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Monetary policy shift to finance fiscal steps

By ZHOU LANXU
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China may take unconventional monetary steps to finance bolder fiscal expansion next year as a top-level meeting has marked a rare shift in policy stance to navigate intensified uncertainties, policy researchers and economists said on Tuesday.

Those measures, possibly including a sizable central bank purchase of government bonds, coupled with more aggressive cuts in interest rates and reductions in banks' required reserves, would align with policymakers' sharpened determination to bolster policy potency and avoid any sharp economic slowdown, they added.

Hu Yifan, head of macroeconomics for Asia-Pacific at UBS Global Wealth Management, said that strengthening fiscal stimulus would be key for China to offset tariff threats from the United States in 2025, with trillions of yuan in additional central government debt likely needed in the coming years for housing market destocking and social protection enhancement.

"We do not rule out the central bank purchasing these bonds on its balance sheet, with the bonds likely designated for specific usages," Hu said, adding that the central bank may also provide low-interest loans to policy-oriented banks to finance related spending.

Hu's remarks came after the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee held a meeting on Monday to analyze and study economic work in 2025 and the top leadership called for a more proactive fiscal policy and a moderately loose monetary policy, marking a shift from the "prudent" monetary stance for the first time since China dealt with the 2007-09 global financial crisis.

"The proactive expressions made us believe that China's GDP growth target may remain the same at around 5 percent for 2025," Hu said, highlighting policymakers' determination in terms of stabilizing growth and strengthening the case for stronger macroeconomic policy buffers.

Chinese equities rose on Tuesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index up 0.59 percent to close at 3,422.66 points.

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President Xi Jinping and heads of major international economic organizations, who attended the "1+10" Dialogue, pose for a photo on Tuesday at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi calls for building open world economy

Nation's economic achievements, actions to defend multilateralism applauded by leaders

By XU WEI
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President Xi Jinping reaffirmed on Tuesday China's commitment to expanding opening-up and aligning itself with high-standard international economic and trade rules, while warning that tariff wars, trade wars and technology wars "produce no winners".

Meeting with heads of 10 major international economic organizations in Beijing, the president stressed that countries should see each other's development as opportunities, rather than challenges, and treat each other as partners, rather than rivals.

He elaborated on his vision that humanity is a closely entwined community with a shared future. "Countries are not riding separately in some 190 small boats, but are rather all aboard a giant ship on which their shared destiny hinges."

The president emphasized the importance of building an open world economy through cooperation. It is important to drive development through innovation, seize the important opportunities presented by the digital economy, artificial intelligence and low-carbon technology, foster new sources of economic growth and support the cross-border flow of knowledge, technology and talent, he said.

He criticized moves such as building a "small yard with high fences", decoupling and the disruption of supply chains, warning that such actions "bring harm to others without benefiting oneself".

Instead of a risk, countries should take economic interdependence as a good thing that enables all to draw on each other's strengths for mutual benefit and win-win results, he pointed out.

Andy Mok, a senior research fellow at the Center for China and Globalization, said that Xi's remarks at the meeting lay bare a

stark reality — the zero-sum game, as well as trade and tech battles, fly in the face of history's lessons and basic economic logic. "It's time to move past the destructive illusion of decoupling and invest in the hard but necessary work of forging a lasting, cooperative path forward," he said.

The heads of the 10 economic organizations were in Beijing for the "1+10" Dialogue, a mechanism aimed at enhancing their policy communication with China.

President of the New Development Bank Dilma Rousseff, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Kristalina Georgieva, President of the World Bank Group Ajay Banga and Director-General of the World Trade Organization Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala spoke on behalf of the 10 organizations.

They applauded China's economic achievements, particularly its strides in poverty alleviation and technological innovation, and described the country as a crucial engine and anchor of global growth and a staunch defender of multilateralism.

With the world facing rising unilateralism and protectionism,

countries around the globe are looking to China, with the hope and confidence that the nation will continue to function as the most important engine of global growth, the economic leaders said.

The event came as Xi presided over a key leadership meeting on Monday to map out priorities for China's economic policies next year, fueling expectations that Beijing is set to roll out greater support for the economy in 2025.

The president struck an upbeat tone on the Chinese economy on Tuesday, saying that the nation has full confidence in meeting this year's growth target and in continuing to serve as the biggest engine of world economic growth.

China has set a target of maintaining GDP growth of around 5 percent this year and creating at least 12 million new urban jobs.

As for the Belt and Road Initiative, Xi told the economic leaders that as a doer and go-getter, China has been hammering away at advancing Belt and Road cooperation and building bridges for the common development of China and the world.

The nation welcomes international economic organizations to continue their active participation in BRI cooperation, and jointly promote the modernization of all countries featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity, he said.

As for China-US relations, Xi reiterated Beijing's readiness to maintain dialogue, expand cooperation and manage differences with the US government and work for the steady, sound and sustainable development of ties with Washington.

China will stay focused on managing its own affairs well, and resolutely safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests, he told the economic leaders. Meanwhile, China's determination to advance high-level opening-up will not change, he added.

On global economic governance, Xi urged the organizations to actively engage in and push for reforms of the global economic governance system, to make it more just and equitable and reflective of the changing world economic landscape, and increase the representation and voice of Global South countries.

Global South countries play bigger role at G20

WORLD WATCH
By Gert Grobler

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva opened the G20 Summit with the unveiling of a global alliance aimed at tackling poverty and hunger. Lula also chaired a meeting where the Leaders' Declaration was adopted.

The declaration included wide-ranging decisions on key themes such as the international economic and political situation, social inclusiveness and the fight against hunger and poverty, reform of global governance institutions and climate change.

Under Brazil's leadership, the G20 addressed some of the world's most pressing issues with tangible initiatives that reflect a vision for a more equitable, sustainable future.

The rotating G20 chair held by Indonesia, India, Brazil and next, South Africa, represents a turning point for the Global South and an injection of new momentum in G20 activities.

See *G20*, page 3

Rally in ROK



South Koreans hold a demonstration in Chuncheon, Gangwon Province on Tuesday, demanding the resignation of President Yoon Suk-yeol, who declared a short-lived emergency martial law on Dec 3. South Korea's National Assembly passed a resolution on Tuesday calling for the immediate arrest of Yoon and seven other officials over last week's order. YONHAP NEWS AGENCY See story, page 10

STATUS BATTLE FOR TALL CHILDREN HITS NEW HEIGHTS, AND A FEW LOWS

Medical interventions are helping spur growth, but experts say variations should be accepted

By YU RAN in Shanghai
For China Daily



Chinese parents have always been anxious about their children's academic performances and excellence in extracurricular activities, but now that competitiveness has been extended to include height.

"Height is increasingly seen as a marker of socioeconomic success and personal potential. Parents' investments in their children's growth reflect deeper ambitions for social mobility and enhanced opportunities," said Yu Hai, a sociology professor at Fudan University.

More and more parents are

turning to medical interventions from an early age, hoping to help their children grow taller through puberty suppression treatments and growth hormones.

Lin Yiran, a 40-year-old mother from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, has found herself at the center of a heated public discussion after it was revealed her 15-year-old son Xiao Rui underwent five years of growth hormone therapy to boost his height.

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PAGE TWO



Height: Tales of the tape — how we measure up

From page 1

The treatment began five years ago when Xiao Rui measured less than 130 centimeters — far below the median height of 140 cm for boys his age.

Concerned about his growth, Lin took him to the hospital for a thorough assessment. “When I saw him standing next to his classmates, it broke my heart. He looked so small, and I worried about how this might affect his confidence and opportunities,” said Lin.

Doctors confirmed that Xiao Rui’s bone age was normal for his chronological age, but cautioned his genetic potential for a good height was limited by his parents’ stature. Lin, at 156 cm, and her husband, at 170 cm, were unlikely to pass on genes for a height exceeding 165 cm.

“The doctor told us bluntly that if we did nothing, he might never hit 165 cm. But with growth hormone therapy, he might have a chance of reaching 170 cm,” said Lin.

More than 80 percent of parents hope their son’s height will be between 175 and 185 cm, according to the Analysis of Parents’ Awareness and Needs Regarding the Height of Preschool Children published by the China National Centre for Women and Children’s Health in 2015.

The survey of over 10,000 cases, also found more than 85 percent of parents wanted their daughter’s height to be between 160 and 170 cm.

Lin said she decided to proceed with the treatment, despite concerns about the cost and potential side effects.

“It wasn’t an easy decision. As parents, we’re always weighing risks and benefits, but we wanted to give him every chance,” said Lin.

Xiao Rui had to inject human growth hormones every day. The treatment cost approximately 6,500 yuan a month, and Lin spent nearly 80,000 yuan in the first year. Despite the financial strain, the results initially seemed promising, and Xiao Rui grew 12 cm in the first year.

However, in the third year Xiao Rui’s annual growth slowed to 7 to 8 cm. Over the past two years, his growth has further slowed to around 5 cm a year.

“Watching the pace slow down was tough. Every injection, and every clinic visit, felt heavier when the results weren’t as dramatic as before. Some days, I wondered if it was all worth it,” said Lin.

Xiao Rui’s height, however, has exceeded expectations. At 15, he stands 171 cm tall — far beyond his predicted height of 165 cm and slightly taller than the median height for boys his age.

“Looking back, it was a long and challenging road, but seeing him confident and standing tall among his peers makes it all worthwhile,” said Lin.

While some friends supported her decision, others questioned the need for such measures, and criticized the growing reliance on medical interventions for natural traits like height.

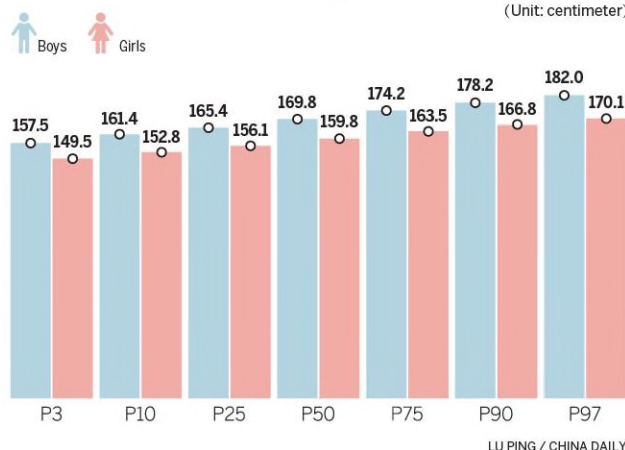
In 2019, the average annual cost of individual growth hormone treatment was

Height comparisons of adolescents aged 15 in China

In this chart, the percentile ranks (P3, P10, P25, P50, P75, P90, and P97) indicate heights of 15-year-old teenagers compared with others of the same age:

- P3** This means that 3 percent of teenagers of the same age and population have a height less than this value. It represents the lower extreme, often indicating smaller children.
- P10** Ten percent of adolescents fall below this value.
- P25** 25 percent of teenagers are below this value.
- P50** This is the middle value, and it represents the average or typical measurement.
- P75** 75 percent of teenagers are below this value.
- P90** 90 percent of teenagers fall below this value.
- P97** This is the highest category in the chart, where only 3 percent of teenagers are taller than this value.

Source: The Chinese Journal of Paediatrics



(Unit: centimeter)

LU PING / CHINA DAILY

42,700 yuan, according to the 2021 China Growth Hormone Market Research Report.

The effectiveness of growth hormone injections varies from individual to individual, and generally requires 2 to 5 years of injections.

Mom’s twin approach

For Xia Ou, a 40-year-old mother of 13-year-old twin girls from Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, it was a complicated decision, but she ultimately discontinued medical intervention for her younger daughter, whose growth lagged behind her sibling.

In late 2020, Xia noticed that her daughters, then aged 9, were shorter than their peers. The older sister measured 132.5 cm and the younger twin was just over 130 cm. Both were below the median height of 134.1 cm for their age.

The younger daughter’s case was particularly concerning, and doctors said she was simply of short stature.

Given Xia’s and her husband’s relatively average heights of 160 cm and 172 cm, she had hoped her daughters could at least reach 160 cm. However, based on their bone age and growth trajectory, doctors predicted that hitting this goal would require a miracle.

“When the doctor said it was unlikely for them to exceed 160 cm without intervention, I couldn’t accept it. Height matters so much in society — it’s not just about looks, but confidence, opportunities, and how people perceive you,” said Xia.

With the younger twin showing early signs of puberty, doctors recommended an aggressive intervention of monthly puberty suppression injections and daily growth hormone treatments. For the older sister, they advised close monitoring and increased physical activity.

Xia decided to begin treatment for her younger daughter in early 2021, while opting for a conservative approach for the older daughter.

“It was the hardest decision I’ve ever had to make. You want the best for your children, but the idea of giving her injections every day felt like I was putting her through unnecessary pain. Yet, I couldn’t

Costs and methods of growth injections

The “height growth injections” are actually recombinant human growth hormone (rhGH), which are produced using recombinant DNA technology.

In China, the treatments are available in three forms: powdered injections, liquid injections, and long-acting formulas. The cost of growth hormone powder injections for one year is 20,000 to 30,000 yuan (\$2,750-\$4,120), while liquid injections cost 50,000 to 60,000 yuan. For long-acting formulas, the annual cost can be as high as 150,000 yuan.

In 2019, the average annual cost of growth hormone treatment in China was 42,700 yuan, according to the 2021 China Growth Hormone Market Research Report.

The effectiveness of growth hormone injections varies from individual to individual, and generally requires 2 to 5 years of injections.

let go of the hope that it might help her grow taller,” said Xia.

The year-long treatment took its toll. Watching her younger daughter endure daily injections filled Xia with guilt.

“Her abdomen was covered in tiny needle marks. She never complained, but I could see the discomfort in her eyes. Sometimes she’d ask me, ‘Mama, is this really worth it?’ And I’d tell her, ‘Yes, this will help you grow taller.’ But I wasn’t always sure I believed it myself,” said Xia.

The results were disappointing. While the younger daughter gained just 3 cm and narrowly surpassed her sister in height, the family had spent over 100,000 yuan on the procedures.

“We sacrificed so much for those 3 cm — it was heartbreaking,” said Xia.

In early 2022, she decided to stop the injections and turned to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) for a holistic approach that is easier on the body.

The alternative was less invasive, but

equally challenging. Every month, Xia traveled between Wenzhou and Hangzhou to consult a specialist in pediatric endocrinology. The TCM treatment aimed to delay puberty and promote growth.

However, the process demanded strict routines that Xia struggled to maintain. “The doctor kept reminding me to ensure they slept nine hours a night and exercised for an hour daily. But honestly, I couldn’t keep it up. I’m not someone who’s good at sticking to rigid schedules,” said Xia.

By early 2023, when her daughters reached the typical age for puberty, doctors advised ending all interventions to allow for natural development. Within a month of stopping the TCM treatments both girls entered puberty.

Today, the older sister stands 154 cm, while the younger twin is 155 cm — both are still below the median height of 156.3 cm for their age. Despite the emotional and financial costs, Xia has made peace with her decision to stop the treatments.

“I can only console myself with the thought that height isn’t everything — it’s who they are inside that matters most,” she said.

It’s only natural

Every summer vacation, the endocrinology clinic at Shanghai Children’s Hospital is filled with parents from across the country bringing their children for consultations about growth and height issues.

Zhou Shasha, an associate chief physician in the endocrinology department, said being overweight or obese are significant factors affecting adolescent height development.

Research indicates that in girls, being overweight or obese can impact sexual development and lead to an earlier onset of puberty. Generally, early puberty accelerates bone maturation and causes growth plates to close earlier, ultimately affecting adult height.

In the past, cases of early puberty in boys were relatively rare, Zhou said. “However, in recent years we have indeed observed more overweight and obese boys experiencing advanced bone age and earlier puberty,” she said.

Most parents are eager for doctors to prescribe puberty suppression injections or

growth hormone injections, which are relatively aggressive methods for promoting growth, even though only a small proportion of children truly require these treatments, Zhou said. The range of normal height for children and adolescents is quite broad, and largely determined by genetic factors.

“As long as a child has good nutrition and their growth potential is fully realized, there’s no need for parents to compare or compete,” she said.

In Shanghai, parental anxiety over children’s height is high. Zhang Kexin, 38, became concerned when doctors said her 11-year-old son might enter puberty within a year, after they discovered he had an advanced bone age of 1.5 years.

However, her son’s situation wasn’t severe. The doctors predicted he could reach 170 cm, which they deemed a reasonable height.

Zhang was told growth hormone injections were an option, but was warned by the doctors it was “not something we recommend lightly”.

Following the doctor’s advice, Zhang took a natural approach to improving her son’s height. She adjusted his academic schedule, reduced his workload, and set a firm bedtime of 9:30 pm, with all homework completed by 9 pm.

Dietary changes included 500 milliliters of milk and two eggs a day to ensure adequate protein, a vegetable-to-meat ratio of 60 percent to 40 percent, and three to four servings of steak each week. His physical activities ranged from swimming and basketball three times a week to 20 minutes of trampoline jumping or daily stretching exercises.

Over the past year, Zhang’s family has strictly followed this routine and his height has increased to 164 cm. His advanced bone age was also reduced by more than half.

“Parents shouldn’t rush to rely on tech and shortcuts to force growth spurts,” Zhang said.

“Don’t put too much faith in predicted heights, but use the difference between bone age and actual age as a reference. Slowing bone age growth scientifically can make a big difference, but the key is consistent execution,” said Zhang.

Between 1985 and 2019, the average height of Chinese men increased by nearly 9 cm, the largest growth rate among 200 countries and regions, according to data published by The Lancet in 2020. The average height of Chinese women grew by 6 cm, ranking third globally.

“The rising height of Chinese children reflects more than just biological changes,” said Yu, the sociology professor.

“It reveals how families increasingly prioritize nutrition, healthcare, and social status — with height becoming a symbol of a child’s potential and a family’s investment in their future.”

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TOP NEWS



Syrian refugees in Lebanon cross the border between the two countries at Al-Arida on Monday to return to their homeland. Türkiye will reopen a border gate with Syria in southern Hatay Province to facilitate and secure the return of the refugees. IBRAHIM CHALHOUB / AFP

Mohammed al-Bashir to head Syria interim govt

Turkiye, Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia condemn Israeli incursions

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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Mohammed al-Bashir, a 41-year-old electrical engineer who headed the "Syrian Salvation Government", announced on Tuesday that he had been tasked with heading a transitional government in Syria until early March 2025 following the collapse of the government of Bashar al-Assad. In a brief televised statement, Bashir said he would lead the transitional authority until March 1.

The announcement came even as the crisis-torn nation was rattled by fresh turbulence with Israel expanding its attacks in the country, including in capital Damascus.

Earlier on Monday, Assad's prime minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali told Al Arabiya TV that he had agreed to hand power to the "Syrian Salvation Government" and that it could take days to complete the handover.

The "Syrian Salvation Government" was formed in Idlib Governorate in 2017 under the aegis of

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham or HTS and other opposition groups during the Syrian civil war. The "Syrian Salvation Government" wielded administrative and service-related authority in areas under HTS control in Syria.

Meanwhile, the latest developments in Syria have sparked concerns in the international community with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday calling for calm and "avoiding violence at this sensitive time".

"We will need the support of the international community to ensure that any political transition is inclusive and comprehensive and that it meets the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria," said Guterres.

Israel launched large-scale attacks on targets in Syria on Monday night, hitting military bases, airports and research centers.

A war monitor said on Tuesday that Israel had conducted 300 strikes on Syria since the fall of Assad, adding the raids had "destroyed the most important military sites" in the country.

Three security sources told Reuters on Tuesday that the Israelis had advanced beyond the demilitarized zone. One Syrian source said they had reached the town of Qatana, several kilometers to the east of the buffer zone and a short drive from Damascus airport.

Incursion slammed

Turkiye, Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have condemned the Israeli incursion. Saudi Arabia said the move would "ruin Syria's chances of restoring security", calling for respecting Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Israel claimed its airstrikes would carry on for days but told the UN Security Council that it was not intervening in Syria's conflict. It said it had taken "limited and temporary measures" solely to protect its security.

An Israeli military spokesperson on Tuesday denied that Israeli forces had moved into Syrian territory beyond the buffer zone with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

"It's not true, the forces have not left the buffer zone," the spokesperson said.

Gokhan Batu, an analyst on Israel studies at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Turkiye, told China Daily that Israel's seizure of the buffer zone with Syria marked a significant escalation in its regional posture.

Despite widespread international support for Syria's territorial integrity, Israel continues to "adopt a stance that accentuates ethnic, religious and sectarian divisions within Syria", Batu said.

"This approach not only undermines Syria's stability but also poses long-term risks for its territorial and political cohesion," said Batu.

Meanwhile, according to the UN, more than 16 million people require humanitarian assistance in Syria, with the global body's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs saying there "is an urgent need for more shelter, food, and sanitation facilities".

The office said the recently displaced were primarily women and children from Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Idlib regions. The situation continues to remain very fluid, with reports of more people returning to Syria in the last couple of days. Earlier, transportation routes had been disrupted, limiting the movement of people, goods and humanitarian aid.

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.

Macao's industrial shift effort bears sound fruit

By ZHANG YI and WANG JING in Macao

Macao is no longer a city driven primarily by its casino gaming industry, as the special administrative region is making efforts to diversify its industrial structure to reduce reliance on a single industry, said Ho Iat-seng, chief executive of the Macao SAR, who will complete his term at the end of this month.

Last year, the gaming industry recovered to about 75 percent of its 2019 level and, yet, it accounted for only 37.2 percent of Macao's GDP, while the non-gaming sector exceeded 60 percent, Ho told China Daily in an exclusive interview. "It means that we're shifting away from a gaming-dominated economy," he said.

Ho, who took office in December 2019, made the promotion of economic diversification a top priority in governance during his five-year tenure, as the city realized the risks associated with relying on a single industry.

"Macao is a very small city, and due to historical reasons, the economy has been predominantly driven by the gaming industry. In the face of uncertainties, such as the pandemic, our economic structure found it difficult to withstand risks," he said.

Following the revision of gaming laws in 2022 to better regulate the industry, Macao's casino operators committed to investing a total of 118.8 billion Macao patacas (\$14.8 billion) over 10 years, with the investment in non-gaming projects being 10 times that in gaming projects. The objective aims to support the diversification of Macao's economy, Ho said.

A formal plan for Macao's economic diversification from 2024 through 2028 — the first such systematic industrial development plan in the city — was issued in November 2023. The goal is to allow the non-gaming sector to contribute about 60 percent of GDP until 2028, while the gaming industry continues to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The document outlines specific plans and arrangements for sectors that Macao will focus on, including tourism and leisure, traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare, modern finance, new and high technologies, and conventions and exhibitions.

Ho said the SAR government is also promoting the development of performing arts, which has not only strengthened the hospitality industry, but also certain segments of the casino gaming industry.

"Many international performers enjoy participating in shows in Macao. We are committed to show-

ing the city's unique charm, which includes the blend of Chinese and Western cultures, the rich cuisine, and more. We encourage visitors to delve deeper to understand Macao, and not just see it as a destination for casino gaming," he said.

The pandemic was among the greatest challenges for Macao since its return to the motherland 25 years ago. Although the city grappled with one of the most severe impacts of COVID-19, which involved three years of Ho's five-year tenure, the SAR government maintained stability and ensured people's livelihoods.

Every permanent resident of the city was made eligible to receive an annual cash handout of 10,000 Macao patacas, boosting the SAR's overall economic recovery, Ho said.

He noted that significant efforts have been made to advance the city's infrastructure development. For example, the construction of the Macao Medical Center of the Peking Union Medical College Hospital, an elite healthcare facility on the Chinese mainland. The Macao Medical Center started trial operation last year, aiming to improve the level of critical care treatment in the city.

"The 'one country, two systems' policy gives Macao a high degree of autonomy. With the strong backing of the central government, Macao managed to overcome three years of pandemic, while also promoting economic development," he said.

In the future, Macao will continue to leverage its unique advantage as a platform for cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and make greater contributions to promoting the country's high-level opening-up to the outside world, Ho said.

Macao's history of over 400 years under Portuguese administration has enabled it to play a unique role, with advantages including the availability of talent familiar with the Portuguese language and Portuguese laws, Ho said.

The SAR invites people from Portuguese-speaking nations, especially those with connections to the city, as well as their descendants, to visit Macao, understand its development, and use their voices to tell the stories of China and the SAR, he added.

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Economy: Effectiveness of policies matters

From page 1

"Monetary easing is expected to be bolder next year compared with 2024," said Feng Jianlin, chief economist at Beijing FOST Economic Consulting.

Noting that China has reduced the seven-day reverse repo rate — a main policy interest rate benchmark — by 30 basis points this year, Feng said that cumulative cuts to the rate could amount to 30 to 40 points in 2025, with market-based lending benchmarks, the loan prime rates, likely to decline by larger margins.

Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura, said his team expects a 50-basis-point reserve requirement rate cut, which reduces the proportion of deposits banks must keep as reserves to boost market liquidity, before the end of the year and two RRR cuts in 2025.

According to analysts, Monday's meeting underlined for the first time ever strengthening "unconventional countercyclical adjustments", which economists said refer to measures other than interest rate cuts and RRR reductions that can involve closer monetary and fiscal policy coordination.

"Unconventional measures, including the central bank providing financing to fiscal expansion, may ultimately be taken, yet the key question is whether the measures would be effective enough," said Shao Yu, a distinguished researcher at the National Institution for Finance & Development.

According to Shao, compared with the last time China adopted a moderately loose monetary policy, the space for stimulating the property and infrastructure sectors has narrowed. "How to strengthen the effectiveness of policy has therefore become more important."

Shao, who is also a distinguished professor of Fudan University's School of Management, said it is crucial to avoid the upcoming stimuli from leaving long-term issues like debt and oversupply problems, emphasizing the need to direct more resources to social welfare such as childcare and future-oriented industries such as the low-altitude sector.

The People's Bank of China and the Ministry of Finance established a joint working group for central bank treasury bond transactions this year, with PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng vowing to jointly study improving the issuance pace, maturity structure and custody system of treasury bonds.

G20: Emerging economies stay on top of global governance agenda

From page 1

The fact that the outgoing, incoming and upcoming presidencies, the so-called G20 Troika, are held by emerging economies presents a unique opportunity to place the Global South's priority theme at the heart of the G20 agenda.

At a time when geopolitical tensions among major powers are high and much of the rest of the world is despondent about the state of multilateral institutions, the G20 Troika, made up of emerging economies, will not only make the G20 a much more dynamic platform, but also revive faith in the ability of multilateral processes and structures to move the global governance agenda beyond polarized political discourse. By doing so, it will put the Global South

squarely at the center of the global governance agenda.

The G20-driven benefits will partially depend on the leverage exerted by emerging economies.

South Africa assumed the G20 presidency on Dec 1. Its presidency presents a unique opportunity to place Africa's developmental priorities on the agenda, as well as advocate for economies of the Global South. It will enable South Africa to build on the efforts and successes of the Indonesian, Indian and Brazilian G20 presidencies.

The G20 presidency will be pivotal for South Africa to champion sustainable development goals, drive global cooperation and prioritize inclusive policies to tackle economic disparities and foster social well-being.

Its G20 participation, therefore, seeks to provide strategic direction

for the establishment of a more equitable, representative and fit-for-purpose international order, in support of the main multilateral processes under the United Nations Charter.

The African Union's inclusion in the G20 last year is, in fact, historic. It solidifies Africa's role in addressing critical global issues such as economic development, climate change and energy transitions, transforming Africa's food systems and sustainability.

G20 membership will contribute to Africa's growing influence and importance on the global stage. In fact, when much of the existing international multilateral architecture was built, most of Africa was still colonized and did not have an opportunity to have its voice heard. This is another step toward correcting that imbalance.

One major example of the serious challenges that Africa faces is that the continent has to meet climate commitments amid significant developmental challenges like poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Africa suffers disproportionately from the climate crisis, despite being responsible for only a fraction of emissions. The climate emergency is harming food security, ecosystems and economies of nations on the continent.

Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed in Rio de Janeiro that China will always be a member of the Global South, a reliable long-term partner of fellow developing countries, and a doer and go-getter working for the cause of global development.

Xi subsequently announced a raft of highly constructive measures designed to support the Global

South. It included, among others, pursuing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, implementing the Global Development Initiative, proposing the Initiative on International Cooperation in Open Science along with Brazil, South Africa and the African Union to help the Global South gain better access to global advances in science, technology and innovation, supporting the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan and China's intention to pursue high-standard opening-up, and unilaterally opening its doors wider to the least developed countries.

Furthermore, the African Union and South Africa have accepted and stand ready to work with China and other developing countries in the G20 context to jointly implement China's Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative.

These initiatives are aimed at strengthening global economic development and the practice of true multilateralism, and will undoubtedly increase the representation and voice of the Global South in global governance and safeguard the shared interests of developing countries toward the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

As President Xi stated, citing a Chinese saying, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step", the country is ready to take steps together with all parties to build a just world of common development, leave poverty in the past, and turn our vision into reality.

The author is a senior research fellow at the Institute of African Studies at Zhejiang Normal University and a former senior diplomat in the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



Celebratory signs are placed near the Ruins of Saint Paul's in Macao on Thursday ahead of the 25th anniversary of Macao's return to the motherland. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

CHINA



A view of the Huangmaohai Link at sunset in Guangdong province on Nov 28. The passage in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will be put into service on Wednesday. LI JIANSU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Massive GBA cross-sea passage all set for trial run

By ZHENG CAIXIONG

in Guangzhou

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Huangmaohai Link, a new major cross-sea passage project in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, officially begins trial operation at 3 pm on Wednesday.

The project is expected to further promote and accelerate the integrated and high-quality development of the GBA.

Huangmaohai Link starts in Zhuhai's Pingsha town and ends in Doushan town in Taishan city, which is under the administration of Jiangmen. It is 31 kilometers long, including a 14-km section above the sea.

The operation of the project takes vehicles only 30 minutes to reach Zhuhai, which borders the Macao Special Administrative Region from Jiangmen. The massive two-way and six-lane project will further strengthen the economic and trade ties between the two cities and promote the region's coordinated development.

The link is free during its trial operation.

Previously, vehicles took over an



hour to complete the journey via the other expressways. Meanwhile, the project is the extension line of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. It will not only help boost infrastructural connectivity but also help strengthen economic and trade ties between core cities in GBA and the cities in the western part of Guangdong, including Zhanjiang, Maoming and Yangjiang and even Hainan province, authorities said.

Lam Wing-tsan, chairman of Guangdong Hop Hing Edible Oil Ltd, said the operation of Huangmaohai Link is beneficial for himself and his company operations.

Lam said peanuts purchased from the northern cities had to be first transported to Nansha port in

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, before being transported to Taishan.

"After the service of Huangmaohai Link, the products from northern regions can be directly transported to Zhuhai Gaolan Port, which is closer to Taishan, before they are transported to the company. It significantly reduces production cost and transportation time," he said.

The Hong Kong business executive, whose company is wholly owned by Hong Kong Hop Hing Group, now frequently commutes between Hong Kong and Taishan.

Bu Hongjin is the deputy general manager of Taishan Lvsheng Food Co Ltd, a subsidiary of China Xulong

Group headquartered in Cixi city of Zhejiang province. He said the opening of the Huangmaohai Link will make it more convenient for the company to transport its baked eel products to Hong Kong, Macao and the rest of the world from Taishan, the largest eel farming and production base in China.

The Huangmaohai Link, designed to allow a speed of more than 100 kilometers per hour and a service life of 100 years, includes two bridges, two tunnels and a service area. Its Huangmaohai Bridge is the world's longest three-tower cable-stayed highway design bridge. The other bridge is the Gaolangan Bridge in Zhuhai.

Construction of the project started in June 2020. It is another mega cross-sea project in GBA, following the HZMB and the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link.

HZMB was open for traffic in 2018 and Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link started service earlier this year.

They have played an essential role in promoting integrated development in GBA and further advancing the economic ties between Guangdong and the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macao.

Swift action assured in abuse cases

Victim's statement will be considered as proof, if perpetrator denies allegation

By CAO YIN

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China has introduced new guidelines to enhance the response to domestic violence, aiming to regulate police procedures in handling complaints and streamline case processing.

The guidelines on the warning system for domestic violence were jointly issued by nine authorities, including the Ministry of Public Security, the Supreme People's Court and the All-China Women's Federation.

While the full text of the 24-article guidelines has not been released, a statement published on the ministry's website on Monday outlined specific conditions under which police can establish domestic violence cases — an area that has often sparked controversy in practice.

Under the guidelines, if a perpetrator does not dispute harming a family member, public security officials can classify the act as domestic violence based on statements from the perpetrator, the victim or witnesses.

If the perpetrator denies the allegations, police can still confirm domestic violence based on the victim's statement or witness testimony, combined with supporting evidence. This evidence can include audio or video recordings, phone messages, or text messages documenting the harm.

Additionally, testimony from friends or neighbors, medical records, or written apologies from the perpetrator is also admissible as supporting evidence.

Peng Xinlin, a law professor at Beijing Normal University, said the guidelines aim to standardize police responses, particularly in situations where evidence for filing a case is insufficient.

In China, a case — whether administrative or criminal — can only be filed if evidence meets legal standards, explained Xu Hao, a lawyer at Beijing Jingsh Law Firm.

"Many domestic abuse complaints fail to meet these requirements, which often prevents the imposition of penalties like fines or detention on perpetrators," Xu said.

The new rules address this issue by instructing police to treat complaints containing a victim's statement or witness testimony, along with one form of supporting evi-



This will help prevent and curb domestic violence more effectively while promoting equality and harmony within families."

Xu Hao, lawyer at Beijing Jingsh Law Firm

dence, as domestic violence cases.

"This means police can no longer dismiss such complaints as mere family disputes," Xu added.

The guidelines also emphasize preventive measures. Public security departments are instructed to educate perpetrators in minor cases of abuse and to issue formal warnings in more serious circumstances.

Du Zhihong, an associate professor of law at Southwest University, praised the use of warning notices. "They serve as a deterrent to perpetrators and provide psychological support to victims," Du told Redstar News, a media outlet in Sichuan province.

Such notices can also serve as evidence if victims seek personal safety protection orders or file for divorce due to domestic abuse, Du added.

The guidelines aim to standardize procedures for issuing these notices nationwide, making it easier for police to respond consistently. "This will help prevent and curb domestic violence more effectively while promoting equality and harmony within families," Xu noted.

The guidelines also clarify the roles of departments such as education, civil affairs and women's federations to improve coordination and efficiency in addressing domestic violence.

China has made significant strides in combating domestic violence in recent years through legislative, judicial and social measures. The Anti-Domestic Violence Law, enacted in 2016, marked a key step in these efforts.

By strengthening police protocols and emphasizing collaboration among various sectors, the new guidelines aim to further safeguard victims and promote family harmony.

Chinese firm's auto-disable syringes to aid Africa

By ZHU LIXIN in Hefei

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A Chinese company's plant in Rwanda has recently obtained pre-qualification from the World Health Organization for its auto-disable syringes.

The latest development marked the first WHO-prequalified syringe product in Rwanda, underscoring Africa's growing capacity for producing essential vaccine syringes locally, said TKMD Rwanda, a subsidiary of Anhui Tiangkang Medical Technology, in a recent news release.

The syringes, designed to be automatically disabled after a single use, are set to be supplied to UNICEF for vaccination initiatives across African nations.

Bai Jinkun, general manager of Tiangkang Medical in Chuzhou, Anhui province, emphasized the

significance of local syringe production in Africa.

He highlighted the challenges posed by raw material supply chains and the importance of mitigating risks associated with manufacturing medical products.

The AD syringes, endorsed by the WHO for vaccination and mandated in programs launched by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, play a crucial role in preventing the risk of reuse and cross-contamination during immunization efforts.

Their advanced safety features have proved effective in halting the transmission of blood-borne illnesses such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Bai said syringe development has received financial and technological support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

"The foundation's support has

been instrumental in strengthening TKMD's confidence to supply UNICEF with locally produced syringes, thereby supporting immunization programs in low- and middle-income countries across Africa and enhancing pandemic preparedness on the continent," Bai said.

With sub-Saharan Africa alone requiring up to 500 million AD syringes annually for routine immunization programs, the demand for these vital medical supplies in the region is urgent, according to TKMD.

Historically, Africa has heavily relied on syringe imports from Asia, a process that can take three to four months by sea to reach many countries.

With an annual production capacity of 300 million units, the factory aims to supply AD syringes for immunization programs across

Africa at an affordable price.

While currently focusing on producing 0.5 milliliter AD syringes to meet immediate needs, the factory is ready to adapt its product lines to address future requirements for other types of syringes.

Located in Rwamagana, Rwanda, the TKMD factory is set to play a pivotal role in creating local jobs and fostering sustainable operations in the community, the company said.

The factory will only hire locally to create jobs in the community and maintain a sustainable operation in the longer term. Currently, the factory employs 60 key staff members undergoing training to build technical and commercial expertise.

Tiánkang Medical decided to invest in the Rwanda plant in 2019. The plant was put into operation in July this year, according to Tiánkang Medical's official website.

Exam practice



High school art seniors practice in a dance studio of a training center, preparing for the upcoming art exams in Handan, Hebei province, on Tuesday. HAO QUNYING / FOR CHINA DAILY

4 senior officials punished in anti-graft campaign

China's top anti-corruption and judicial authorities announced the punishment of four senior officials on Tuesday following investigations into bribery and misconduct.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate ordered the arrest of Tang Renjian, former minister of agriculture and rural affairs, on suspicion of bribes.

His case has been transferred to procuratorial authorities for prosecution after an investigation by the

National Commission of Supervision. Tang was expelled from the Communist Party of China and dismissed from public office last month for serious violations of discipline and law.

Investigators found that Tang failed to implement central policies on agricultural affairs, accepted illegal gifts and travel invitations, and made poor decisions during the

national poverty alleviation campaign. He also interfered with judicial matters and used his position to benefit his family and others in business and government affairs.

Separately, Wu Yingjie, a former Party chief of the Xizang autonomous region and senior member of China's top political advisory body, was expelled from the CPC and dismissed from his official roles for serious violations of Party discipline.

An investigation revealed that Wu mishandled local projects for personal gain and took bribes in exchange for benefits, including project contracts. His illegal assets will be confiscated, and his case will be transferred to prosecutors for prosecution.

Zhang Jianchun, former deputy head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, was also expelled from the Party and removed from his public office after

an investigation revealed he had violated Party rules.

Zhang accepted gifts, accommodation and travel arrangements that could influence his official duties, failed to cooperate with the investigation, and abused his power to secure benefits for others in exchange for bribes. His illicit gains have been confiscated, and the case will be referred to the procuratorate for further action.

Wang Bo, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Inner Mongolia autonomous region, was expelled from the

CPC for severe disciplinary violations. The investigation found that Wang accepted bribes, including housing and banquet services, from private business owners and used his position to benefit others in exchange for bribes.

He also failed to report issues truthfully during inquiries and exploited his position for personal gain. Wang's illegal assets have been confiscated, and his case has been transferred to prosecutors for review and indictment.

CHINA

Craftsmanship and entrepreneurship contribute to rural vitalization in Ningbo

Community attracts creative young people with favorable conditions, peaceful environment

By HE QI in Ningbo, Zhejiang
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A dazzling array of Polish ceramics, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and the ambiance of a grassy courtyard fill the quaint shop with a rich sense of sophistication. However, this scene is not set in a bustling modern city but in a small village in Zhejiang province.

Located in Ningbo's Yongwang village, Strawberry Cafe, whose unique selling point is that it combines ceramics with coffee, is one of many businesses that have popped up in recent years, attracted by the village's quaint atmosphere.

Spearheaded by Wang Qiong, from Ningbo, the cafe was opened last year and has quickly found itself popular with locals and visitors.

"When you come to the countryside, you feel incredibly relaxed. I can engage with more customers because it's only in rural settings that you can truly unwind," Wang said.

"Our Polish ceramics draw inspiration from nature such as flowers, birds and insects, that reflect the elements of the countryside. Therefore, they harmonize perfectly with the rural surroundings," she said.

The authorities in Yongwang provided favorable conditions for Wang to open her coffee shop, which prompted her to make up her mind.



From left: Gift packages of traditional Ningbo food and handicrafts are displayed at the Artisan Tribe in Yongwang village in Ningbo, Zhejiang province. Ceramic tableware is displayed at Strawberry Cafe in Yongwang village. PHOTOS BY HE QI / CHINA DAILY



products, the tribe brings together artisans while introducing interactive projects such as intangible cultural heritage research and learning, and cross-border exchanges among artisans.

"We primarily focus on integrating culture with commercialization. Through our platform, we aim to pass down intangible cultural heritage. We believe that only through the dual inheritance of culture and commerce can the skills of intangible cultural heritage truly be passed on," said Zhang Shaohua, brand director of Yong's Gourmet.

In addition, to meet the housing needs of young talent in scientific research and entrepreneurship in the neighboring region, Yongwang has partnered with a State-owned enterprise to establish supportive youth entrepreneurship apartments.

This project is among Ningbo's initial affordable rental housing endeavors on collectively owned land.

Comprising 400 units, the youth entrepreneurship apartments were finished and put on the market in July last year.

"This accommodation option is available to current and graduating students from vocational schools and higher education institutions, offering a complimentary stay of up to 15 days," said Mao Yunbo, manager of the apartment project.

“When you come to the countryside, you feel incredibly relaxed. I can engage with more customers because it's only in rural settings that you can truly unwind.”

Wang Qiong, owner of a coffee house in suburban Ningbo

"Having been in business for over a year, it has already exceeded my expectations," she added.

Yongwang village is a standout rural community excelling in rural vitalization, and is home to many innovative projects, which have led to repeated honors and awards.

Located in Zhenhai district, the 2.69-square-kilometer village has received numerous provincial accolades for its picturesque environment and effective governance. In 2022, it was designated one of the inaugural provincial-level "Future Villages".

Guo Chengjun, the village Party secretary, aims for dual growth in the village's economy and residents' incomes, creating a future rural community where locals prosper, newcomers settle comfortably and returnees thrive in entrepreneurship.

According to Guo, in recent years Yongwang has utilized idle resources within the village, focusing on rural innovation and cultural industries. They have established the "Rural Youth Innovation Hub", integrating offices, homestays, youth apartments and distinctive neighborhoods.

Artisan Tribe is a prime example, dedicated to creating a hub for artisans and transforming traditional crafts into lucrative new industries that benefit the community.

In recent years, time-honored brands like Yong's Gourmet and Jaragou have collaborated with these local artisans and enterprises. This has driven sales of related products to exceed 80 million yuan (\$11 million).

Artisan Tribe came into being by using idle space in Yongwang.

In addition to showcasing traditional crafts and selling unique

Coffee enthusiasts discover opportunity, sense of community in Zhejiang village

By HE QI in Zhoushan, Zhejiang
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Xie Junwu sold coffee from the back of his van while driving around China with his wife for years. However, his journey came to an end in 2022 when he arrived at Luxiaxu, a small village adjacent to the sea in the city of Zhoushan, Zhejiang province.

The couple fell in love with the ancient village, which had been reinvented on the back of a tourism boom that went viral in recent years. Their affection immediately led to the idea of setting up a local coffee shop — 55 Road Coffee.

"If we were to go back to city life now, we would actually find it quite challenging to adapt to that pace again. We truly enjoy the rural life here. This place is our home," said Xie, who used to live in Changsha, Hunan province.

Part of the coffee shop has been transformed from the original old house's chicken and duck coop. In order to preserve the old characteristics, they retained most of the structure and the roof tiles. Xie's mother is currently the head chef at the coffee shop and restaurant, specializing in Hunan cuisine known for its spicy taste.

"We used to live in Hunan, and now starting a business here allows me and my family to live and work together, something that is hard to achieve elsewhere," Xie said.

Xie is just one of the young entrepreneurs trying their luck in Zhoushan thanks to a favorable

local policy to support cultural and dining businesses.

Luxiaxu village is dubbed "an entrepreneurial park without walls", offering policy support such as low rent, renovation subsidies, guaranteed loans with interest subsidies and talent housing guarantees for aspiring entrepreneurs. Currently, it hosts 50 diverse shops, including nearly 10 village cafes, employing over 100 locals.

"Our annual revenue stays stable, reflecting a positive trend in this rural business model. We manage to earn slightly more than in a traditional job, enjoying greater freedom and a stronger sense of community," he said.

Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years, government initiatives such as media exposure and client visits have benefited businesspeople such as Xie.

"The local community and government care about everyone's businesses and organize events such as rural coffee festivals and related markets to attract more visitors," he added.

Apart from government support, a stronger sense of belonging emanates from the warmth of rural life, Xie said.

"We have great relationships with our neighbors. We share leftover food with them to feed their chickens and ducks, and they often bring us fresh vegetables and fruit. They even help us raise chickens.

"The bonds among neighbors are not easily encapsulated in a

single phrase, they are the culmination of numerous acts of kindness," he said.

Xie also managed to pay back the kindness of the neighbors with reciprocal benefits — the rice, chicken and vegetables he orders are all sourced from locals.

"The money we earn from using these ingredients goes back to the community, albeit temporarily passing through my hands, ultimately benefiting many villagers," he said.

His business expanded in May with the second 55 Road Coffee opening in nearby Daqing Mountain, fulfilling his dream of owning a shop facing the sea with a mountain behind.

"After observing Daqing Mountain for nearly a year, we found that the sea in that area is blue for over 200 days out of the whole year. We want to share this unique view with more friends, and encourage them to enjoy the sea at Daqing Mountain, apart from rural life in Luxiaxu village.

Last year, Luxiaxu had 1.2 million visits, generating over 252 million yuan (\$34.7 million) in revenue. It was selected as one of the first batch of model destinations showcasing the province's efforts to vitalize rural areas, according to Zheng Ping, a local interpreter.

The village's inaugural rural coffee lifestyle festival last year attracted 80,000 attendees, with the event's profit exceeding 1.5 million yuan, Zheng said.

Attracting innovative and creative talent back to rural areas is also a major initiative in the village.

It was reported that the village has attracted over 160 such individuals, half of them non-locals, leading to the creation of nearly 400 jobs and increasing the income of surrounding households by over 10,000 yuan each, Zheng said.

Xia Ziyu, founder of Rabbit Market, a village store that sells high-quality agricultural products with island characteristics, said: "It is very important for many young people to return to their hometowns to start businesses and for youth to empower rural areas. We hope to empower rural areas through art."



Elementary school students tour Tiangong Manor during a field trip in Ningbo, Zhejiang province, in March. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Culture plays big role in boosting tourism and improving livelihoods

By SHI JING in Ningbo, Zhejiang
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While the service industry has played an increasingly important role in rural vitalization, tourism featuring cultural characteristics has gained the attention of visitors, boosting the incomes of villagers.

Suburban Ningbo's Wandu village in Zhejiang province is an example of such a story.

With a registered population of 1,076 people, the village is home to nine museums and art exhibition halls, featuring intangible cultural heritage, flower arrangement art and qipao dresses.

The purpose is to add more cultural and educational features into agriculture-based sightseeing and rural experiences, said Wandu village's Party secretary Cai Guocheng.

Wuxia Culture and Art Center, which provides professional training for traditional Chinese musical instruments such as the *guzheng* and *guqin*, is a good example. Founded in Ningbo in 2011, the center was moved to Wandu in 2021.

According to the center's cofounder Zhao Binwuxia, one of the purposes of relocating to Wandu was to focus on cultural services and the complete industrial chain built in the small village.

Business results justify the decision to relocate, with students from different parts of Ningbo commuting to the center every week to attend classes, some driving 90 minutes to get there. The center, which has attracted students aged between 4 and 70, recently earned 3 million yuan (\$410,000) in annual sales revenue, which was not affected during the pandemic, she said.

Another must-visit place for tourists to Wandu is Tiangong Manor, showcasing modern agricultural technologies. In 2021, 5.6 million yuan was invested to build a 7,200-square-meter smart glass greenhouse in the manor. Tropical fruits such as guava and papaya are grown in the greenhouse where tourists can experience fruit picking. The manor also has an indoor botanical garden where the temperature is kept at 28°C, the largest of its kind in Zhejiang,

showcasing more than 400 species of plants.

Weng Liqun, founder of research program service provider To Be Natural, started providing research courses to children in Tiangong Manor in 2020. Many of their family clients, who live in urban Ningbo, have booked study programs for their children in Tiangong Manor more than once.

While children can get closer to nature and obtain more agricultural knowledge, Tiangong Manor has become a good choice for parents to get together and take some time off, she said.

Wandu attracted 370,000 visitors in the first three quarters of the year, bringing in 24 million yuan in tourism income.

The tertiary industry, including tourism, contributed 73 percent of Wandu's income in 2023. The collective net assets of Wandu reached 1.2 billion yuan last year, while its collective operating income amounted to 49.5 million yuan. Wandu villagers' disposable income per capita reached 76,500 yuan last year, while Ningbo's average was 71,700 yuan.



The view from the 55 Road Coffee in Daqing Mountain in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

BUSINESS

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More futures, options to be accessible

Nation's capital market eyes upping investment choices for foreigners

By SHI JING in Shanghai
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Further opening-up of the Chinese capital market and deepening cooperation with multilateral financial institutions will not only bolster the country's high quality economic growth, but also provide more opportunities outside the country, said experts.

China will steadily include more futures and options that can be directly traded by overseas investors. Commodity futures and options accessible to qualified foreign investors (QFIs) will also be expanded in an orderly manner.

Chen Huaping, vice-chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, released the above information during the 19th China (Shenzhen) International Derivatives Forum held on Saturday.

The CSRC, the country's top securities watchdog, will also support domestic and foreign exchanges to carry out settlement price authorization and launch cross-border commodity exchange-traded funds. Overseas exchanges will be allowed to launch more financial products linked to Chinese onshore futures prices, said Chen.

The Shanghai Futures Exchange (SHFE) is studying the internationalization of its nickel products, the exchange's deputy general manager Zhang Ming said at the Saturday forum.

The SHFE will study rolling out more international products to better meet risk management demand from companies around the world, Zhang said.

He said the SHFE has introduced six futures products directly available to overseas investors, including yuan-denominated crude oil, international copper and low sulfur fuel oil. As to the other 16 futures options accessible to QFIs, they are now traded by investors from more than 30 countries and regions, covering companies along the industrial chain, cross-border trade firms, investment banks, funds and asset managers.

As of end-November, the SHFE saw the number of overseas clients up 20 percent year-on-year and QFI clients spiked 60 percent on a yearly basis.

"By giving full play to the massive size of the Chinese market and achieving higher level opening-up, the futures market can better serve the real economy," Zhang added.

The further opening-up of the Chinese futures market will help to bring in higher returns, better diversify risk and enhance market

liquidity, said Kang Lan, deputy general manager of Metori Investment Management (Zhuhai Heng-qin) Co Ltd.

More two-way opening-up is underway in the Chinese insurance sector.

According to an action plan to promote high-quality development of the Chinese property insurance sector — released by the National Financial Regulatory Administration on Friday — qualified overseas financial institutions will be supported to invest in the Chinese property insurance sector. Foreign property insurers already operating in China will be encouraged to seek high-quality development. Meanwhile, qualified Chinese property insurance firms are encouraged to optimize their business layout in overseas markets.

Via reform and opening-up, the property insurance sector can better absorb economic fluctuations, stabilize economic growth and serve the country's major strategies, said Wang Guojun, professor at the School of Insurance and Economics at the University of International Business and Economics.

Public data show that there are about 20 foreign property insurers operating in China. In October, the NFRA gave the green light to BNP Paribas and Volkswagen Financial Services to jointly set up a property insurance company in Beijing. In May, Generali China Insurance was approved to acquire the 51 percent stake previously held by a Chinese company, making it a wholly foreign-owned property insurance company.

Foreign insurers' continued investment in China has also reflected their confidence in seizing business opportunities in the Chinese insurance market, said Jimi Zhou, financial service consulting partner at PwC China.

During the "1+10" Dialogue held in Beijing on Monday, Premier Li Qiang said that the country will steadfastly advance high-standard opening-up and take on international obligations commensurate with its own capabilities to jointly promote the healthy and stable development of the global economy.

China will introduce more autonomous and unilateral opening-up policies, further expand the network of high-standard free trade zones, and continue to create a market-oriented, law-based, world-class business environment, said Li, while meeting leaders of multilateral organizations including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and New Development Bank, among others.



A container ship leaves Qingdao Port, Shandong province. YU FANGPING / FOR CHINA DAILY

Foreign trade growth on steady track

By ZHONG NAN
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As global demand gains momentum, China's foreign trade is expected to maintain steady growth in the coming months, surpassing the usual seasonal fluctuations observed in previous years, trade experts and exporters said on Tuesday.

The resilience of China's foreign trade sector is supported by favorable global demand and ongoing policy adjustments, positioning it for sustained performance, they said.

China's foreign trade expanded by 4.9 percent year-on-year to 39.79 trillion yuan (\$5.5 trillion) in the January-November period, while exports rose 6.7 percent yearly to 23.04 trillion yuan, statistics from the General Administration of Customs showed.

Bai Ming, a member of the Academic Degree Committee at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing, said exports are expected to continue growing over the coming months due to higher overseas demand and foreign importers rushing to stock up in anticipation of potential tariffs by the United States next year.

China's exports grew by 5.8 percent on a yearly basis in November and its monthly foreign trade values have maintained growth for eight consecutive months, said the administration.

The nation's exports outperformed seasonal trends last month, primarily due to resilient overseas

orders, a recovery in electronics demand, and some foreign retailers' increasing imports in advance to avoid the effects of tariffs, said Zhou Maohua, a researcher at China Everbright Bank.

Structurally, China has maintained growth in traditional markets such as the European Union and the US in the past 11 months, while exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and economies participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, Africa and South America continued to show steady growth, said Zhou.

For example, China's foreign trade with the United States and economies involved in the BRI rose 4.2 percent and 6 percent year-on-year, respectively, in the first 11 months.

Lyu Daliang, director of the GAC's department of statistics and analysis, said that private businesses, as key players in technological and industrial innovation, will continue to inject fresh momentum into China's foreign trade growth in the long run.

In the first 11 months, over 150,000 private companies engaged in the foreign trade of high-tech products across China, with their total import and export value jumping 12.9 percent year-on-year, data from the GAC showed.

In the same period, China's exports of electromechanical products grew by 8.4 percent year-on-year to 13.7 trillion yuan, accounting for 59.5 percent of its total exports.

As the external situation is com-

plex and changing, exporters said that they have already begun to expand into emerging markets to mitigate the risks caused by geopolitical tensions, as well as unilateral and protectionist moves.

For instance, tire exports by Chaoyang Longmarch Tyre Co Ltd, a Chaoyang, Liaoning province-based tire manufacturer, grew by 2.5 percent year-on-year to 1.87 billion yuan between January and November, while about half of its products were shipped to markets involved in the BRI, according to information released by Shenyang Customs.

"Emerging markets have a huge demand gap in industrial goods, building materials and energy equipment. With weak local manufacturing and high dependence on imports, these markets provide long-term and stable business opportunities for Chinese companies in these industries," said Jin Yongsheng, the company's board chairman.

Tao Cheng, president of Jiangsu Minglida Technology Co Ltd, an auto parts supplier based in Nantong, Jiangsu province, said that apart from increasing investment in research and development, the company has been actively expanding its customer base and targeting the Latin American markets to strengthen its supply chain.

Jiangsu Minglida's exports of automotive pallets and parts reached 129 million yuan during the January-November period, a year-on-year increase of 105 percent, said Nanjing Customs.

Biz leaders discuss cross-Strait industrial chains

XIAMEN — More than 700 people from the Chinese mainland and Taiwan gathered on Monday in the city of Xiamen, East China's Fujian province, to discuss strengthening cross-Strait industrial chains.

The annual Cross-Strait CEO Summit, which opened on Monday, received a congratulatory letter from top political adviser Wang Huning.

On behalf of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping and the CPC Central Committee, Wang congratulated the convocation of the conference and sent regards to members of the summit and all attendees.

Wang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, reaffirmed the mainland's support for Taiwan compatriots and enterprises, encouraging them to take an active part in Chinese modernization and benefit from the mainland's development.

Wang reiterated the mainland's commitment to upholding the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, its firm opposition to "Taiwan independence" separatism and external interference, and its dedication to fostering cross-Strait economic and cultural collaboration as well as integrated development in various fields.

Wang lauded the summit's role in uniting business leaders across the Taiwan Strait, urging attendees to enhance exchanges, promote high-quality economic cooperation and contribute to the growth of the Chinese economy.

Wang also called on entrepreneurs on both sides of the Strait to work together toward national reunification and rejuvenation.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

China to investigate Nvidia in anti-monopoly case

By CHENG YU
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Antitrust enforcement has been a global practice to defend fair competition and fuel innovation, leaving no room for companies to use geopolitical tensions as an excuse to break their legal commitments, top industry experts said on Tuesday.

Their comments came after the State Administration for Market Regulation, China's top market regulator, announced an investigation on Monday into US chipmaker Nvidia over suspected violations of the anti-monopoly law and commitments it made during the company's acquisition of Israeli chip designer Mellanox Technologies Ltd in 2020.

Though the specifics of the investigation remain undisclosed, Deng Feng, a professor of law from Peking University in Beijing, said that Nvidia has repeatedly stopped supplying several GPU products to China amid US semiconductor export controls, which disobeyed its commitments and has infringed upon the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies, sparking significant dissatisfaction within the industry.

When the US firm made the \$6.9 billion bid to acquire Mellanox in 2019, concerns arose that China could block the deal due to US-China trade frictions. Beijing however later approved the deal in 2020.

Nvidia is required to refrain from engaging in practices such as tying sales or discriminating against customers when selling related prod-



Nvidia's booth seen during an expo in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, earlier this year. LONG WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY

ucts to the Chinese market. The company was also asked to ensure product interoperability and continue supplying Nvidia GPU accelerators, Mellanox high-speed networking equipment and related software and accessories to the Chinese market.

"The so-called export control is not a justified reason for Nvidia to breach its commitments or fail to fulfill its legal obligations. Even if it cannot honor prior commitments, it should adopt alternative remedies, for instance, to present new alternatives to mitigate the negative competitive effects," Deng emphasized.

Following the latest investigation, Nvidia's shares opened over 2 percent lower on Tuesday in the US stock market. In a statement, the company said that Nvidia wins on merit... and

works hard to provide the best products in every region and honor its commitments everywhere they do business, and is happy to answer any questions regulators may have about its business.

Liu Xu, a senior research fellow at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said that enforcing antitrust efforts in high-tech sectors is a "global consensus" in recent years with the rise of digital economy.

"In fact, concerns about Nvidia's suspected monopolistic behaviors have been widespread. This year alone, antitrust authorities in the US and European Union have taken actions such as issuing opinions, and initiating investigations into whether Nvidia has abused its market dominance," he said.

China's investigation into Nvidia has been consistent with its antitrust enforcement, which has prioritized the concentration of business operators, particularly regarding large multinational mergers, Liu said, citing that since 2008, 63 merger cases have been conditionally approved, of which 60 involved multinationals.

"Fundamentally, China's review of Nvidia stems from its existing monopolistic behaviors, which already disturbed the stability of industrial and supply chains," said Zhong Gang, executive director of the Competition Law Research Institute at the East China University of Political Science and Law. "Such a move aligns with China's antitrust aims of protecting fair market competition, encouraging innovation, enhancing economic efficiency, and safeguarding consumer and public interests."

According to Nvidia's report last month, customers based in China accounted for about 13 percent of sales so far this year.

A CITIC Securities report said that the investigation serves as a legitimate management measure aimed at regulating and maintaining fair market competition, but has a guiding role for the domestic chip industry.

The move is expected to boost market sentiment around domestic computing power and chips in the short term. It also made clear that the country's current priority of encouraging the use of homegrown chips, it said.

Briefly

Mainland shares close higher

Chinese mainland shares closed higher on Tuesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index rising 0.59 percent to 3,422.66 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 0.75 percent higher at 10,812.58 points. The combined turnover covered by the two indexes stood at 2.2 trillion yuan (\$306.03 billion), up from 1.63 trillion yuan recorded in the previous trading day. Shares in the dairy and humanoid robot sectors led the gains, while those related to precious metals and coal mining saw significant declines. The ChiNext Index, tracking China's Nasdaq-style board of growth enterprises, gained 0.69 percent

to close at 2,264.05 points.

NEV car sales surge in November

China's new-energy passenger vehicle market continued to see robust growth in November, with retail sales reaching nearly 1.27 million units, industry association data showed. The figure marked a 50.5 percent year-on-year increase and a 5.9 percent jump from the previous month, according to the China Passenger Car Association. In November, production of new energy passenger vehicles reached about 1.48 million units, representing a 49.3 percent year-on-year increase and a 71 percent rise from the previous month.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

BUSINESSFOCUS

CHINA UP-CLOSE

Down apparel sales up big in colder weather

Despite concerns over cost, quality and increased competition, chilly winter giving boost to sector

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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The down apparel market is experiencing a surge as colder weather arrives, pushing up sales for domestic and international brands, despite rising concerns over costs, quality and increased competition.

Bosideng, a leading player in the down apparel market, opened its new concept store in the Sanlitun shopping area of Beijing on Saturday. The new store features high-end down jackets, priced between 1,000 yuan (\$138) and 6,000 yuan.

The expansion of retail stores reflects its booming business in the country. In the first half of its fiscal year 2024, Bosideng reported a revenue growth of 17.83 percent year-on-year to 8.8 billion yuan, and its operating profit increased by 19.6 percent to 1.47 billion yuan, with operating profit margin growing to 16.7 percent.

Down jacket sales accounted for 6 billion yuan, a 22.7 percent increase year-on-year, while its high-end Bosideng brand down jackets recorded 5.2 billion yuan in revenue, up 19.4 percent.

The group also balances with affordability. Its Snow Flying brand, targeted at female customers aged between 18 and 35, grew 47.1 percent to 390 million yuan.

During the recent Double 11 shopping festival, Bosideng ranked second in Tmall's clothing category, achieving over 1 billion yuan in sales.

Gao Dekang, chairman and CEO of Bosideng, said: "Focusing on the mainstay business of down jackets as well as fashionable and functional apparel enhanced with technology is the way forward for the group's development."

Bosideng has also recently launched a co-branded collection with Harbin, also known as the ice city and capital of Heilongjiang province. The collection blends urban aesthetics with cold weather functionality to appeal to younger consumers who value both style and performance.

A recent research report by Shanxi Securities said that Bosideng should be aware of the risks of rising raw material costs and intensified brand competition.

However, the report said that in the short term, due to widespread cold weather across the country since mid to late November, the down jacket category has entered peak sales season, and Bosideng is expected to grow further, leveraging its high-quality supply chain and quick response capability.

The size of China's down apparel market rapidly increased to 196 billion yuan in 2023, according to Hua-



Above: A view of a Bosideng store in Beijing in November.

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Left: Customers buy down jackets at a mall in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, in November.

SHI BUFA / FOR CHINA DAILY

“Focusing on the mainstay business of down jackets as well as fashionable and functional apparel enhanced with technology is the way forward for the group's development.”

Gao Dekang, chairman and CEO of Bosideng

yuan Securities. It is expected that by 2028, the scale of the industry will maintain rapid growth, with a compound annual growth rate expected to reach around 11 percent, said the company.

Chinese consumers remain enthusiastic about down jackets, particularly those that offer both functionality and style. The market is broadly divided into three segments: luxury brands, outdoor and technical apparel, and domestic or mass-market offerings.

According to a white paper published by the China Feather and Down Industrial Association and fashion media LUXE.CO, China is the world's largest producer, exporter and consumer of down and down products, accounting for 70 to 80

percent of global market share.

Nearly four out of 10 people surveyed considered down apparel "very crucial" to their winter wardrobe, said the report.

Of medium and high-income consumers surveyed, eight out of 10 considered goose down as better fillings for their jackets to stay warm.

Guvet, a high-end domestic brand based in Zhejiang province, has positioned itself as a global contender, with investment focusing on technology, fabrics and raw materials.

With sourcing of goose down from regions like Hungary and Canada, Guvet aims to rival luxury names like Moncler.

The company has conducted research with fashion and luxury

professionals in Paris, Milan and Shanghai. It recently launched flagship stores in high-end shopping malls such as La Samaritaine in Paris and SKP in Beijing.

Wu Kunming, founder and chairman of Guvet, said: "Today's consumers are better equipped to evaluate the quality of products. What some perceive as pickiness is actually a quest for high-value offerings."

This shift in consumer behavior is pushing brands to innovate. Beyond traditional down jackets, companies are exploring advanced materials and designs that cater to specific needs. For instance, antibacterial and tear-resistant fabrics are becoming standard features in premium offerings. At the same time, collaborations with global designers and institutions are helping Chinese brands gain international recognition.

Guvet recently collaborated with FBZ Group, a leading goose down production base in Hungary, to secure its supply of quality and sustainable materials.

"This has been the first year of working together, and we supplied a significant quantity, but there is still room to grow. We will increase the supply quantity year-by-year and build up our business," said Nandor Baradacs, marketing director of FBZ Group. "Reliable suppliers will become increasingly important as the supply of raw materials decreases while demand grows."

International brands have also accelerated their focus on the

winter apparel category.

Lululemon, an athleisure apparel producer, doubled down on its winter jackets category to penetrate northern markets. To better resonate with Gen Z, Lululemon introduced the "Wunder Puff Movement Theater" during its partnership featuring top Chinese figure skaters to launch the pop up store in Harbin in October of this year.

Canada Goose, in its second quarter report, saw business in the Chinese market up 5.7 percent year-on-year to 46.4 million Canadian dollars (\$32.7 million). Operating 28 stores in the market, the company launched its live shopping channel on the Chinese platform, Douyin, enabling it to engage in strong brand storytelling and grow awareness with a large audience in a key market, said the company.

Carrie Baker, president of Canada Goose, said during the earnings call for its second quarter results, "our performance in these early days on Douyin is strong and contributed meaningfully to our Asia Pacific e-commerce revenue in the second quarter. And we were successful in expanding our audience, both on social and our own communities."

Canada Goose performed well in the Chinese mainland market in October, leading to a low single-digit increase in total direct-to-consumer comparable sales growth for the month, according to the company.

Globally, the growing number of middle-income consumers is considered a factor in driving the sector's expansion. Over the past decade, the global down jacket market has been increasing and is expected to continue growing.

However, the supply of down and feathers will not be easy to increase, as the main factor of the goose and down supply is the animals raised for it. "This has led to a future with less supply but increasing demand," said Baradacs.

China dominates the global down supply chain, producing 88 percent of the world's down and feathers, according to the China Feather and Down Industrial Association.

The raw materials of down, the essence of any down jacket, have seen costs rise over the past year in China.

In 2023, the production of ducks grown for meat dropped to 4.2 billion, down from a high of 4.8 billion in 2019. A similar pattern happened with geese grown for meat, which dropped to 515 million from 630 million during the same period.

This reduction, coupled with extreme weather events and increasing demand, have driven prices higher.

The cost of 90 percent white duck down had risen by 32.7 percent year-on-year by Nov 15, while white goose down had increased by 19.8 percent, said cn-down.com, a platform for down commodity information and services based in Wuchuan, Guangdong province.

Record-breaking growth for nation's outdoor clothes market

By WANG ZHUOQIONG

China's outdoor apparel market is on the rise, driven by a growing base of young, affluent and style-conscious urban consumers. This surge in interest presents significant opportunities for sportswear brands looking to expand in the world's second-largest economy.

Demand for outdoor gear, ranging from jackets to hiking boots, has encouraged global brands to increase their investments in China.

During this year's Double 11 shopping festival, sales in the outdoor sports category soared across various platforms. On video-sharing platform Douyin, sales increased by 70 percent year-on-year, with over 2,000 brands doubling their revenue compared to last year.

Outdoor brands such as The North Face, Kailas and Adidas launched expeditions to the mountains and woods, engaging consumers and boosting their businesses. Topics like "How to

dress well while doing sports" and "What to wear in winter" garnered 140 million views, driving discussions and translating online buzz into transactions.

E-commerce platforms like JD.com and Tmall also reported record-breaking growth. Brands such as Pellicot and Kolon Sport saw their transaction volumes climb by more than 100 percent.

The growth is not confined to local platforms. International brands, including Sweden's Peak Performance and Japan's Goldwin, are seizing the opportunity. Goldwin, renowned for its high-performance designs, recently opened its third store in Shanghai, while US-based Keen has expanded from Shanghai to other major cities, including Guangzhou and Shenzhen in Guangdong province.

Amer Sports, a global group of iconic sports and outdoor brands such as Arc'teryx, Salomon, Wilson, Atomic and Peak Performance, reported a 56 percent year-on-year



A view of Nike's booth at a sports show in Shanghai in November.

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revenue increase in the Chinese market during the third quarter, reaching \$313 million. This growth outpaced other regions.

On a call with analysts, Amer Sports CEO Zheng Jie highlighted

the widespread appeal of outdoor trends in China.

"The outdoor trend in China continues to be very strong, attracting younger consumers, female consumers, and even luxury

shoppers," Zheng said.

Led by Arc'teryx, Amer Sports' portfolio of premium technical brands is carving out new market space and gaining share in sports and outdoor markets worldwide.

High-end outdoor brands, including Mammut, are launching urban collections, while footwear labels like Hoka and On are collaborating with luxury designers to appeal to style-savvy consumers. The growing popularity of outdoor gear reflects a shift in consumer priorities, offering a blend of functionality, culture and emotional value that makes it more relatable than traditional luxury goods.

However, competition in the market is intensifying. Established sportswear giants like Nike and Adidas are expanding into the outdoor category with collections such as Nike ACG and Adidas Terrex. Domestic brands, including Camel and Beneunder, are ramping up research and development to cater to increas-

ingly discerning consumers.

The surge in outdoor brand activity results from years of accumulated investment in the sector. According to LUXE.CO, a leading fashion media and market research institute, global investment and M&A transactions in sports and outdoor markets surged in 2021, recording 81 deals. The momentum continued into 2022, with a sharp increase in sports and outdoor investments in China, beginning with 28 transactions. In 2024, the sector rebounded significantly from a slowdown in 2023, with investment activity reaching a five-year high — 69 deals in the first 10 months alone.

Over the past five years, sports and outdoor footwear and apparel brands accounted for 38.5 percent of total transactions. Other key categories included sports and outdoor equipment/services (25.4 percent), sports and outdoor footwear and apparel retailers/trading platforms (14.5 percent), fitness technology services and sports fitness venues/studios (11.4 percent), and fitness/health management equipment (10.3 percent), according to the report.



From left: Tibetan antelopes graze on grassland in the Changtang Nature Reserve in the north of Xizang. WANG JIANZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY A bullet train runs on the Lhasa-Nyingchi Railway. JIAO HONGTAO / FOR CHINA DAILY A large solar farm is operational in Chonggyai county. SONG WEIXING / FOR CHINA DAILY Environmental protection, transportation and new energy are among the areas of development where CPPCC Xizang members have devoted their wisdom.

United national front delivers stability and progress for citizens of Xizang

Local committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference plays key role in autonomous region's history

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is a patriotic united front organization of the Chinese people, serving as a key mechanism for multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and a major manifestation of socialist democracy.

In September 1949, the first plenary session of the CPPCC was held in Beijing, marking the founding of this important organization in China.

The Xizang Committee of the CPPCC was founded on Dec 20, 1959, following the peaceful liberation and alongside democratic reform in this autonomous region in Southwest China.

The establishment of the CPPCC Xizang Committee also responded to the development of the local patriotic united front and the local people's aspiration to become the masters of the society and their own destiny.

The CPPCC is a major form for promoting socialist democracy in China's political life, an important component of the country's governance system, and a distinctively Chinese institutional arrangement. The two main purposes of the CPPCC are to pursue unity and democracy. This is also the case of the Xizang Committee of the CPPCC.

Over the past 65 years, under the leadership of the CPC, the CPPCC Xizang Committee has been engaged in all the important undertakings in Xizang, including the democratic reform, the establishment of the Xizang autonomous region, the reform and opening-up initiatives since the late 1970s, and the construction of socialist modernization.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the CPPCC Xizang Committee has upheld the principle of the organic integration of the CPC leadership, the united front and consultative democracy to implement the central authorities' strategies in governing Xizang.

Through fulfilling their missions of political consultation, democratic supervision and participation in discussing and handling State affairs, the CPPCC Xizang Committee has played an important role in and made its due contribution to creating a chapter of modernization with Chinese characteristics.

In the Xizang autonomous region, the CPPCC members at various levels adhere to the principle that stable growth, democracy and unity in the autonomous region is paramount in local governance. Therefore, they have devoted much energy to safeguarding rule of law and strengthening ethnic and cultural unity.

They realize that handling civil, cultural and religious affairs in accordance with the rule of law is among the important missions to safeguard the harmonious development of Xizang. For this purpose, the CPPCC members in Xizang have been communicating and networking with people from all walks of life, espe-



Members of the Xizang Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference attend a meeting in late November to mark the 65th anniversary of the founding of the CPPCC Xizang Committee. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Clockwise from top left: Tourists visit a peach flower scenic area in Nyingchi city. Farmers work on a tea farm in Metog county. Farmers harvest grapes from a vineyard in Chamdo city. Farmers use a combine harvester to collect highland barley in Lhokha city. Rural vitalization is one of the major concerns of the CPPCC Xizang members. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

cially in religious circles and the community of returned compatriots, aiming to gather consensus for harmony among religions

and various ethnic cultures. Networking with people from all walks of life is an important area where CPPCC members exer-

cise their duty in political consultation, which aims to get people informed of administrative affairs and gather feedback relat-

ing to major policies proposed by the central and local governments, and matters of importance concerning political, economic,

cultural and social affairs.

Discussing and handling State affairs means to organize CPPCC members of various parties, people's organizations, peoples of various ethnic minorities and other social groups to take part in the country's political, economic, cultural and social activities in whatever way they think fit.

In this area of exercising duty, Xizang's CPPCC member have carried out numerous field research tours, aiming to hear the requirements of local people and businesses, study local conditions relating to socioeconomic development, and produce proposals to decision-makers.

In the field of economic development, Xizang's CPPCC members have made extensive tours of the autonomous region, studying local conditions in economic development, the business environment, livelihoods, culture and environmental protection, resulting a number of proposals submitted to the local and central governments, with some of the proposals incorporated in national and local development strategies.

The proposals put forward over the recent years — like developing the clean energy industry into a local economic pillar and advocating the construction of a greater Shangri-La ecotourism zone in Xizang and its neighboring regions — have been confirmed and adopted by national administrations including the National Development and Reform Commission, the National Energy Administration and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The Law on Ecological Protection of the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau took effect on Sept 1, 2023. Marking the nation's recent effort in building Xizang and its neighboring regions into a hub of China's ecological civilization, the law also incorporated the wisdom of the CPPCC Xizang Committee members. After extensive research tours of Xizang, the members proposed stricter protective measures of Xizang's rivers, lakes, mountains, grassland and forests and called for a better legislative framework for the protection of nature reserves like the Qomolangma Mountain National Park and Changtang National Nature Reserve. The proposals were included in this specific law for the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

Over the years, CPPCC Xizang members' proposals have covered almost every aspect of people's livelihoods, including employment, education, healthcare, housing, elder care and living environment improvement, addressing the pressing concerns of the public.

Exercising democratic supervision is another important duty of CPPCC members. The CPPCC Xizang Committee recently released a new set of implementation measures for enhancing and improving democratic supervision.

Under this new guideline, supervision over the implementation of laws, regulations and major policies, and over the work of government agencies, are carried out in a more regular and effective manner.

WORLD

UK wants closer ties with EU: Minister

By EARLE GALE in London
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The United Kingdom's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves has told her European Union counterparts her country now wants closer ties with the bloc it left five years ago.

Reeves took her message to a meeting of eurozone finance ministers on Monday, where she said the UK is targeting closer cooperation but is not seeking to rejoin the 27-nation political and economic alliance.

After the Eurogroup meeting, she told reporters the UK is looking to move on from the unpleasantness that was evident when it left the bloc in January 2020 and instead foster cooperation in areas including trade, security and defense.

"Today was not about starting a negotiation," she said at a news conference after the gathering in Brussels, Belgium, on Monday. "Today was the preliminary work that is needed to rebuild trust and to build relations after a very fractious and antagonistic few years."

She said the UK's Labour Party government, which came to power in July after 14 years of Conservative Party rule, wants to distance itself from the previous administration's confrontational attitude toward the EU.

"Turn a page"

"We want to draw a line ... and turn a page to one of cooperation," she said.

At the meeting, which was the first between a UK finance minister and EU counterparts in five years, Reeves said London wants a "deeper, more mature relationship".

Business newspaper City AM quoted her as saying: "Division and chaos defined the last government's approach to Europe, it will not define ours."

And she said the removal of barriers between the UK and the EU will stimulate growth for both sides.

Reuters noted that Reeves told her counterparts she disagrees with commentators who have said the UK will have to choose between having closer ties with the United States or with the EU, saying "a closer economic relationship between the UK and the EU is not a zero-sum game".

After the meeting, which Reeves described as a "milestone", she said she had been "overwhelmed" by the response she received from her EU counterparts.

Eurogroup President Paschal Donohoe described the gathering as valuable and said it should "set the tone" for negotiations in the year ahead.

"The issue of fisheries, of youth mobility, and all those other matters are for another day," he said, alluding to likely areas in which the bloc and the UK may not see eye to eye.

The two sides are set to sit down in January to begin more detailed discussions of possible areas of cooperation, including greater regulatory alignment in key sectors.

Horror in Haiti



A man carrying his belongings observes the wreckage of vehicles burned out by armed gangs as he flees the Poste Marchand suburb in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on Monday. Nearly 200 people were killed over the weekend in the country when a gang leader targeted elderly people he suspected of causing his child's illness through witchcraft, with the government on Monday condemning a massacre of "unbearable cruelty". RALPH TEDY EROL / REUTERS

Japanese arrivals in China set to increase

Tourism experts hail reinstatement of visa-free access for short-term visitors

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo
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China's reinstatement of the short-term visa waiver for Japanese visitors will accelerate the recovery of Japanese travel to China and foster stronger exchanges between the two nations, tourism professionals said.

China's Foreign Ministry announced on Nov 22 that the requirement for short-term visas for Japanese nationals holding ordinary passports will be waived from Nov 30 through the end of next year. The maximum visa-free stay was also extended to 30 days, up from the previous 15-day limit. This policy had been suspended in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ouyang An, director of the China National Tourism Office in Tokyo, said the resumption of the visa-free arrangement has received unanimous praise and widespread attention from both the Japanese tourism industry and the public. Since last year, Japanese nationals and tourism professionals have frequently contacted the office to inquire about the reinstatement of the visa-free policy.

"The number of Japanese tourists visiting the Chinese mainland is gradually recovering," Ouyang said. "The return of the visa-free arrangement for short-term Japanese visitors will greatly encourage major Japanese travel agencies to develop more tourism products and routes tailored to the Chinese mainland, providing further momentum for Japanese tourists to explore the country."

He added that many Japanese

travel agencies have shown keen interest in reinvesting in and developing China-focused tourism products, with some already making progress in this area.

Following the end of the pandemic, Hankyu Travel International, one of Japan's leading travel agencies, began creating promotional materials for travel to China in February 2024.

According to Atsushi Sakai, the company's president, the situation has since shown promising improvement. The number of Japanese business travelers visiting China through the agency is also gradually recovering.

Starting in January next year, the company plans to launch new promotional campaigns to further boost travel to China.

"Since the announcement of China's visa-free policy, the daily average of Japanese customers booking China tour packages through our company has tripled compared to before the policy was introduced," Sakai said.

Bookings surge

Kozo Arita, executive officer and general manager of outbound travel sales headquarters at HIS, another major travel agency in Japan, noted that in the five days before and after the reintroduction of the visa-free scheme, online bookings for flights to China surged by approximately 156 percent, signaling strong interest.

Arita explained that obtaining a visa has traditionally been a time-consuming and complex process, requiring travelers to complete application forms and visit the Chi-

nese Visa Application Service Center or consulates to submit and receive documents. This process was especially challenging for those living in remote areas.

"With the removal of these obstacles through the visa exemption, it has become easier for travelers to choose China as their destination. This is also expected to create a significant business opportunity for our company," Arita said.

Although business travel is currently leading the way, he anticipates that the number of travelers for various purposes, including tourism, academic activities, and intercity exchanges, will rise.

"As people-to-people exchanges grow, mutual understanding between the two nations is expected to deepen, ultimately fostering positive developments in Japan-China relations at the grassroots level over the medium to long term," he added.

Kuniharu Ebina, president of the Japan Association of Travel Agents, or JATA, expressed optimism about the resurgence of leisure travel demand.

JATA plans to urge travel agencies to intensify promotional efforts to showcase China's appeal. This includes not only classic destinations but also new and innovative tourism experiences that spark interest and excitement.

"If outbound demand picks up thanks to the visa exemptions, we can expect further recovery of airline routes and stronger exchanges with regional cities," Ebina said.

"As travel products, which have mainly focused on major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, expand to include regional destinations, we hope that local-level exchanges, such as sister-city exchanges, will gain momentum."

US free trade advocates warn against tariff hikes

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
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Some free trade advocates in California and Nevada in the United States are taking a wait-and-see approach regarding another potential round of tariffs of the second Donald Trump administration.

They called for the US to seek constructive engagement and mutual understanding with other countries, as the costs of tariffs ultimately will be borne by domestic consumers.

Trump recently said he is considering raising tariffs on Canada and Mexico by 25 percent and on China by 10 percent.

During his presidential campaign earlier this year, he floated a potential tariff of 60 percent or higher on all imports from China.

Bob Underwood, a Hollywood producer and writer, spoke of the misconceptions around tariffs and their impact on consumers.

"The frustrating thing about tariffs is that most people don't understand how they work," he told China Daily. "They think 'Oh, we're charging China, we're charging Mexico.' And it's not that way at all. It's charging the people who want to import these products, so the cost gets passed to people."

Underwood said that tariffs are not effective punitive measures against other countries, as the costs ultimately are borne by domestic consumers.

"I'm much more an advocate of free trade because I think the more you're trading with one another, the more likely you are to see things from their point of view," he said, adding that he hoped Trump's rhetoric would soften in reality.

From Hollywood to local governments, voices across the US West Coast are advocating for policies that promote international collaboration, reduce trade barriers and foster mutual trust.

Despite their different views, all shared a common belief in the

importance of engagement over conflict.

Tony Wu, the mayor of West Covina, a city in Los Angeles County, underscored the importance of maintaining city-to-city relationships, even amid tensions.

"Trump's tariffs aren't just targeted at China — they extend to Mexico, Canada and Europe. It's a potential risk but also an opportunity to make a deal," Wu said.

Meanwhile, Wu said that local governments can shape policies independently to foster international relationships and attract investment.

He said that his focus has been on cutting taxes, attracting businesses, creating jobs and enhancing public safety.

Sister cities

Discussing efforts to revive a sister-city agreement with Beijing's Fengtai District, originally signed in 2017, Wu, who immigrated from Taiwan at the age of 25, expressed pride in his Chinese heritage, which he believes has contributed to his success as mayor.

"Confidence, cutting red tape, fostering friendship and promoting business and tourism are key to benefiting both countries," he said.

Michael Antonovich, a former California state Assembly member, offered a measured perspective on Trump's tariff approach, viewing it as a bargaining tool rather than a means to an end.

"I don't really support tariffs, but Trump uses them as a negotiation tactic," he said. "I believe the US and China will have better cooperation in the future."

Jesse Law, chairman of the Clark County Republican Party in Nevada, said that strong ties between China and the US remain achievable.

"There are brilliant people in both countries who can address these issues. We are looking for a beneficial relationship where both China and the US win," he said.

Haul of shame



A vet and a police officer display deer skulls and antlers seized from smugglers during a news conference in Banda Aceh, capital of Aceh Province, Indonesia, on Tuesday. CHAIDEER MAHYUDDIN / AFP

'Polarization' word of the year: Merriam-Webster

NEW YORK — Merriam-Webster announced on Monday its 2024 word of the year is "polarization", which it said "happens to be one idea that both sides of the political spectrum agree on".

"We define polarization as 'division into two sharply distinct opposites; especially, a state in which the opinions, beliefs, or interests of a group or society no longer range along a continuum but become concentrated at opposing extremes,'" Merriam-Webster, a US company publishing reference books and mostly known for its dictionaries, said in a release.

The word was widely used across the US media landscape in 2024. Fox News reported that "Vance's debate answer on the immigration crisis shows voter polarization", while MSNBC observed that "the 2024 presidential election has left our country more polarized than ever".

According to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters, about eight in 10 Kamala Harris voters were very or somewhat concerned that Donald Trump's views were too extreme, while about seven in 10 Trump voters

felt the same way about Harris.

"Polarization means division, but it's a very specific kind of division," Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, told The Associated Press ahead of Monday's announcement. "Polarization means that we are tending toward the extremes rather than toward the center."

Last year's pick was "authentic". This year's comes as large swaths of the US struggle to reach consensus on what is real.

"It's always been important to me that the dictionary serves as a kind of neutral and objective arbiter of meaning for everybody," Sokolowski said.

The word was also used to describe divides beyond the US election, as when Forbes warned that in workplaces, "cultural polarization is becoming a pressing challenge", according to the release of Merriam-Webster.

Other words that stood out in the company's lookup data in 2024 are: totality, demure, fortnight, pander, resonate, allusion, weird, cognitive and democracy.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Belgian zoo visitors bid fond farewell to panda trio

By CHEN WEIHUA
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It was 8 am on Tuesday and still dark in the southern Belgian city of Bruges, where Pairi Daiza zoo is located. But hundreds of fans had already arrived to bid farewell to three giant pandas.

Giant panda Tian Bao and twins Bao Di and Bao Mei, all born in the zoo, departed at 9:45 am in a truck to the Brussels Airport, where they boarded a cargo flight to China.

Marianne Defreyne and her daughter came all the way from Ostende, a Belgian city on the North Sea coast about a two-hour drive from the zoo, to say goodbye.

Like Defreyne, many fans were taking a last look at their beloved curly animals and some were waving the national flags of China and Belgium.

Eric Domb, founder and president of Pairi Daiza, said it was a mixed feeling for him. "Of course, it's a feeling of sadness. Leaving these wonderful babies is a very sad moment, especial-



The staff members at the Pairi Daiza zoo in Bruges, Belgium, make preparations for the departure of giant pandas Tian Bao, Bao Di and Bao Mei for China on Tuesday. CHEN WEIHUA / CHINA DAILY

ly when you think about the zookeepers who have accompanied them all day long," he told China Daily.

"But at the same time, it's a beautiful feeling. It's about a feeling to show gratitude to China."

"China introduced their parents Hao Hao and Xing Hui to the zoo 10 years ago and now we are so happy to bring you three beautiful pandas.

It's a feeling of humility and happiness," Domb said.

Pairi Daiza welcomed Xing Hui and Hao Hao, the first pair of giant pandas in Belgium in February 2014, on a 15-year loan agreement. They gave birth to a male cub Tian Bao on June 2, 2016, and on Aug 8, 2019, they gave birth to twins — male Bao Di and female Bao Mei.

WORLD

Yoon faces fresh probe over treason

Parliament OKs bill to name special counsel as political turmoil deepens

By YANG HAN in Hong Kong
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Embattled South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol is facing bleak prospects after the parliament passed a bill on Tuesday mandating a permanent special counsel to probe treason charges over his failed bid to impose martial law.

The National Assembly approved the legislation 210-63 with 14 abstentions, Yonhap reported.

The opposition Democratic Party bloc holds 192 seats in the 300-strong parliament, while Yoon's ruling People Power Party has 108. The result indicated about 20 assenting votes from the PPP.

The bill's passage will mark the first time in South Korea's constitutional history that public prosecutors, police, the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, and a special prosecutor launch simultaneous investigations into the same case.

Besides Yoon, the bill calls for investigations into several other officials involved in imposing martial law, including former defense minister Kim Yong-hyun, former interior minister Lee Sang-min and army chief Park An-su, who was named martial law commander.

Yoon declared emergency martial law late on Dec 3 but it was reversed in the National Assembly in 155 minutes.

As the president cannot exercise his veto right on a bill about a permanent special counsel, the bill's passage is expected to have a prolonged influence on South Korea's political situation.

In addition, the National Assembly adopted a resolution calling for the swift arrest of eight key figures involved in the martial law incident, including Yoon.

The president and several top officials, including the Commissioner General of the Korean National Police Agency Cho Ji-ho, have been banned from leaving the country while under investigation.

Yoon avoided an opposition-led bid to impeach him on Saturday. However, the opposition parties have vowed to submit a new impeachment motion on Wednesday, with a vote set for Saturday.

Meanwhile, local media reported

that the ruling PPP is discussing a road map that could see Yoon's "early exit" in February or March followed by fresh elections.

Democratic Party floor spokeswoman Kang Yu-jung dismissed the PPP plan, saying that the immediate impeachment of Yoon is the only answer.

"Who gives the PPP the power to settle the political situation?" Kang said.

"The PPP, which refused to vote for the impeachment of Yoon, is the one that caused political turmoil."

"What the people want is immediate suspension of Yoon's duty either by resignation or impeachment."

Apologizing to the public, Culture Minister Yu In-chon called for restraint in the opposition party's continued submission of impeachment motions against high-ranking officials, as it could pose a great danger to the public if all ministers responsible for security become vacant.

"I sincerely urge the majority party to demonstrate wisdom and restraint, ensuring that legal and political procedures proceed in alignment with the rule of law so that the government can focus on stable governance," said Yu.

Stability urged
Fang Kun, charge d'affaires ad interim of the Chinese embassy in South Korea, said China hopes to see continued stability in South Korea's economy and society as the two countries are important partners and close neighbors.

In a meeting with South Korean Deputy Finance Minister Choi Ji-young in Seoul on Tuesday, Fang also emphasized the need to continue bilateral cooperation through exchanges in various fields, such as the economy and tourism.

Choi said the government will proactively address financial and foreign exchange market volatility and prevent foreign companies from shirking investment and economic activities.

Uncertainties surrounding South Korea's economy have increased following Yoon's martial law declaration, with analysts worrying that the prolonged political crisis may even affect the country's credit rating.



Children warm themselves by the fire at a makeshift camp for displaced Palestinians in the Nahr al-Bared area in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Monday. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

Israeli strikes kill 34 Palestinians in Gaza

CAIRO — Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 34 Palestinians overnight on Tuesday, medics said, as Israeli tanks pushed into areas in central and southern parts of the enclave.

An Israeli airstrike killed at least 25 people in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, where Israeli forces have operated since October, and injured dozens of others in a multistorey building, medics said.

The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said most of those killed were from the same family, including women and children. Images posted online, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed the bodies lined up in a single mass grave in the town.

Another airstrike on a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza killed at least seven people. It wounded several others, medics and the Palestinian Civil Emergency Service said, while another strike killed two people in Rafah, south of the enclave.

In Deir al-Balah near the coast,

Israeli naval forces detained six Palestinian fishermen who tried to sail into the Mediterranean Sea earlier on Tuesday, according to residents.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday he would not stop the conflict in Gaza "now", with renewed efforts toward a cease-fire underway.

Speaking at a news conference in Jerusalem 14 months into the military campaign against Hamas militants, he said that "if we end the war now, Hamas will return, recover, rebuild and attack us again — and that is what we do not want to go back to".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Oct 23 that Israel had "managed to dismantle Hamas' military capacity" and eliminated its senior leadership. With those successes, Blinken said, it was time to "get the hostages home and bring the war to an end with an understanding of what will follow".

On Tuesday, a Hamas official declined to disclose the details of negotiations but told Reuters that

mediators had recently stepped up their efforts, citing the group's willingness to show the flexibility needed "to end the aggression on our people".

A Palestinian official with knowledge of the mediation efforts said Hamas had asked other Gaza factions to list the names of Israeli and foreign hostages in their custody, whether dead or alive, signaling potential progress in the talks.

In another development, Netanyahu took the witness stand for the first time on Tuesday in his long-running corruption trial, saying he was being hounded for his hawkish security policies.

Charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust, he will testify three times a week.

Netanyahu was indicted in 2019 in three cases involving gifts from millionaire friends and for allegedly seeking regulatory favors for media tycoons in return for favorable coverage. He denies any wrongdoing.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

TIES THAT BIND

Vital pass to boost China-Pakistan trade

By XU WEIWEI in Hong Kong
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A critical land port on the China-Pakistan border has commenced year-round operations, which will significantly boost bilateral trade and benefit the wider region, experts say.

Previously open for only eight months annually, the Khunjerab Pass is now operational throughout the year starting Dec 1, a move expected to bolster economic ties between the two countries and advance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, to a new phase, they added.

Zulkafil Hassan Khan, president of the Society of International Relations & Law in Islamabad and director of the Pak-China Corridor of Knowledge, said a giant step has been taken in respect to the Khunjerab Pass.

"It is indeed a milestone in the land connectivity between two ironclad brothers, facilitating bilateral trade, commerce and, of course, uplifting local communities," he said.

Situated at about 5 kilometers above sea level, the Khunjerab Pass serves as a strategic gateway along the Karakoram Highway, connecting China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region with Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region.

Experts said the mountain pass has ensured smoother and more efficient transportation of goods such as machinery and textiles in the region.

"Now, it is hoped that the year-round opening of the border would improve the region's economy, encourage people-to-people contacts and accelerate regional connectivity in the days to come," Khan said.

Moiz Farooq, executive director of Pakistan Economic Net and Daily Ittehad Media Group, hailed the year-round operation of the Khunjerab Pass as a landmark decision highlighting the enduring strength of China-Pakistan ties.

"This significant development (will) enhance connectivity, trade and people-to-people exchanges between the two nations," he said. "As a critical gateway linking China and Pakistan with South Asia and beyond, the Khunjerab Pass will play



Soldiers stand guard at the Khunjerab Pass in Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region on Sept 30. MA YONG / XINHUA

an even greater role in advancing the goals of the CPEC."

According to Khunjerab Customs, since the resumption of passenger customs clearance on April 1, the border port has handled more than 50,000 passengers, 11,000 vehicles and 40,900 metric tons of cargo by the end of October, demonstrating the immense potential of this vital trade route. With trade volume up 72.7 percent year-on-year, the transition to year-round operations is set to further boost economic activity, facilitate cultural exchanges and strengthen regional integration.

Symbol of friendship

The Khunjerab Pass is more than a land port — it is a symbol of friendship and cooperation, Farooq said. The continuous operation reflects the commitment of both nations to mutual prosperity and enhanced connectivity, paving the way for greater regional stability and development, he added.

"This decision is a testament to the shared vision of China and Pakistan to overcome challenges such as high altitude and harsh weather conditions, ensuring uninterrupted collaboration," he said. "It underscores the importance of sustainable infrastructure in fostering

economic resilience and growth."

Imran Khalid, an international affairs commentator in Pakistan, said the decision to keep the pass open year-round is a game changer for trade and tourism in the region.

Year-round operations will enhance Pakistan's role as a regional trade hub, linking Central Asia, South Asia and Europe through improved connectivity, and will also promote cultural exchanges and tourism while stabilizing supply chains for both China and Pakistan, he said.

"Overall, this strategic move strengthens economic ties, supports CPEC objectives and integrates the region into a broader transcontinental trade network."

Bai Zhijun, director and producer of the documentary *From Xi'an to Gwadar Port*, which was launched in October on Pakistani state TV to celebrate the enduring China-Pakistan friendship, said that as strategic points of CPEC projects, the Khunjerab Pass and the Karakoram Highway serve as important channels for trade, communication and exchanges among neighboring countries, particularly Central Asia, which can benefit from the open ports and accesses.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Africa sees growing drive to join BRICS

By OTIATO OPALI
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The increasing number of African countries seeking to join the BRICS group signifies a strategic shift by the continent aimed at deepening its influence in the global community and securing new economic pathways for the future, analysts say.

With Ethiopia and Egypt being the latest African countries to join BRICS this year, Kenya's President William Ruto has also expressed interest in joining the group.

Experts have argued that BRICS is becoming increasingly attractive to African countries because it is guided by principles of sovereign equality, inclusiveness, strategic cooperation, and multilateralism. The growing affiliation with BRICS, especially by African countries, is also anchored in the perceived shortcomings of the global unipolar system, which is mostly dominated by the United States and European nations.

Aly Khan Satchu, a leading investment banker from Kenya, described BRICS as "a lodestar" for African countries, "in practically every case it makes sense for these countries to join".

"African countries need to dilute the influence of Bretton Woods institutions and escape the dollar stranglehold," he said. "By joining BRICS, increasing their bilateral trade and increasing settlement in local currencies, BRICS is a win for African countries."

On the other hand, Fredrick Ogola, CEO of the African Health and Economic Institute, a non-profit research organization in Kenya, said that in the past, Kenya and many developing countries have depended on economic engagements with the West, whose economic architecture is biased toward developing countries while keeping poor countries poorer.

Ogola identified a number of ways African countries stand to gain by joining BRICS. The first advantage will be overcoming the debt cycle that Africa has developed with the West, which is choking economies.

Most of the debt advanced to African nations through Western institutions comes with punitively high interests, he said. So far, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has proved that its loans have much lower interest than private Western lenders, he added.

Affordable prices

Working together with BRICS will also help African countries lower the cost of living, Ogola said. "This is because Africa can import products like wheat from India or maize from Brazil through government-to-government deals, thereby avoiding intermediaries while keeping the prices affordable."

Other areas that stand to flourish for African countries by joining BRICS include trade, especially in value-added and intermediate goods by moving away from the trade in raw commodities, he said. BRICS will also promote tourism, cultural exchange and knowledge and technological transfer.

In addition, the recent BRICS summit held in Russia provided an opportunity for emerging states such as Kenya to look forward to reinforcing relations and realigning their ambitions for multipolarity, Ogola said. At the same time, the summit outlined how the bloc can remain a strategic player in the changing international arena and avoid carrying on with a system that was never designed with Africans' input and does not treat Africa as a partner.

Kenya, for instance, is well-positioned to be a member of BRICS since it is the strongest economy in East Africa and enjoys a long-standing history of engagement with BRICS countries, Ogola added.



South Korea's parliament passes a bill on Tuesday to appoint a permanent special counsel to investigate insurrection charges against President Yoon Suk-yeol. YONHAP

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COMMENT

Editorials

Countries need to board ship to sail together rather than struggle to stay afloat in small boats

Facing mounting downward pressure on its economy and repercussions from the volatile world situation, China has attached great significance to the talks with the visiting heads of 10 major international economic organizations.

A core message for the guests at their series of meetings with President Xi Jinping, the heads of the central government and the key policymaking circles of the central leadership over the past two days, is that China has full confidence to achieve this year's economic growth target and will continue to play its role as the biggest engine of world economic growth through expanding its high-standard opening-up.

Meanwhile, Beijing is intent on taking advantage of the meetings to call on all major economies and international economic organizations to objectively view the challenges facing the global economy, consolidate their confidence in the prospects of inclusive economic globalization, and thereafter make concerted efforts, along with China, to overcome the difficulties through cooperation, coordination and communication, rather than confrontation, containment and conflict.

In his meeting with the visitors on Tuesday, President Xi expressed the hope that international organizations will adapt to the changes of the times and proactively push forward institutional reform, so as to build a fair, just and rational global economic governance system.

As Xi urged, the key is to reflect the changes in the world, and effectively guarantee the Global South's representativeness and its corresponding right to a meaningful say in world economic affairs.

No matter how the global economic governance system is reformed, it must adhere to the principle of extensive consultation, joint construction and sharing, adhere to true multilateralism, and ensure that all countries have equal rights, equal opportunities and equal rules, otherwise, a widening development gap and growing global governance deficit will undoubtedly be a drag on the global economy.

Xi called for countries to strengthen cooperation rather than pursue beggar-thy-neighbor policies and to build a community with a shared future rather than resort to zero-sum games focused on building their own cliques. Countries are not individual small boats, but part of a big ship with a shared destiny. They should view each other's development as an opportunity rather than a challenge, and regard each other as partners rather than opponents, Xi told his guests, stressing that China is willing to practice multilateralism with their organizations.

Responding to Xi's remarks, the heads of the international economic organizations spoke highly of China's achievement in economic development and poverty reduction, and its adherence to a people-first development principle, and highlighted the important role it plays as a driver of world growth, an anchor for global stability and a promoter of multilateralism. They also conveyed their strong confidence in the benefits that China's pursuit of high-quality development will bring to the world, especially the Global South, and expressed the common hope that China can work closely with them to safeguard free trade and economic globalization, and make greater contributions to the common development and prosperity of the world.

It is clear these organizations are well aware of the harm inflicted on the world economy by the protectionist, unilateral and clique-building approaches some developed economies have adopted to try and resolve their own problems, which result in them trying to create "small yards with high fences", seriously disrupting the global industry and supply chains, and shattering global solidarity, thereby stymying efforts to address common challenges.

As Xi said, that all countries face their own difficulties in promoting sustainable economic growth requires them to cooperate in building an open world economic system and to adhere to innovation-driven development. That is the only way to unleash the full potential of cross-border flows of knowledge, technology, and talents that can create and explore the opportunities of the digital economy, artificial intelligence, and low-carbon technology, which represent new sources of economic growth.

China has always believed that countries should regard economic interdependence as a positive effect multiplier, rather than as a risk.

Nvidia antitrust investigation legal and justified

No one should question China's resolve to continue to promote high-quality opening-up through the rule of law. It is mainly thanks to the consistent legislative efforts China has made over the years to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of foreign enterprises that the country has turned itself into one of the world's top destinations for foreign direct investment.

Those who want to use the antitrust probe the Chinese authorities have launched into US chipmaker Nvidia as a pretext to point an accusing finger at China for allegedly politicizing the business environment for foreign companies are not only turning a blind eye to the facts of the case, but also taking a double standard when it comes to antitrust scrutiny.

The investigation that China's top market regulator initiated on Monday into Nvidia for suspected monopolistic behaviors has caught a lot of media attention given the high-profile position the company holds as the world's leading chip producer and a key player driving the artificial intelligence revolution.

While much of the Western media have portrayed the probe as a tactical move in the Sino-US trade war ahead of the new US administration taking office or tried to link it with what they hype up as intensified geopolitical rivalry focused on a battle for AI dominance between the two countries, the actual reason is more prosaic. According to the State Administration for Market Regulation, Nvidia is suspected of violating China's Anti-Monopoly Law, as well as the commitments it made in 2020 after it acquired Israeli chip manufacturer Mellanox Technologies in 2019.

The merger further strengthened Nvidia's market dominance in the semiconductor field, which might have the effect of excluding or restricting competition in the global and Chinese markets for GPU accelerator, dedicated network interconnection equipment and high-speed Ethernet adapter. Nvidia therefore submitted to China some measures to resolve the competition problems making clear commitments, including that it should continue to supply Nvidia GPU accelerators, Mellanox high-speed network interconnection equipment and related software and accessories to the Chinese market after the deal, based on "fair, reasonable and nondiscriminatory principles". After that, China approved the transaction.

Yet, Nvidia has stopped supplying a number of GPU accelerator products to China in recent years on the grounds of the US government's export controls. This action has infringed upon the legitimate rights and interests of relevant Chinese enterprises. Therefore, it is not surprising that Nvidia is under investigation for allegedly violating antitrust laws. Article 46 of the Anti-Monopoly Law stipulates that antitrust enforcement agencies are authorized to investigate and take action against suspected monopolistic behaviors. Effectively implementing the conditions attached to the merger approval is both a proactive commitment from Nvidia and a legal obligation.

In fact, Nvidia is also facing an antitrust investigation in the United States, as the Justice Department is looking into claims that Nvidia is potentially cornering the market and pressuring its customers to unfairly retain business. That includes allegations of Nvidia threatening to punish those who buy products from both itself and its competitors at the same time. The European Union's antitrust regulators are also investigating Nvidia for possible unfair sales practices.

That Nvidia has so far responded in a low-key way — saying only "we are happy to answer any questions regulators may have about our business" — points to the confidence it has in China's legal environment. Actually, the company has taken China as one of its key global markets, with about 16 percent of its revenue coming from the country, second only to its US-generated revenue, according to data firm FactSet. Nvidia's Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang has called China "a very important market for the technology industry", and warned there would be "enormous damage" to the US companies if they were unable to trade with China.

China has made it one of its top priorities to attract and use foreign investment. That it attracted 1.13 trillion yuan (\$158.7 billion) in foreign investment in 2023, the third-highest in history, as compared with 941.52 billion yuan in 2019, is an indication that the country still enjoys strong competitiveness in the global investment market.

Contrary to any attempts to use the Nvidia investigation as a means to discredit China's efforts to create a level playing field for foreign businesses, the probe shows that China's business environment operates under the law. As it has affirmed on many occasions, the country will continue to develop a market-oriented, legalized and internationalized first-class business environment in which foreign companies can enter the Chinese market and share the country's development dividends.

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Cai Meng



Opinion Line

'China threat' to Arctic a baseless allegation for the sake of smearing

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic and Global Resilience Iris Ferguson recently expressed concern about China "leveraging its support for Russia's war in Ukraine to increase its access to the Arctic".

"The increasing levels of collaboration between Russia and the PRC, and unprecedented styles of collaboration, especially in the military domain, give us pause," Ferguson said during an appearance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank based in Washington, on Thursday. Most of Ferguson's speech was devoted to the supposed "threat" posed by China's "growing presence in the Arctic".

In July, the Pentagon released an updated Arctic Strategy, claiming the United States will expand military capabilities and surveillance activities in the Arctic, a cover for its militarization of the Arctic region.

The report is full of groundless accusations and deliberate distortion of the normal cooperation between China and Russia in the Arctic.

A day after Ferguson made the distorted remarks, the Canadian government issued its "Arctic foreign policy", which misinterpreted China's Arctic policy and discredited China's normal Arctic activities in accordance with international law.

It is China's stance that Arctic affairs don't concern the Arctic states alone. As an important stakeholder in the Arctic, China has always participated in Arctic affairs in line with such principles as "mutual respect, win-win cooperation, and sustainability" and is committed to maintaining peace and stability and promoting sustainable development in the region.

China has reiterated on many occasions that its cooperation with Russia in the Arctic is not targeted

at a third party but only to promote regional stability. No country should maliciously distort or misinterpret China's Arctic policy and make groundless accusations.

China has always been a promoter of international peace and a mediator in international and regional conflicts, and any country that harbors no ill will toward China should not feel threatened by China's normal activities. It is the US, not China, that carries out the most extensive surveillance and reconnaissance activities; even its ships and aircraft carry out reconnaissance near China, seriously endangering China's national security and undermining regional peace and stability.

The US and Canada should not be suspicious about China's normal activities in the Arctic and do more to contribute to Arctic governance.

— WU YIXUE, CHINA DAILY

Combating domestic violence a society's duty

Relevant central departments have jointly issued a document strengthening implementation of the domestic violence admonition system.

The document has now gone a step further by clarifying the standards for evidence recognition and law enforcement. For example, according to the new document, the basic conditions for the public security authorities to recognize domestic violence include "the perpetrator's statement plus the victim's statement or witness testimony" and "the victim's statement or

witness testimony, along with another form of corroborative evidence".

The new document also specifies eight types of corroborative evidence that public security organs can treat as admissible in court. These include audiovisual materials, telephone recordings, text messages, instant messaging information, emails and other electronic data; testimonies from relatives, neighbors, and others; written apologies or guarantees previously provided by the perpetrator; medical evaluation opinions; medical treatment records

from medical institutions; records of complaints, reports, or requests for assistance regarding domestic violence received by relevant departments.

All these will make it easier for victims of domestic violence to collect evidence, as well as for the legal enforcement institutions to have ample grounds to admonish. The move is evidence that combating domestic violence is not just a family matter but a national affair that requires the participation of whole society.

— BEIJING NEWS

What They Say

Pillars of wisdom provide support for healthy ties

In the meeting of the two heads of state of China and the United States last month, President Xi Jinping summarized the lessons of the past four years of Sino-US ties, and condensed them into seven pillars of wisdom to support healthy bilateral relations, namely the importance of having the correct strategic perception of the folly of a new Cold War; of matching words with deeds; of engaging with each other on an equal footing; of not challenging red lines and paramount principles; of increasing dialogue and cooperation; of building bridges to bring the two peoples closer together; and of the two countries shouldering their international responsibilities by carrying out constructive interactions.

The development of Sino-US relations is related to world peace and development. Exploring a correct way for major countries to get along with each other is a historical must-answer question that China and the US must face. In the past four years,

although Sino-US relations have experienced ups and downs, they have also carried out dialogue and cooperation. Under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, overall stability has been achieved.

Washington should realize that the aforementioned pillars of wisdom to support the healthy development of bilateral relations are also a historical manifestation of the relations over the past 45 years.

Without correct perception, the two sides may fall into the abyss of a new Cold War. The US "saying one thing and doing another" approach damages mutual trust and erodes national credit. Equality means mutual respect, and a big country cannot deprive another party of its legitimate right to development in order to maintain its leading position. Challenging red lines and wantonly harming another party's core interests will only lead to conflicts and confrontations. The first four pillars clearly form a

"negative list", and the other three are the guidance for both sides to accumulate positive factors.

The two countries have broad space for cooperation in the economy and trade, energy, science and technology, education, etc., and bear major responsibilities for addressing common global challenges.

Competition among major powers should not be the defining background of the times. Only through unity and cooperation can big countries overcome difficulties together. China and the US should work together to inject more certainty and positive energy into world affairs.

The incoming US administration will take office in less than two months. It is hoped that both sides will uphold the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation, and take the seven pillars proposed by President Xi as a guide to achieve a smooth trajectory for improved Sino-US relations.

— XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

COMMENT

David Gosset

China, US face global stakes, shared fates

In an increasingly complex world, the accumulation of crises seems unending. Tragic conflicts dominate the headlines, with the war in Ukraine serving as a stark reminder of the dangers of escalation. On Jan 20, Donald Trump will be officially inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States of America. As the world navigates these turbulent times, few issues will carry greater significance for global peace and prosperity than the evolution of US-China relations. This bilateral relationship is not only critical for the people of the US and China but also shapes the trajectory of humanity as a whole.

Since his election on Nov 5, 2024, Donald Trump has made several key nominations, signaling that China hawks will occupy prominent positions in his administration. These individuals prioritize containing China's rise and maintaining US preeminence in global affairs. This zero-sum game approach raises the risk of renewed tensions, including the possibility of a new trade war and a further deterioration in bilateral relations. Such a scenario could exacerbate existing crises, creating a ripple effect across the world.

However, Trump's leadership style and personal tendencies also offer glimmers of hope. Known for his love of personal negotiation and his penchant for striking deals, Trump has the capacity to pivot toward a more constructive relationship. His close associations with figures such as Elon Musk, who possesses a nuanced understanding of China's dynamics and potential, could influence a more balanced approach.

As the US and China face a pivotal crossroads, three scenarios could emerge: a new Cold War, strategic competition, or competitive coexistence. Among these, competitive coexistence is the most desirable outcome. This scenario envisions both nations recognizing their differences while finding areas of mutual benefit, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of outright hostility or unchecked rivalry. Achieving such a balance, however, will require deliberate and early efforts, particularly at the highest levels of leadership. A crucial step would be for Chinese and US top leaders to talk soon after Trump takes office.

The personal relationship between Chi-

nese President Xi Jinping and Trump could prove instrumental in setting the tone for this critical partnership. The two leaders have met before and reportedly share mutual respect, which could serve as a foundation for renewed dialogue. While it is unrealistic to expect them to resolve all bilateral issues in a single meeting, they could prioritize areas of convergence. By collaborating on shared interests, they

could begin rebuilding trust, a vital element for stabilizing the broader relationship.

Trust between the two nations is fragile and must be carefully cultivated. The US and China have differences, ranging from economic policies to global governance. Yet, both nations share a profound vested interest in preserving global stability. Indeed, their cooperation is essential to ensuring world peace. Early engagement between

Trump and Xi could send a powerful message to their respective governments and the international community: that despite their differences, both countries are committed to constructive dialogue.

Their ability to navigate the complexities of US-China relations could significantly influence the global order in the coming years. A productive relationship between these two leaders could prevent the world

By working together, the US and China can set an example for other nations, demonstrating that even in a world fraught with division, constructive engagement is possible.

from sliding into a new era of division and rivalry. Conversely, a failure to establish mutual understanding could lead to heightened tensions, with far-reaching consequences for global peace and economic stability.

While the stakes are high, it is important to remain cautiously optimistic. Trump's inclination toward deal-making and Xi's pragmatic approach to leadership offer a pathway to competitive coexistence. This outcome would require both sides to exercise restraint and adopt a long-term perspective. They must recognize that their nations' fates are intertwined and that collaboration on global challenges is not merely desirable but essential. By working together, the US and China can set an example for other nations, demonstrating that even in a world fraught with division, constructive engagement is possible.

In a time of mounting crises, the importance of this relationship cannot be overstated. The China-US relations will impact billions of lives and determine whether the 21st century is defined by collaboration or confrontation. Competitive coexistence offers a path forward, one that prioritizes peace, prosperity, and the well-being of all humanity. It is a vision worth striving for and one that both leaders have the power to make a reality.

The author is the founder of the China-Europe-America Global Initiative. He is the editor of China and the World in three volumes, and the creator of the Inspiring Series, a collection of books that aims to introduce China to the world. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

Wang Xiaoguang

Effective control of risks key to safely deflating real estate bubble

The Chinese leadership, during the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee meeting on Monday, emphasized stabilizing the housing and stock markets while addressing key risks and external challenges — highlighting the critical role of real estate in securing economic recovery and resilience.

China's real estate market is undergoing a prolonged adjustment period. The government is focused on mitigating risks to prevent them from escalating into systemic economic threats. Stabilizing the real estate market involves balancing risk mitigation with demand stabilization to achieve a phased equilibrium in the real estate market.

The essence of real estate stabilization lies in effectively resolving accumulated market risks. Besides, a critical component of this stabilization is the successful transition to a new development model for the real estate sector, ensuring its sustainable growth.

The current policy signals indicate that the real estate market is transitioning from a "reduction" phase to a new stage characterized by accelerated price competition and market clearance. Since 2021, the market has experienced significant declines in funding and sales volumes, primarily due to the sharp reduction in speculative demand. However, price adjustments have been less pronounced.

For instance, real estate investment funding in China exceeded 20 trillion yuan (\$2.75 trillion) in 2021, dropped by 5.2 trillion yuan in 2022, and further decreased by over 2 trillion yuan in 2023. This year, it is expected to fall below 10 trillion yuan, halving in just three years. Sales volumes have mirrored this decline, while investment levels and price adjustments have been more moderate. The market has squeezed out speculative demand, while the government aims to stabilize consumer demand.



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To stimulate new housing demand, the central government has implemented financial policies such as interest rate cuts and reserve requirement reductions. Local governments have lowered payment ratios, abolished distinctions between ordinary

and non-ordinary housing, and lifted purchase restrictions. These measures have returned housing policies to their most relaxed state, coupled with historically low interest rates. However, is there a risk that these

Financial and housing regulators must enhance oversight of subprime loans, clearly delineating prohibited subprime loan boundaries and strictly prohibiting their issuance.

favorable conditions might attract buyers who lack repayment capacity or have poor credit, potentially leading to a subprime crisis similar to that in the United States? The lessons from the US subprime mortgage crisis are a stark reminder: future risks should not replace current ones. The core of real estate stabilization is the effective resolution and control of risks.

As the real estate market enters a new adjustment phase, it is crucial to continue addressing existing risks while preventing new ones. This requires a combination of rational consumer behavior, prudent policy guidance and strengthened market risk supervision.

First of all, new homebuyers must remain vigilant, adopt a strong risk awareness, and avoid purchasing with speculative intentions. Despite the lower down payments and minimal loan costs, real estate risks persist. The primary risk in China's real estate market is the "price bubble", which increases cost of purchasing. For example, if a house worth 1 million yuan, which is about five or six times of local urban residents' annual income, is currently priced at 2 million yuan. Despite its fall from the peak price of 2.5 million yuan, the potential purchasers still face risks of financial loss due to further price reduction.

What's more, government policy guidance should help buyers understand the

real estate adjustment process and the government's phased regulatory objectives. China's real estate bubble has been building for nearly 20 years, accumulating significant risks. Stabilizing the market is no easy task. Implementing the "three-volume" policy — strictly controlling new construction, optimizing existing stock, and improving quality — is essential for effective stabilization. In 2023, the total planned investment in the housing market reached 100 trillion yuan, accelerating the oversupply situation in the housing market.

From a market clearance perspective, the second phase of real estate adjustment will feature price reductions and promotional sales, alongside large-scale reductions, optimization of existing stock, and quality improvements in new developments. Therefore, a long-term decline in housing prices is inevitable. Stabilization does not mean returning to a bubble-driven market with another round of price surges, which would only exacerbate risks.

And equally important, financial and regulatory authorities must rigorously monitor risks and enforce entry standards. Lifting purchase and price restrictions does not equate to neglecting market risk management. Financial and housing regulators must enhance oversight of subprime loans, clearly delineating prohibited subprime loan boundaries and strictly prohibiting their issuance. Additionally, real estate developers should include risk warnings — such as "the housing market has risks; buy with caution" — in their sales offices and advertisements.

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GLOBAL VIEWS

BERNARD DEWIT

Gainful deployment

It is essential for Europe and China to work together, not only for the benefit of their own people, but also for the broader international community

We are witnessing the ongoing evolution of not only Belgium-China relationship but also EU-China relations, a relationship that is integral not only to the economic prosperity of both regions, but also to the stability of the global order.

Generally speaking, the relationship between Europe and China is complex and multifaceted. Despite the fact that China and the European Union maintain a partnership, it is also acknowledged that there are trade tensions and several areas of competition. The EU seeks to attain strategic independence and greater reciprocity and wants to improve its competitiveness in the global economy. The future of European competitiveness is indeed increasingly intertwined with China, and how the EU navigates its ties with China will shape the broader economic and geopolitical landscape in the coming decades.

The balance between competition and cooperation will be a key issue that will define the future of EU-China relations. To this end, the EU has adopted a cautious yet pragmatic approach, one that includes de-risking its economic reliance on China and that aims to reduce Chinese influence in critical sectors such as energy and digital technology. I believe the goal should be to pursue a pragmatic, fact-based and balanced approach, in order to find common ground and keep a frank and open dialogue. Only in this way will the two global powers be able to reduce vul-



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

nerabilities without severing ties that are vital for economic growth and international collaboration. The EU's strategy should not be one of confrontation but rather one of coexistence with China, which preserves European values while

advancing mutual interests. The EU and China should continue to work toward greater market access for European businesses in China, particularly in sectors such as technology, auto manufacturing and pharmaceuticals. While China

has made some strides in opening its economy, more can still be done. The EU's role as an advocate for fair market access can help ensure that European companies compete on a level playing field in the Chinese market.

Europe's competitiveness must also be assessed in the context of the broader global economy. The United States remains a dominant global economic force. As the EU and China navigate their bilateral relationship, they must also consider the geopolitical rivalry with the US, especially in the context of the recent re-election of Donald Trump as US president. For example, both sides face common challenges related to technology, supply chains, and the future of multilateral institutions. A strategic partnership between China and Europe could help them mitigate the risks of over-reliance on the US while maintaining their own economic and political autonomy.

As the chairman of the Belgian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, I believe in the power of constructive cooperation. While it is clear that the EU must preserve its values and interests, it also recognizes the necessity of cooperating with China on global challenges, such as climate change and economic instability, that transcend national borders.

Working together with China to combat these global issues can also help Europe achieve its goal of strategic independence. By working together to promote sustainable development and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Europe and China can help to address some of the most pressing issues facing the world today. The EU's Green Deal and China's commitment to becoming carbon neutral before 2060 provide a shared framework for collaboration on green technologies, energy efficiency and climate mitigation. By working together, Europe and China can make significant strides toward addressing cli-

mate change while also stimulating economic growth and job creation on both continents. Additionally, by working together to promote economic development in less developed regions, Europe and China can help to reduce poverty and promote stability.

In the context of trade and market access, both the EU and China must work toward greater openness and reciprocity. For European businesses, gaining access to key sectors of the Chinese economy, such as technology, auto manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals, remains a priority. While China has made progress in opening its markets, more work remains to be done to ensure that European companies can compete on a level playing field and vice versa. The EU's role as an advocate for fair market access is crucial in ensuring that trade between the two regions remains open, transparent and mutually beneficial.

The road ahead is not without challenges, but we should be optimistic that through continued dialogue and cooperation, both Europe and China can build a future that promotes economic growth, stability and mutual prosperity. As we face a rapidly changing global landscape, it is essential for Europe and China to work together, not only for the benefit of their own people but also for the broader international community.

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KU JIN AND LU YINGLIN

Vying for a pole position

Europe's future in a rapidly changing world will be defined by not only transatlantic relations but also its ties with China

With intensifying major-country competition, growing geopolitical risks and the accelerating development of the new round of technological and industrial revolution, Europe's long-standing quest for strategic autonomy has taken on new features, with a new focus on enhancing Europe's competitiveness.

It is against this background that the European Commission released the Future of European Competitiveness report on Sept 9.

The report continues the European Union's pursuit of strategic autonomy, aiming to enhance its competitiveness by laying out a new industrial strategy.

Europe's pursuit of strategic autonomy has deep historical roots. Since the end of World War II, Europe has embarked on a quest for strategic autonomy. At the end of the 1990s, the EU pushed further for strategic autonomy. After the Kosovo War, at the Cologne European Council in 1999, member states reaffirmed the EU's willingness to develop capabilities for autonomous action. In 2016, the EU formally introduced the concept of "European strategic autonomy", an ambition that extends from the military and defence to the economy, energy, technology and industrial chains.

Since 2020, however, the EU has been facing crises that have hampered its quest for strategic autonomy. First is a competitiveness crisis. The rise of emerging economies

and developing countries has posed an acute challenge to the EU's traditional competitive industries. At the same time, the EU is lagging behind China and the United States in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and semiconductors.

Second is a vulnerability crisis. Supply chain disruptions triggered by "black swan events" such as the COVID-19 pandemic and regional geopolitical conflicts have dealt a blow to the operation of European enterprises, and the energy crisis caused by the breakdown of the EU's relationship with Russia has led to a new round of economic recession. Meanwhile, the unreliable US commitment to Europe's security and support for Ukraine in its hostilities with Russia have dramatically increased the military spending of member states. The EU is therefore in desperate need of growth and stability.

Thus, despite the promising vision set out in the report mentioned above, its proposals will be hard to put into practice. To restore the EU's competitive strength, an annual additional investment of over 750 billion euros (\$792 billion) is needed. But given the gloomy economic and financial situation of EU member states, it is a huge challenge for the EU to raise such a large amount of money.

According to the report's assessment, the EU is completely behind China and the US in advanced technologies. In this sense, since Europe is unable to gain an advantage over China and the US in digital technology in the short term, it should give play to its strength as a "normative power" and gradually become a leader in digital standards and rules.

Specifically, security and defence have long been the weak points of Europe. The EU rolled out its first European Defence Industrial Strategy in March, in which it laid out a

long-term vision to bolster Europe's technological and industrial base for defence. Despite the ambitious targets set out in the document, Europe still has a long way to go to become more resilient in defence.

Besides, some structural causes place limits on the EU's efforts to restore its competitiveness and pursue strategic autonomy — Europe relies on Russia for energy resources, China for trade, and the US for security. In these three areas, Europe cannot break its structural dependencies.

In terms of security, European countries are still heavily dependent on the US, which provides large amounts of weapons and military equipment to Europe. The EU has neither the capacity nor the will to break up the transatlantic partnership. Its quest for strategic autonomy does not mean freeing itself from the US influence and becoming independent or neutral in security or political affairs, but rather increasing its say in the China-US-Europe triangle of relations.

As for the economy and trade, a report released by the European Economic and Social Committee in November 2023, proposed to bolster the EU's supply chain security and reduce dependencies through "de-risking", and to choose trade policies that best serve the EU's interests based on the principles of openness and cooperation. The EU aims to diversify its supply and industrial chains so that it does not rely too much on the US or China. However, due to the close trade cooperation between China and Europe, it is almost impossible for the EU to completely decouple from China in the short term.

In the energy sector, before the Ukraine crisis fully escalated in February 2022, Russia had been the largest natural gas supplier of the EU. Since then, the EU has slashed natural gas imports from Russia, and turned to the US for LNG. As a



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

result, the US has become the largest LNG exporter in the world. But according to the Brussels-based think tank Bruegel, the EU imported more natural gas from Russia than from the US from April to June, the first time in nearly two years it purchased more gas from Russia than from the US during a single quarter.

The next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the EU. However, the growing China-US rivalry, the China-Russia strategic partnership and the China-Europe competition in the high-tech sector will combine to further complicate the China-Europe high-

tech trade conflict. Europe is likely to impose more restrictions on China in semiconductors, chips and solar photovoltaic products.

Nevertheless, China is willing to support the EU's pursuit of greater strategic autonomy.

There are no acute geopolitical conflicts between China and Europe. And Europe's future will not only be defined by the transatlantic relations, but also by its ties with China.

In the short term, the EU's capacity to achieve strategic autonomy will be limited, and the continent will remain heavily dependent on the US for security and may continue following the US' steps to

impose sanctions on China, which will definitely strain the China-EU relations to some extent. But in the medium to long term, the EU should base its China policy on its own interests instead of the US' needs.

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Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

Z WEEKLY

Social Media Digest

Sugar watchers

During China's recent "Double 11" online shopping festival, sales of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) on e-commerce giant JD.com doubled compared to last year. Once primarily used for managing diabetes, these devices are now gaining popularity among health-conscious young people.

One user, Anyu (pseudonym), shared her experience with news website 36Kr. She started tracking her blood sugar after learning that imbalances could lead to fatigue and hormonal changes. By adjusting her diet — cutting back on coffee and ice cream based on her CGM data — she found she could "focus better" within just a few weeks.

Unlike traditional blood sugar tests that provide a single snapshot, CGMs offer continuous tracking. A small, circular sensor attached to the arm or abdomen records glucose levels 24/7 for up to two weeks, giving users a comprehensive view of how their body responds to food, exercise, and stress.

However, not everyone using these devices has a medical need. Xie Yun, an endocrinologist at Zhu Xianyi Memorial Hospital of Tianjin Medical University, noted that many young people are simply curious. "Short-term blood sugar changes caused by exercise, diet, or emotions are normal," she told 36Kr. "Different CGM technologies can yield varying results, which might lead to unnecessary anxiety."

While CGMs can be helpful tools, it's important to use them with care — and not stress over every spike or dip. Sometimes, it's okay to enjoy that coffee or dessert without guilt.



Continuous glucose monitors involve a small sensor attached to the arm to record glucose levels. TUCHONG

From barn to runway

If you ask about this winter's defining style, any fashionista will probably tell you: the "barnfit" look.

The hashtag "barnfit" has garnered over 310,000 posts on Xiaohongshu, a Chinese lifestyle platform. According to Lyst, a British shopping platform and fashion data agency, barn jackets ranked among the top five most popular products in 2024, with a 410 percent surge in search volume compared to previous months, underscoring their widespread appeal.

Barn jackets are at the heart of this trend, typically found in colors like khaki, navy blue, and sage green. Originally worn by farmers and laborers, they made their way to the American Midwest around the 1890s. By the 1990s, they had become iconic, even appearing in classic films.

Renowned for their durability and utility, these jackets are often made from sturdy materials such as cotton, canvas, and corduroy. Over the years, they've evolved with features like waterproof wax coatings, insulated collars and linings for warmth, and multiple spacious pockets.

Like jeans, barn jackets are incredibly versatile, transitioning seamlessly between various occasions and styles. On this year's Prada runway, they were paired with chiffon dresses, blending ruggedness with delicacy. They also work effortlessly with sweaters and shirts.

"The 'barnfit' style is more than just a fashion trend — it's a way of life," wrote a fashion editor on Xiaohongshu. "It shows that fashion isn't only about following trends but also about discovering a style that suits you, making each day full of personality and vitality."

LI XINRAN



Barn jackets are essential to the "barnfit" look. TUCHONG



Participants of the International Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs Associations Work Meeting visit the ITEC Innovation Center in Beijing on Dec 3. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Young innovators forge global ties

Global youth gather in Beijing to forge paths in economic cooperation, sustainability, and tackling global challenges through entrepreneurship.

By GUI QIAN
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What happens when young minds from across the world come together? They spark new ideas, drive change, and build connections that transcend borders.

The International Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs Associations Work Meeting, also known as the Roundtable on International Young Entrepreneurs Economic and Trade Cooperation, was held from Dec 5 to 6 in Beijing.

Jointly organized by the China International Youth Exchange Center (CIYEC) and the International Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs Associations (IAYEA), the conference attracted nearly 100 participants. These included young entrepreneurs from over 20 countries and regions, as well as representatives from foreign embassies in China, chambers of commerce, universities, and international and regional organizations.

Deborah Bottreau, secretary-general of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council, introduced IAYEA as a global movement for change driven by the energy, innovation, and resilience of young leaders under the age of 45.

"We believe that entrepreneurship is not only an engine for economic growth but also a catalyst for social responsibility, inclusivity, and innovation," she said.

Xu Xiao, president of the All-China Youth Federation, addressed the event's theme, "Overcoming Challenges by Win-win Cooperation", in his opening speech.

"This is not only the theme of this conference but also a pressing issue of our time that we all face," he said. "It urgently requires the youth around the world to shoulder the responsibilities of our era and contribute their wisdom and strength to solving global challenges."

One of the key outcomes of the event was the review and approval of the Global South Young Entrepreneurs Partnership Initiative, which focused on four areas: advocating for sustainable development and global green initiatives, removing trade barriers and advancing trade liberalization and facilitation, ensuring the seamless and stable operation of global industrial and supply chains, and fostering the development of the ocean industry and



“Currently, our cross-border trade typically requires settlement in US dollars, but I have a bold dream that one day ASEAN countries will have a common currency similar to the Euro.”

San Zaw Htet, a member of the Myanmar Young Entrepreneurship Association

economy and safeguarding marine resources.

These themes were explored in four parallel meetings, each attended by around 20 young representatives who discussed the challenges and opportunities within their respective fields.

William Zarit, chairman of the Global Investment Council from the US, emphasized the contemporary significance of international cooperation on green, low-carbon development.

He highlighted the contributions of Tesla's solar roof products to green energy, BYD's battery technology in green transportation, and Germany's passive houses, which reduce building energy consumption through excellent insulation materials.

Lee Kee Foong, deputy secretary-general of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council from Malaysia, focused on further cooperation between China and Malaysia in hydrogen energy.

He noted that hydrogen-powered buses developed by Chinese companies are already in use in Malaysia and stressed the need for a hydrogen production and processing plant.



“We believe that entrepreneurship is not only an engine for economic growth but also a catalyst for social responsibility, inclusivity, and innovation.”

Deborah Bottreau, secretary-general of the ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs Council

In terms of trade prosperity, Zhang Hang, a representative from the Treasury Department of China's Ministry of Finance, encouraged entrepreneurs to actively participate in government procurement.

He mentioned that government earnings account for about 15 percent of a country's GDP and play a crucial role in the national economy.

He added that the Ministry of Finance has improved transparency and transaction mechanisms to ensure that all business entities, including foreign enterprises, can participate equally in government procurement activities.

Zhang also addressed questions about how to access procurement information from various levels of government through China's official government procurement website, as well as how to seek administrative review or file complaints in cases of dissatisfaction.

Regarding cooperation with industrial and supply chains, the conference highlighted the importance of establishing a shared information base for business projects worldwide.

The Myanmar Young Entrepreneurship Association is already taking steps in this direction.

According to San Zaw Htet, a member of the association, Myanmar's information base for entrepreneurs was recently launched on Dec 7. Their next goal is to connect it with a larger, global database.

In discussing his understanding of the conference theme "Overcoming Challenges", he pointed out that a major issue for companies in many Southeast Asian countries, including Myanmar, is the instability of exchange rates.

"Currently, our cross-border trade typically requires settlement in US dollars, but I have a bold dream that one day ASEAN countries will have a common currency similar to the Euro," he said.

"ASEAN, combined with China, Japan, and South Korea, can be considered a super large economic entity. I have great expectations for closer cooperation and development in this region in the future," he added.

At the parallel meeting on marine industry cooperation, participants engaged in a lively discussion on the cultivation of talents in marine fisheries.

Professor Li Jingyu from Ocean University of China in Qingdao, Shandong province, is leading a joint master's degree program between her university and Kasetsart University in Thailand. Over the past six years, nearly 40 students from ASEAN countries have participated in this program.

She emphasized the significance of university-industry collaboration.

"In the field of fisheries, enterprises often move faster than academia," she said. "Universities can conduct specific research projects or train graduates according to the needs of these enterprises. This not only addresses the talent gap in enterprises but also leverages the financial support from enterprises to provide better education for more young people."

For Li, attending this conference is an invaluable opportunity to establish cooperation between universities and enterprises.

"On one hand, there are voices from many countries and regions here; on the other, it gathers numerous entrepreneurs. I have accessed a wealth of information and resources here," she said.

Z WEEKLY

Her space, her rules

Women-only businesses in China are empowering women by creating supportive spaces that challenge traditional norms and foster community, Meng Wenjie reports.

In a bar in Beijing's Haidian district, a group of women gather to discuss the newly released Chinese feminist film *Her Story*. This bar, called Second, is a women-only space, with women not only as patrons but also as founders and bartenders.

Meng Qingdi, 30, one of the bar's founders, explained that women often feel uncomfortable due to unwanted attention in traditional bars. An all-women bar, however, creates a safer, more relaxed environment, allowing female patrons to truly unwind.

"I want this place to feel like a second home for our customers, where they can relax as they would at home," Meng said, explaining the inspiration behind the bar's name.

Feminism is increasingly shaping various aspects of Chinese society, and one notable development is the rise of women-only businesses, including bars, gyms, bookstores, and renovation teams. A closer look at this trend reveals bold and inspiring examples of women challenging traditional male dominance.

In March of this year, Meng and her friend Zhang Huilin opened the first Second bar in Beijing's Chaoyang district. By July, they had expanded to a second location in Haidian, bringing on a new partner, 32-year-old Lan Ya.

Lan fondly recalled a visit from two young women celebrating their first bar experience with their mother, while their father waited outside. They enjoyed their time with other female patrons, creating a warm and supportive atmosphere.

The bar has been constant-

"I want to provide a supportive and fair fitness space for women, where they can enjoy their workouts and feel comfortable in their gym attire."

Kong Meiyang, owner of a women-only gym

ly innovating to meet the needs of its female clientele. For example, it provides shared makeup kits and feminine hygiene products such as sanitary napkins. Non-alcoholic drinks are also available, starting at just 6 yuan (\$0.83).

"Many traditional bars avoid offering soft drinks due to lower profit margins," Lan explained.

The bar also hosts weekly events, such as screenings of female-focused films and discussions on trending feminist topics.

"Most of our customers are college students," Lan said. "These women-centered exchanges help them see that their struggles and viewpoints are shared by others their age, making them feel less alone."

For the bar's all-fe-

male staff, unique policies have been introduced, including a monthly menstrual leave day.

Enduring no more

Kong Meiyang, 36, opened a women-only gym in Tianjin's Binhai New Area in 2020, at a time when the concept of women-only businesses was still relatively uncommon.

As a former coach at a gym where 95 percent of her clients were women, Kong noticed the unique challenges women often faced in mixed-gender gyms: many of them felt self-conscious wearing form-fitting workout attire due to the gaze and comments from men and often limited themselves to cardio exercises as a result.

At Kong's gym, women can focus on strength training without worrying about being stared at. The gym also implements thoughtful measures, such as extending monthly memberships by seven days to accommodate women's menstrual cycles.

"I want to provide a supportive and fair fitness space for women, where they can enjoy their workouts and feel comfortable in their gym attire," Kong explained.

When Kong first proposed the idea of a women-only gym, many of her family and friends were skeptical about its success. However, her professionalism quickly earned the trust of her clients.

By 2022, with the support of a loyal customer base, Kong opened a second gym in downtown Tianjin, which soon gained popularity as well.

Fixing it myself

Li Xiaoxiao, a 33-year-old from Chengdu, Sichuan province, is addressing the everyday challenges faced by women.

In April, she launched a social media account called "Qiangji Women Workers", through which she offers free tool rentals to women in Chengdu.

Li designed the platform's logo with a creative twist, using the numbers 3 and 8 to symbolize International Women's Day. Together, the numbers form the Chinese character *qiang*, meaning "strength", echoing the name "Qiangji".

However, Li soon realized that access to tools alone wasn't enough — women also needed the skills to use them.

In July, she organized a 10-day

repair training program exclusively for women. The course, which combined theory and hands-on practice, quickly filled to capacity, with half of the participants traveling from outside Chengdu to attend.

Li later expanded her initiative by recruiting some of her certified trainees to establish a women's repair team, breaking into a field traditionally dominated by men.

Reflecting on her experience, Li noticed that women are often stereotyped as patient and good communicators — traits that can become limiting.

"I don't want women's strengths to turn into social constraints on their career development," she said. "If a female repair worker isn't as patient, would people be less tolerant of her than they would be of a male worker? That's not fair."

Thriving through doubt

Women-only businesses are often met with skepticism. Li, for instance, has been the target of personal attacks online, with critics questioning whether her efforts to empower women are driven by profit. Despite this, she remains confident that her sincerity will be recognized over time.

"Women consumers are very perceptive, and entrepreneurs with insincere motives will eventually be pushed out by the market," she said.

When women-only businesses fail, they also tend to attract harsher criticism.

Fanfan (pseudonym), 24, launched a women's co-living community in May 2023 with two female friends. They rented a five-room villa in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, offering female tenants a unique shared living experience.

"We wanted to create an environment where women could truly be themselves, while also easing the financial and emotional burdens they often face when looking for a safe place to live," she said.

Initially, the community drew many young women from other regions during the summer, but visitor numbers dropped sharply after the holiday season ended. The business also faced online misogynistic attacks.

Struggling financially and under mounting pressure, the startup closed in early 2024.

Fanfan's experience is not unique. Recently, several women-only businesses in Beijing have shut down, raising concerns about the sustainability of such business models.

Meng and Lan attribute these closures to various factors, including a lack of entrepreneurial experience and poor planning — issues unrelated to gender.

Li agreed. She said that when women-only businesses fail, people tend to focus on gender instead of the underlying issues. "Countless startups fail every day, and that's not surprising," she explained.

Despite the setbacks, Fanfan remains active in the female-focused entrepreneurial space. She has since opened a women's bar in Nanjing and is working to promote women's products like period underwear, which are still relatively new to the Chinese market.

"Women's growing awareness has opened up a whole new world of possibilities for me," Fanfan said. "Still, few businesses truly address these emerging needs. I want to carve out my own space in this new landscape, even if it means starting from scratch and challenging the old rules."

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Below: A female bartender prepares a cocktail at Second, a women-only bar in Beijing. **Bottom:** Participants in the "Qiangji Women Workers" repair training program pose for a photo with the program's banner. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Z WEEKLY

Dance prodigy defies her age

A 12-year-old social media sensation charms millions with her Chinese classical performances inspired by ancient culture, **Gui Qian** reports.



Gu Jinling performs traditional Chinese classical dance. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Gu Jinling, a 12-year-old from Beijing, has become a social media influencer with over 2.5 million followers, captivating audiences with her unique Chinese-style costume dances.

Online, Gu goes by the username "Gagaling", which conveys the meaning of being "extremely intelligent and highly sensitive" in Chinese.

In her videos, she imitates the flying figures from Dunhuang murals, portrays themes inspired by Tang Dynasty (618-907) figurines, and draws from the *Chu Ci*, an anthology of poetry from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), using Chinese classical dance to bring legends to life.

Viewers are fascinated by her versatile and intricate costumes, stunning visuals, and the rich atmosphere of classical culture in her performances. They are also amazed by her exceptional dance skills at such a young age.

However, as netizens jokingly say, Gu is already an "old artist". She began learning dance at the

age of 3 and has been practicing for nearly a decade.

"I have studied calligraphy and played the piano, cello, and guitar, but I didn't find any of them fun. In the end, I realized that dancing is what truly makes me happy," she said.

Gu initially trained in ballet but began learning Chinese classical dance at the age of 6, drawn by its costumes, which she found "even prettier" than those of ballet.

Alongside classical dance, she also explored various ethnic folk dances. "While ballet is elegant, classical dance tends to be more reserved and subtle, and ethnic folk dances are lively and passionate," Gu explained.

However, the subtlety of classical dance is rooted in tremendous cultural heritage. Performing it well requires a deep understanding and appreciation of various aspects of traditional Chinese culture.

Gu's home is filled with books on Chinese murals, which she studies to imitate the expressions and postures of the depicted fig-

ures. When visiting different cities, she often tours museums, closely observing the points of exertion in ancient dance figurines.

For Gu, attention to detail is vital in capturing the authentic essence of ancient Chinese style.

For example, in the classic Dunhuang dance pose "Rebound Pipa", the eyes must look downward before gazing far away, conveying a sense of overlooking the world. The "Floating Clouds" dance move, which involves the use of long silk ribbons, requires exceptional control to achieve the desired graceful effect.

Another distinctive and challenging feature of Dunhuang dance is the variety of foot positions, including flexed feet, pointed feet, toes flexed on a pointed foot, and toes flexed on a flexed foot. "I don't feel much pain doing these movements because years of practice have made them second nature," Gu said.

However, transitioning from childhood to adolescence brings new challenges for a dancer. A

child's body is naturally more flexible, and movements that once came easily now require greater effort and practice. Since last year, Gu has devoted more time to mastering basic dance techniques, making leg stretches part of her daily routine and regularly attending flexibility classes.

Despite her demanding schedule, Gu does not feel mentally fatigued or unbalanced. Like many teenagers, she enjoys playing with dolls and spends her weekends hanging out with friends, shopping, and watching movies.

"My friends also have extracurricular classes. No one's life is all about playing," she said with a laugh. "I chose dance. The better I dance, the happier I am."

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Online
Watch the video
by scanning
the code.



Fu Shuqin (front) and her teammates conduct a field study in a village in Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, Hubei, in September to evaluate the conditions for cultivating Gexian rice. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Sowing seeds of change

By LIU KUN in Wuhan and LI XINRAN

"Our time studying away from home wasn't about escaping our impoverished hometowns but about gaining the skills and knowledge to one day help lift them out of poverty," said Fu Shuqin, a co-founder of Xishanshui, a company specializing in cultivating and selling Gexian rice, which, despite its name, is actually a rare and nutritious blue-green algae.

Fu and her partners, all college graduates originally from Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture in Hubei province, embarked on this journey after Fu discovered Gexian rice at a local restaurant in 2022.

She learned that Gexian rice, known as "gold in the water", contains 17 types of amino acids and up to 52 percent protein — twice that of fish. The current global annual yield of wild Gexian rice is less than 3,000 kilograms, with 95 percent of it coming from her hometown of Hefeng county. However, despite its nutritional value and scarcity, local farmers struggled to sell it at a fair price.

Cultivating prosperity

After extensive research and discussions, Fu and her partners decided to build an entire industry chain from scratch — a project far beyond their budget. To seek funding, they turned to venture capital, impressing investors with a meticulously prepared project dossier and a hundred-page PowerPoint presentation. Their efforts paid off, securing substantial financial backing.

"We are committed to building modern agriculture and place great importance on standardized production and technological innovation," said Fu.

To achieve this goal, they first set a quality standard for Gexian rice. According to Fu, wild Gexian rice is graded into five categories based on evaluations of its color, aroma, taste, and condition. To strictly regulate production standards, they use sensory, physicochemical, and microbiological indicators, rather than relying solely on visual and olfactory assessments, as many farmers do.

"We have developed a dedicated production line, carefully controlling the process to ensure each step is scientific, safe, and hygienic," said Fu.

However, since the industry is still in its early stages, Fu's team relies mainly on nature's offerings for harvesting.

To change this, Xishanshui has been working to build a standardized industrial base, collaborating with university experts to research and refine breeding technologies as a first step toward industrialization.

"We are actively developing artificial cultivation techniques to enhance the yield of Gexian rice, aiming to increase harvests and improve local incomes," said Fu.

The first batch of Gexian rice was harvested in July. As their production process stabilizes, they have begun exploring ways to promote their products, such as creating short videos, writing articles, and participating in exhibitions.

"My partners often say that we're not afraid of hard work; we're only afraid of not working hard enough and regretting it later," Fu shared.

Fu and her team are not only building their own business but also supporting their fellow villagers by creating a local e-commerce platform that anyone can join free of charge.

In Fu's view, they've made significant strides in industrializing Gexian rice, moving from zero to one. While there is still a long way to go before reaching 100, she remains confident and determined.

"Rural areas need young people, but young people also need the rich, vibrant land of the countryside to flourish," she said.

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Global Insights

Exploring agricultural synergies between Brazil and China

By MENG WENJIE
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Ana Carolina Palazzo grew up in the countryside of Brazil, where her early exposure to agriculture sparked a lifelong passion to further explore the subject. A pivotal chapter in her journey was her experience in China, a major agricultural powerhouse.

Palazzo earned a full scholarship to pursue a master's degree in contemporary Chinese studies at the Silk Road School of Renmin University of China. Starting in early 2023, she spent seven months at RUC's Suzhou Campus in Jiangsu province.

Her class had 25 students from 23 countries, spanning nearly every continent. This multicultural environment left a lasting impression on her.

"Exchange programs like this are very meaningful, as they create more opportunities for young people to interact and build a future of cooperation," she said.



Ana Carolina Palazzo

During field trips with her international peers, Palazzo was deeply impressed by China's agricultural innovation.

In a village in Jinhua, Zhejiang province, for example, she was amazed by how local family farms maximized small spaces for production using advanced technology, rather than relying on large plots of land. She also noticed the wide variety of agricultural products from different regions of China available in supermarkets.

"One similarity between China and Brazil is that both countries focus on improving land productivity," she said. "However, China is more advanced in its use of technology. In some areas, I saw farmers building vertical farms for swine, something I have never seen in Brazil."

With a degree in agriculture and a strong background in agribusiness, Palazzo believes that agricultural production is not just about farming — it's deeply intertwined with economics, politics, culture, logistics, and marketing.

"I see a whole environment related to food and energy production," she said.

Her visit to Yiwu, the largest small commodity market in China, located in Zhejiang, quickly confirmed this perspective.

She learned that as far back as the 1600s, people in Yiwu would carry small items like sewing needles, thread, and sugar chunks in bamboo baskets, using shoulder poles to transport them. They would trade these goods with rural villages for chicken feathers, which were either used as fertilizer for local farms or made into feather dusters for export. Over time, this practice became an integral part of Yiwu's culture.

Today, as Palazzo explained, the Yiwu International Trade Market serves as a hub

that links logistics, modern commerce, and a wide variety of products — from everyday items to luxury goods, technological innovations, industrial products, and much more.

One phrase she once heard about Yiwu particularly stood out to her: "In Yiwu, you can find the unthinkable, but never the unbuyable."

Palazzo also visited the Yiwu-Europe freight train, which travels from Yiwu to Madrid, Spain. This train is a key part of the China-Europe freight network, supporting the growing demand for international trade among countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

Palazzo currently leads the agri-inputs department at a company in Brazil, where she is actively involved in the agribusiness sector and works closely with many Chinese companies.

"My study experience in China gave me a whole new perspective on the industry," she said. It helped her better understand the

dynamics of the Chinese market and how to work with Chinese entrepreneurs.

She believes there is immense potential for partnership between China and Brazil, as both countries are rich in natural resources and complement each other well in terms of industry and agriculture. With growing China-Brazil ties and China's expanding influence in the global economy, Palazzo has made collaboration with China a key part of her future career plans.

"There's no one I can think of who doesn't have a direct or indirect connection with China," she said. "Being aligned doesn't mean both countries will agree on everything; it simply means they can understand each other and find ways to cooperate."

Palazzo recalled a quote from a senior strategy executive at a major consulting firm: "Many people look for what is going to be the next China. Well, based on the data and estimates we have now, the next China is China!"