimum real interest rate of 0.88 percent — same as the level of October 2016 — and the core CPI can reach a year-on-year growth rate of 0.8 percent in the future, which is the average annual growth rate of core CPI since the COVID-19 pandemic, the nominal interest rate can be reduced to about 1.7 percent.

Considering that the current 10-year treasury bond yield is around 2.1 percent, it is expected that there is still room for interest rate cuts of about 40 basis points in the near future. The US Federal Reserve's entry into the interest rate reduction cycle has also provided a favorable external environment for China's interest rate cuts.

Whether it is an RRR cut or an interest rate cut, it will be conducive to further bringing into play the effectiveness of monetary policy in conjunction with proactive fiscal policy.

The writer is a professor at China Europe International Business School and former director-general of the statistics and analysis department of the People's Bank of China.

This op-ed is a translated version of a speech by the writer at a financial forum held by CEIBS in November. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## WORLD

# Yoon asked to step down in 'orderly' way

Opposition party to continue push for impeaching South Korean president

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong  
kelly@chinadailyapac.com

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, now facing possible charges of treason, will step down early "in an orderly manner", the ruling party said after the parliament's failure to pass an impeachment motion against Yoon.

"Even before he leaves the post, the president will not take part in state affairs, including diplomacy," said Han Dong-hoon, leader of the ruling People Power Party, on Sunday, noting that the majority of the people believe that Yoon should step down because he cannot run state affairs normally for the remainder of his term originally set to last until May 2027.

At a joint public address with Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the ruling party leader and the prime minister pledged all-out efforts to stabilize the political situation in the country.

However, soon afterward, South Korean National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik said it is "unconstitutional" if the prime minister and the ruling party jointly exer-

cise presidential power.

In a televised address, Woo also said impeachment is the only legal procedure to suspend the president over his breach of the constitution by declaring martial law on Tuesday night.

The motion to impeach Yoon requires support from two-thirds of the National Assembly, or 200 out of its 300 members. Though 192 lawmakers of the opposition coalition cast their ballots on Saturday afternoon, all but three of the 108 members of the People Power Party left the National Assembly ahead of the vote, making the impeachment vote invalid due to the lack of quorum.

Woo had waited about three hours for the ruling party lawmakers to return before announcing the scrapping of the impeachment motion due to lack of quorum. Outside, and also in other cities, hundreds of thousands of citizens held a candlelight rally to demand that Yoon step down.

Before the vote, Yoon apologized for his martial law declaration and said he will let the ruling party decide on his term. Yoon accepted the resignation of Minister of the



People attend a rally to call for the impeachment of South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol near the National Assembly in Seoul on Saturday. YAO QILIN / XINHUA

Interior and Safety Lee Sang-min on Sunday.

PM Han Duck-soo said the government will put the people first and avoid any vacuum in state affairs.

The main opposition Democratic Party, or DP, called for the immediate arrest and investigation of Yoon over the martial law declaration and rejected the ruling party's plan to have the prime minister lead state affairs.

DP leader Lee Jae-myung said on Sunday that they will try again to impeach Yoon on Dec 14.

## Treason charges

South Korean prosecutors said Yoon has been booked as a suspect on charges of treason, Yonhap News Agency reported on Sunday. DP will submit bills on Monday for investigating charges of Yoon's

alleged insurrection and scandal involving his wife, multiple media outlets said.

While the opposition party wants impeachment as quickly as possible, the ruling party's primary goal seems to be to prevent Lee from coming into the presidency, said Benjamin A. Engel, a visiting professor at the Dankook University in South Korea.

According to the law, a presidential election will take place within 60 days of Yoon's impeachment, which would give Lee a chance to participate in it as it will take time for the top court to hand down the ruling over cases related to Lee.

Because Lee faces trials over corruption and other criminal charges, it is possible he will be ineligible to contest a presidential election within six months from now, so the ruling party is delaying impeach-

ment long enough and keeping Yoon in office but with no real authority, so that they can delay the next presidential election, said Engel.

Ryu Yong-wook, an assistant professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, said it is important to keep a close eye on how South Korea's foreign policy will change in the medium and longer term as the political leverage is now firmly with the progressive opposition.

"Under Yoon, Seoul has sided with the US in the great power rivalry, which helped other regional security initiatives such as the US-Japan-ROK trilateral to develop," said Ryu. "All this could change if we have a new president from the progressives in the future."

Xinhua contributed to this story.

# Chinese, US scientists tie up for cancer treatments

By RENA LI in Los Angeles  
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Despite geopolitical tensions, Chinese and US medical professionals have made persistent efforts to strengthen collaboration between the two nations in biomedical and medical sciences, a forum has heard.

Themed "Cancer Immunotherapy: Breakthroughs and Challenges", a recent forum organized by the International Association of Biomedical Sciences brought together Chinese and US medical professionals to discuss advancing innovative therapies for challenging diseases.

Exri Wu, a researcher at the Baylor College of Medicine, emphasized the resilience of nongovernmental exchanges in the Sino-US medical community.

"Although the China Initiative has hindered cooperation between the Chinese and US medical communities, nongovernmental exchanges continue," Wu told China Daily.

The China Initiative, launched by the US government in 2018 to "combat economic espionage", was terminated in February 2022, but its chilling effects still linger. In this challenging environment, the Baylor College of Medicine has maintained partnerships with Chinese institutions such as Xian Jiaotong University, Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Yantai University.

"China has more students and more resources, and compared with the technology in the US, only by working together can we achieve strong research results and benefit the world," Wu said.

## Common challenge

"Cancer is a common challenge facing mankind," Wu said. "The Chinese and American medical communities should continue to cooperate."

Cancer remains a leading cause of death worldwide, claiming nearly 10 million lives annually, with lung, colorectal, liver and breast cancers among the most prevalent. According to the World Health Organization, one in six deaths globally is due to cancer, and cases are projected to rise significantly, from 19.3 million new cases in 2020 to an estimated 28.4 million by 2040.

Ethan Shevach, a researcher from the National Institutes of Health, said his team has spent two decades working on an experimental method to selectively target tumors, but success remains limited.

"We really hope the two sides can develop essential cooperation to battle cancer," Shevach said, highlighting the importance of shared expertise to overcome such hurdles.

Fan Chaohong, an oncology medical officer at the US Food and Drug Administration, pointed to the potential of China's large population and workforce for biotech drug development. She also noted the critical role of collaboration in navigating regulatory challenges, particularly in gene and cellular therapies.

"The main challenge is the historical lack of regulation and the need for more communication and trust between the US and China," Fan said.

"With cancer cases on the rise globally, international partnerships are becoming increasingly essential to address medical needs," said Li Yong-tian, president of the International Association of Biomedical Sciences.

# Chinese Americans laud UN recognition of Spring Festival

By RENA LI in Los Angeles  
renali@chinadailyusa.com

The news that Spring Festival was officially recognized by UNESCO on Wednesday has generated an outpouring of pride across Chinese American communities in the United States.

Zhang Yong, chairman of the Roundtable of Chinese American Organizations, called it a milestone for Chinese culture globally.

"This represents respect and recognition for traditional Chinese culture and will undoubtedly help promote it worldwide," Zhang said.

He emphasized the festival's significance for Chinese Americans, saying it enhances cultural identity. "With this success, we must further tell China's story well and promote our culture on the global stage," Zhang said.

A cornerstone of Chinese cultural tradition, Spring Festival has been officially inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

UNESCO announced the designation during the 19th session of its Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Asuncion, Paraguay, which ran from Monday to Saturday.

"The Spring Festival is a vibrant expression of unity, cultural pride and sustainable living," UNESCO stated.

San Francisco Bay Area resident Yan Jieyu welcomed the announcement by wearing traditional Chinese hanfu attire, reflecting on the long history of Chinese immigrants in the US.

"Since 1885, our ancestors never forgot their traditions. Now I can officially say 'Happy Chinese New Year' to my neighbors and non-Chinese friends — cool!" Yan said.

For Yu Zhongxia, president of the Inner Mongolia General Chamber of Commerce in the US, inclusion on the UNESCO list was both a personal and national celebration. "Congratulations to our motherland. I

wish everyone a Happy New Year!"

Huang Dongping, president of the American Southern California Chinese Economic and Trade Cultural Association, underscored the festival's growing inclusivity. "Spring Festival has become a world festival. We will invite more ethnic groups to join us in our celebrations," Huang said.

Nancy Bo, head of EE Data Wonderful Entertainment in Texas, recalled the festival's origins dating back 3,000 years to the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC).

She highlighted the tradition's universal appeal by saying "wherever there are Chinese people, the tradition of celebrating Spring Festival will be preserved."

David Chong, president of the US-China Youth and Student Exchange Association in Washington, said, "This recognition shows that our country's cultural influence is expanding, and its status on the international stage is becoming more important."

Lan Jin, president of the Oregon China Council, said the festival is a unifying event for Chinese people worldwide.

"The Spring Festival is not only a traditional Chinese holiday, but also the most important cultural bond in the hearts of Chinese people globally," Lan said. "The successful inscription allows us to feel the strong influence of our homeland's culture, making us more united and confident even while living abroad."

Bo urged Chinese American communities to educate young generations about the festival's significance.

"We must let our children understand and celebrate Spring Festival, ensuring its fireworks continue to bloom for thousands of years," she said.

Chang Jun in San Francisco, Linda Deng in Seattle and May Zhou in Houston contributed to this story.

# Trump tariffs to harm growth: Experts

By YANG RAN  
yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

The wave of tariff hikes proposed by United States President-elect Donald Trump would harm global livelihood and economic growth, while it can't help resolve the country's domestic economic issues, global experts said.

They made the remarks at the 9th China Global Think Tank Innovation Forum held in Beijing on Wednesday, where experts discussed the potential global impact of Trump's return to the White House, especially over his controversial tariff policies.

Jeff Nankivell, president and CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, stated that tariffs are one of the most regressive forms of tax, especially affecting the poorest consumers and members of society.

"Tariffs are going to make life more expensive," Nankivell said, noting the world has already experienced inflationary pressures over the last couple of years due to ongoing conflicts.

"But as we get into a world of tariffs ... it's not just expensive at the consumer level, but also for business operations," he emphasized.

He Weiwen, former commercial counselor at the Chinese consulates general in New York and San Francisco, echoed this view, noting that history shows tariffs lead to downturns in global trade.

"Tariffs are reciprocal. When one country imposes them, others retaliate, ultimately affecting everyone," he pointed out.

Tariffs are reciprocal. When one country imposes them, others retaliate, ultimately affecting everyone."

He Weiwen, former commercial counselor at the Chinese consulates general in New York and San Francisco

He cited Bloomberg estimates, which suggest that if the US imposed a 60 percent tariff on China and 10 to 20 percent on other countries, and those countries responded in kind, US imports could drop by 55 percent and exports by 30 to 60 percent.

"In 1930, the US Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act raised tariffs to historic highs, prompting retaliations from the UK, France, Canada and Germany. Over the following three years, US imports fell by 66 percent, exports by 61 percent, and global trade dropped by over 50 percent. This led to the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and later the World Trade Organization."

"If the US were to significantly raise tariffs again, we could see a repeat of these outcomes. To avoid such setbacks, a global free trade system is essential," he said.

Dede Nickerson, strategic adviser at DLN Media, said, "What we need to do in business is to counter the tariffs, because tariffs are not

gonna help the American people. They're gonna cause further inflation. A lot of people are (already) struggling to pay their bills. There's a lot of worry and anxiety."

Nankivell echoed this view, saying the structural factors behind the US' current hardship will not be resolved by tariff policy or trade wars. It has to do with savings rates and a structural imbalance in the government borrowing and spending that express themselves in currency valuations, which are major drivers of bilateral deficits and surpluses, he said.

At the geopolitical level, threats of tariffs will only make things more unpredictable, experts said.

Giorgio Cuscito, editorial board member at Limes-Italian Review of Geopolitics, said that tariffs are becoming a geopolitical tool the US would like to use in a very strong way in the next few years.

"The fact that the tariff threats are being wielded on noneconomic issues is an indication that things are going to be hard to predict," Nankivell added.

However, he pointed out that there are still reasons to be optimistic as the rest of the global community will continue to try to advance free trade and economic liberalization, aiming to include people at all levels of society in the benefits of trade.

The forum, hosted by the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, drew over 200 attendees from about 50 nations.

# Federal court upholds TikTok ban despite opposition

WASHINGTON — A US federal appeals court on Friday upheld a law mandating that ByteDance sell the widely used social media app TikTok or face a potential ban in the United States, despite widespread opposition.

A three-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals in Washington, DC, dismissed TikTok's claim that the ban is unconstitutional and infringes on the First Amendment rights of the 170 million people in the United States who use the app.

If ByteDance does not sell TikTok by Jan 19, the law will require Apple and Google to remove TikTok from their app stores, leading to a ban of the app.

"Unfortunately, the TikTok ban was conceived and pushed through

based upon inaccurate, flawed and hypothetical information, resulting in outright censorship of the American people," TikTok said in a statement on X.

The company said on Friday that it would go to the US Supreme Court to fight the law.

"The Supreme Court has an established historical record of protecting Americans' right to free speech, and we expect they will do just that on this important constitutional issue."

In April, US President Joe Biden enacted the law, which only gave ByteDance 270 days to sell TikTok to a non-Chinese buyer, following concerns from lawmakers across both parties about TikTok's suspected ties to the Chinese government. In

May, TikTok sued the US government to block the potential ban.

The TikTok ban, based on unfounded national security concerns due to its Chinese ownership, has drawn widespread criticism.

"For the first time I'm realizing that a lot of what I worked for could disappear," Chris Mowrey, a social media influencer with 470,000 TikTok followers, told Reuters.

"I don't think it's been talked about enough how damaging it will be from an economic standpoint for small businesses and creators."

Congressman Jim McGovern from Massachusetts is among those who voted against a TikTok ban in March. In a post on X earlier this year, he laid out four reasons: first, the bill was rushed; second, there are major free

speech issues; third, it would hurt small businesses; fourth, "America should be doing way more to protect data privacy & combating misinformation online. Singling out one app isn't the answer!"

Gary Clyde Huffbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, noted that National Security adviser Jake Sullivan previously promised that US restrictions on direct commerce with China would be confined to limiting the flow of advanced technologies with "a small yard and a high fence."

Unfortunately, the "small yard has since grown into a pasture with no discernible fence," he said.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Situation in Syria will have spillover effects on a region already convulsed by violence

Taking advantage of the ongoing conflict in Gaza and Lebanon, Syria's rebel groups, a coalition with a complicated composition and backed by foreign forces including the United States and Türkiye, launched a surprise offensive against Syria's pro-government forces last month.

In a stunning development on Sunday, these opposition forces claimed to have taken Damascus, the country's capital, and announced an end to President Bashar al-Assad's government. This has sent shock waves around the world as it spells more uncertainties for an already crisis-ridden region.

It also means even more suffering for the Syrian people.

In a statement on Sunday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said that it hopes Syria will regain stability as soon as possible, and called on all relevant parties to take measures to ensure the safety of Chinese institutions and personnel in the country.

The lightning advance of the Syrian rebel forces has plunged the Middle East country into further violence, chaos and now an alleged regime change, dealing yet another heavy blow to the fragile fabric of the country and the broader region's peace and stability.

Before the alleged fall of Damascus, the rebels had already captured several other big Syrian cities including Aleppo and Hama. The abrupt escalation of tensions in Syria has thrown the country into a fresh spiral of violence that has brought even more grief and an ever-worsening humanitarian disaster to the Syrian people.

The United Nations has warned that the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with more than 370,000 Syrians being displaced and many others trapped in frontline areas. UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria Adam Abdelmoula said in a statement on Sunday that the latest violence has "resulted in the tragic loss of innocent civilian lives, including women and children, damage to civilian infrastructure, and the suspension of critical services".

Syria was already suffering a humanitarian crisis resulting from the civil war in the country that is now in its 14th year, with around 90 percent of families in Syria living in poverty. After years of civil war and unrest and the heavy toll of US sanctions against Syria, Syrian people have already suffered greatly.

Before the recent influx of more than half a million returnees and refugees from Lebanon, there were more than 16.7 million people in Syria in need of humanitarian assistance. The dire humanitarian situation needs more than expressions of sympathy.

Influential players in Syria's civil war, especially those with sway over the rebel coalition, should look to the larger humanitarian picture and the need for stability in the region, rather than relentlessly exploiting the sufferings of Syrian people in selfish pursuit of their own strategic interests.

What is happening in Syria is yet another consequence of the Israel-Hamas conflict which began more than a year ago. With Washington's backing and encouragement, Tel Aviv has struck against one force after another in the Middle East, with its military launching attacks near and far against Hamas, Hezbollah and even targets in Syria. Israel's reckless war machine has broken the region's power balance and given Syria's rebels the opportunity they were looking for.

The new wave of violence in Syria, the first significant one since 2016, has plunged the country deeper into crisis and aggravated its people's plight. It has also opened a new chaotic front in the Middle East that has just seen a glimmer of hope for peace with the newly-reached Lebanon truce.

Any humanitarian violation must be condemned, and so must any foreign interference aimed at instigating regime change in the country. Relevant UN resolutions on Syria must be upheld and the international community should support a peaceful and proper resolution of the crisis in Syria through inclusive political dialogue at an early date.

## Policy coordination can spur common prosperity

The talks Chinese Premier Li Qiang is hosting in Beijing on Monday with heads of 10 international economic organizations are expected to be conducive to improving the global economic governance system and promoting global common prosperity.

Under the theme of "Building Consensus on Development to Promote Global Common Prosperity", Premier Li and his guests, including heads of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, are scheduled to have intensive discussions on the prospects for world economic development.

According to the agenda of the "1+10" Dialogue, the three topics under which they are to exchange views are "Seizing Opportunities in Transformation to Promote World Economic Transition and Growth", "Upholding Multilateralism in Advancing Reform and Development of the Global Economic Governance System" and "China's Endeavor to Further Deepen Reform Comprehensively and Break New Ground in Chinese Modernization".

These topics are all pertinent to the practical challenges confronting the world economy on both the macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. If a common understanding can be reached through the dialogue, it would hopefully prompt the relevant parties to make concerted efforts to help the world economy overcome its obdurate difficulties.

With the rise of anti-globalization sentiment and intensified geopolitical conflicts, more and more parties have switched their focus from working together to make the pie bigger for all to scrambling for a larger share of the existing pie for themselves.

But if countries only consider maximizing their own interests and ignore the interests of others, and even resort to "decoupling" and "de-risking" measures that aim to build "small yards with high fences" to protect their own interests and development rights at the cost of others', they will only raise the costs of economic operations, sever economic ties between regions, intensify contradictions and disputes, and drag countries around the world into a vicious cycle of dog-eat-dog competition.

China strongly opposes these shortsighted and selfish practices and the zero-sum mentality they represent. As the world's second-largest economy and a major manufacturing base, logistics hub and investment destination, China firmly upholds free trade, inclusive economic globalization and fair multilateral global governance.

Countries should treat the global economic challenges with a sense of camaraderie and responsibility. China is committed to building a fair and transparent business environment under the rule of law for all market entities and is willing to work with these international economic and financial organizations to strengthen macroeconomic policy communication and maintain an open market environment.

In the process of strengthening macroeconomic policy coordination and working together to explore new growth drivers and new frontiers of high technology, countries should discard their zero-sum game approach, and create an open, fair and nondiscriminatory environment for each other.

To that end, China is ready to work with these international organizations, and other like-minded partners, to strive for a balanced and sustainable recovery of the world economy.

With the implementation of a series of effective and precise incremental policies, China's economy has maintained a positive trend since the beginning of this year, and the country has the confidence and ability to achieve its annual growth target of about 5 percent. China is willing to continue to share with the world its development dividends and opportunities.

All responsible players should work closely together to replace bloc confrontation with inclusive win-win cooperation, replace decoupling with efforts to stabilize global industry and supply chains, and replace "small yards with high fences" approaches with trade and investment liberalization and facilitation efforts.

China will continue to support the organizations to advance their respective institutional reforms so they can play an active role in macroeconomic and financial policy formulation to support a recovery of the global economy.

And it will also continue to support developing countries with practical actions so as to promote inclusive and equitable development.

At the same time, it is ready to make concerted efforts with relevant parties to enhance the representation, voice and influence of emerging market countries and developing countries in international affairs.

## CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

## Contact us at:

**China Daily**  
15 HuiXin Dongle Chaoyang District,  
Beijing 100029  
News: +86 (0) 10 6491-8366  
editor@chinadaily.com.cn  
Advertisement: +86 (0) 10 6491-8631  
ads@chinadaily.com.cn  
Subscription: +86-400-699-0203  
subscription.chinadaily.com.cn  
App: www.chinadaily.com.cn/mobile/daily.html

**China Daily UK**  
90 Cannon St, London EC4N 6HA, UK  
+44 (0) 207 398 8270  
editor@chinadailyuk.com

**China Daily Asia Pacific**  
**China Daily Hong Kong**  
Unit 1818, Hing Wai Centre, 7 Tin Wan  
Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong  
+852 2518 5111  
editor@chinadailyhk.com  
editor@chinadailyasia.com

**China Daily USA**  
1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,  
New York, NY 10036  
+1 212 537 8888  
editor@chinadailyusa.com

**China Daily Africa**  
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
+254 (0) 20 242 8589 (Nairobi)  
editor@chinadailyafrica.com  
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com  
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## Bitcoin reflects a fast changing global financial system landscape

The price of Bitcoin has exceeded \$100,000 recently. Several institutional changes behind this are worth noting.

In the past few years, the US standard for cryptocurrency regulation has gradually become an international standard. International organizations, mainly the Bank for International Settlements and the Financial Stability Board, have done a lot of work in the development and cross-border regulation of cryptocurrencies, reached a consensus on the financial stability and financial risks brought by cryptocurrencies, and established risk prevention and control mechanisms.

In the future, asset tokenization based on blockchain technology is expected to become an important trend. The BIS has currently proposed a financial internet model based on blockchain technology, which has been recognized by many countries and regions. The development of the financial internet mod-

el will have an important impact on the cryptocurrency market and the global financial infrastructure.

The cryptocurrency market represented by Bitcoin will become an important part of the global financial system, and Bitcoin's market value will continue to expand with the development of the entire market. From the current perspective, Bitcoin's asset attributes will become stronger, and its status is expected to be comparable to digital gold. If the US president-elect clarifies the national strategic reserve status of Bitcoin, it will further promote the rise of Bitcoin's market value and push it to become a global strategic asset.

It is foreseeable that with the continuous development of the market and the gradual relaxation of US regulatory policies, financial derivatives with Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies as underlying assets will continue to emerge, promoting the continuous prosperity

and development of the cryptocurrency market.

At the same time, relevant financial product innovation will also have an impact on different economies, especially small economies. The function of their national financial regulatory departments, and their domestic legal currency status are likely to be weakened in the process.

The development of the cryptocurrency market and the support of the US government may trigger a new wave of financial technology innovation as well. Financial technology innovation in areas such as stablecoins, blockchain, financial internet and financial data will be ready to go then. Moreover, the new round of financial technology innovation will take the form of global cross-border integrated collaboration, which may bring major changes to the current global financial system rules and financial infrastructure.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

## Reform should address market's practical concerns

In November, the manufacturing purchasing managers' index rose by 0.2 percentage points from the previous month to 50.3, a rise for the third consecutive month and reaching a seven-month high.

The package of incremental policies launched since the end of September has gradually realized its intended effects, with major indicators related to industry, services, consumption and investment recovering at the same time.

Notably, as the manufacturing PMI indicates, both the supply and demand sides of the manufacturing industry have accelerated expansion,

and small and medium-sized enterprises have also seen a long-awaited continuous recovery.

It can be said that the coordination of the recovery and the development of the manufacturing industry in production, supply and marketing, both upstream and downstream among enterprises of various sizes, is increasing.

But surveys also show that due to the complex international political and economic situation, domestic demand remains weak; involuntary competition in some industries is still intensifying; some companies are still under great operating pressure; and

the financial burdens on enterprises in taxes, fees, fines and other operation costs are still heavy.

Policymakers should focus more on addressing the practical concerns of enterprises by pushing the envelope of some key reforms, further coordinating the implementation of relevant pro-business policies in terms of finance, taxation, investment, land and innovation, and accelerating the improvement of the business environment, so as to substantially strengthen the market's confidence and consolidate the entrepreneurs' expectations.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

## What They Say

## ROK cycle of retribution likely to continue

Although the ROK parliament didn't pass the motion on Sunday to impeach President Yoon Suk-yeol for what is widely regarded as his self-serving imposition of martial law, his authority has been eroded "to the point of no return", for all intents and purposes, some observers say.

Yoon vowed to run an open government when he won the presidency in March 2022 with a margin of just 0.7 percent. But he has only paid attention to strengthening the Republic of Korea's alliances with the United States and Japan, at the cost of the ROK's relations with other neighbors, and has failed to connect with the ROK people.

Despite the image he has tried to present to the world that he is a pro-democracy and open-minded leader, Yoon seems to have little time or patience to listen to different points of view, even within his own party, and his abiding political mindset is "my way or the highway". That the former prosecutor twice

vetoed a bill seeking a special counsel inquiry into allegations against his wife's suspected graft has seen his approval rating drop to a dismal 19 percent last month, a historical low since the restoration of "democracy" in the ROK in 1987.

Although the Yoon government has done a good job controlling inflation and unemployment after taking power, the ROK's year-on-year economic growth rate plummeted from 2.6 percent in 2022 to 1.4 percent last year, though it is projected to rebound to 2.3 percent this year. The lackluster economy has weakened public confidence in the Yoon government, and also aggravated the political polarization in the ROK, not only between Yoon's People Power Party and the Democratic Party, the largest opposition party, but also within the PPP itself.

Although the PPP blocked Yoon's impeachment, the ruling party's internal divisions are becoming more pronounced after Yoon's imposition of martial law and swift

about-face, and some key figures within the party including party leader Han Dong-hoon, who has urged that Yoon's presidency be suspended, and Seoul mayor Oh Se-hoon, will be ready to jockey for power within the party in case of Yoon's increasingly possible step-down before the next presidential election that is scheduled to be held in March 2027.

The calls for Yoon's resignation are going to increase across the political spectrum in the country. The chaos shows a troubling lack of political leadership and deep political polarization entrenched within the country's "democracy", and a confluence of these elements poses a significant risk to the country's future stability and governance.

It is clear that the vicious cycle of retributions, an unfortunate hallmark of ROK politics, is not likely to stop when this current crisis ebbs and a new president takes office, as some ROK analysts point out.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

## COMMENT



China and the World Roundtable | China's Socioeconomic Development

**Editor's note:** Over the past years, China's socioeconomic situation has undergone significant transformation. Faced with challenges and opportunities, the Chinese government has been making concerted efforts to promote social development and high-quality growth. Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Steve Farr

## Encouraging youth to achieve their dreams

A recent study by Harvard Graduate School of Education and Indiana University found that an overwhelming majority (81 percent) of American teens face tremendous pressure regarding their achievements, appearance and future. American teens are not alone. In China, too, the youth face *neijuan*, unnecessary excessive peer competition, and *tangping*, continuing to coast on the "chosen path" despite facing challenges.

I have the good fortune of working with the best and brightest university students throughout the world, including those in China. I know firsthand that strong academic performance and high test grades hold the key to admission to the best universities and to secure the best jobs. I also know that after graduation, youth face extremely tough competition to get suitable jobs, especially during times of unemployment and economic challenges. This problem is again not unique to China and this pressure, if not checked, can become dysfunctional.

Given the intense pressure and competition, no wonder youth are increasingly feeling despair and, as a coping or self-protection strategy, might refuse to overwork or even withdraw from the challenging competition to escape the relentless pressure. Youth born between 1997 and 2012, often referred to as "Gen Z", account for 30 percent of the world's population and are the incoming workforce generation. Viewed as the "first global generation", they are generally tech-savvy and have a greater sense of connection as well as personal and professional relationships.

They are socially accountable, and value a sustainable environment. Raised in a digitalized and economically fluctuating society, Gen Z tends to be more communicative, open, diverse and collaborative. These youth value the importance of meaningful work, prioritization of mental health, inclusive company culture, open and honest communication, stability and balance, professional growth, collaboration, autonomy and flexibility.

This change in our workforce is compounded by the supply and demand of good jobs and the need to further create new job opportunities. China is already successfully addressing this challenge by increasing investments in infrastructure, education, and research and development while further encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit.

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in China — fueled by China's pro-



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY



The author is executive director of the Secretariat Office for the Alliance of Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities.

include the Alliance of Guangzhou International Sister-City Universities) further promote, recognize and reward this spirit. These competitions in China, often attended by college students from other countries, multiply entrepreneurial efforts and the progress of the youth across the world.

The success of these efforts is readily visible, with the World Bank reporting

motion of the creation of private or rural enterprises. In Guangzhou, Guangdong province, business incubators provide valuable combinations of research, office and living space as well as incubation solutions for start-ups. Urban innovation and entrepreneurship competitions organized by our universities (to

in 2022 that almost 46 percent of the people in China are self-employed as compared with about 10 percent in the United States.

As the world's fastest growing major economy since the 1980s, China's meteoric rise to a major economic power is unprecedented. This remarkable journey has been ably supported by its highly competent and skilled workforce. To maintain this momentum, we should continue to adapt to changes and further nurture the Gen Z workforce by creating equal opportunities to help them achieve their dreams and goals.

Where there are challenges there also are opportunities. These opportunities could include better defining careers and paths for promotion, empowering and delegating decision-making powers as much as possible, engaging all levels of staff in decision-making, thanking and showing appreciation for a job well done, and publicly acknowledging and rewarding the hard work and achievements of every individual with incentives. We should not fear mistakes or

failure given this is often how we learn to improve and how we stand stronger and smarter.

Our youth should also be encouraged to be optimistic, to continue pursuing their dreams and to believe in themselves. We should strive to make work even more meaningful by using the latest technologies, building a positive company culture, helping achieve work-life balance, increasing opportunities for social and professional advancements, and integrating environmental sustainability and professional development programs.

Youth in China and the rest of the world remain optimistic about the future and I have faith in our next generation. They are brilliant, strong, talented and more than capable. They will become our next world leaders, and we must continue to do all we can to better support their success and achievement of their dreams.

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

Wu Ruijun

## How to ensure fertility support policies yield desired results

The number and structure of people of marriageable age, including women of childbearing age, in China have undergone comprehensive changes. While an increasing number of people are choosing to remain single, many couples prefer getting married late and having just one child or no children at all.

In fact, the numbers of single and married women of childbearing age, including women in "ideal" fertility age, are shrinking. These developments have made the implementation of fertility support policies a big challenge.

Many young couples are reluctant to have children due to economic uncertainties. The industrial upgrading and economic transformation have resulted in structural unemployment among youths and created shock waves in the markets. The possibility of salary reduction and negative impact on career development is reducing young couples' urge to have children.

Besides, women's anxiety over childbirth and children's education are reinforcing each other, inhibiting couples' desire to have children and aggravating their concerns about raising children. A shrinking fertility rate could trigger a butterfly effect, leading to a decline in labor supply, slower economic growth and increased pressure on China's pension system.

China has greatly eased its strict family planning policy, and is now encouraging couples to have two to three children by implementing fertility support policies. For example, although some areas have already started offering cash subsidies to encourage childbirth, the amount is relatively small. Hence, the support policies are not having the desired effect.

Furthermore, a few of the current family planning regulations lack rationality and supervision, and some enterprises are still reluctant to incur additional costs of granting long maternity leave, and refusing to implement or only implementing part of fertility support policies.

Though the government is trying to build a marriage-friendly society, most women cannot avail of its benefits and still shoulder most of the responsibilities of raising a child. Not to mention that many working mothers still face discrimination at the workplace.

Therefore, efforts should be made to adapt to the demographic changes and advance Chinese modernization with high-quality population development.

First, the government should make tackling low fertility a national strategy and promote the integrated development of eldercare and childcare services. For instance, the government should form a leading group to ensure balanced population development. The government could also consider establishing an independent administrative department to deal with population and family affairs, and address the mismatch between policy and its effective implementation.

The government needs to consider the actual fertility intention of women of childbearing age, too, and devise differentiated incentives for all urban and rural couples of childbearing age and families with children, in order to encourage couples to have two to three children. It should also establish a policy support system based on family units, improve and boost the integrated development of childcare and eldercare services, and enhance micro-control over public services.

Second, the authorities should focus on couples who are willing to have children but are worried about the high cost of raising a child by, among other things, improving family support policies and developing high-quality education resources to reduce their child education burden. In this regard, it is essential to develop broader and more caring universal childcare services both in urban and rural areas, and ensure urban areas gradually bring migrant workers' children aged 0-3 under the cover of universal childcare services.

The government could also consider increasing the proportion of standard deduction for children's education from individual income tax for medium- and low-income families, and provide housewives whose spouses have insurance cover with some maternity insurance benefits.

The government also needs to implement housing support policies for families with children, and give preference to families with two-three children in difficulty when allocating low-rent housing, public rental housing and affordable housing. It should also take measures to lower the down payment ratio for families with two-three children and provide them with low-interest loans.

Equally important, the government should pay attention to young women's career development and encourage employers to hire and promote women, and take institutional and legal measures to protect young women, especially pregnant women and new mothers, from discrimination at the workplace. A fertility-friendly employment environment can be fostered by providing incentives to employers that treat pregnant women and new mothers as normal employees and grant them adequate maternity leave.

And third, it is essential to create an environment in which the "new-era" marriage and childbearing culture, and traditional filial piety can play their due roles in demographic development.

In short, the pressure of childcare and eldercare on couples should be eased to increase the country's fertility rate.

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

Li Wenjing

## Traditional culture creating new businesses

While modern technology is empowering, transforming and reshaping traditional industries,

traditional culture is creating new business opportunities and helping drive China's high-quality development. The rapid development of technologies such as big data, cloud computing, 5G and artificial intelligence (AI) in the new era has changed the way traditional culture is experienced and promoted.

New technologies used in digital museums, virtual reality (VR) exhibitions and augmented reality interactive experiences can more vividly and intuitively promote traditional culture, allowing people to transcend the limits of time and space while experiencing the charm of traditional culture.

For example, about 900,000 pieces and sets of cultural relics, or about 48 percent of total collection, at the Palace Museum (Forbidden City) in Beijing had been digitalized till the end of last year. More than 100,000 high-definition images of these artifacts are on display, allowing visitors to experience them through VR technology in the museum.

The Dunhuang Academy, in charge of the Mogao Grottoes, a 1,600-year-old UNESCO World Heritage Site in Dunhuang, Gansu province, has built a rich base of cultural resources by developing a complete system integrating the digital cultural heritage collection with processing, storage and display technologies.

In fact, new generation information and communications technology (ICT) is penetrating into every corner of society at an unprecedented rate and scale.



The author is an associate professor of politics and law at the Party School of the CPC Central Committee.

young people love to wear *hanfu* (a traditional Chinese dress) when visiting scenic spots, especially in first- and second-tier cities and cities with a rich history. The *hanfu* market was worth 14.47 billion yuan (\$2.06 billion) in 2023, and is expected to increase to 24.18 billion yuan by 2027.

Another apt example of the integration of new technology and traditional Chinese culture is the video game *Black Myth: Wukong*, which many consider a "milestone" in the Chinese gaming industry. Released on Aug 20, the game acquired immense popularity on major gaming platforms. On Steam, the leading gaming platform, it occupied top spot on the global chart. Within an hour of being officially uploaded on Steam, the game had more than 1 million concurrent players. The next day, the figure increased to 2.2 million. And in just two days, the game had sold 8.4 million units on Steam, earning a gross revenue of more than \$400 million.

The inheritance and innovation of traditional culture have thus created new development opportunities, giving rise to new business models which cater to people's new cultural needs.

People are developing new aesthetic interests and enjoying new experiences thanks to the application of new technologies. For example, many

The application and promotion of new generation ICT have given rise to new demands, enriching traditional culture. New technologies are also shaping people's lives in fields such as communication, education, entertainment, work, consumption, healthcare, transport and finance.

The integration of hard and soft power indeed reflects China's high-quality development. The development of new technologies has facilitated the commercialization of traditional culture. Cultural relics, ancient paintings, sculptures, and calligraphy and architecture works can now be stored and displayed on digital platforms, promoting traditional culture and enriching viewers' experiences. And advanced 3D printing technology can replicate and produce artworks in a more effective and efficient way, better meeting people's demands at a lower cost.

With traditional Chinese culture enjoying a revival in the consumer market, the growing popularity of Chinese chic products of vintage brands reflects the country's high-quality development. Official data show that last year, the number of Douyin users buying vintage brands rose by 38 percent year-on-year, while the number of older, renowned businesses generating revenue on Douyin increased by 89 percent. Time-honored products and brands not only demonstrate China's hard power but also enhance and promote the country's soft power.

The key to brand building is innovation and integration. The cultural and manufacturing industries can achieve high-quality development only by supporting each other. Since the consumer

goods industry tends to incorporate Chinese elements into product design, packaging and marketing strategies, popular brands, rather than the industry as a whole, can support each other and form a flywheel effect.

Of course, more efforts should be made to further boost traditional Chinese culture, and one way of doing that is to effectively use more emerging technologies. China needs to promote the digitalization of industries, accelerate the digital reconstruction of cultural heritage, and popularize traditional cultural products and services using digital technology.

While the integration of traditional culture with emerging formats such as popular variety shows, self-media live broadcasts and online performances improves new cultural products and services, and enriches consumers' aesthetic experience, traditional culture can be integrated with newly emerging business formats such as popular entertainment programs, livestreaming and online performance to create new cultural products and services, and enrich consumers' aesthetic experience. As a matter of fact, the collaboration of traditional culture and new media platforms can create valuable and interesting content which would attract more young people.

And rural areas can establish intangible cultural heritage workshops to help promote rural cultural revitalization and industrial prosperity, while tourism projects can integrate with unique local culture to enrich visitors' experiences.

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

## GLOBAL VIEWS

ENDALKACHEW SIME

## Tried and tested poverty reducer

Africa has the potential to harness tourism for improving the livelihood of its rural population and reducing poverty by learning from China

Rural tourism is emerging as a creative way of revitalizing rural areas across the Global South. It promotes a unique blend of agriculture and tourism, which is crucial for the economies of many developing nations. The relationship between rural revitalization and agro-tourism integration is on the rise across Chinese provinces, highlighting agro-tourism as a

highly effective means of driving rural revitalization and reducing poverty. What can Africa learn from this through South-South cooperation? Let us take Ethiopia as an example.

Ethiopia, with its rich rural diversity and heritage, stands to gain significantly from this approach by designing a common denominator of strategies for agriculture, tourism and rural development efforts innovatively within the framework of poverty reduction and sustainability, as witnessed in the Chinese experience. When we ponder on China's remarkable strides in poverty reduction from 1981 to 2020 — when its poverty rate fell from 66.3 percent to just 0.3 percent — we usually focus on rapid economic growth, while overlooking its other targeted poverty alleviation policies, in which integrating agriculture and tourism for rural revitalization and poverty reduction played a crucial role.

Coming to Africa, with its immense potential in tourism, integrating every tourism capacity with agriculture will not help. What is needed is a creative policy blend since Africa's tourism spectrum is diverse.

Take Ethiopia for example. There are many historical sites, parks and lodges that collectively enhance the tourism industry by offering unique natural and cultural experiences, creating jobs and supporting local economies through sustainable practices. But which one is suitable for agro-tourism integration? This

has to be worked out, as seen in Huzhou, Zhejiang province. The 2024 Lucun Forum, hosted by the World Rural Tourism Council in Huzhou, shared many interesting and valuable lessons. The forum demonstrated findings from studies showing that both agro-tourism integration and tourism-driven poverty reduction significantly contribute to rural revitalization in China.

For instance, the Wenchi Eco-Lodge in Ethiopia seems perfect for agro-tourism integration, as its location near Wenchi Crater Lake offers fertile land ideal for sustainable farming practices. Integrating agriculture with eco-tourism here could provide fresh, locally-grown produce for the lodge, enhance the visitor experience with farm tours, and support the local economy by creating agricultural jobs. Another example is the Bale Mountains National Park, which seems to have the potential for agro-tourism since the region's agricultural activities can be linked with tourism to maximize local economic benefits and promote sustainable development.

Africa can draw valuable lessons from China's experience in integrating agriculture and tourism for



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

rural revitalization and poverty reduction. The key lies in adopting a holistic approach that combines policy innovation, community

involvement, and sustainable practices. By doing so, Africa can harness its rich natural and cultural heritage to drive economic growth

and improve the livelihoods of its rural population.

One of the critical lessons from China is the importance of government support and policy direction. The Chinese government has played a pivotal role in promoting rural tourism through various initiatives and policies. For instance, the implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy has provided a comprehensive framework for integrating agriculture and tourism. This strategy includes measures such as improving rural infrastructure, providing financial support to rural tourism projects, and promoting the development of rural tourism products. Africa can adopt a similar approach by developing a strategy at the African Union level for rural tourism that aligns with its broader development goals.

Another lesson from China is the significance of community involvement. Local communities are actively involved in the planning and implementation of many Chinese rural tourism projects. This ensures that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably and that the projects are sustainable in the long term.

In Africa, involving local commu-

nities in rural tourism projects can help to ensure that the projects are culturally appropriate and that they meet the needs of the local population. This can be achieved through participatory planning processes, capacity-building programs, and the establishment of community-based tourism enterprises.

Sustainability is another crucial aspect of China's rural tourism model. Many rural tourism projects in China are designed to be environmentally sustainable, with a focus on preserving natural resources and promoting eco-friendly practices. For example, eco-lodges and organic farms are common features of rural tourism projects in China. Africa can adopt similar practices by promoting eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture in its rural tourism projects. This can help to protect the environment, enhance the visitor experience, and create a positive image for Africa as a sustainable tourism destination.

In conclusion, Africa has the potential to harness rural tourism for economic growth and poverty reduction by learning from China's experience. By integrating agriculture and tourism, Africa can create new opportunities for rural communities, enhance the visitor experience, and promote sustainable development. The key lies in adopting a holistic approach that combines policy innovation, community involvement and sustainable practices. With the right strategies and support, Ethiopia can unlock the potential of its rich natural and cultural heritage to drive economic growth and improve the livelihoods of its rural population.

The author is a PhD student at Peking University, ex-state minister of planning and development of Ethiopia, and vice-chairman and Africa Chapter president of the World Rural Tourism Council. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

DARYL GUPPY

## Defender of global trade stability

China is countering destabilizing forces and the weaponizing of trade relationships

China is a strong defender of global trade stability, countering destabilizing forces with support for global mechanisms and innovative domestic policies.

The nearshoring and friendshoring led by the United States have become a greater threat to global trade when combined with trade protectionist policies, often based on tariffs and unilateral sanctions imposed outside of global trade agreements.

The political weaponization of trade relationships and the consequent potential for trade instability have accelerated in recent weeks and added urgency to the quest for ways to stabilize the operation of global trade and ensure that trade settlement can be achieved without interference. Imposing tariffs is not conducive to these objectives. Only global cooperation and expanding international platforms can enable and enhance global trade.

Speaking at the second China International Supply Chain Expo held in Beijing recently, Vice-President Han Zheng said that China stands ready to work with other countries to build an open world economic system, and ensure stable and unimpeded global industrial and supply chains.

At a high level, these open trade mechanisms include APEC, the G20, the World Trade Organization, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and other trade agreements operating within the framework that supports global trade. China's support for these global free trade objectives is very important and it stands in contrast

to the policies implemented by the US and its like-minded allies.

At an operational level, the challenges are more practical and solutions increasingly rest on the productivity gains and cost reductions that flow from the increased digitalization of logistics chains. China is committed to clearing these obstacles, particularly through the advanced application of technologies for both the domestic economy and the global trade economy.

In terms of China's domestic situation, there is still relatively large room to lower social logistics costs. Three main features of the planning in this area involve highlighting areas of reform and innovation: clearing bottlenecks, systematic planning and promotion efforts. These policy initiatives will help China reduce its per unit logistics cost by 6.3 percent in three years by improving logistics efficiencies in its domestic market and by boosting offshore competitiveness despite the increase in protectionist trade policies elsewhere.

Efficiency improvements in port storage facilities are required to service exports of electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar panels. The plan also targets reforms in the rail and road freight sectors, calling for an open logistics data sharing mechanism across transport and customs departments. Achieving these objectives relies on advancing digital transformations by making better use of technologies such as big data, 5G, and the Beidou Satellite Navigation System.

In terms of the international situation, gaining the same efficiencies in the global trade environment starts with maintaining the stability of global supply chains. The challenges confronting businesses worldwide include escalating costs,

geopolitical tensions and rising protectionism.

China can address chokepoints in international logistics and enhance the security of international supply chain logistics.

Often these chokepoints are created by poor supply chain scheduling combined with archaic customs and border clearance processes. This type of process productivity is an underrated area when it comes to tackling cost reduction and supply chain efficiency.

The adoption of distributed ledger technologies is a key element in process efficiency achieved by the effective digitalization of supply chains.

Hand in hand with digital efficiencies in the logistics of the supply chain comes the requirement for smooth settlement of international trade obligations. Global trade stability is undermined and settlement risk increases, when the SWIFT trade settlement system is weaponized in the pursuit of political objectives.

The foundation of global trade stability is the ability to settle trade in a currency of choice. Historically, this has often been the US dollar and this has enabled the recent manipulation of the cross-border trade settlement system to reflect political objectives.

In response to this risk, an increasing number of countries are exploring alternative currency settlement methods, particularly now that the petrodollar link has been broken. Global trade stability is improved when countries are able to settle trade in a currency of their choice.

The speed of alternative trade settlement mechanisms supported by new fintech technologies reduces counterparty risk and the risk of adverse currency movement by



ZHANG TING / FOR CHINA DAILY

shortening the trade settlement period from days to minutes.

Recently, US president-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose 100 percent tariffs on BRICS countries — which include China and Russia — that do not use the dollar as their reserve currency. This is an open attack on global trade stability.

It may also have the unintended consequence of undermining the US economy. In retaliation, some countries may choose to stop buying the US debt treasuries that currently fund the extravagant US lifestyle based on accessing never-ending debt. The result of unfunded debt is hyperinflation which further undermines global trade stability.

Against this backdrop, maintain-

ing the stability of global supply chains seems even more essential for businesses worldwide, and it rests on three pillars.

The first pillar is to implement efficiencies in the domestic market logistic and supply chains. The second is to apply digitalization efficiencies to global supply chains to ensure stability and security. The third pillar is to support smooth and rapid trade settlement achieved through the use of enhanced non-dollar solutions which do not rest exclusively on the use of the US dollar.

The US dollar enjoys the exorbitant privilege of being the major reserve currency, but that privilege has been widely abused by using sanctions and manipulation of the exchange mecha-

nisms in recent years.

China has pioneered the development of central bank digital currencies. These will reshape global payments by reducing transaction costs and providing an alternative to the dominance of the US dollar in international trade settlement.

All in all, China is a leading supporter of an open world economy which enhances global trade and rejects protectionism.

The author is an international financial technical analysis expert and a former national board member of the Australia China Business Council. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## LIFE



Wild yaks at the Kumukuli Desert, one of the world's highest deserts in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The photographic work by Zhang Fuqiang is one of the winners of the China Wildlife Image and Video Competition. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Focusing on the wonder of nature

On vibrant green moss, a *Heteropoda davidbowie*, of the huntsman spider species, carries a white egg sac, its orange body blazing like a fiery flame, strikingly vivid and captivating against the faintly visible ferns in the surroundings.

It has a way of pulling the audience into the dreamlike microscopic world, which is rarely seen by the naked eye but was captured in a photo by the Malaysian photographer Lam Soon Tak.

His clever manipulation of the light creates a darkened backdrop that throws into sharp relief the precious moment of the spider's reproductive behavior.

Before the viewers had time to reconcile the fantastical elements, a short video abruptly pulled them back to the harsh reality of nature as it vividly showed how bar-headed geese, nesting on the cliffs of the Qilian Mountains across China's northwestern Qinghai and Gansu provinces, guide their newborn goslings to leap from the heights.

The hardship is only the beginning of the trials and tribulations the geese family has to endure, while foraging along the banks of Qinghai's Buha River as they fend off predatory Pallas's gulls.

The dynamic visuals of the dramatic twists and turns of the birds' fate, filmed by a Chinese crew, hammered home the concept of nature's survival of the fittest and the journey of a life that never ceases.

The two works are among a total of 17 images and videos that dazzled the audience at the awards ceremony of the China Wildlife Image and Video Competition in Beijing on Dec 1.

They stood out from more than 37,600 submissions from across the world, and covered a wide range of wildlife groups, natural conservation areas, and the relationship between humans and nature, presenting a rich and multidimensional view of wildlife and ecological diversity.

The competition was hosted by the Chinese National Geography and sought to deepen public understanding and appreciation of wildlife and natural ecosystems, while promoting conservation efforts.

This year marks the 5th session of the competition that was initiated in 2020, with a record high in both total submissions and international entries, says Li Shuanke, editor-in-chief of Chinese National Geography.

"This year's theme — Spirituality of Mountains and Seas — symbolizes humanity's timeless yearning for and imagination of nature. Among the numerous submissions, we deeply felt each individual's curiosity and affection toward their natural home, as well as their attention to and care for wildlife," Li says, adding that this theme also captures the harmonious resonance between the myriad beings of nature and the creators of natural imagery.

Jia Haining, whose team won the best production award in the short film category for their work zooming in on wildlife, highlighting a bunch of Oriental storks gracefully traversing the Yellow River Delta, says the award is a great encouragement.

Wildlife imagery competition showcases the often unseen and captivating beauty of the world, **Yang Feiyue** reports.



Clockwise from top: Award-winning photos depict wild argali sheep overlooking a city in Xinjiang, by Zhao Lansheng; the remains of a mallard used as a nest, by Zhou Guiping; a huntsman spider carrying its white egg sac on vibrant green moss, by Malaysian photographer Lam Soon Tak; and moths resting on a tree trunk by Sun Zhixuan.

“Having a competition like this is a way of encouraging young people to go out into nature and look around at the wonders of nature.”

Jane Goodall, 90, British primatologist



The video is aimed at showcasing the ecological features of the Yellow River Delta, a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

"Through the lens of the Oriental storks' story, we reveal the biodiversity of the Yellow River Delta across four seasons, and China's successful ecological practices and insights, demonstrating Chinese wisdom in ecological governance," Jia says.

"This is the foundation and pur-

pose of our work — to tell the world about the country's journey and contributions to achieving harmony between humans and nature."

Jia considers the essence of their work lies in capturing the fleeting details that genuinely touch people's souls on the filming site.

"I believe this holds true not only for nature but for other types of storytelling as well," he says.

Reflecting on the filming process, the crew waited nearly two months to capture the moment when young Oriental storks took their first flight, he says. Similarly, to film wild red-crowned cranes foraging, they had to arrive at the location by 4:30 in the morning and remain in position. "Our work approach was not dictated by past filming experience but by the habits and pace of the birds' lives," Jia says.

"This allows for zero tolerance for mistakes," he notes, adding that the project's execution cycle spanned one year, with filming constrained to migration and breeding seasons.

Essentially, within a one-year time frame, Jia's team only got one shot.

"Our filming team not only had to master the equipment but also

aims not only to present compelling stories of life through these extraordinary visual works, but also to deliver pieces truly worthy of deep reflection, says Chen Yihuan, general manager at Chinese National Geography.

"Our perspective goes beyond that of just the creators. We focus more on the broader audience — ordinary people — whether as consumers viewing these works or as individuals inspired by them to create and share their own," Chen says.

"From this angle, we believe that those who appreciate wildlife photography are likely also fans of nature documentaries," Chen adds. "We are committed to providing a platform for creators in this field who share the same values, fostering a community that resonates with their passion for the natural world."

Special awards, such as those for mobile phone photography and popular video-sharing Douyin platform presentation, were introduced in this year's competition to encourage public engagement in nature photography and biodiversity conservation.

The public drive has sparked significant interest, with related Douyin topics accumulating over 120 million views, according to the organizer.

To better engage the public, more than 100 natural photography works have been put on display in an exhibition at the China World Mall in Beijing. They were selected from more than 100,000 entries submitted to the competition over the past five years. The exhibition, opened to the public free of charge on Tuesday, will run until Jan 20.

"I've just been around the exhibition of these photographs, taken by traditional photographers, photographs taken on phones, and I have been seeing some of the most amazing and incredible pictures," says the internationally renowned British primatologist Jane Goodall, who has thrown her weight behind the development of the competition over the years.

The 90-year-old says she is drawn to those works highlighting the natural world, the dramatic and comical moments in the lives of animals.

"I was transported into other worlds, and I think that's the value of this competition," Goodall says.

She takes delight that those photographs were done by not necessarily professional photographers but people who love nature.

"Having a competition like this is a way of encouraging young people to go out into nature and look around at the wonders of nature," she says.

"There are many people living in the cities who do not get the opportunity to go out into the really wild places, and the photography, videography and filmmaking can at least give them some idea," she adds. "At least people can feel immersed in nature; they can feel something of the awe and wonder that we get if we are lucky enough to go out into nature, to see a large waterfall, to hear the water crashing down onto the gravel below."

Contact the writer at yangfeiyue@chinadaily.com.cn

## Zimbabwe turning to traditional Chinese medicine

HARARE — Traditional Chinese medicine is gaining popularity in Zimbabwe following the opening of a TCM exhibition room at the Zimbabwe-China TCM and Acupuncture Center in the capital of Harare.

Opened in June under the auspices of the Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals, the exhibition room has been set up to introduce TCM culture and therapy to the public.

"TCM is not just acupuncture. There are a lot of other methods, therapies and theories," says Hu Sha, director of the center.

In addition to acupuncture, the room is devoted to other aspects of TCM, including Chinese herbs, cupping tools, massage therapy tools, methods of preparing Chinese herbs and related books.

"I hope this will be a good window for Zimbabweans to learn about it and encourage cooperation between TCM and local traditional medicine," Hu says.

The number of patients receiving free treatment at the center has increased since its opening in 2020.

"We treat between 30 and 60 people every working day, and our appointments are scheduled until next February. I am happy that people trust and believe in TCM, and I am also glad that it helps them treat diseases and relieve pain," she says.

"Every time I come here, I feel calm. It's like my body is rejuvenated, and I'm stronger than before," says Harare resident Farai Mugwisi, who decided to try acupuncture after experiencing headaches.

“I hope this will be a good window for Zimbabweans to learn about it and encourage cooperation between TCM and local traditional medicine.”

Hu Sha, center director

"I remembered that I had a similar problem when I was in China, and I went to a traditional medical center, so I searched and found this place. When I came here, my left eye was closed, but after the acupuncture, my eye was open, and I slept well for the first time," she says.

She then introduced her mother to acupuncture. "My mother is a stroke patient, so I brought her in. She was doing physical therapy somewhere, and when she came back for a session, her therapist said, 'You've improved a lot! What happened?'"

Luisa Maidza, another beneficiary of TCM, says the ancient tradition has helped her relieve back pain that had plagued her for more than a decade. "It's a wonderful thing to receive such life-changing treatment without cost," the 58-year-old says.

To help meet the demand from patients, a group of 10 Zimbabweans graduated from a TCM training course at the center in 2022.

Munashe Mboneka, an assistant at the center, decided to enroll in the course after realizing the benefits and growing demand for TCM in the southern African country.

"I am proud to say that our clinic is becoming more and more popular. People are recognizing the benefits and natural healing methods of TCM, and our clinic's approach resonates with those seeking effective, long-term health solutions," says Mboneka. "This growing popularity motivates us to continue providing the best possible care to our community."

XINHUA

LIFE

# FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Young professionals are increasingly helping to fill in gaps in Chinese versions of French literature, past and present, **Fang Aiqing** reports.

A younger generation of translators has entered the limelight this year at the Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Award.

The three winners of the 16th edition of the prize, which is sponsored by the French embassy in China, were announced in Beijing on Nov 30. French Ambassador to China Bertrand Lortholary said that the event can also be viewed as part of the wider celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China-France diplomatic relations.

Since 2009, the Fu Lei award has been given each year to outstanding translations from French to Chinese, recognizing the efforts of translators, as well as the influence of the translations on Chinese readers. Fu Lei (1908-66), for whom the prize is named, produced Chinese translations of French literary classics by the likes of Balzac, Voltaire, Romain Rolland and Prosper Merimee.

This year, Cao Danhong won the Essay category for her translation of *Fact and Fiction: In Defense of a Border* by Francoise Lavocat; Shi Xueying won the Literature category for her translation of Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*; and the Young Shoots prize was awarded to Dong Ziyun for his translation of *The Monarchy of France* by Claude de Seyssel.

Yu Zhongxian, a researcher at the Institute of Foreign Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and president of the jury this year, said during the award ceremony that while female translators make up the majority of those nominated, the younger generation — born in the 1980s and '90s — also constitute a majority.

He says that the Essay category was devoted to classics of social sciences, sometimes so voluminous that they required collaboration between multiple translators, whereas the literature works nominated focus more on contemporary French social realities and pop culture with innovative themes and a variety of writing styles.

In *Fact and Fiction: In Defense of a Border*, Lavocat, a professor of comparative literature at the Universite Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, reviews the historical controversy around fiction.

Her book clearly deals with a key concern in literature — how to distinguish fiction from fact — by demonstrating that a border exists between the two, as well as exploring the diversity, complexity and fragility of the links between the real and the imagined world, which demands a passionate defense of both fiction and reality. Lavocat takes reference from various literary traditions including Chinese.

Cao, translator of the book and a professor in the French language department of Nanjing University in Jiangsu province, says that during translation, she maintained contact with Lavocat.

The Chinese edition includes updated content the author added in response to the sweeping changes brought by new technology, such as artificial intelligence and virtual



Winners of this year's Fu Lei award (from top): *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, *Fact and Fiction: In Defense of a Border*, *The Monarchy of France*.

reality, since the book was first published in 2016.

Cao says that since she began translating in 2003, she has noticed an increasing number of direct translations of French books into Chinese, rather than being translated from English versions, which is resulting in increased accuracy and fidelity.

Meanwhile, a growing number of diverse books have been introduced to China.

She adds that the originality of the translator, especially in flashes of linguistic inspiration surrounding the most accurate translation of a particular word or phrase, cannot be replaced by AI.



The winners and jury of this year's Fu Lei Translation and Publishing Award. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Born in the French overseas territorial collectivity of Martinique in the Caribbean, poet and playwright Cesaire was one of the co-founders of Negritude, a literary movement to restore the cultural identity of black people that began in the 1930s among French-speaking African and Caribbean writers in Paris.

He was among the first to reveal that beyond political domination, colonization had a significant impact on ways of thinking that extended far beyond colonialism itself, according to a jury statement.

Cesaire is still a little-known author in China and the translation of his *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* is the first of his books published on the Chinese mainland. The translation provides readers with access to more diverse French literature, the statement adds.

Shi, the book's translator and an associate professor at Nanjing University's French language department, says that Cesaire's particular style was the result of cross-cultural experiences that integrated aspects of French Surrealism, African literary traditions and Caribbean folk culture.

He coined new words in French by transforming the way a word was used or by combining two words to create a new one. In her translation, Shi worked in a similar fashion.

"I didn't reproduce Cesaire's book literally but used my translation to highlight his creative process. I hope that for Chinese readers it will offer an imaginative reading experience," Shi says.

"Through his work, readers can feel the richness of French literature, which is imbued not only with the culture of metropolitan France, but with experiences from other



Clockwise from top left: The award ceremony is attended by French-speaking writers and scholars from China and abroad. The translators of nominated social sciences this year. French Ambassador to China Bertrand Lortholary. French writer David Foenkinos. Yu Zhongxian, president of the jury this year.

continents," she continues, adding that Cesaire's writing presents how different parts of the world entered modernity and connected with other parts by following their own path.

The Young Shoots award was bestowed on a translation of a book published in 1515 by an author who wrote in Middle French.

Seyssel's influential book on political thought explores the evolution

of the French monarchical system and addresses specific problems facing its practice.

Dong's clear, well-annotated translation, and detailed and rigorous preface, demonstrates the depth of the young historian's knowledge of the subject as well as his professionalism, according to the jury statement.

During his speech at the award ceremony, Lortholary addressed

China's recent rise to becoming the largest international partner for French publishers in copyright trading for French books.

He added that the work of the translators goes far beyond that of a simple transcription from one language to another. "They are messengers of culture," he said.

Contact the writer at [fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:fangaiqing@chinadaily.com.cn)

## Museums as guardians of heritage always look to the future

By ZHANG KUN in Shanghai [zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:zhangkun@chinadaily.com.cn)

The leaders of 21 museums from abroad and 17 domestic museums gathered in Shanghai for the inaugural M20+ International Museum Conference at Shanghai Museum East on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Under the theme "Evolve and Everlast", museum leaders from some of the most celebrated institutions in the world, such as the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Guimet French National Museum of Asian Arts in Paris, shared their experience and insight on subjects such as heritage preservation, global reach and local roots, as well as technology and public engagement.

The conference also coincided with the opening of Shanghai Museum East after seven years of construction.

The new wing on the east bank of the Huangpu River showcases more than 15,000 objects in 20 galleries and interactive spaces. It is expected to receive more than 6 million visitors annually.

"Museums in China have made rapid progress in the past few years and achieved great improvement in many aspects including facilities, talent and so on," Chu Xiaobo, director of Shanghai Museum, told the media on Tuesday.

"We decided to invite colleagues from abroad to witness our development, and meanwhile we are aware of the big gap between us and the top-notch museums in the world, and that's the direction we are heading through hard work in the future."

In the past decade, museum-going has become a popular pastime for Chinese people.

Last year, museums in China received 1.3 billion visits.



Liu Shuguang, chairman of the Chinese Museums Association, speaks at the M20+ International Museum Conference in Shanghai on Tuesday. GAO RQIANG / CHINA DAILY

This year, Shanghai Museum estimated it would host more than 6 million at its two venues on People's

Square and the new Shanghai Museum East. The third venue of the Shanghai

Museum is undergoing preparation, Chu told the media at the conference.

Located at the previous site of the Shanghai Shipyard Company in Yangpu district, Shanghai Museum North will focus on the research of underwater archaeology and maritime trade.

The museum will also serve as a long-term excavation workshop for a salvaged shipwreck and is expected to open to the public by 2030.

By then, Chu estimates the three venues will receive more than 10 million visits every year. This "museum fever" in China has partly been brought about by the exchange and cooperation between Chinese and foreign museums, according to Liu Shuguang, chairman of the Chinese Museums Association.

"I hope Shanghai municipality and Shanghai Museum will play a greater role in promoting pragmatic

and high-level cooperation and exchanges between Chinese and international museums," he said at the conference.

Chu agreed that communications with overseas colleagues and counterparts is of vital importance.

"I'm sure the conference will bring new ideas, methods and ways of work, which will lead the direction of development of museums in the future."

Today, the world is faced with more complexities and challenges, such as war, cultural differences and technology, said Jameson Kelleher, chief operating officer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States.

"I think it is important that leaders (in the international museum community) have a sounding board so that we can come together to think about complicated topics and find power together to think about how we can best serve the world."

## CULTURE



Li Xinshu (left) and Fraser Sampson on a stand-up comedy stage in Beijing in August. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

# Duo finds laughter is the best medicine

Chinese medical student and British comedian team up to put smiles on more faces, **Hou Chenchen** reports.

In a traditional courtyard dwelling in Beijing, an unexpected partnership was forming between a local graduate and a foreigner.

Chinese medical major Li Xinshu, 24, and British comedian Fraser Sampson, 27, were crafting their next stand-up comedy routine right in the heart of the Chinese capital.

Their partnership, dubbed "Shufu Duo", is a cross-cultural stand-up comedy act born last December.

Sampson, known on stage as A Fu, and Li, known as Little Shu, represent an unusual fusion of cultures and comedic traditions.

Their act diverges from the traditional Chinese cross-talk *xiangsheng*, embracing instead global and contemporary elements.

Sampson resides in a traditional Beijing *siheyuan* courtyard home

surrounded by buildings on all four sides. Eastern and Western design elements converge on the site, mirroring the cross-cultural appeal of Shufu Duo's performances. The unique setting has become a creative sanctuary for the partners to hone their act.

Their resonance with audiences also reflects how stand-up comedy incorporating Western elements is carving out a niche in the country's entertainment scene.

"Unlike traditional comedy, stand-up involves direct engagement with the audience, creating a dynamic and often unpredictable comedic effect," Li said, noting that the interaction is a key feature that distinguishes stand-up from Chinese *xiangsheng*.

"While both forms depict everyday life with humor and satire, *xiangsheng* follows a more structured and

"I've always enjoyed making the people around me laugh since I was little, I feel really happy when I know they need me."

Li Xinshu, Chinese medical student and stand-up comedian

generational approach, whereas stand-up thrives on spontaneity and contemporary relevance."

The journey of stand-up comedy in the Chinese mainland can be traced back to the 1970s and 1980s. It gained early traction in Hong Kong area with performers like Wong Tze Wah. By 1990, Wong's stand-up routines, known for their sharp social commentary, resonated with audiences and paved the way for the genre's expansion into the Chinese mainland.

The 2012 debut of a TV variety show series themed "Tonight 80's" further introduced stand-up comedy to audiences. Subsequent similar offerings, such as Tencent Video's *Rock & Roast* series, helped place it firmly in Chinese entertainment.

## Home advantage

Fraser Sampson himself was raised in Beijing's traditional *hutong* alleyways and discovered his passion for comedy while thinking about how he could leverage his Chinese language skills post-graduation.

"I kept wondering how to use Chinese after graduating from university, and how to apply it in my work, and then I found comedy," he said.

Influenced by Canadian *xiangsheng* performer Da Shan, Sampson saw parallels between his cross-cultural background and Da Shan's successful integration of Western and Chinese comedic elements. In 2023, he transitioned into stand-up, aiming to bridge cultural divides through humor.

Sampson said he then met his perfect partner, Li Xinshu, who was working as a host for the Yinghe comedy group at that time.

"Bro, your chest hair is spurring out," Li said to him during their meeting in the stand-up comedy theater.

Looking back on that moment, Sampson said he found it "very abstract and quite humorous".

Li, who majored in Western medicine, began her comedy career after being discovered during an improvisation event.

"I've always enjoyed making the people around me laugh since I was little, I feel really happy when I know they need me," she said.

Sampson and Li said they value the collaborative nature of their work. Stand-up can be a solitary pursuit but having a partner offers essential support and shared creative input, he said.

## Connecting people

His linguistic versatility — switching between US and British English and the Beijing dialect — also reflects their act's broader cultural adaptability. "When I was little, I spoke American English at school, and then switched to British English at home. I spoke the Beijing dialect with the nanny. The language kept switching, and so did my way of thinking," he said.

Sampson said he believes that stand-up, as an imported art form, offers Chinese audiences a rich cultural experience, albeit one that must be tailored to local sensibilities.

The duo's performances often address cultural misunderstandings and humorous anecdotes, easing the tension that might arise from language barriers. Their act not only entertains but also fosters a deeper appreciation of cultural differences, he said.

"Many people don't usually communicate with foreigners in English, so I noticed that when I'm on stage, the audience can somehow feel nervous. We use stand-up comedy techniques to release this tension, and it works very well," Sampson said.

Looking forward, the partners said they aspire "to further refine their craft, embark on a solo tour, and expand their influence through social media, and eventually perform on major stand-up comedy stages".

Sampson added that comedy audiences may experience significant stress in their lives, whether from work or family, and some might feel a bit depressed or unhappy. Comedy can bring joy to these groups, helping everyone loosen up.

"It is something our society really needs, and it's like a contribution we make to society," he said.

"Moreover, there's a saying in the UK, 'Comedy brings people together.' This is something that modern society truly needs."

Contact the writer at [houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:houchenchen@chinadaily.com.cn)

## Japanese lyricist sings the praises of Wuxi

By CHINA DAILY

In a world where the pursuit of wealth and status often takes precedence, Kawakami Sadao, a retired Japanese businessman known as Zhang Yi within Chinese circles, shines as a beacon of a different ethos. At 78 years old, he has chosen a path less trodden, prioritizing spiritual enrichment over material wealth.

Over the past four years, Kawakami has delved into a passion that set his soul ablaze — writing Chinese lyrics. Despite relying on a modest pension, he has poured his heart and resources to create over 30 songs that have captured the hearts of hundreds of thousands online in China.

"In my late 70s, I've come to realize that material pursuits hold little allure for me," the Japanese lyricist shared in a recent interview with China Daily. "In the time I have left, I want to indulge in what I love, even if it means living a more humble existence."

Many of Kawakami's lyrical works weave stories of Wuxi, Jiangsu province, a place he referred to as his "second home". In 1988, Kawakami was dispatched to work in Dalian, Liaoning province, by a Japanese corporation, and he relocated to Wuxi in 1997, where he spent almost 23 years before returning to his hometown of Hiroshima in 2019.

It was in 2020, a year after leaving Wuxi, that Kawakami embarked on his lyrical journey, inspired by his Japanese friends' love for Chinese music and his deep-rooted affection for the city. Upon his return to Japan, Kawakami actively participated in local song gatherings, where he often performed popular Japanese songs like *Love Story in Wuxi* — a hit that drew many young Japanese to the city in the 1980s, and a couple of Chinese folk songs.

Singing the songs during his time away from Wuxi amplified his yearning for the city. In his words, crafting songs became a way to express his emotions, "akin to how Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet Li Bai conveyed his feelings through poetry".

His earlier studies in history at Chongqing Normal College (now Chongqing Normal University), complemented by his enduring commitment to writing Chinese poetry, prose, and novels, with numerous publications under his belt, have paved the way for his lyric writing.

For Kawakami, lyrics are a form of poetry, both requiring the heartfelt expression of emotions and reflecting the art of real life. "Having lived and worked in Wuxi for 23 years and being a foreigner influenced by diverse cultures, I observe everything in the city with keen interest and freshness," he explains. "What may appear ordinary to locals strikes me as the most beautiful and poignant things in the world."

Kawakami's unique perspective on everyday occurrence is mirrored in his lyrics, resonating with listeners. Xu Ruilan, former director of the culture and art club of the Wuxi Association of Foreign Invested Enterprises, commended his compositions for blending a distinct foreign viewpoint with familiar Chinese elements.

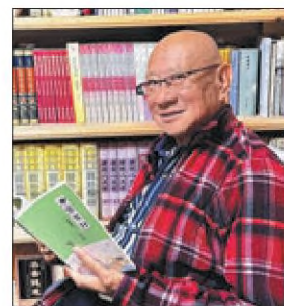
One of his compositions, *Enchanting Cherry Blossom Season on Earth*, captures the essence of Wuxi's cherry blossom season. Speaking about the piece, Kawakami says that when Japanese people see cherry blossoms in China, it evokes a deep warmth, much like the feelings experienced by Chinese people when encountering pandas in Japan. "As a lyricist, I aim to depict not just the visual beauty of cherry blossoms but also elevate it to a humanistic beauty that transcends borders and nationalities."

His dedication and talent have not gone unnoticed, garnering him multiple accolades, including two gold and several silver awards at a Chinese lyrics and music competition, alongside praise from peers in the music industry.

Composer Zhang Zhishen from Harbin, Heilongjiang province, reflects on his collaboration with Kawakami: "My multiple visits to Wuxi have sparked a deep affection for the city. The appreciation shared by Kawakami and myself for the beauty of Wuxi has truly enriched the depth of our partnership."

Another collaborator, Yang Hong from Wuxi, attributes the swift rise in popularity of many of their released songs to Kawakami's reverence for Chinese literature. "His admiration for Chinese culture is evident in his relentless efforts, which have not only led to the creation and publication of many literary works in Chinese but also enriched his lyrics, enabling him to convey profound emotions and cultural insights in his songs."

Yang points out that Kawakami's creations go beyond mere songs. "His Japanese heritage and his capability to blend Chinese and Japanese cultures in his work offer a fresh out-



Top: Kawakami holds one of his own works at his home in Hiroshima, Japan.



Above: Trophies won by Kawakami Sadao at a Chinese lyrics and music competition.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

look on cultural exchange, nurturing mutual understanding and appreciation between the two nations," she adds.

Both Chinese composers wrote music to go with Kawakami's lyrics free of charge.

Looking to the future, Kawakami envisions a continued journey of musical exploration, with the aim of touching the hearts of even more listeners in China. He talks of plans to enlist Japanese singers to perform his compositions, aspiring to "have a similar impact as *Love Story in Wuxi* did, using music to introduce Wuxi to a wider audience".

Zhao Guangmei and Xiang Wenjian contributed to this story.



Online Watch the video by scanning the code.



From top: Sampson and Li hold up a sign saying *Shufu Zuhu*, the name of their act, which means duo of comfort and luck, in Sampson's Beijing courtyard house in August; Sampson and Li pose on stage with an audience after a show in Beijing in August.



Literary and music works by Kawakami.