

Feathered paradise

Poyang Lake provides perfect habitats for migratory birds

CHINA, PAGE 8



AI empowering private firms to seek global edge

BUSINESS, PAGE 14



Wall Street selloff

Stocks jittery on the heels of recession talk, tariffs

WORLD, PAGE 10

CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中國日報 TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025

Advisers called on to fulfill major tasks

CPPCC members should focus on difficult issues in driving high-quality development

By ZHANG YI zhangyi1@chinadaily.com.cn

National political advisers have been urged to serve the country's major tasks and work to improve people's livelihoods through high-quality consultation and suggestions, in order to further promote China's modernization drive.

Wang Huning, chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body, made the remarks while delivering a speech to around 2,100 national political advisers at the closing meeting of its third session in Beijing on Monday.

President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, and other leaders attended the meeting, which was held at the Great Hall of the People.

National political advisers should focus on key and difficult issues in deepening reform, promoting high-quality development, ensuring and improving people's livelihoods, and maintaining social stability in carrying out surveys and making suggestions and proposals, Wang said.

The CPPCC should strengthen the mechanism for reflecting public opinion, connecting with the people, and serving the people, enhancing the unity of Chinese people at home and abroad, he added.

A resolution on the work report of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, a resolution on a report on how the proposals from political advisers have been handled since the previous annual session, a report on the

examination of new proposals, and a political resolution on the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee were approved at the meeting.

Samuel Yung Wing-ki, a member of the CPPCC National Committee from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, said, "At this meeting, I have gained a deep understanding of the country's major policies and development direction, and I have also felt the country's emphasis on Hong Kong."

Hong Kong should leverage its advantages in international exchanges and the "one country, two systems" policy to attract more talent to develop in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, he said.

Jin Hua, a national political adviser from Qinghai province, said that at this year's two sessions she wore the traditional attire of the Mongolian ethnic group that she had got married in, as she considered the meeting to be a major event for the country.

"I am most proud that I can use my platform to bring the livelihood-related facts of the ethnic group to the national level. Then I can deliver good policies to our ethnic minority areas," she said.

Yang Yuni, another national political adviser and a post-1995 member of the Hani ethnic group, said that she will make efforts to combine artificial intelligence with ethnic minority songs and dances to attract more young people to the protection of intangible cultural heritage, thereby assisting in vitalizing rural areas.

Inside

- Special Coverage, pages 2-7
- Editorial, page 12



Members of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference vote at the closing meeting of the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

Two sessions: Unveiling a road map for tech future

WORLD WATCH By Denis Simon

This year's two sessions — the annual meetings of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body — have reaffirmed one central theme: technological self-reliance.

As China nears the end of its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the leadership has made it abundantly clear that the next phase of economic development will be defined by innovation, industrial upgrad-

ing, and diminishing dependence on Western technology.

Amid growing geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and intensifying competition with the United States, China is doubling down on advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology and digital infrastructure, among others.

The policy blueprint emerging from the two sessions suggests that China is not merely reacting to external pressures but is proactively positioning itself as a major global technology player — one that seeks to play a central role in the critical industries of the future.

See Tech, page 3

Desperate for food



Displaced Palestinian children queue up to get cooked food from a charity kitchen in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on Sunday, ahead of *iftar* — a fast-breaking meal during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. OMAR AL-QATTAA / AFP See story, page 9

Envoy urges Japan to jointly uphold multilateralism

By ZHANG YUNBI zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn



Wu Jianguo

As Beijing looks to mark the 80th anniversary this year of victory in World War II, Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wu Jianguo has called on people in Japan and around the globe to jointly safeguard justice, the postwar international order and world peace.

In an interview on the sidelines of this year's two sessions, the annual meetings of China's top legislative and political advisory bodies, Wu, a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, also urged Tokyo to reject malicious competition directed at China and work together to uphold multilateralism and the global free trade system.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Fascist War.

When asked how he views the approach adopted by people in Japan toward history, Wu said, "The history issue is one of the most sensitive issues in China-Japan relations."

China has noticed that Japan recently said it will "face up to history and look to the future", while right-wing forces in the country are still denying the history of aggression and glorifying wars of aggression, he said.

He quoted Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who said at a news conference on Friday: "Guarding against the revival of militarism is a duty Japan must carry out without a moment's relaxation. This is also the firm resolve of the Chinese and Asian people that will not be challenged."

Wu said, "We are ready to work with all peace-loving and righteous people in Japan and around the world to champion human conscience and justice, the postwar international order, and the lasting peace between China and Japan and in the world."

In November, President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba held a meeting on the sidelines of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima, Peru.

The ambassador said that since that meeting, "China and Japan have carried out a series of positive interactions", and the bilateral ties "have shown a momentum of improvement and development".

"When it comes to whether China-Japan ties will be able to break away from the past circle of ups and downs, my understanding is that only by sticking to the political foundation will we be able to advance

steadily and make lasting progress," Wu said.

The principles set out in the four landmark China-Japan political documents, especially the solemn commitments made by Japan on major issues such as history and Taiwan, "constitute the political foundation of China-Japan relations, which must be firmly maintained and honored, and do not allow for even the slightest ambiguity or backpedaling", he said.

He emphasized the need to follow the leaders' consensus to "bolster positive factors, manage and control contradictions and divergences, rule out external disturbances, and promote stable improvement and development of bilateral relations along the right track".

Regarding Taiwan, Wu stressed that "Taiwan-related issues are a prominent point of risk in current China-Japan ties".

He warned that some Japanese political figures have been colluding with "Taiwan independence" separatist forces in a high-profile manner, and helping them seek "independence" and make provocations, in a bid to thwart China's national reunification efforts.

Wu reaffirmed that "using Taiwan to cause trouble is actually inviting trouble for Japan".

"We will constantly convey this solemn position to the Japanese community, underscoring that China is bound to reunify and will even-

tually reunify," he said. "Anyone's attempt to separate Taiwan from China will never be allowed by the Chinese people."

Wu said that China has always adopted a positive and open mindset and is willing to tap complementary advantages and achieve higher levels of win-win cooperation with Japan.

"But if the Japanese side fails to reject its competitive and defensive mentality and persists in imposing various restrictions on China, it will only make its own path narrower and narrower," he said.

The next step for upgrading China-Japan cooperation is to enhance the promotion of technology and innovation, while new quality productive forces, emerging industries and the digital economy can be new highlights for growth, he said.

"In the face of serious uncertainties in the current international economic situation, China and Japan also need to work together to oppose unilateralism and protectionism and to jointly safeguard multilateralism and the global free trade system," he said.

On the topic of people-to-people exchanges, Wu welcomed more Japanese friends to visit China.

"We will also continue urging the Japanese government to adopt tangible measures to facilitate the exchange of visits between China and Japan based on the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit," he said.

NATIONAL VISION, LOCAL ACTION

Guangxi to expand AI ties with ASEAN

By SHI RUIPENG in Nanning and ZOU SHUO in Beijing



Chen Gang

As a frontier window between China and member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region has unique advantages for establishing a hub for artificial intelligence cooperation with ASEAN, which will inject momentum into the building of a China-ASEAN community with a shared future, said Chen Gang, Party secretary of Guangxi.

Not only is Guangxi located at a critical juncture between the huge market of China, which has 1.4 billion people, and that of ASEAN, which boasts a population of nearly 700 million, but it also has an abundant energy supply, a linguistic tal-

ent pool including those skilled in the languages of ASEAN countries, and favorable policies, Chen noted.

Therefore, the region is uniquely positioned to implement China's AI Capacity-Building Action Plan for Good and for All, and to conduct AI cooperation with ASEAN, Chen told China Daily on the sidelines of this year's two sessions, the annual gatherings in Beijing of the nation's top legislative and political advisory bodies.

"I think that in the future, it will not be AI that defeats humans, but those who utilize AI defeating those who do not," said Chen, who is also a

deputy to the National People's Congress, China's top legislature. "The same applies to the development of an enterprise, a region and a country. Those who develop and apply AI first will lead the way."

The China-ASEAN Information Harbor, a State-level digital open platform, has established 12 terrestrial optical cables linking Guangxi with ASEAN countries.

The newly approved Nanning International Telecommunications Hub, which is scheduled to be operational by late this year, is expected to make Guangxi the fastest data transmission gateway to ASEAN, which can meet ASEAN countries' demand for AI data processing, Chen said.

See Guangxi, page 3



INSIDE Revisionist power Global Views, page 13 www.chinadailyglobal.com Member of ANN China Daily Global ©2025 All Rights Reserved Newsstand prices: US \$1 Canada C\$1 UK 1.6 EU 1€ Kenya 50 Kenya Shilling Asia Pacific: Thailand 120 THB Philippines 120 PHP Myanmar 2000 MYR Japan 210 Yen Dubai 10 Dirham Pakistan 300 Rupee


TWO SESSIONS

'Silver economy' shows promising potential

As nation's society gets older, new markets, business opportunities are opening up

By LIU YUKUN
liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

When a 78-year-old quantum physics professor goes viral "dissecting" Schrödinger's cat on short-video platform Douyin, when silver-haired models from Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, strut defiantly at Paris Fashion Week, and when musicians with an average age of around 70 ignite standing ovations on stages overseas, it is further evidence that China's "silver economy" is rewriting the rules of aging.

Far from a niche market for retirement homes and stairlifts, this \$4 trillion revolution has become a cultural reckoning — one where pensioners aren't just spending money, but creating whole new markets that are likely to be a greater force in the economy.

The reason is quite simple: the elderly are transitioning from fulfilling basic needs to seeking avenues for personal growth, according to political advisers to this year's two sessions, the annual gatherings of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

From ensuring quality elderly care to embracing smartaging, from promoting silver-haired cultural tourism to developing age-appropriate technology and silver economy finance, this "aging revolution" covering all facets of life, health and leisure is reshaping the landscape of economic growth and societal values, they said.

The term silver economy — a cross-section of the economy consisting of the over 60s, especially the retirees — was popular during the two sessions. As of the end of last year, China's population included 310 million individuals aged 60 and above, with 220 million aged 65 and older, representing 22 percent and 15.6 percent of the total population, respectively, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Jin Li, vice-president of the Southern University of Science and Technology and a member of the 14th National Committee of the CPPCC — the country's top political advisory body — said that by 2035, the market size of China's silver economy could potentially reach 30 trillion yuan (\$4 trillion), injecting momentum into China's economic landscape.

He highlighted that the needs of China's aging population are evolving from mere survival necessities to a focus on personal growth.

"This shift encompasses not only essentials like clothing, food, shelter and transportation but also services for healthcare and elderly care, as well as emerging desires for leisure, entertainment and exploration. The silver economy offers extensive opportunities on both the supply and demand fronts," Jin said.

In terms of how to develop the silver economy, Jin said that it necessitates a dual approach focusing on both government safety net measures and industrial maturity. To achieve this, macroeconomic policy coordination is essential to encourage social engagement in the silver economy and foster the growth of quality elderly care businesses.

"However, many enterprises in this field currently face profitability challenges, hindering new entrants," said Jin, who suggested that the government introduce supportive policies such as tax incentives to relevant businesses to better align governmental and market forces.

The government has already ramped up efforts supporting the elderly care industry in recent years. Last year, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a document with opinions on developing the silver economy to enhance the well-being of the elderly, advocating for accelerated scaling, standardization, clustering and branding of involved businesses. It also put forward 26 specific measures.

This year's Government Work Report, unveiled during the two sessions, also emphasized the importance of addressing population aging, enhancing policies and mechanisms related to elderly care and actively promoting the silver economy.



Clockwise from top: Volunteers celebrate the Chongyang (Double Ninth) Festival at a community in Luoyang, Henan province, on Oct 10. The Chongyang Festival is dedicated to paying respect for the elderly. HUANG ZHENGWEI / FOR CHINA DAILY Workers at an elderly care center make flower pots with seniors in Beijing on Oct 31. LI XIN / XINHUA Medical workers help seniors with their rehabilitation exercises at a community-based elderly center in Rizhao, Shandong province, on Nov 11. CAI YANG / XINHUA

“The pressing need to expedite the enhancement of an elderly care service system that aligns with the aging population process is increasingly evident.”

Wang Shuhui, member of the National Committee of the CPPCC

"How can we better integrate the power of the government and the market? When addressing the financial challenges of elderly individuals with relatively lower incomes, the government safety net may necessitate a more substantial role in providing support. As for middle- to high-income brackets with varying and complex needs, shouldn't we leverage market dynamics to tailor services more effectively to their demands?" Jin said.

"Here's another concern. In many places, many older people are unwilling to leave their children to live in nursing homes, and such actions are even considered unfilial by some seniors. In this environment, how can we activate market vitality, make elderly people willing to engage with nursing homes, willing to consume, and encourage nursing homes to offer more high-quality, cost-effective services, creating a virtuous cycle?"

Jin pointed out that currently in China, 90 percent of elderly care is provided at home, 7 percent in the community and less than 3 percent

choose institutional care. Compared to Western countries, the institutional participation rate is very low.

"To develop the silver economy, it is necessary to adapt to this characteristic from both the supply and demand sides, for example, setting up elderly care stations in communities to provide home-based elderly care services such as cleaning, assistance with mobility and meal delivery," Jin said.

"Although we have only recently entered the aging era, we must also consider future trends. The elderly population will continue to increase, the average age will rise and a higher proportion will face disabilities and cognitive issues. For severely ill or disabled elderly individuals, their family members may have to quit their jobs or retire early to care for them, or they may have to pay high prices and still not be able to find good care.

"At this point, the intervention of institutions and the leveraging of concentrated resources to provide quality and cost-effective services are crucial. I suggested corresponding tax incentives and other favorable measures to support the early development of commercial nursing homes," Jin said.

In line with the current mainstream trends of home-based and community-based elderly care, Zhang Yunqian, a CPPCC National Committee member and a researcher at the Institute of Computing Technology affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, suggested that policies should support businesses and actively leverage technology for more efficient services.

Zhang said that after going through various stages of product exploration, functional improvement and AI empowerment, elderly care robots are gradually maturing.

Currently, elderly care robots are generally divided into three categories: nursing, rehabilitation and companionship.

Nursing robots are usually designed for disabled elderly individuals, rehabilitation robots primarily target semi-disabled elderly individuals and companionship robots cater to elderly individuals with emotional communication needs.

The researcher highlighted the issues facing the current development of elderly care robots. "On one hand, elderly care demands high service refinement, personalization, product safety and convenience, which leads to high research and development costs for robots and subsequently higher sales prices.

"Some families find it difficult to afford these services, which in turn hinders in-depth technological research and development," Zhang said. "On the other hand, elderly care robots are complex technological systems that require breakthroughs in achieving a closed loop of 'perception-decision-execution-feedback', particularly requiring extensive data coverage, sufficient computing power and intelligent algorithms that combine AI with human collaboration."

The use of technology in elder care has also received policy support. In a document released by the State Council last year, further efforts were called for accelerating the development and application of elderly care technology.

Liu Qingfeng, chairman of iFlytek and a deputy to the NPC, the country's legislative body, showcased the application scenario of an AI elderly care assistant during the two sessions. When the smart bracelet of a 90-year-old elderly person living alone detects an abnormal heart

rate, the system immediately alerts a community doctor to visit. The AI voice assistant can also chat with the elderly person, remind him to take medication and even simulate the voice of a deceased loved one to narrate stories about old photos.

In Liu's view, the current AI technology can to some extent meet the diverse medical and health service needs of the elderly. However, there are still many obstacles in its development process such as digital gap and inadequate service supply.

Liu suggested establishing a standard system for digital health services for the elderly and promoting the coverage of medical insurance for intelligent elderly care and rehabilitation services.

Wang Jianjun, a CPPCC National Committee member and former head of the China National Committee on Aging, called for strengthening national-level planning for the development of intelligent healthcare for the elderly, promoting the improvement of policies in the field of intelligent elderly care, focusing on the integration of intelligent devices such as wearable devices and service robots in elderly care service scenarios, enhancing product development and enabling technology to better serve the elderly.

"Some community-based elderly meal assistance projects have successfully achieved precise matching of supply and demand through intelligent information platforms, effectively solving the dining problems faced by elderly people during home-based elderly care," Wang said.

Dining was a prominent issue for elderly people living alone. Many elderly people "cook a meal at home and eat it for a day or two," while dining out poses practical problems such as high prices, unsuitable tast-

es and hygiene concerns.

Wang Shuhui, a CPPCC National Committee member and the general manager of Xi'an Good Breakfast Project Co, identified existing bottlenecks in elderly dining services. These challenges encompass supply and demand imbalances, institutional operations, service models and supportive policies.

"The pressing need to expedite the enhancement of an elderly care service system that aligns with the aging population process is increasingly evident," she said.

In light of this, Wang proposed the creation of a "elderly care service circle" by setting up elderly dining service centers and improving delivery services.

She said this initiative would operate under a "government-guided, enterprise-operated" framework. The government would establish community meal distribution centers through policy support, while businesses would operate associated convenience restaurants.

Jin mentioned that the development of the silver economy will also bring more opportunities for young people.

"The elderly have specialized needs for clothing, food, housing, transportation and healthcare, as well as new demands for leisure, entertainment and exploration. Conservatively estimating, by 2050, the silver economy will provide at least 100 million job opportunities," he said.

Guan Weijiang, who has been doing business in children's toys in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, for 10 years, has intuitively felt the consumption potential in the elderly sector. He stated that over the past year, his online store has seen a surge in orders. Many elderly consumers prefer fitness and educational toys, with users over 50 years old accounting for 30 percent of the store's customer base.

Guan said that the search and order volume for toys among consumers aged 55 and above are gradually increasing, with particularly rapid growth in transactions for fitness toys that promote light exercise.

"This may become an extremely promising new track," he said.

According to e-commerce platform Taobao, over the past year, searches for elderly toys on Taobao have increased by 121 percent year-on-year, with transaction volumes increasing by over 70 percent year-on-year. The proportion of consumers aged 55 and above is gradually increasing, and the transaction speed continues to accelerate. More toy industry merchants have also sensed the business opportunities in elderly toys and entered the market.

Traveling is another major part of leisure for elderly people. In recent years, various themed and content-rich tourist trains carrying elderly tourists traveled across the country, allowing elderly travelers to enjoy magnificent landscapes.

On Feb 11, the Ministry of Commerce and eight other departments released the action plan for increasing silver tourism trains to promote service consumption development, proposing various specific measures around increasing the service supply of silver tourism, strengthening the guarantee of age-appropriate facilities, enhancing the service level of trains specialized for silver tourism, among others.

Riding on the policy tailwind, various regions have launched trains specially designed for silver tourism. Last month, a train departed from Liuzhou station in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region with 270 middle-aged and elderly passengers, embarking on a four-day leisure trip along the coast of western Guangdong.

A travel agency affiliated with China Railway said that in March, it will launch a 12-day spring trip project traveling to Jiangxi, Guangdong and Hunan provinces. China Railway said that by 2027, it will design more than 100 high-quality silver tourism railway routes, create 160 sets of silver tourism trains with specialized elderly care, and expand the scale of silver tourism trains to over 2,500.

The China Tourism Academy said silver tourism is becoming one of the fastest-growing sectors in the silver economy. Among them, the travel booking volume for people aged 50 and above continues to grow, and the silver population accounts for approximately 64 percent of weekday travelers, significantly higher than other age groups.



Left: Elderly students learn to play the keyboard at a seniors' university in Chongqing on Sept 19. SUN KAIFANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Right: Travelers take pictures before boarding a dedicated train that will take some 330 elderly tourists to Sanming, Fujian province, from Shanghai, on April 20. LIU WEIXING / XINHUA



TWO SESSIONS

Nurturing new talent key for nation's growth

Advisers call for boosting use of AI in education, improving vocational courses

By ZHAO YIMENG
zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

National political advisers have emphasized the importance of nurturing talent that can support China's social and economic development, as called for by President Xi Jinping during the two sessions, the annual meetings of China's top legislative and political advisory bodies.

After participating in a joint group meeting attended by Xi last week, national political advisers from the education sector said the new generation of capable young people is expected to adapt to evolving technology while maintaining strong moral grounding, intellectual ability, physical vigor, aesthetic sensibility and work skills.

Xi stressed at the meeting that it is necessary to keep pace with the times and master the tools and methods of applying artificial intelligence to empower education, while at the same time ensuring that the cultivation of students' intellectual ability and problem-solving skills is not neglected.

Speaking on the transformative impact of AI on education, Xu Kun, president of Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications and a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, said the future of education will shift from traditional teacher-student interactions to a dynamic model involving students, teachers and AI.

"The role of teachers will evolve from merely delivering knowledge to designing learning environments, as well as inspiring and guiding students," Xu said. "Our priority is to cultivate students' core competencies that go beyond AI, such as imagination, aesthetic appreciation, empathy and critical thinking," he said.

During the group meeting, Xu suggested leveraging the country's advanced information network infrastructure to develop a more intelligent, interconnected education system that supports talent development and scientific innovation.

He said the government, universities and industry can collaborate to build an open-source ecosystem that integrates data, models and computing power into education.

At the panel discussion, President Xi also said that China must coordinate primary, higher and vocational education and optimize public as well as private investment to enable a more reasonable and efficient distribution of education resources.

Zhang Yunhai, a national political adviser and vice-president of Hebei Jiaotong Vocational and Technical College, said that Xi has a deep passion for education and a profound understanding of educational issues.

"At the meeting, I strongly felt his unwavering commitment to education," Zhang said.

Zhang's speech at the meeting was focused on how to better align vocational education with industrial development and suggested innovating the industry-education integration system and enhancing technical service capabilities.

For the past three years, Zhang has advocated vocational education reform. This year, he made a proposal on further promoting cooperation between schools and enterprises, ensuring that learning in classrooms aligns with workplace needs and academic disciplines correspond to industrial demand.

Liu Lin, a CPPCC National Committee member and president of Beijing City University, suggested an early introduction of vocational education by incorporating career awareness and experiential courses into primary and secondary schools.

These courses should align with children's interests and be integrated with labor and science education to help young students develop a correct understanding of careers while improving their practical skills, Liu said.

Meanwhile, more application-oriented universities should be encouraged to offer vocational undergraduate programs, steadily expanding the scale of vocational education with bachelor's degrees.

"This expansion will ensure that vocational education produces highly skilled professionals who are better equipped to meet the demands of economic and social development," Liu said.

Cultural confidence

In addition, Xi emphasized the need to integrate moral education into intellectual, aesthetic and labor education.

During the meeting, Ma Jinglin, a national political adviser and the principal of Beijing No 4 High School, shared how the school integrates traditional Chinese culture into its curriculum.

He highlighted courses that introduce intangible cultural heritage to students and activities that take students out of the classroom to experience the vitality and unique value of traditional culture.

Ma suggested developing tailored traditional culture textbooks based on students' cognitive abilities at different age levels, and strengthening collaboration between schools and families to promote cultural education.

It is essential to nurture students' cultural confidence through textbooks, curricula and daily activities, Ma said.

While more young Chinese people can be on a par with their foreign peers in terms of material wealth, only with deeper cultural confidence can they truly contribute to the building of the nation, he added.

Talking point



Deputies from the Xizang autonomous region engage in a discussion after a plenary meeting on Monday on the sidelines of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress in Beijing.

TENTSEN SHINDEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Country taxis to next frontier of air travel

By ZHAO LEI
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

Aviation Industry Corp of China, the nation's leading aircraft supplier, has designed and built two models of the electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, or eVTOL, and is working on their flight tests, according to a senior AVIC expert.

Wu Ximing, a senior rotorcraft researcher and chief technologist at the State-owned



Wu Ximing

China Helicopter Research and Development Institute in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, which built the prototypes for both.

"Research and development of the AR-E3000 started in the spring of 2023 and progressed smoothly. In September that year, we unveiled the model at the 6th China Helicopter Exposition in Tianjin. In the summer of 2024, we conducted its first flight test in Jingdezhen," Wu said.

"Design work for the AR-E3000, a larger configuration, was launched in the second half of 2024, and it also moved fast. The model was first unveiled to the public at the 15th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, Guangdong province, in November. A prototype will have its maiden flight around the end of this year," he added.

Engineers at the Jingdezhen institute will continue to carry out

more tests involving the two models, optimize some subsystems according to the tests' results, and work with civil aviation authorities to arrange the timetables for airworthiness certificate applications, according to the senior researcher.

"We hope that they can obtain the type and production certificates within two to three years, but it depends largely on the certification process," he said.

Wu, who is also a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's top political advisory body, made the remarks on the sidelines of the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee, which concluded in Beijing on Monday.

Low-altitude economy

The eVTOL aircraft models are part of the aviation conglomerate's hardware portfolio designed for China's low-altitude economy, Wu said.

The low-altitude economy has been a common term in the lexicon of China's economic planners for several years. Though there has yet to be an official definition, economists have generally agreed that it refers to a spectrum of business activities occurring within low-altitude airspace, commonly defined as airspace up to 1,000 meters above ground.

It involves manned and unmanned civilian aircraft activities, such as passenger transportation, air tourism and cargo delivery, and also covers related hardware manufacturing, maintenance and integrated services.

According to a report from the

Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China's low-altitude economy reached 506 billion yuan (\$70 billion) in 2023, marking an increase of 33.8 percent year-on-year. The Civil Aviation Administration of China has projected the sector's market scale to hit 1.5 trillion yuan by 2025 and further expand to 3.5 trillion yuan by 2035.

Wu said the eVTOL aircraft feature advantages such as simplified structures, low maintenance costs, zero emissions and reduced noise.

"Such vehicles are driving growth in industries such as new electric motors, batteries, advanced materials and telecommunications. Their deployment is expected to stimulate the construction of integrated transit networks, create new business scenarios and give new momentum to public consumption," he said.

According to the aviation conglomerate, the AR-E3000 has a maximum takeoff weight of 400 kilograms, a maximum carrying capacity of 120 kg, and can fly 30 kilometers when fully loaded.

The model has been designed for urban transportation, aerial sightseeing and cargo delivery. It is equipped with low-noise and low-vibration rotors, high-safety flight control, a lightweight full-composite body structure, and high-performance batteries and motors.

The AR-E3000 has a maximum takeoff weight of 2.6 metric tons, a maximum carrying capacity of 450 kg, and can fly 200 km when fully loaded. It can serve personal and cargo transportation purposes and is also suitable for medical rescue missions.

Political Lens

Journalists lauded for covering CPPCC session

Wang Huning, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, met on Monday with representatives of journalists covering the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee and extended his greetings and gratitude for their hard work.

Wang said that media outlets have reported the event on all aspects and from different perspectives, conveying China's determination and confidence in achieving new successes in socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

He encouraged the journalists to continue telling well the stories of the political advisers performing their duties, of China's whole-process people's democracy and of the CPPCC.

CHINA DAILY

Guangxi: China-ASEAN Expo expected to focus on AI

From page 1

The upgraded China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 now includes cooperation on the digital economy, while Guangxi's AI industrial fund of 10 billion yuan (\$1.38 billion) was set up in February and multiple development zones are further bolstering cross-border innovation, Chen said.

He noted the region and ASEAN have engaged in deepened cooperation in trade, investment, people-to-people exchanges and education, and accumulated a rich language database that can be used to train AI models.

Moreover, Guangxi has hosted the China-ASEAN Expo 21 times and the China-ASEAN AI Summit four times, with the 22nd China-ASEAN Expo, scheduled for September in Nanning, the region's capital, expected to focus on AI cooperation, he added.

Chen said that during a recent visit to Vietnam and Laos by a Guangxi delegation, which he led, the top leadership of the two nations acknowledged the development progress of China's AI and said they expect to enhance cooperation with China to develop AI models based on their own languages.

The delegation signed deals with Vietnam on cross-border logistics data flows and established the China-Laos AI Innovation Cooperation Center — the first such platform between China and ASEAN, Chen said.

Chen said there are four priorities for deepening AI collaboration.

The first priority is to attract leading Chinese and ASEAN AI enterprises to set up research and development centers in Nanning, in order to foster cross-border industrial synergy, he said.

Second, the region should aim to develop tailored AI applications for agriculture, healthcare, tourism and logistics in ASEAN markets, Chen said.

Third, an integrated industrial chain should be established that includes research and development in Beijing and Shanghai as well as Guangzhou and Shenzhen, Guangdong province; integration in Guangxi; and application in ASEAN, he said.

Fourth, the region will launch AI training programs for ASEAN officials, workers and students.

Through a multilayer cooperation mechanism established between Guangxi and ASEAN government institutions, enterprises, research institutes and the commerce sector, ASEAN countries can equally participate in and benefit from cutting-edge AI technology and standards, which will be conducive to further strengthening the two sides' political trust, Chen said.

Moreover, the China-ASEAN AI Innovation and Cooperation Center will cultivate AI talent to empower various industries and push for the inclusive development of AI and bring real benefits to the people, he added.

Zhang Li contributed to this story.

Contact the writers at
zoushuo@chinadaily.com.cn

Gathering ideas



Staff members work at the secretariat of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress in Beijing on Sunday. National lawmakers submitted 269 proposals to China's annual legislative session by Saturday noon, the deadline for proposal submission. The secretariat said on Sunday that it had also received over 8,000 suggestions from NPC deputies.

JIANG QIMING / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Tech: Private companies to lead innovation

From page 1

With an annual 5 percent GDP growth target for 2025, China's leadership is signaling confidence in its economic trajectory. But instead of relying on the traditional levers of infrastructure spending and real estate investment, the government is banking on technological progress to drive long-term prosperity.

To this end, China has taken a bold step: raising fiscal deficit to around 4 percent of GDP and planning to issue 1.3 trillion yuan (\$180 billion) of ultralong special treasury bonds. Unlike previous stimulus measures, which usually favored construction and State-led infrastructure investment, this round of fiscal support is designed to accelerate high-tech breakthroughs in areas such as semiconductors, renewable energy, telecommunications and automation.

The message is clear: If China wants to compete globally, it must expand and deepen its position in the critical technology supply chains of the 21st century.

China has seen success in several key areas. For example, China is now the world's largest electric vehicle producer, with companies such as BYD challenging Tesla in global markets. China also demonstrates green energy leadership, dominating the global solar panel supply chain, producing over 80 percent of the world's solar panels and leading in wind energy and battery storage. Fur-

thermore, China's high-speed rail and infrastructure, including rail technology exports and domestic network expansion, have cemented its status as a leader in transport engineering.

The emphasis in the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) will certainly be on technological self-reliance, with a sharper focus on AI, quantum computing, biotech, and next-generation semiconductors.

The two sessions reinforced China's commitment to AI leadership. The government is expanding research and development funding for generative AI, quantum computing, robotics and automation, positioning these fields as core engines of future economic growth.

China's AI sector is already a powerhouse, with major companies such as Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent making significant advancements in large language models, computer vision and autonomous driving. The next frontier is AI-driven industrial automation, where China hopes to revolutionize manufacturing through smart factories and AI-powered logistics.

In the telecommunications sector, China is aiming to lead in 6G technology, building on its global dominance in 5G networks. With Huawei and ZTE continuing to expand despite US sanctions, China's leadership sees digital infrastructure as a key pillar of national security and economic competitiveness.

A major question remains: Does China's desire to foster a truly innovative ecosystem require maintain-

ing a high level of State control?

Historically, State-backed R&D programs have driven major breakthroughs in China. To ensure desired levels of progress, the government is strengthening trust with the private sector, and emphasizing market-friendly policies and incentives to spur investment in emerging technologies. The welcome news is that recent signals from China indicate a greater willingness to let private enterprises take the lead in high-tech innovation.

China obviously remains an indispensable player in global innovation. Whether it's AI, clean energy or biotech, Beijing has positioned itself to set the rules of the road in the industries that will define the 21st century.

The decisions taken during this year's two sessions are intended to address these and related questions. With success stories such as DeepSeek making headlines every day, there is less and less reason to doubt that China can and will cement its place as a global technological leader. Moreover, based on the policies and initiatives put forward from the ongoing meetings, it will become increasingly difficult for other countries to constrain China's quest to become a true innovation-driven nation. The world will be watching.

The author is a nonresident fellow at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a think tank based in Washington, DC, the United States. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.



TWO SESSIONS

PERSPECTIVE

China's clean energy growth is impressive

Former UN official hails the nation's green revolution and innovation

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

Erik Solheim, former executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, has been closely following the two sessions in Beijing remotely from his home in Norway.

Solheim, who also served as UN under-secretary-general, has visited China frequently in the past decades, focusing primarily on China's sustainable and green development as well as the Belt and Road Initiative to build connectivity.

He said two keywords stand out for him from the two sessions, referring to the annual meetings of China's National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. "One is 'stability' in a world of enormous uncertainty," he told China Daily. China is a stable power, with a long-term vision that underpins peace and sensible action for human development and the environment, he said.

Solheim said this was also evident from Premier Li Qiang's Government Work Report when he made the argument that China is a stable power.

Solheim said the 5 percent GDP growth target will make China the global powerhouse of growth.

"China will be contributing a huge percentage of the global growth," he said, adding that it will create "stability and prosperity for everyone".

Solheim said that the other word he has observed from the two sessions is "innovation".

"China's DeepSeek showcases how far China can be a leader in information technology," he said, citing China's leadership in solar, electric cars and electric batteries.

Solheim has just returned from a trip to South Asia. He said that in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, 85 percent of the cars are EVs, and the vast majority are Chinese, from BYD and Nio to Hongqi and Geely.

"So Chinese innovation in the green sector and IT sector is beneficial to China, for sure, but also the much wider world," he said.



Erik Solheim

Solheim marveled at how much progress China has made in cleaning its environment.

"The progress in cleaning up the waterways and air in China is amazing. No other nation has ever cleaned up in such a short period of time," he said.

He said he would not have gone for a run in Beijing 10 years ago, especially in winter, due to the air pollution. "Now I will happily do it because the sky is blue and the air is fresh. It's just wonderful," he said.

Solheim felt compelled to highlight China's achievements in clean energy. "The Chinese leadership in the energy of the future is astonishing, mind-boggling," he said, citing China's adding of 280 gigawatts of new solar capacity in 2024, more than the total that the US has done in its history.

He has visited the world's largest solar farm in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, Northwest China, and said "it's like an ocean. It's enormous and provides fantastic green energy". He has also visited Chinese solar panel companies, including Tongwei Solar, the world's largest producer of solar silicon, in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

So China leads in the energy of the future, solar energy, he said.

"It's simply the message to the world, you must step up and you must partner with China, otherwise, the transition will be much more expensive for you," Solheim said.

His message to the Chinese leaders, NPC deputies, and CPPCC National Committee members at the two sessions is to continue what China has done in the green revolution to make it even cheaper for the world, such as in solar power and EVs. "The efficiency of Chinese industrial eco-system in these areas is amazing," he said.



Online
See more by scanning the code.

What CPPCC National Committee members say



Lian Yuming, chief expert of the Three-River-Source National Park Administration

The overall improvement in the diversity, stability and sustainability of the ecosystem in the "Water Tower of China" on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has led to an annual increase of over 6 percent in the oxygen levels of water resources at the Three-River-Source National Park. The Tibetan antelope population has grown from over 20,000 at the beginning of conservation efforts to more than 70,000. Sightings of snow leopards and leopard cats have become more frequent across the three-river-source region — the source of the Yangtze River, the Yellow River, and the Lancang River.



Chen Qingli, head of the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League Zhejiang Provincial Committee

With the deepening of equal treatment policies and exploration of new paths for cross-strait integration, more opportunities are opening up for Taiwan compatriots to pursue their dreams on the Chinese mainland. The momentum for development will only grow stronger. We hope more Taiwan compatriots will seize this valuable opportunity, take part in and experience the vast possibilities of Chinese modernization.



Irons Sze Wing-wai, head of the Federation of Hong Kong Beijing Organizations

The "one country, two systems" principle, implemented after Hong Kong's return to the motherland in 1997, grants institutional support for Hong Kong to consolidate traditional strengths while further integrating into the nation's overall development. As of last year, over 1,400 mainland enterprises have been listed in Hong Kong's stock market, accounting for over 80 percent of the total market value, which shows the Hong Kong financial market's appeal to mainland businesses.



Ho Ion-sang, deputy head of the General Union of Neighbor Association of Macao

The progress of the Guangdong-Macao In-depth Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, Guangdong province, provides not only diversified industrial opportunities for the special administrative region, but also various facilities designed to improve the lives and employment opportunities of Macao residents. The Macao New Neighbourhood project, a complex in Hengqin that has integrated residential, commercial and public service functions following Macao standards, has been warmly welcomed by Macao residents who work or live in the mainland.

CHINA DAILY



An aerial photo of the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) project situated in mountains in Pingtang county, Guizhou province, in February last year. OU DONGQU / XINHUA

Engineer advocates youth astronomy education

By YANG JUN in Guiyang
yangjun@chinadaily.com.cn

After earning his PhD in 2009, Jiang Peng, now 47, joined the team behind the world's largest single-dish radio telescope and now serves as its chief engineer. As a deputy to the National People's Congress, he hoped to see astronomy more integrated into primary and secondary school curricula to ignite children's first spark of scientific curiosity.

When Jiang first heard of the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) project, he was astounded by its unimaginable structural and scale challenges. "I have an insatiable curiosity and a passion for tackling tough problems. I was eager to discover how this project would be realized," he said.

Motivated by that drive, he joined the FAST team.

The evolution of telescopes is essentially a quest for greater sensitivity. Scientists have long pursued bigger apertures because a bigger dish means a greater light-collecting area, which captures richer cosmic details.

Jiang's team overcame numerous hurdles to achieve a staggering 500-meter span, from maintaining structural precision to installing massive components.

The telescope's reflector com-

prises 6,670 steel cables, making it among the world's largest and most precise cable networks.

"The contrast between the telescope's precision requirements and its immense structure meant every step felt like walking on thin ice," he recalled about the construction process. "No one had attempted these tasks before and there wasn't even a precedent of failure to learn from."

After years of relentless breakthroughs, the grand project was completed and commissioned in 2016. What were once considered wild, out-of-the-box ideas have now coalesced into a formidable asset.

The FAST team is forging ahead with developing domestically produced receivers, devices that convert the electromagnetic waves captured by the vast reflector into electrical signals. "We are still enhancing FAST's overall performance amid international competition," Jiang said.

"Our exploration of the cosmos will never cease," Jiang told China Daily. "Now that my team and I are gradually transforming our visions into reality, I can't imagine a more fulfilling feeling."

He attributes his perseverance in research to the joy it brings and a deep-seated desire to explore the unknown.

According to Jiang, although he entered the field with a solid ac-

“Astronomy taps into humanity's deepest curiosity, it helps young people understand the universe and, in doing so, themselves.”



Jiang Peng, NPC deputy and the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST) project chief engineer

demographic background, his understanding of astronomy was relatively limited before joining the team.

Through his experience, he came to appreciate astronomy's boundless potential — a realization that has inspired him to advocate for the subject's inclusion in the curriculum during the national two sessions.

He proposed expanding the current geography curriculum in primary and secondary schools to "Earth and Astronomical Sciences". This approach would remedy current shortcomings in astronomical

education by teaching students to view the Earth against the backdrop of the universe.

"Historically, astronomy has left an indelible mark on human society and played a pivotal role in intellectual enlightenment," Jiang believes. He asserts that astronomy not only sparks scientific interest among youth but also helps them grasp the cosmos on a grand scale.

"Stars can burn gently and reliably for billions of years due to a delicate balance between gravitational forces and nuclear fusion. This process shows multiple scientific principles. While the theory might seem abstract, the vivid astronomical phenomena provide students with tangible and intriguing examples," he explained while describing the charming phenomenon of a star's steady burn.

Jiang urged education departments to involve professional astronomy experts in textbook compilation, ensuring that astronomical knowledge is integrated into the existing curriculum in a clear and accessible manner.

"Astronomy taps into humanity's deepest curiosity, it helps young people understand the universe and, in doing so, themselves. That, for our nation's youth, is truly important," Jiang said.

Liu Boqian contributed to this story.

AI success signals new tech shift among startups

As a technology industry reporter for over a decade, I have been closely monitoring the latest developments and trends in the fast-changing tech sector. Chinese artificial intelligence startup DeepSeek recently became a buzzword and captured widespread attention during the ongoing two sessions.

I marveled at DeepSeek's open-source models' performance in mathematics and natural language reasoning. They are on a par with leading models from US-based OpenAI but at a fraction of the cost typically spent by foreign counterparts.

Last week, an AI agent named Manus created by another Chinese AI startup called Monica.im rapidly gained traction on social media platforms with its ability to handle complex tasks like screening resumes, analyzing stocks and creating websites. The AI agent is more advanced than a chatbot because it doesn't only provide suggestions or answers, but delivers tangible results.

What surprised me even more was that the two companies made significant technological breakthroughs within a very short period, as they had been established no more than three years ago.

China has attached great importance to the development of AI, a strategic emerging field in which major economies are scrambling to gain a competitive edge. AI is set



Fan Feifei
Reporter's log

to play a pivotal role in driving industrial transformation and upgrading.

According to the Government Work Report delivered at the opening meeting of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress, the country will continue to pursue the AI plus initiative and support the extensive application of large language models.

I have interviewed many national legislators and political advisers, and they are very concerned about how to make DeepSeek and fast-developing AI technology better empower all walks of life and bolster the deeper integration of cutting-edge digital technologies with a wide range of industries, facilitating the shift of growth drivers from old to new ones.

They told me that the meteoric rise of DeepSeek has showcased China's immense potential in bolstering technological innovation, signaling a profound shift in the global AI landscape. It has subverted the traditional AI development paradigm and will accelerate the penetration of AI technology into various sectors.

Zhou Hongyi, a member of the

14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, believes China's AI industry has ushered in a milestone breakthrough. The emergence of DeepSeek's AI model signifies that China is evolving from a "follower" to a "leader" in AI, making a historic leap.

Zhou, who is also founder and chairman of Chinese internet enterprise 360 Security Group, perceives that 2025 will be the year of AI applications, and the key to success lies in seizing the opportunities created by DeepSeek and combining local advantages with different application scenarios to stay ahead in the global AI competition.

With the wide application of AI technology, challenges like hallucination and content security arise. Zhou called for efforts to establish a security governance system related to AI models, and an industry alliance to ensure the safe use of AI in various fields.

Zhong Zheng, a deputy to the 14th NPC and vice-president of Midea Group, said the company has integrated DeepSeek's AI models into its businesses and developed its industry-specific models, with AI technology used in intelligent manufacturing, smart home, robotics and healthcare segments.

Zhong suggested stepping up research and development investment in AI, especially in core tech-

nologies in key fields, establishing a data security and privacy protection system, and strengthening the training of high-caliber AI talent.

Lou Qianjian, spokesman for the third session of the 14th NPC, said the technological breakthroughs made by Chinese companies such as DeepSeek fully demonstrate that an innovative, open and sharing approach to increase people's well-being is the right choice.

Lou mentioned that DeepSeek follows an open-source technological path that has facilitated the broader application of AI technologies worldwide and contributed China's wisdom to the world. "DeepSeek shows China's innovative and inclusive approach to sci-tech development," he said.

After talking with NPC deputies and members of the CPPCC National Committee, I have a deeper understanding of the AI industry. I firmly believe the growth potential of China's economy will come from technological innovation, and Chinese AI companies can lead the global AI industry. These companies' continuous advancements in AI will bolster the evolution of the global AI ecosystem in an open and collaborative manner, and inject new momentum into global economic recovery.

Contact the writer at fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn



TWO SESSIONS

Tech, talent needed to boost food security

By ZHAO YIMENG and LIU KUN

China is pushing to better align agricultural science and technology with industry needs to enhance productivity and strengthen national food security, political advisers said during the annual two sessions meetings.

Premier Li Qiang's Government Work Report, delivered on March 5 at the opening of the third session of the 14th National People's Congress, emphasized efforts to revitalize the seed industry and expand the large-scale application of agricultural science and technology.

Yan Jianbing, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, who is also the president of Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, Hubei province, said that while China has made significant advances in agricultural technology, with a contribution rate surpassing 63 percent, more needs to be done to translate research into real-world productivity.

Yan and his team have been developing high-protein corn varieties that serve as both an energy source and a protein supplement for animal feed, aiming to reduce China's reliance on soybean imports. Collaborating with enterprises, they have developed multiple new corn varieties with protein content exceeding 10 percent, which are being grown on more than 666,660 hectares.

"If China's annual corn production of 290 million (metric) tons saw just a 1 percentage point increase in protein content, that would mean an additional 2.9 million tons of protein, potentially reducing soybean imports by 7 to 8 million tons," Yan told reporters on March 4.

"Every percentage point matters in enhancing food security," he said. A recent breakthrough by Yan's team identified a key gene that reduces corn kernel moisture, allowing faster drying at harvest time and improving mechanized harvesting efficiency. The new corn varieties are expected to combine multiple desirable traits, including high yields, high protein content and ease of harvest, he said.

However, commercialization has faced obstacles due to mixed cul-



An automated robot grafts tomato seedlings in a digital seeding farm in Tongxiang, Zhejiang province, on Feb 19. The process only takes three seconds for each seedling, with a survival rate of 99 percent. WANG JIANLONG / ZHEJIANG DAILY



Yan Jianbing

During the two sessions, Yan called for establishing an integrated, standardized industrial chain for high-protein corn, covering cultivation, storage and processing, to accelerate the adoption of advanced agricultural technologies.

"Our goal is to develop solutions while simultaneously deploying them, leveraging the entire supply chain to facilitate technological breakthroughs and their large-scale application," he said.

Beyond technological advancements, China needs more young talent in agriculture, driven not only by interest but also by a sense of duty, Yan said.

He highlighted "Science and Technology Courtyards," an initiative that immerses students and researchers in real-world production challenges to identify industry-related problems and solutions.

Zhong Denghua, a CPPCC National Committee member and Party



Zhong Denghua

secretary of China Agricultural University in Beijing, also underscored the importance of these courtyards in transforming scientific research into produc-

tion and social service. The initiative was highlighted in this year's No 1 Central Document as a model for integrating academic research with rural development.

Despite its success, Zhong said inadequate coordination between education, agriculture and financial departments has hindered the large-scale application of agricultural technology and extension services.

He suggested that agriculture and education authorities develop a joint action plan aligned with national agricultural science and technology initiatives, such as new variety cultivation and soil quality improvement.

Central and local governments should also invest in courtyards focused on food security and rural development, helping them commercialize technology and attract talent, he said.

Additionally, Zhong proposed establishing a nationwide alliance to coordinate efforts among universities, agricultural extension services, enterprises and research institutions.

By taking a people-centered approach, prosecutors and judges prioritized frequently disputed issues such as food safety, cyberbullying and livestreaming sales, while also strengthening protections for vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly and children, the reports showed.

Though these cases may seem less severe than violent crimes, their proper handling is key to protecting people's fundamental interests, safety and well-being, officials said.

The reports from the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate were submitted on Saturday to the ongoing third session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for review.

The SPP report said last year, prosecutors indicted 15,000 individuals on charges of endangering food and drug safety, and prosecuted 4,175 others accused of medical insurance fraud.

Prosecutors also initiated 26,000 public interest litigation cases after uncovering violations such as counterfeiting, illegal food additives and non-compliant sales in group buying, online marketing and livestreaming, according to the report.

"Upholding the philosophy of putting people first, what we do is safeguard the money people rely on for medical care, enabling them to truly feel and experience the services provided by prosecutors," Procurator-General Ying Yong said while delivering the report.

The document also addresses issues such as marriage customs, cyberbullying and domestic violence.

According to the SPC report, Chinese courts concluded more than 5.48 million cases related to public well-being last year, including disputes over education, elder care and healthcare, marking a 1.7 percent year-on-year increase.

In addition, judges intensified efforts to handle lawsuits related to emerging business models, including ride-hailing services, food delivery and fraud schemes targeting elderly consumers in livestreaming sales. The efforts were aimed at improving internet platform regulations and addressing challenges posed by an aging population, the report said.

The document also addresses issues such as marriage customs, cyberbullying and domestic violence. According to the SPC report, Chinese courts concluded more than 5.48 million cases related to public well-being last year, including disputes over education, elder care and healthcare, marking a 1.7 percent year-on-year increase.

In December, the Yezhou Bay Biological Breeding Industry Alliance was established, with member organizations including the China National Seed Group and the Yezhouwan National Laboratory. The alliance aims to foster innovation in gene editing and accelerate the application of biotechnology in agriculture.

As China advances intelligent and industrialized breeding, it is also sharing its expertise globally. In November, the China-LAC Sustainable Food Innovation Center was established in Sanya Yezhou Bay Science and Technology City, marking a significant step in global agricultural cooperation.

"China is now at the forefront of global biotechnology research," Chen said. "We hope to engage in mutually beneficial collaboration with other countries, extending the benefits of our research beyond our borders."

Contact the writers at zhaoyimeng@chinadaily.com.cn

Judicial efforts ensure public well-being

Courts address issues such as domestic violence, bride prices and cyberbullying

By CAO YIN

caoyin@chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese judicial authorities handled numerous public interest cases last year, aiming to address people's concerns and enhance access to justice, according to the annual work reports reviewed by national lawmakers.

By taking a people-centered approach, prosecutors and judges prioritized frequently disputed issues such as food safety, cyberbullying and livestreaming sales, while also strengthening protections for vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly and children, the reports showed.

Though these cases may seem less severe than violent crimes, their proper handling is key to protecting people's fundamental interests, safety and well-being, officials said.

The reports from the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate were submitted on Saturday to the ongoing third session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for review.

The SPP report said last year, prosecutors indicted 15,000 individuals on charges of endangering food and drug safety, and prosecuted 4,175 others accused of medical insurance fraud.

Prosecutors also initiated 26,000 public interest litigation cases after uncovering violations such as counterfeiting, illegal food additives and non-compliant sales in group buying, online marketing and livestreaming, according to the report.

"Upholding the philosophy of putting people first, what we do is safeguard the money people rely on for medical care, enabling them to truly feel and experience the services provided by prosecutors," Procurator-General Ying Yong said while delivering the report.

The document also addresses issues such as marriage customs, cyberbullying and domestic violence.

According to the SPC report, Chinese courts concluded more than 5.48 million cases related to public well-being last year, including disputes over education, elder care and healthcare, marking a 1.7 percent year-on-year increase.

Progress reports



The delegation from Jiangsu province holds a plenary meeting to deliberate on the work reports from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate during the third session of the 14th NPC in Beijing on Monday. WAN CHENGPENG / FOR CHINA DAILY

'Fengdeng' a friendly, intelligent tool for farmers

By YANG RAN and CHEN BOWEN

If you're new to agriculture and have a piece of land you'd like to cultivate, the Seed Large Language Model "Fengdeng," released in April last year, could be a valuable resource.

Fengdeng acts as a personal farming adviser, recommending crop varieties best suited to your land and guiding you on planting techniques based on your land's characteristics. It can also suggest treatments and necessary nutrients if crops encounter health issues.

Developed through a collaboration between the Yezhouwan National Laboratory in Hainan province, China Agricultural University in Beijing and the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Fengdeng is China's first large language model for seed design, also known as SeedLLM.

Chen Pan, a deputy to the National People's Congress and deputy director of the Yezhouwan National Laboratory, emphasized Fengdeng's capability in integrating biotechnology, big data and artificial intelligence to support agricultural work and research.

"Digitalization and intelligence are undoubtedly the future directions for building the 'Nanfan Sili-



Chen Pan

con Valley," Chen said. "We must use high technology to serve and transform both production and research of agriculture."

"Nanfan" refers to a unique breeding process that leverages Hainan's warm winters as a natural breeding accelerator. According to the Construction Plan for Building the National Nanfan Silicon Valley 2023-2030, released in January last year by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Nanfan Breeding Base in Hainan is set to evolve into the "Silicon Valley" of China's seed industry by 2030, serving as a comprehensive hub for agricultural research, industry and technology exchange.

Fengdeng is just the first step in creating an intelligent breeding model, Chen said.

"In the future, we will incorporate vast data sets, including genotype, phenotype and environmental data, into the model to create a 'navigation system' that helps scientists breed optimal crop varieties more quickly," the NPC deputy said.

"Traditionally, developing a specific, high-yield crop variety for a particular location could take dec-

ades due to insufficient information," he said. "With an intelligent breeding model, this timeline can be cut to a few years."

He likened it to using a navigation system instead of a paper map, allowing for instant route optimization and real-time adjustments.

On Feb 23, China unveiled its No 1 Central Document for the year, emphasizing the role of the Nanfan Silicon Valley in developing breakthrough crop varieties and promoting the industrialization of biological breeding.

"China faces a significant soybean supply gap, with imports reaching 105 million (metric) tons last year. So, the research on soybean variety with high yield is an important part of our work," Chen said.

Last year, the Yezhouwan National Laboratory research team successfully developed a new salt-tolerant soybean variety with an average yield of over 4.5 tons per hectare, surpassing both China's current average of 2.25 tons and the US's 3.37 tons.

"This new variety is a small step toward greater self-reliance in soybean consumption. Going forward, our breeding efforts will focus on increasing average yields and enhancing specific traits such as high protein content and salt toler-

ance of crop varieties," Chen said.

"In the field of breeding industrialization, we are promoting the integration of innovation chains, industrial chains and capital chains to quickly transform industry needs into innovation tasks," he noted.

In December, the Yezhou Bay Biological Breeding Industry Alliance was established, with member organizations including the China National Seed Group and the Yezhouwan National Laboratory. The alliance aims to foster innovation in gene editing and accelerate the application of biotechnology in agriculture.

As China advances intelligent and industrialized breeding, it is also sharing its expertise globally. In November, the China-LAC Sustainable Food Innovation Center was established in Sanya Yezhou Bay Science and Technology City, marking a significant step in global agricultural cooperation.

"China is now at the forefront of global biotechnology research," Chen said. "We hope to engage in mutually beneficial collaboration with other countries, extending the benefits of our research beyond our borders."

Contact the writers at yangran1@chinadaily.com.cn

Liaoning moves to boost foreign trade, draw investment

By LI JIAYING

lijiaying@chinadaily.com.cn

Liaoning province is pursuing new business models and initiatives to boost foreign trade and attract investment as it builds a more open and interconnected economy, a senior official said.

Liaoning's total import and export volume reached 763.05 billion yuan (\$105.2 billion) in 2023, while actual foreign investment amounted to 21.86 billion yuan, said Pan Shuang, a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress and director of the prov-



Pan Shuang

ince's department of commerce. "The keyword for Liaoning's foreign trade and investment efforts in 2024 is 'exploration,'" Pan said, noting that the province has launched "zero-to-one" initiatives to help industrial enterprises, high-tech firms, small and medium-sized businesses, and cross-border operators expand into foreign trade, online marketing and emerging markets. Liaoning added 779 new foreign

trade market entities last year, contributing an additional 11.5 billion yuan to trade volume, she said.

The province is also embracing new business models to boost trade. It has become the site of Northeast China's first cross-border ship and aircraft financing lease projects, as well as the region's first bonded mixing trial site for imported copper concentrate.

The used car export sector has also grown significantly, with the export value reaching 1.88 billion yuan, up 7.1 percent year-on-year. Export volume exceeded 10,000 vehicles, mark-

ing a 20.9 percent increase from the previous year.

Liaoning is actively exploring new international markets, including Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and West Asia, Pan said. The province is also tapping into emerging sectors, including equity investment, the low-altitude economy, and ice and snow tourism, while developing new business models such as cross-border e-commerce and international marketing networks.

Foreign investment in Liaoning has also risen, with major global companies increasing their presence.

Last year, BMW Group announced an additional 20 billion yuan investment in its manufacturing base in Shenyang, the provincial capital, while multinational corporations such as Draxlmaier Group, Michelin, Panasonic, SK Group, Saudi Aramco and Wilmar International have engaged in investment discussions.

According to government data, Liaoning saw 958 newly registered foreign-invested enterprises last year and received foreign investment in 236 projects, 12 more than the previous year.

The province has also strengthened its open economic platforms. The China (Liaoning) Pilot Free Trade Zone's Shenyang section has developed a thriving aviation indus-

try cluster, Pan said, adding that Shenyang is Northeast China's only China-Europe freight train consolidation center. Liaoning operated 892 China-Europe freight trains in 2024, a 14.4 percent year-on-year increase, ranking first in Northeast China and eighth nationwide, she said.

Looking ahead, Liaoning aims to expand its openness and foster a more dynamic and cooperative economic environment, Pan said.

"The province is prioritizing digital, green and service trade, nurturing digital transformation in foreign trade enterprises, developing regional cross-border e-commerce hubs ... to build a high-level, globally connected trade and investment ecosystem," she said.



TWO SESSIONS

Guizhou mountain recognized by IUCN for conservation efforts

By YANG JUN
yangjun@chinadaily.com.cn

Fanjing Mountain in Tongren, Guizhou province, has been added to the green list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with Mayor Mu Rongkun calling it a testament to the city's success in balancing conservation and tourism.

The green list is a global program established by the IUCN to promote biodiversity conservation based on natural protected areas.

"The charm of Fanjing Mountain lies in its unique ecological resources," said Mu, who is also a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress. "Careful conservation of its biodiversity is essential."

Ninety-seven percent of the mountain, the highest peak in the Wuling Mountain Range at 2,572 meters, is covered by woodland, making it Guizhou's premier tourist destination.

Dubbed an "ecological island", it is home to 7,925 species — some of which are rare or endangered — and is the sole habitat of the Guizhou golden snub-nosed monkey and the Fanjing fir. It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2018 and named one of the world's most exciting destinations by National Geographic in 2019.

Last year, the scenic area set a record for visitation, welcoming more than 1.97 million visits, a 7.18 percent increase year-on-year, with international visits surging by 119.55 percent.

Tourism now accounts for 28 percent of Tongren's GDP, directly creating 230,000 jobs and generating more than 40 billion yuan (\$5.5 billion) across the agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors, Mu said. The green economy has grown to comprise 51.2 percent of the overall economy.

The growth has also boosted rural per capita disposable income by 7.5 percent, the fastest in the province.

With Guizhou now included in China's visa-free transit policy that allows foreign visitors to stay for up to 240 hours, Mu said the city plans to enhance supporting facilities for international tourists, streamline entry payment processes and improve connectivity with dedicated tourist flight routes.

Mu said inbound tourism is expected to grow this year, with international visits projected to increase by more than 40 percent.



Mu Rongkun

He also outlined plans to integrate sports events, wellness tourism and matcha products into Fanjing Mountain's development. The area will continue hosting marathons, make use of its abundant hot springs and ecological resources to expand the wellness industry, and develop a matcha-themed town at its base.

Facing the pressure of rising tourism and environmental preservation, Mu said the mountain's development must adhere to the principle of "ecology first, protection prioritized", while also innovating to enhance visitors' experiences.

To protect the ecosystem, the local government has implemented comprehensive conservation measures and enacted legislation, he said.

A big data management platform provides round-the-clock intelligent fire detection in key areas, and 46.82 million yuan has been invested in infrastructure projects to protect the Guizhou golden snub-nose monkey and other wildlife.

"We have enacted local regulations for the protection of Fanjing Mountain and the Jinjiang River Basin, established a coordinated law enforcement and resource management mechanism, set up a Fanjing Mountain police district and an ecological court, and are intensifying efforts against environmental crimes," Mu said.

The scenic area has also introduced a reservation system with capacity control and timed entry. An ecological observation station for Guizhou golden snub-nosed monkeys welcomes an average of 800 visitors daily.

Beyond its natural wonders, the region is home to 28 ethnic groups, including the Tujia, Dong, Qiang, Miao and Gelao. In nearby traditional villages such as Yunshe, Zhaisha, Taohuayuan and Qishuping, locals preserve their cultural heritages.

"In these villages, visitors can immerse themselves in the slow pace of life at the foot of Fanjing Mountain and experience traditional arts such as Tujia lantern-making and ritual dances," Mu said.

Liu Boqian contributed to this story.



Session concludes

The third session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference holds its closing meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday.

WANG JING / CHINA DAILY

Porcelain capital draws intl attention with innovation

Jingdezhen aims to become creative hub for ceramic artists worldwide

By ZHAO RUINAN
zhaorunan@chinadaily.com.cn

Jingdezhen, dubbed the porcelain capital of China, is opening its doors to the world with a more inclusive and innovative approach, accelerating its efforts to become a creative hub that attracts international ceramic artists and foreign tourists, said Hu Xuemei, Party secretary of Jingdezhen and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress.

With a pottery history spanning more than 2,000 years, an official kiln history lasting over 1,000 years and a legacy of imperial kilns extending more than 600 years, Jingdezhen, a city in Jiangxi province, possesses one of the richest and most remarkable ceramic cultural heritages in the world, making it a major draw for visitors.

During the Spring Festival holiday, Jingdezhen saw a 9.64 percent increase in tourist visits from the previous year, with total tourism revenue rising 16.9 percent, according to government data.

The number of foreign tourists is also on the rise. In 2024, inbound tourist arrivals increased 45 percent year-over-year, while tourism spending grew 31 percent, according to data from travel platform Trip.com Group.

In May 2019, a proposal was made to establish Jingdezhen as a national



Hu Xuemei

ceramic culture heritage innovation experimental zone. The initiative aims to create a new platform for cultural exchange with the world, said Hu.

"Jingdezhen has embraced this directive, moving forward to share the story of china (ceramics) to illustrate the cultural confidence of China," she added.

Jingdezhen has placed a strong emphasis on cultural exchanges with the global community. Last year, the 21st China Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo attracted nearly 1,000 foreign guests from 82 countries and regions, with total participation exceeding 500,000.

Additionally, a Jingdezhen economic and trade delegation visited the United Kingdom and Portugal, hosting numerous ceramic-themed events. During a visit to the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge, England, the delegates witnessed the profound impact of ceramic culture, which transcends time and borders, Hu said.

"These exchange platforms transcend language and craftsmanship, surpassing nationalities and cul-

tures, making Jingdezhen a spiritual homeland that captures the attention of global artisans," she said.

Zhang Jingjing, dean of the International School of Jingdezhen Ceramic University, said Chinese porcelain has historically traveled across ancient China and reached foreign regions, breaking geographical boundaries and serving as a cultural ambassador.

She believes porcelain can act as a "breaker of cultural barriers".

"We cherish our traditions, but we do not cling to them. We should innovate upon the foundation of tradition so that our cultural products can confidently enter the global market," Zhang said.

Contemporary appeal

In her view, Chinese porcelain should draw inspiration from its traditional roots, embrace contemporary innovations and help shape an international image for Chinese cultural brands.

Taoxichuan Ceramic Art Avenue, centered around the former Universe Porcelain Factory, began renovations in 2013 and officially opened to the public in 2016.

The area hosts multiple annual ceramic-themed creative markets, attracting both domestic and international tourists, as well as ceramic enthusiasts. It has hosted short-term residencies for over 800 artists from more than 50 countries, incubated over 3,000 startups, and created jobs for over 110,000 people

across related industries.

"Leveraging our rich cultural and tourism resources, Jingdezhen has innovatively developed a series of scenic spots that combine millennium-old kilns with modern urban life. This approach deeply integrates cultural heritage with urban development, continuously unlocking the cultural, economic and social values associated with that heritage," Hu said.

Hu also emphasized that Jingdezhen is focusing on digital empowerment and innovative methods for preserving cultural heritage.

In recent years, the city has accelerated the use of digital technology for cultural heritage preservation, establishing the world's first ancient ceramic gene bank. By creating a digital platform, the city has collected nearly 20 million porcelain shards from different dynasties and extracted information on more than 300,000 ancient ceramic genes.

Alongside its innovative initiatives, Jingdezhen has prioritized the protection of historical heritage.

The city has expanded its system of intangible cultural heritage by offering art design and cultural relic preservation courses at seven local universities, educating nearly 90,000 students in ceramic culture and craftsmanship.

"Next, Jingdezhen will prioritize the development of a national ceramic culture inheritance and innovation pilot zone, striving to create a world-renowned destination for ceramic culture tourism," Hu said.

Shanxi records steady progress in urbanization drive

By ZHU XINGXIN
and ZHOU HUIYING

Shanxi province has made significant progress over the past year in advancing county-centered urbanization, aiming to create a model that aligns with modernization goals while maintaining local characteristics.

"The urbanization rate of counties in the province has steadily increased by 1 percent annually," said Chang Shuming, Party secretary of Jinzhong, a city in Shanxi, and deputy to the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature. Chang spoke to China Daily during the ongoing annual session of the congress.

"Rates of centralized water supply, heating, gas supply and sewage treatment have all surpassed 97 percent," he said.

Shanxi has boosted its counties' capacities by implementing more than 1,200 infrastructure projects and strengthening regional public services.

"In July 2024, Jinzhong set up a special working group to promote urbanization centered on counties," Chang said. "Last year, the city's housing and construction bureau launched 215 projects with a total investment of 55.6 billion yuan (\$7.66 billion), accelerating urban renewal efforts such as renovating old neighborhoods, upgrading pipe-

line networks, improving urban-rural roads and enhancing public infrastructure."

Xiyang county was named a pilot site for county-level urban planning and construction by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development in 2023.

In October last year, during an on-site event in Xiyang that focused on developing livable counties, the county's innovative approaches, including improved neighborhood governance and a "smart city management" platform, were highly praised.

"In the future, we will continue integrating industrial hubs, population centers, health and wellness

facilities, and age-friendly communities," Chang said. "We aim to accelerate rural revitalization, boost county economies and advance high-quality urbanization."

Jinzhong has led the way in integrating county and rural development, with the economic output of its nine county-level regions accounting for 89 percent of the city's total.

The city has prioritized strengthening county economies by developing one to two dominant industries and one emerging sector in each county.

"We developed Pingyao as a cultural tourism hub and Zuozhuan as an ecological conservation area,"



Chang Shuming

Chang said. "In 2024, Pingyao county welcomed more than 10 million visitors, an 11 percent increase year-on-year. Meanwhile, 200 painting sites in the Northern China International Outdoor Painting Base in Zuozhuan county generated around 45 million yuan in revenue."

Pingyao, home to the UNESCO-listed Pingyao Ancient City, attracted nearly 50,000 foreign tourists last year. Shuanglin Temple and Zhenguo Temple, both featured in the game *Black Myth: Wukong*, also saw significant increases in visitors and tourism revenue.

"We aim to highlight the city's his-

torical and cultural significance, as well as its ecological value, to build county-level tourism economies," Chang said. "We launched the 'Follow Wukong to Tour Jinzhong' route, integrating ancient architecture and scenic sites while upgrading tourism services to convert visitor numbers into sustained economic growth."

Jinzhong hosted 65 million domestic tourists last year, a 16.2 percent increase from the previous year, with total tourism revenue reaching 66.3 billion yuan, up 27.5 percent year-on-year.

Chang emphasized the cultural tourism industry's role as both a key economic driver and a source of public well-being.

Contact the writers at
zhouhuiying@chinadaily.com.cn

Shaanxi seeks collaboration of institutes, enterprises

By JIANG CHENGLONG
jiangchenglong@chinadaily.com.cn

Deputies from Shaanxi province to the National People's Congress have called for strengthening the role of enterprises as key drivers of innovation and deepening collaboration with local universities to advance the province's science and technology industries.

During a group discussion of the Shaanxi delegation at the third session of the 14th NPC, Zhao Yide, an NPC deputy and secretary of the Communist Party of China's Shaanxi provincial committee, said the province has made significant progress in reforming education, science and technology, talent development and the integration of

science, industry and finance.

Zhao said Shaanxi is focusing on breakthroughs in key core technologies and addressing "bottleneck" challenges while coordinating scientific research with the application of technological achievements.

"In the past two years, we have solved more than 1,000 technical problems of various types, contributing to national major science and technology projects and strengthening industrial and supply chain security," he said.

Shaanxi is prioritizing enterprises as the primary force behind innovation, Zhao said.

"Enterprises are both the main demanders and suppliers of innovation. We are focused on empowering innovative businesses," he said.

Over the past three years, the number of small and medium-sized high-tech enterprises in the province has grown by an average of 30 percent annually, respectively, according to the provincial government.

Officials said the province will continue leveraging education, science and technology, and talent to develop new quality productive forces suited to local conditions.

During the discussion, Zhang Xiushu, director of the 20th research institute of China Electronics Technology Group Corporation, called for a nationally unified implementation plan for enterprise-oriented management reform of scientific research institutions.

He proposed allowing research

institutions to adopt more flexible management systems than general public institutions and explore enterprise-style management models.

"We should grant researchers greater autonomy in distributing benefits from the commercialization of scientific and technological achievements and establish a strategic management system for intellectual property assets," Zhang said.

Xu Liping, a worker at the Academy of Aerospace Propulsion Technology, said aerospace technology, representing advanced manufacturing and new quality productive forces, should drive the transformation of the manufacturing sector toward high-end, intelligent and green development.



Deputies from the delegation of Shaanxi province hold a meeting during the third session of the 14th National People's Congress in Beijing on Thursday. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

He suggested creating a joint training and cooperation mechanism between universities, vocational colleges and aerospace enterprises to develop talent programs, including curriculum design and experimental base construction.

Xu also proposed establishing a multi-dimensional skills training system to enhance the capabilities of skilled workers in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, intelligent manufacturing and digital twins.



TWO SESSIONS

Ding Kuiling

Reform needed to boost research applications

Generally speaking, a strong supply capacity is an important prerequisite for economic development. Likewise, the stronger the nation's capacity for innovation, the more solid its foundation for realizing Chinese modernization and the greater its momentum for progress. For universities, the two key drivers of innovation are the successful application of scientific and technological achievements in industry, and the cultivation of top-tier talent.

However, challenges remain, including the low commercialization rate of research results into industrial and commercial applications, as well as an insufficient pipeline of high-caliber talent. In order to promote the transformation of scientific and technological advancements into real-world industry applications — and to develop top talent into a new driving force for productivity — it is essential to implement the “three musts and two changes”.

The “three musts” primarily focus on the commercialization of technological achievements. In general, scientific and technological research in universities tend to have a relatively low level of maturity (only about 7 percent reach the engineering stage), and the path to industrialization is often lengthy. Therefore, establishing a comprehensive, end-to-end public transformation platform is necessary.

This platform should cover key stages such as proof-of-concept validation, pilot-scale testing and investment transfer. This involves creating a centralized institution to oversee the entire transformation process, appointing dedicated personnel for each stage, as well as ensuring that there are sufficient resources allocated throughout.

State-owned enterprises are often reluctant to invest in university-led scientific research due to the low commercialization rate of outcomes — currently only about 30 percent. To address this challenge, it is crucial to foster greater risk tolerance, which can encourage these enterprises to prioritize building an innovation-oriented ecosystem and promoting industrial advancement rather than focusing purely on asset preservation and financial returns. They should be incentivized to allocate funds toward early-stage, small-scale investments and cutting-edge technologies.

Improving the commercialization rate of scientific and technological achievements requires starting at the source. The value of conversion contracts serve as a key metric for assessing the quality of research outcomes. Although China has been making progress in this area, a significant gap remains between Chinese universities and leading global institutions.

High-value and interdisciplinary

research, though challenging, is highly sought after by industries and investors, and can often lead to higher commercialization rates. However, such research is inherently risky and deters participation. Without proper support and guidance, few researchers can sustain long-term engagement in these fields. Therefore, the integration of high-value and interdisciplinary research into the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) is crucial.

Additionally, both central and local governments, along with universities, should strengthen support for scientific and technological innovation by launching more targeted funding projects to boost the commercialization rate of research achievements.

Of the “two changes”, one focuses on the cultivation of top talent. This requires a shift from the traditional training model toward a more “dynamic” and “competitive” approach. To develop world-class talent, China must nurture individuals who can transform their creative potential into concrete and groundbreaking innovations.

This requires reshaping the educational framework through the innovation chain and developing a “dynamic” training plan that allows students to grow through “competitive” practices. Specifically, students should be given autonomy to tailor

their learning paths dynamically based on their innovation needs, which includes making use of micro-classes and modular short courses. Universities should offer more courses centered on innovation, organize more entrepreneurship competitions, replace standard answers with creative solutions, and assess students' performances based on their innovative contributions.

The second “change” involves reforming the AI-driven teaching model. We must transition from an AI-only approach to an AI+HI (Human Intelligence) model. While AI has significantly increased teaching efficiency and course effectiveness, the indispensable role of teachers in education must not be overlooked. AI is both a revolutionary tool and a catalyst for transformation, but the core of this revolution still remains rooted in human involvement.

Therefore, it is crucial to reinforce the role of teachers by encouraging them to continuously update their AI knowledge and fully embrace their initiative and creativity.

The author is president of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Ip Sio Kai

Macao also a financial hub in GBA

Macao is not only a good example of the success of “one country, two systems” but also a key city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, an important hub of the Belt and Road Initiative and a gateway to cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries. The Macao Special Administrative Region's government upholds the “one country, two systems” policy, building “one center, one platform and one base” to help the region fully integrate into the Greater Bay Area and the national development policy.

Drawing on President Xi Jinping's speech during his inspection tour to Macao, in which he outlined “four hopes” and “three expectations”, and the SAR government's vision, the SAR can strengthen its role in financial connectivity and innovation in the Greater Bay Area. By leveraging its advantage of being “backed by the motherland and connected to the world”, Macao can play a leading role in promoting high-level financial opening-up, helping the country realize its broader development goals.

First, cross-border financial cooperation between Macao and Hengqin, a 106-square-kilometer island near the SAR poised to become a free trade zone, is entering a key breakthrough phase. So Macao should leverage its unique position as a facilitator of both domestic and international cooperation, and connect national policies on institutional opening-up with the standards and rules of the Greater Bay Area.

With careful planning, Macao can continue to develop the “Macao plus Hengqin” model to enrich “one country, two systems” and strengthen ties between international markets and the Chinese mainland. And by adopting a “dual-line management” approach, Macao can streamline cross-border financial management, enhance market access, and create efficient mechanisms for cross-border investments and financing in high-tech industries and healthcare, paving the way for high-quality development in the second phase of the development of the cooperative zone.

Second, as a major international financial hub, the Hong Kong SAR has long been a key player in cross-border financing, offshore renminbi business, and economic exchanges. The development of Macao's bond market can help boost Hong Kong's offshore renminbi business and strengthen its capital market. As such, Hong Kong and Macao should deepen collaboration to integrate their financial resources by focusing on sectors such as offshore renminbi business, green finance, financial technology, and talent exchanges.

By connecting Macao Central Securities Depository and Clearing Limited with Hong Kong's Central Money Markets Unit, the two cities can jointly expand financial services and capital flows, advancing the country's opening-up while meeting the needs of various international markets.

And third, Macao's unique position as a special administrative region enables it to serve as a crucial bridge which improves the Greater Bay Area's financial connectivity with the rest of the world. Macao should continue to leverage its existing mechanisms such as the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries and the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Cooperation and Development Fund to work with the central government to strengthen ties with Portuguese-speaking countries, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership member states, and key Belt and Road countries.

Through effective trade and investment agreements, Macao can attract more investment due to its low-tax system and access to the mainland's vast market. By building a China-Portuguese cross-border digital trade settlement platform, exploring investment mechanisms between Portuguese-speaking countries' sovereign funds and taking other initiatives, Macao can strengthen its role in international economic collaboration.

Besides, the Macao SAR government can enhance the role of the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Cooperation and Development Fund in helping boost the development of Portuguese-speaking countries. By increasing its investment, Macao can become a leading investor in less-developed Portuguese-speaking countries. And by a new model of integration of industry and finance featuring mainland risk assessment plus Macao financial output plus market expansion in Portuguese-speaking countries, Macao can expand its market in Portuguese-speaking countries, improve its international financial profile, and better narrate the story of the Chinese nation's rise.

The author is a member of the 14th National Committee of the CPPCC, a member of the Executive Council of the Macao SAR, and a member of the Legislative Assembly of Macao. The views don't necessarily represent those of China Daily.

Fang Shouen

Concerted efforts necessary to bridge AI talent gap

Artificial intelligence is not only driving economic transformation but also reshaping global competition. Recognizing its significance, major economies have adopted national strategies to gain a competitive edge in AI development.

According to the World Economic Forum, trends in AI and information processing technology are expected to create 11 million jobs, while simultaneously displacing 9 million others between 2025 and 2030. And McKinsey & Company estimates that China could face a shortfall of up to 4 million AI professionals by 2030. Bridging this gap with a robust pipeline of top-tier AI talents is critical to the success of national AI strategy.

Yet the current AI education system faces several bottlenecks that are hindering the development of a skilled workforce. First, AI curriculums and teaching resources lag behind technological and industrial advancements. AI is characterized by interdisciplinary depth, rapid innovation cycles and close integration with industry. But the traditional university structure, with its rigid departmental boundaries, often fails to foster interdisciplinary collaboration or meet the evolving needs of industries.

Second, faculty members often lack hands-on engineering experience. While the number of AI PhD advisers in China has grown by 40 percent in the past five years, less than 25 percent have industry backgrounds, according to Tsinghua University's 2023 China AI Development Report. Worse, a Ministry of Industry and Information Technology report says that nearly 70 percent of companies believe AI graduates lack practical skills for real-world applications.

And third, industry-academia collaboration in China remains insufficient. In the



United States, universities leverage partnerships with industries to integrate cutting-edge technologies and real-world applications into AI education. But China's AI talent development ecosystem is yet to achieve such a synergy. Most university-industry partnerships in China are confined to general research areas.

To address these challenges, the following measures should be taken. To begin with, a tiered and specialized AI talent training system should be developed, and AI talent development categorized into foundational research, technological inno-

vation and applied AI fields.

While a national AI education advisory committee should be established to guide curriculum design and update teaching content regularly, cross-disciplinary coursework needs to be strengthened and fast-track AI education pathways, expanded to accelerate talent output.

There is also a need to build a dual-track faculty training model, with the education department entrusting some universities and leading enterprises to build industry-academia innovation laboratories in specific sub-fields of AI, and providing policy

and financial support for it. Using these integrated innovation laboratories, a flexible talent system should be established to recruit or invite personnel from enterprises to teach in universities.

Universities should also establish a mechanism for young teachers to undergo six to twelve months of paid training at leading AI companies before starting to teach, and invite frontline engineers from enterprises to participate in practical teaching activities to provide students with more practical and forward-looking guidance.

And last, it is important to enhance industry-academia collaboration, by allowing industry-academia innovation laboratories to promote research cooperation among universities, research institutions and enterprises, and explore paid mechanisms to integrate advanced manufacturing equipment and core technological resources from enterprises into the talent development process.

It is also recommended to open green approval channels for school-enterprise cooperation projects, reduce the patent approval period to six months, and transform research results into industrial or commercial use.

With AI reshaping industries and global competitiveness, the ability to cultivate high-level talents will be a defining factor in national success. So governments, universities and enterprises must collaborate to reform AI education, and ensure the workforce of the future is capable of driving innovation.

The author is secretary of the Party Committee of Tongji University and a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

Gao Wei

Coordinated laws vital to combating cross-border crimes

Cross-border telecom scams and other criminal cases in Myawaddy, a border town in Myanmar close to Thailand, which is known for scam networks, have highlighted the complexity of cross-border crimes, underscoring the importance of coordinating China's rule of law with foreign-related legal frameworks to handle foreign-related matters.

Although legal systems built on the traditional concept of sovereignty can extend their reach through the extraterritorial application of domestic laws, their actual effectiveness in other sovereign states depends on consultation and cooperation mechanisms between countries.

The proliferation of cross-border crimes in many regions is largely due to the exploitation of the differences in the laws and legal concepts of sovereign states by cross-border gangs.

Differences in laws and legal concepts refer to the collective social understanding of the harm caused by specific behaviors and governance goals. For instance, different countries interpret human trafficking differently, and different countries have different laws on fraud, human trafficking and drug smuggling, and some jurisdictions may not criminalize fraud cases involving foreign victims.

The effectiveness of law enforcement

depends on a country's political system, power structure, and the quality, capability and practice of law enforcement, as well as judicial personnel. In northern Myanmar and its border areas with Thailand, the presence of multiple political forces has resulted in uneven law enforcement mechanisms, leading to a lack of unity and stability and undermining efforts to combat cross-border crimes in such regions.

The persistence of cross-border crimes such as telecom scams has significant implications for regional stability and China's border security. Telecom scams not only violate the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens but also facilitate related crimes such as money laundering, drug trafficking and human trafficking.

The illegal cross-border movement of people involved in telecom frauds poses a serious challenge to China's border management and may cut across cross-border ethnic and religious issues, potentially affecting China's political and ideological security. Therefore, establishing a long-term mechanism to address cross-border crimes is essential.

First, China and neighboring countries affected by cross-border crimes should consider creating a coordinated framework for regional legal cooperation. For example, a multilateral treaty addressing

specific types of cross-border crimes could be signed under the Lancang-Mekong cooperation framework, with the treaty making clear the obligations and action plans for participating countries, including political measures and legal reforms, to establish a universal standard for evaluating and combating cross-border crimes.

Besides, China could sign bilateral agreements with countries where cross-border crimes are prevalent, in order to address issues such as the punishment or extradition of Chinese suspects, and the protection of Chinese victims.

Second, China's Criminal Law provides for various jurisdictional models, including territorial, personal and protective jurisdiction, laying the legislative foundation for the extraterritorial application of its laws. However, specific mechanisms to ensure the extraterritorial enforcement of these laws need to be strengthened.

China should also seek to align its legal framework with those of other countries in terms of jurisdiction. By interpreting the connection between different legal systems, China should expand the normative basis for the extraterritorial application of its laws without requiring extensive legal amendments. It could also enhance its influence and judicial credibility in the region through high-level exchanges, stra-

tegic cooperation agreements and capacity-building initiatives.

And third, when perpetrators of cross-border crimes abroad are repatriated to China, the country's Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure Law should serve as the basis for prosecuting them for the crimes they committed overseas. But since much of the evidence in such cases is collected abroad, and some victims may not be Chinese nationals, China needs to take measures to improve its evidence rules by establishing separate guidelines for the collection, review and authentication of foreign evidence.

These guidelines should make clear the admissibility and evidentiary standards for foreign evidence. This would enable China's criminal justice system to more effectively prosecute those committing cross-border crimes. By implementing these measures, China and its regional partners can strengthen their collective capability to combat cross-border crimes, protect the rights of victims, and enhance regional security and stability.

The author is a professor at the School of Law, Yunnan University, and a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress. The views don't necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

CHINA



Conservation dividends soaring at Poyang Lake

Improved ecology attracts flocks of migratory birds, photographers, nature lovers



Left: Migratory birds frolic at Poyang Lake in Jiangxi province on Jan 22, 2024. PHOTOS BY HUANG BIN / FOR CHINA DAILY
Right: Patrol officers monitor migratory birds at the lake. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUINAN in Nanchang
zhaoruinan@chnadaily.com.cn

When Lu Xubo reflects on his 20 years of photographing migratory birds around China's largest freshwater lake, he says the strongest impression he has is that birds now exist more harmoniously with humans.

"People used to say that harmonious coexistence between humans and animals only existed in other countries, but we have had it here for a long time. You can see birds everywhere around Poyang Lake," he said.

Lu, a native of Yichun, Jiangxi province, is an avid bird photographer. He began taking images of migratory birds at Poyang Lake in the province's north in 2004, and discovered it was a rewarding and interesting pursuit.

"Photographing birds is quite different from photographing people. Birds are agile and active, making it challenging to capture a striking photo, as these moments are often fleeting and hard to reproduce," Lu said.

"Jiangxi has a natural geographical advantage. In winter, Poyang Lake attracts tens of thousands of migratory birds. Whenever this occurs, I join other bird enthusiasts at the lake to photograph these beautiful creatures."

Poyang Lake is a globally important wetland and serves as one of the most significant wintering grounds for migratory birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Over 95 percent of the world's white cranes, more than 80 percent of Oriental white storks, and over 70 percent of white-naped cranes spend the winter in the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.

At the end of November, Poyang Lake starts the peak season for migratory birds, which lasts until March.

Patience the key

Photographing birds often requires several days or even a week of effort, according to Lu. One of his most memorable experiences was four years ago, when he and a group of friends traveled to Duchang county in Jiujiang city to take pictures of migratory birds.

To capture the best photos, they

would wake up at 2 am, take a boat to a small island and hide behind a bamboo shelter, remaining there all day.

"It's worth it. We truly love these migratory birds; they feel like the spirits of nature. When I first began photographing birds, not many people were coming, but now more and more people are joining our team," Lu said.

Huang Bin, 56, is a photographer who recently started focusing on migratory birds. He serves as chairman of the Yichun Photography Association and has over 30 years of photography experience, mainly of people.

Over the past two years, he has driven several hundred kilometers from Yichun to the shores of Poyang Lake, where he sets up his telephoto lens to capture images of migratory birds. "In recent years, Poyang Lake has seen an increase in visitors. Many come for bird-watching, bird photography, or as part of study groups. Schools and organizations take children to observe birds in their natural habitats," he said.

The first time he went bird-watching was with his family a few years ago, when he accompanied his children on an educational field trip. "I fell in love with the birds. Now I usually go out to photograph and watch birds once or twice a month in winter. It's a very enjoyable thing," he said.

Many migratory birds are classified as first-level national protected animals. "Although we may not see them often, we can enjoy rare wildlife



in our hometown and take beautiful photos, which brings us great happiness," Huang said.

Shi Shuiping, director of the Duchang County Migratory Bird Nature Reserve Management Office, said that since fishing was banned in Poyang Lake, the number of migratory birds has been on the rise.

In 2002, a fishing ban was put in place each spring. A year-round fishing ban was later introduced in 2021 by the province's Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs for a 10-year period, to protect aquatic resources and biodiversity.

The bans have coincided with a rise in the number of tourists visiting the area to observe and photograph the birds.

"Every year, many ecological and photography enthusiasts travel from far and wide to Poyang Lake. With the nature protection efforts in place, the environment is continuously improving," Shi said.

Every two years, Jiangxi hosts what is billed as the International

Birdwatching Season, which attracts bird-watching enthusiasts from around the world.

Visitors can explore various bird-watching spots in Nanchang, Jiujiang, Shangrao, and other areas to enjoy the stunning scenery of the Poyang Lake wetlands, Shi said.

"We have established three protection stations in Duchang county. Each station has four to five patrol personnel responsible for daily patrols and ensuring the security of the lake area," the official said.

Arrival of the species

The Jiangxi Poyang Lake Nature Reserve has grown significantly over the years, going from having no protection stations to more than a dozen now that cover almost the entire area of Poyang Lake.

After more than 20 years of conservation efforts, the ecological condition of Poyang Lake has improved, leading to yearly increases in the number of migratory birds that winter there.

The number of bird species in the reserve has risen from an initial 310 to 381.

Notably, the population of white-naped cranes has seen remarkable growth, increasing from over 100 in the 1980s to between 2,900 and 3,000 in the 1990s.

Currently, the population is stable at around 3,600 to 4,000, which accounts for 98 percent of the world's total population of the crane species.

Wucheng township is famous for the sight of cranes gathering along the lake's shore.

Wang Xiaolong, a patrol officer at the town's protection and management station, said that the migratory birds that winter in the protected area include Oriental white storks, small swans, white egrets, and white-fronted geese, and total more than 160,000.

Since International Birdwatching Season was first held in Wucheng in 2019, "more and more tourists have come to watch birds. Now there are more and more bird-watching facilities, including restaurants and hotels," Wang said.

Wucheng is situated at the confluence of the Ganjiang River, Poyang Lake, and Xiuhe River. It is recognized as one of Jiangxi's "Four Famous Towns" and serves as a crucial bird protection zone of the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.

On Dec 5, 2019, the China Wildlife Conservation Association awarded Wucheng, Yongxiu county, the title of "China's migratory bird town". In the first three quarters of 2023, Wucheng welcomed a total of 754,600 Chinese and international tourists.

Guide jobs boosted

The bird-watching boom at Poyang Lake has also led to the emergence of a specialized job — bird-watching guides.

One such professional is Yu Penghai.

During the bird-watching season, he guides tourists from around the world at Poyang Lake, where they can observe and photograph various bird species.

He shares his expertise and knowledge, points out the best locations for photography, and provides insights about different bird species.

"Now is the peak season for migratory birds, and many bird-watching tourists come to find us. Typically, we explore the lake region a few days in advance to identify the best bird-watching spots before we provide guide services to visitors," he said.

Yu, who is from Wuyuan county, Jiangxi, has worked as a bird-watching guide for 16 years.

"I am familiar with over 500 bird species, which represent nearly half of all bird species in China. Everyone affectionately calls me 'bird brother'," he said.

"The ecology here is improving, which is evident from the rising number of birds. In the past, one could only observe them from a distance of several hundred meters, but now it's much easier to get closer. People can approach migratory birds to within about 100 meters."

Shen Zhenyu is one of Yu's clients. In late November, he traveled from Chengdu, Sichuan province, to Yugan, a county neighboring Poyang Lake, to photograph birds.

"I successfully captured one of the main target birds, the crane. Without an experienced bird guide, it would indeed be difficult to find them in an area as vast as Poyang Lake," Shen said.

Yu said that not only are Chinese visiting the lake, but there has also been an increase in foreign tourists coming to observe migratory birds.

"This year, we have welcomed over a dozen groups of foreign tourists for bird-watching. As a result, bird-watching and bird photography have emerged as new forms of tourism."

Bird enthusiasts have significantly contributed to the improved ecological environment of Poyang Lake.

Lu, who previously served as a political adviser in Wanzai county in Jiangxi, proposed a bird protection plan in 2019.

He has also published albums and organized photography exhibitions to combat illegal hunting.

"Migratory birds are the spirits of nature. I hope that I can not only use my camera to capture their images but also inspire those around me to join in protecting them," said Lu.



Photographers take pictures of migratory birds in December at Poyang Lake. ZHOU GUKAI / FOR CHINA DAILY

By ZHAO RUINAN in Nanchang

Nov 23 was the happiest day of last winter for Wang Xiaolong. On that day, he spotted a flock of nearly 400 white cranes in his patrol area near Poyang Lake.

"I was thrilled. It was the largest number of migratory birds I had seen in months," Wang said.

Poyang Lake, located in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River, is China's largest freshwater lake. It serves as a crucial wintering ground for hundreds of thousands of migratory birds, including over 95 percent of the world's white cranes, which flock to the lake from October to March.

Wucheng town, in Yongxiu county, Jiangxi province, is on the eastern

side of Poyang Lake and has been given the title "China's migratory bird town" by the China Wildlife Conservation Association. Over the years it has welcomed a large number of rare migratory birds, especially white cranes, and attracts many bird-watchers every winter.

Wang has been a patrol officer at the Wucheng protection and administration station of the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve Administration Bureau for 38 years. Each morning, around 5 am, he rises early, has a simple breakfast, and sets off from the protection station.



Wang Xiaolong observes the injury of an Oriental white stork he rescued in Yongxiu, Jiangxi, on Feb 18 last year. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Patrol officer thrilled to protect 'nature's spirits'

Dressed in camouflage clothing and boots, he grabs his binoculars and camera and patrols areas such as Zhonghu Pool, Meixi Creek, and nearby lakes. On busy days, he covers an area of up to 40 kilometers.

"The patrol route is quite long, and I often can't make it back to the canteen for lunch, so I bring simple food like sweet potatoes and steamed buns," he said. He added that the most challenging aspects of his job are the loneliness and navigating the muddy roads after heavy rain.

"Protecting the birds of Poyang Lake is my duty. This work has

become a significant part of my life and holds the utmost importance to me. By protecting nature's spirits, I have found my life's purpose."

Wang fondly recalls rescuing a juvenile white crane 20 years ago on a winter's day. He spotted an injured young crane during his patrol and brought it back to the protection station, where he fed it small fish and shrimp and took it to the bird hospital for treatment.

"I remember when we went to the hospital; I walked in front, and the young crane followed me. We entered the hospital together. After

about a month, its injury healed, and I decided to release it back into the wild," he said.

"That day left a deep impression on me. The little white crane circled above my head for a long time before flying away. It felt like it recognized me and was reluctant to leave."

Over the decades, Wang has rescued and released over 300 birds and participated in more than 180 projects involving the protection of migratory birds. He has received numerous honors, including being named Jiangxi's most beautiful environmentalist.

"I've already planned that after I retire next year, I will stay here as a volunteer to continue protecting migratory birds," said the 59-year-old.

WORLD

Australia-China trade ties hold vast potential

By ALEXIS HOOI and XIN XIN in Sydney

From agriculture to clean energy, Australia-China investment and business ties offer vast potential for collaboration across both traditional and emerging sectors, says a leading Australian scholar.

The relationship between Australia and China is "quite particular", underpinned by long-standing cooperation in key industries, most notably Australian iron ore exports, as well as other specialized markets such as agriculture, education and tourism, said Hans Hendrichske, a professor at the University of Sydney Business School.

The main attractions in Australia presenting significant opportunities for Chinese investment can now be seen at different levels. Apart from the traditionally strong area of iron ore, there is fresh focus on new minerals such as lithium — essential for the green energy transition and battery supply chains, Hendrichske said.

As the head of the school's Australia-China Business Network and chair of the business and economics cluster at the university's China Studies Centre, Hendrichske has been at the forefront of research on bilateral trade and investment.

He also leads a strategic research project that publishes annual reports on Chinese outbound direct investment in Australia and provides insights into evolving business relations between the two countries.

"The bilateral relationship is very strong in terms of trade volume," he said. But regarding deeper economic interactions, such as mutual investment, the level of engagement is much weaker than one would expect given the scale of trade, he added.

China is Australia's largest two-way trading partner, accounting for 26 percent of its global goods and services trade in 2023-24, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian government.

"China is the fifth-largest foreign direct investor in Australia, accounting for 4 percent of total foreign direct investment," the department said on its website. "In recent years, Chinese investment has broadened from mainly mining to other sectors including infrastructure and healthcare."

Australian foreign direct investment in China totaled \$1.4 billion in 2023, it said.

Global factors

Hendrichske emphasized that Australia-China relations are "very much influenced by international events and the geopolitical situation", extending into economic cooperation and development.

Amid these challenges, agriculture remains a sector with much potential, he said.

"We know there is demand and interest in the Chinese market, but there is very little uptake of opportunities in the Australian market. We've observed that over the years now," he said.

"We are surprised that every year, when we do our statistics, in spite of all the interest that we've

noticed there, the growth and the uptake is rather limited. That could be linked to the general geopolitical atmosphere, the confidence that people have in cooperation."

The energy sector is another field where Australia could attract greater investment through deeper cooperation, Hendrichske added.

Investment that once flowed to Southeast Asia, creating competitive pressure, he said. "These are areas where Australia could again work with China if we didn't have the broader geopolitical issues."

Europe, for example, attracts Chinese investment linked to technology and innovation based on a strong manufacturing sector, he said.

"But we don't really see it in Australia, there is very little investment coming in for manufacturing. There is potential, but it would require that political and geopolitical differences are somehow settled."

Business confidence

In terms of boosting business confidence amid global economic uncertainty, Hendrichske highlighted China's recently released Government Work Report.



With the economic tools that were announced, again, the main thrust of the message is that China can continue with business as usual ... the point being that the government policy is meant to be stable."

Hans Hendrichske, a professor at the University of Sydney Business School

In a highly unpredictable and complicated environment, China's announcement of policies aimed at increasing incentives for foreign investment sends a clear message that business remains on track, he said.

The country's GDP growth target of around 5 percent for the year reflects the sign of "giving confidence to both the domestic and international audience", Hendrichske said.

By setting this target, China signals its commitment to stability and reassures investors that it does not anticipate any disruptions — despite the global landscape being marked by uncertainty and unpredictability, he said.

"With the economic tools that were announced, again, the main thrust of the message is that China can continue with business as usual ... the point being that the government policy is meant to be stable," he said.

Contact the writers at alexishooi@chinadaily.com.cn

CHINA DAILY USA

NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com
readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:

x.com/chinadaily
facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

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

WASHINGTON

National Press Bldg, Suite 1108
529 14th Street NW

Washington, DC 20045

Tel: 202-662-7249

Fax: 202-662-7247

SAN FRANCISCO

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel: 415-348-8288

Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE

800 Fifth Ave, Suite 4100

Seattle, WA 98104

Tel: 206-922-2868

HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 100

Houston, TX 77077

Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA | TORONTO

471 Yonge Street, 10th Floor

Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8

Tel: 416-481-5706

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

Vol. 38 - No.1533

Ramadan relief



Afghans receive food aid from a charity during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan in Kandahar on Sunday, as part of efforts to support struggling families during the fasting season. SANULLAH SEIAM / AFP

Israel suspends supply of electricity to Gaza

Hamas describes act as 'unacceptable blackmail' ahead of new cease-fire talks

JERUSALEM — Israel ordered an immediate halt to Gaza's electricity supply on Sunday in an effort to pressure Hamas into releasing hostages, even as it prepared for fresh talks on the future of its truce with the Palestinian group.

The decision came a week after it blocked all aid supplies to the enclave, a move reminiscent of the initial days of the conflict when Israel announced a "siege" on Gaza.

Hamas described the electricity cut as "blackmail", a term it had also used after Israel blocked the entry of aid.

The truce's initial phase ended on March 1 and both sides have refrained from returning to all-out war, despite sporadic violence, including an airstrike on Sunday that Israel said targeted militants.

Hamas has repeatedly called for an immediate start to negotiations on the cease-fire's second phase, aiming to end the conflict permanently.

Israel says it prefers extending phase one until mid-April, and halted aid to Gaza over the impasse.

"I have just signed the order to stop supplying electricity immediately to the Gaza Strip," Energy Minister Eli Cohen said in a video statement.

"We will use all the tools at our disposal to bring back the hostages and ensure that Hamas is no longer

in Gaza the day after" the conflict, he said.

Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, described Israel's move as "a desperate attempt to pressure our people and their resistance through cheap and unacceptable blackmail tactics".

The Palestinian Authority said on Monday that Israel's decision was "an escalation in the genocide" in the war-ravaged territory.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it "strongly condemns the Israeli Ministry of Energy's decision to cut electricity to the Gaza Strip, considering it an escalation in the genocide, displacement and humanitarian disaster in Gaza".

Dire conditions

Just days after the conflict erupted on Oct 7, 2023, Israel cut electricity to Gaza, only restoring it in mid-2024.

The sole power line between Israel and Gaza supplies the main desalination plant, and Gazans now mainly rely on solar panels and fuel-powered generators to produce electricity.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza live in tents, with night-time temperatures now forecast around 12 C.

Meanwhile, Hamas representatives met Egyptian mediators over

the weekend, emphasizing the urgent need to resume aid deliveries "without restrictions or conditions", a Hamas statement said.

"We call on mediators in Egypt and Qatar, as well as the guarantors in the US administration, to ensure that the (Israeli) occupation complies with the agreement ... and proceeds with the second phase according to the agreed-upon terms," spokesman Hazem Qassem told AFP.

On Monday, Hamas accused Israel of renegeing on the cease-fire deal.

"The (Israeli) occupation continues to renege on the agreement and refuses to commence the second phase, exposing its intentions of evasion and stalling," Hamas said in a statement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it would send delegates to Doha on Monday.

Last week, United States President Donald Trump threatened further destruction of Gaza if all remaining hostages were not released, issuing what he called a "last warning" to Hamas leaders.

US envoy Adam Boehler, who held unprecedented direct talks with Hamas officials in recent days, said on Sunday that a deal could be reached "within weeks" to secure all remaining hostages.

Boehler told CNN there could be "a deal where they can get all of the prisoners out, not just the Americans".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Strike hits flights at German airports

By JONATHAN POWELL in London
jonathan@mail.chinadailyuk.com

More than half a million travelers faced severe disruptions as workers at 13 major German airports, including the key Frankfurt and Munich hubs, launched a strategic 24-hour strike on Monday.

The nationwide walkout, organized by the Verdi trade union, brought Germany's aviation network to a virtual standstill, forcing the cancellation of thousands of flights and highlighting the growing tensions between labor groups and airport operators.

The influence was particularly severe at Frankfurt Airport, Germany's busiest aviation hub, where an unprecedented 94 percent of flights were grounded, with 1,054 out of 1,116 scheduled operations canceled and ripple effects threatening to extend into Tuesday's operations, reported German news agency dpa, citing airport traffic management.

Berlin Airport canceled all its regular flights, while major centers such as Hamburg and Munich were forced to drastically reduce or suspend their services entirely, reported The Associated Press.

The industrial action stems from the Verdi union's push for an 8 percent wage increase, or a minimum 350-euro (\$380) monthly raise, a demand that employers have firmly rejected as financially untenable



Flights are canceled because of a strike at the Berlin Brandenburg Airport in Schoenefeld, Germany, on Monday. RALF HIRSCHBERGER / AFP

amid continuing negotiations, reported Reuters.

The walkout, a so-called warning strike tactic common in German labor disputes, involves parallel negotiations for both airport security personnel and public sector workers, with talks scheduled to resume on separate dates this month. Negotiations for federal workers resume on Friday, while airport security staff will return to the bargaining table on March 26.

The airport disruption is part of a broader wave of public sector strikes taking place across Germany this week led by the Verdi union, affecting 2.5 million workers from various services.

The union's package of demands

extends beyond pay, encompassing better workplace safety standards, increased vacation allowances, additional shift work benefits, and worker autonomy in selecting doctors for mandatory health screenings.

The association of Germany's airport operators estimated Monday's strike effect to be substantial, stating more than half of Germany's typical 6,000 daily flights were facing cancellation, with some 3,400 flights set to be grounded, leaving more than 510,000 passengers stranded.

While operators protested the sudden action, a Verdi spokesman told Deutsche Welle news network: "The walkout was necessary so that the impact of the strike could really be felt."

Canton Fair set to boost cooperation with Kenya

By EDITH MUTETHYA in Nairobi, Kenya
edithmutethya@chinadaily.com.cn

Kenya's policymakers, industry leaders and entrepreneurs are looking forward to deepening trade ties with China as well as attracting investments and technology during the upcoming 137th edition of the China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair.

Running from April 15 to May 5, the fair will provide global buyers with a one-stop trading platform. It spans 1.55 million square meters.

Ronald Meru, vice-chairman of the Nairobi chapter of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the country's engagement with the Canton Fair has offered tangible business opportunities for local companies.

Speaking at a conference last week in Nairobi, Meru said the opportunities have enabled companies to diversify partnerships, expand market, strengthen supply chains, and foster long-term collaborations.

The Canton Fair presents a gateway to the vast Chinese market and beyond, provides access to diverse products, and enables Kenyan importers to source quality products at competitive prices, he said.

It also offers Kenyan exporters a global platform to showcase products, particularly where Kenya holds a competitive advantage, such as agriculture, handicrafts and textiles, he added.

"Access to the innovative technologies exhibited at the fair can catalyze modernization of manufacturing and agriculture, enhancing productivity and competitiveness," Meru said.

"Kenya must seize the platform to expand our trade footprints, strengthen industrial capabilities and foster mutual economic growth with China."

Pius Rotich, general manager of investment promotion and business development at the Kenya Investment Authority, said the country has been the biggest participant from Africa at the Canton Fair.

Mutual benefits

Floice Mukabana, chief executive of Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency, said the Chinese market offers significant opportunities for Kenya's agricultural products, and in return, Kenya provides China with access to high-quality goods and serves as a strategic gateway to East Africa because of its vibrant economy.

"As we move forward, we are committed to diversifying our export basket to include value-added products tailored to Chinese consumer preferences," Mukabana said.

Zhou Zhencheng, minister counselor at the economic and commercial office of China's embassy in Kenya, said 1,400 Kenyan businesses took part in last year's Canton Fair.

"Through platforms like the Canton Fair, we aim to support Kenyan businesses in expanding their access to high-quality goods, technologies and expertise, all of which contribute to Kenya's economic development and industrialization goals," Zhou said.

Jane Marete, director of agribusiness company Grains World in Nairobi, and a frequent Canton Fair attendee, said each visit brings fresh insights and innovations.

"You may go to China without knowing what you are coming back to do, but by the time you return, you have a clear mind of how your business will look like."

Vincent Muriba, general manager of China Information and Culture Communication in Nairobi, emphasized the fair's role in helping Kenyan traders forge strategic partnerships and expand their commercial horizons.

Over the past 18 years, his organization has facilitated the participation of 5,000 Kenyan entrepreneurs.

WORLD

US stock market craters amid talk about a recession

By HENG WEILI in New York
hengweili@chinadailyusa.com

The US stock market on Monday showed how it felt about recession talk over the weekend — by heavily selling off.

Monday was the worst day yet in which the S&P 500 has swung 1 percent up or down — seven times in eight days in reaction to US President Donald Trump's on- and off-again tariffs.

Asked whether he was expecting a recession in 2025, Trump told Fox News in a Sunday broadcast: "I hate to predict things like that."

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said the economy may go through a "detox" phase as the administration looks to slash government spending.

The Nasdaq Composite fell by 728 points, or 4 percent, on Monday, while the S&P 500 fell 156 points, or 2.7 percent, to send it close to 9 percent below its all-time high, which was set last month. The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined by 890 points, or 2.1 percent, after paring an intraday loss of more than 1,100 points.

Bitcoin also hasn't provided a refuge for investors. The cryptocurrency's value as of Monday had dropped below \$80,000, from more than \$106,000 in December.

"This is the first time we've had an administration pretty much say with a straight face ... the objectives are going to cause pain," said Shelby McFaddin, investment analyst at Motley Fool Asset Management, to The Wall Street Journal.

"There are always multiple forces at work in the market, but right now, almost all of them are taking a back seat to tariffs," said Chris Larkin, managing director at E-Trade from Morgan Stanley. David Bahnsen, the chief investment officer at the Bahnsen Group, also sees tariffs as the cause of the market's roiling — but mainly because investors can't figure out what the end game is.

"The market volatility is much less about the bad news of tariffs and much more about the uncertainty of tariffs, especially uncertainty as to what the policy is, where it is headed, how long it will last and what the end result will be," he told The New York Times.

There are more tariffs in the pipeline. Starting Wednesday, the Trump administration plans a 25 percent tariff on all US steel and aluminum imports. There is also the prospect of reciprocal tariffs on all US imports, to mirror other countries' tariffs,

effective April 2.

"The desire to believe in American exceptionalism is very strong," said Matt Rowe, head of portfolio management at Nomura Capital Management, to the Journal. "The reality is that if we're doing everything on our own, everything is going to be a lot more expensive."

Trump met on Monday with tech industry CEOs, but the event was closed to the news media. He didn't comment about the selloff while the market was open.

Michael Rosen, chief investment officer of Angeles Investment Advisors, told Bloomberg: "It took a few weeks for Trump to break the international economic regime, presumably with a plan to fix and replace it with something 'better.' Absent a clear idea of what 'better' is, investors are just left with the detritus of the broken global economic framework. Unless and until we see what replaces it, investors will be cautious, at best."

At Goldman Sachs, analyst David Mericle cut his estimate for US economic growth to 1.7 percent from 2.2 percent for the end of 2025 over the previous year, largely because tariffs look like they'll be higher than he was previously forecasting.

But Mericle said he sees only a 1-in-5 chance of a recession over the next year, raising it only slightly because "the White House has the option to pull back policy changes" if risks to the economy "begin to look more serious."

On social media, some speculated that the selloff was part of a plan.

"The US government has to refinance \$7 trillion of debt in the next six months.

There is no way TRUMP wants to refinance it at current 10-year yields so this is why he wants (the) stock market to crash (to) pump the bond prices," wrote Ash Crypto to 1.7 million followers on X. "As bond prices will go up, yields will come down and the US government will be able to refinance their debt at cheap rate. Not only that, lower bond yields will also push the Fed to do rate cuts, which is bullish for risk-on assets (such as stocks and real estate)."

Charles Gasparino, a Fox Business senior correspondent, wrote on X: "One thing to keep in mind with the markets correcting: there were only a handful of stocks that pushed the indices higher and to their records. They were bound for a correction and tariffs are the trigger because there is always a triggering event that changes the direction of the herd."

Agencies contributed to this story.

Calling for peace



Protesters gather during a news conference demanding the scrapping of the Freedom Shield military exercise between the US and South Korea, near the Defense Ministry in Seoul, on Monday. The placards read "Stop war exercise". JEON HEON-KYUN / EPA-EFE

Von der Leyen marks 100 days of 2nd term

EU chief sees Washington as 'an ally' despite differences over Kyiv, tariffs

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen touted her first 100 days of second term by claiming the US is still an ally despite the actions of President Donald Trump's administration.

Von der Leyen started her speech with a somber reminder of the harsh reality of the world.

"The world around us is changing at lightning speed. Geopolitical shifts are shaking alliances. Decades-old certainties are crumbling," she told a news conference on Sunday.

She did not specifically mention any of the Trump administration's behavior that was regarded as total betrayal in Europe.

When asked by reporters why she still called the US an "ally," she said, "My position is clear: The United States is an ally in the trans-Atlantic alliance."

"In the face of adversity, the US and Europe have always been stronger together," she said.

"Yes, there are differences. We might have different views on some topics, but if you look at the common interests that we have, they always outweigh our differences. So, I think it's important that we work together and find common avenues."

Von der Leyen said "no" when asked if the European Union seeks to "de-risk" from the US, a message contradicting what Friedrich Merz, the likely next German chancellor, has said about becoming "independent" from the US, namely in security and defense.

"That's fine to say, but does Trump America see Europe as an ally? There aren't really any signs of that," Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister and co-chair of the European Council on Foreign Relations, commented on X on von der Leyen's remarks.

'New reality'

"The EU's staunchly Atlanticist president is not adjusting to the new reality," said Dave Keating, a Brussels-based journalist and commentator, referring to von der Leyen's reputation as extremely pro-US.

Von der Leyen has not secured a face-to-face meeting with Trump since the US president took office on Jan 20.

"I think we will have a personal meeting when the time is right and this is the state of play at the moment," she told reporters when asked about a possible meeting.

Europeans overwhelmingly preferred Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris during the 2024 US presidential

campaign, according to various polls. Trump's return in the last seven weeks has sent shock waves across the EU when he threatened the bloc with punitive tariffs, talked about annexing Greenland, made dramatic policy changes on Ukraine and verbally attacked President Volodymyr Zelensky, who has been regarded as a hero by EU politicians.

On Sunday, von der Leyen praised the "unanimous support" for "ReArm Europe", an 800-billion-euro (\$867 billion) package on defense.

"Europe's economic and innovation potential is an asset for its security. Vice versa, Europe's defense efforts can give a massive boost to a more competitive single market in the mid and long term," she said.

While EU leaders' emergency summit last week agreed to boost defense, they have yet to agree on where the money should come from, given the tough economic situation faced by many member states.

The EU now buys about 80 percent of its defense equipment from non-EU supplies, with a large share coming from US companies.

According to a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on Monday, NATO countries in Europe more than doubled their arms imports in the past five years, more than 60 percent of which were purchases of US weaponry.

US, China businesses look to work together

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
renali@chinadailyusa.com

Business leaders from the United States and China convened in Los Angeles for the China General Chamber of Commerce (CGCC)-USA annual meeting, where the importance of US-China trade relations was stressed.

Participants in the March 7 meeting addressed the challenges posed by tariffs and called for mutually beneficial cooperation between the world's two largest economies.

Mario Cordero, CEO of the Port of Long Beach and one of the keynote speakers, emphasized the importance of US-China trade relations.

"We do have challenges, no doubt. But today, I think the challenges are big challenges," Cordero said, referring to the negative impact of tariffs on the shipping industry.

"I don't want to get too political here or spend too much time on that, but why I am here is to reconfirm how important the trade relationship is," he said. "I want to confirm how important it is for us to collaborate and partner with our ports in China ... because together, that is how we make our respective economies great."

He also outlined the port's green initiatives, including a \$4.5 billion project aimed at generating 25 gigawatts of wind energy by 2045.

Cordero recognized the Chinese government and sister ports in China for their commitment to decarbonization. He also highlighted the significant reduction in harmful emissions at Long Beach port since 2005 and credited the collaboration of stakeholders, including China.

Another keynote speaker, Bob Weis, former president of Walt Disney Imagineering, shared his experience leading the design of Shanghai Disneyland.

"It was essential that we tap into Chinese talent," Weis told China Daily.

In his book, *Dream Chasing: My Four Decades of Success and Failure with Walt Disney Imagineering*, Weis acknowledged the significance of Disney's collaboration with the Chinese market. He emphasized the importance of incorporating Chinese architects, engineers, artists, writers and storytellers to tailor Disney's offerings to the Chinese audience.

"The success of Shanghai Disneyland showed that working together creatively can overcome geographical boundaries," Weis said.

Chinese enterprises also have actively contributed to local communities, particularly in times of crisis. During the Los Angeles wildfires, many Chinese businesses stepped forward, donating time, resources and financial support.

CGCC member Bank of America and associated member East West Bank Foundation contributed \$10,000 and \$250,000, respectively, to the Pasadena Community Foundation's Eaton Fire Relief and Recovery Fund to aid long-term recovery efforts.

Ye Chun, president of CGCC-LA, acknowledged the complexities of the current business environment and reaffirmed the chamber's commitment to supporting its members.

"The past year presented an uneven landscape. Looking ahead, we anticipate an increasingly complicated business environment," Ye said. "With our role as a platform for information sharing, mutual support and effective communication, we are committed to further enhancing the bilateral trade and people-to-people exchange."

Guo Shaochun, the Chinese consul general in Los Angeles, emphasized the fundamental role of economic and trade cooperation.

"The trade between our two countries is an important part of China-US relations," Guo said, noting that it is mutually beneficial, based on market rule and demand, and it is significant for the global economy.

Guo said that bilateral trade has significantly contributed to the US economy by creating 2.6 million jobs, reducing American manufacturing costs by 15-20 percent, and increasing the annual purchasing power of American families by \$850.

He said that more than 7,000 Chinese companies have invested in the US, with CGCC members contributing approximately \$140 billion, while more than 70,000 American enterprises have established a presence in China, with profitable returns.

US to assess Ukraine's peace stance in Saudi Arabia meeting

WASHINGTON — The US side is planning to use Tuesday's meeting with a Ukrainian delegation in Saudi Arabia in part to determine whether Ukraine is willing to make material concessions to Russia to end the conflict, according to two US officials.

The US delegation will also be watching for signs that the Ukrainians are serious about improving ties with the Donald Trump administration after a meeting between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky devolved into an argument last month, said one of the officials who requested anonymity.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was expected to arrive in Jeddah on Monday for the bilateral talks on Tuesday with Ukrainian officials, who will be led by Andriy Yermak, a top Zelensky aide. Rubio will be joined by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff.

"You can't say 'I want peace', and 'I refuse to compromise on anything,'" one of the US officials said of the upcoming talks.

"We want to see if the Ukrainians

are interested not just in peace, but in a realistic peace," said the other official. "If they are only interested in 2014 or 2022 borders, that tells you something."

Trump expressed optimism about the talks. "We're going to make a lot of progress, I believe, this week," he told reporters traveling with him on Air Force One.

Zelensky traveled to Saudi Arabia on Monday to "continue to work for the sake of peace". He said he hopes the talks between his team and US officials will bear results.

Aerial and naval truce

Kyiv will propose an aerial and naval cease-fire with Russia during talks, a Ukrainian official told AFP on Monday.

"We do have a proposal for a cease-fire in the sky and cease-fire at sea because these are the cease-fire options that are easy to install and to monitor and it's possible to start with them," the official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

US officials had met with Russian officials in the Saudi capital of Riyadh in February for separate bilateral discussions which were focused largely on rebuilding a

working relationship after a near-total freeze on official contact under former US president Joe Biden.

On the battlefield, Russian troops have been making slow but steady progress in eastern Ukraine, while thousands of Ukrainian troops who stormed into Russia's Kursk region last summer are nearly surrounded.

The Ukrainian military said on Monday that Russia launched 176 drones during its overnight attack.

The country's armed forces shot down 130 drones and another 42 did not reach their targets, likely due to electronic warfare countermeasures, the military said in a statement on Telegram.

In a statement, National Security Council spokesman Brian Hughes said Zelensky had made progress in restoring the US-Ukraine relationship following his acrimonious meeting with Trump on Feb 28.

Hanging over Jeddah is the fate of a minerals deal between the US and Ukraine, in which Kyiv wants a security guarantee from Washington in exchange for access to certain mineral resources in Ukraine. Zelensky and Trump were slated



People look at a damaged building two days after Russian shelling in Donetsk, on Sunday. MARIA SENOVILLA / EPA-EFE

to sign that accord during Zelensky's Washington visit, but it was not signed after the White House blow-up between the two men.

Since then, both sides have expressed a renewed willingness to sign the deal, but no signing has taken place yet. Trump said on Sunday he thought Ukraine would sign

it, with a caveat that he wanted Zelensky's government to show that it wanted peace.

The US State Department and the Ukrainian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

LIFE



TWO SESSIONS

Chinese film boom talk of the town

Ticket sales from blockbusters and festival encouraging but more must be done to build a solid industry, **Xing Wen** reports.

Spring Festival box-office revenues experienced a remarkable surge, hitting a record of 9.51 billion yuan (\$1.31 billion) by the end of the holiday (Jan 28-Feb 4). Leading the charge was the animated hit *Ne Zha 2*, which made history as the first Asian film to exceed \$2 billion in earnings, and claim a spot in the top 6 global box-office rankings.

As of last Wednesday, the film has been watched by over 300 million viewers, becoming the first in Chinese cinematic history to reach this milestone.

During the ongoing two sessions, this cultural sensation was fervently discussed by members of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from the film industry.

Jin Dong, a CPPCC National Committee member and A-list actor, remarked that the film is a "strong stimulant" for the Chinese film industry.

"The success of one film does not mean all films are successful. I hope all filmmakers, including myself, will write more solid scripts to produce better films," he added.

Wang Pingjiu, a CPPCC National Committee member and deputy editor-in-chief of China Central Television's movie channel, pointed out that in today's film market, content is king.

He said that excessive reliance on industrial special effects, over-commercialization, exaggerated comedy, and manipulative emotional appeals are increasingly unpopular with Chinese audiences.

"For Chinese filmmakers, it is important to draw cinematic elements from the country's cultural heritage and the trends of the times," Wang added.

Huangfu Yichuan, a CPPCC National Committee member and a researcher at the China Film Art Research Center, agreed.

He added that *Ne Zha 2* is a coming-of-age story and its themes of family bonds, personal growth, and defying fate resonate with audiences everywhere.

"It speaks to universal human emotions through a Chinese aesthetic approach," he said.

Huangfu emphasized the sub-



Staff put up a poster of the film *Ne Zha 2* at a cinema in Nanhu district, Jiaxing city, Zhejiang province, in January. JIN PENG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Jin Dong, a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from the film industry, talks to the media after a meeting on Friday. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY

stantial influence of the IP effect on this year's Spring Festival movie market. He said that the six films that opened during the period covered a wide range of genres and themes, such as martial arts, mythology, comedy and action, and appealed to varied tastes and different age demographics.

Additionally, some of the films leveraged existing fan bases to bolster their success.

For instance, *Boonie Bears: Future Reborn* is the 11th installment in the Boonie Bears film series, which has been running since 2014. Similarly, *Detective Chinatown 1900*, which is a prequel to Chen Sicheng's highly successful suspense-comedy franchise, the *Detective Chinatown* series, recently surpassed 3.49 billion yuan at the box office.

He believes that the impressive performance of films during the Spring Festival holiday is a direct outcome of the ongoing exploration by Chinese filmmakers.

"*Ne Zha 2* skillfully intertwined themes of youthful growth with a mythological backdrop, whereas *Detective Chinatown 1900* maintained its blend of suspense and comedy while incorporating historical narratives and patriotic sentiments," he said.

Huangfu said that some Hollywood blockbusters don't seem to be as popular as they used to be, especially in the Chinese market. This could be due to audience fatigue with the formulaic narratives and special effects of Hollywood, and a desire to see more innovative films.

"The world today is actually seeking



The world today is actually seeking diversity. The fact that Chinese films are going global is itself providing the world audience with variety and freshness."

Huangfu Yichuan, CPPCC National Committee member and a researcher at the China Film Art Research Center

diversity. The fact that Chinese films are going global is itself providing the world audience with variety and freshness," he said, adding that *Ne Zha 2* has earned more than 150 million yuan overseas.

"This box-office figure is small, but it's a start," he said.

This year, Fu Ruoqing, a CPPCC National Committee member and the chairman of China Film Group Corporation, proposed measures to boost national film consumption.

Fu emphasized that relying solely on the bustling Spring Festival season and a few blockbuster films is not sufficient to sustain a vibrant film market. To increase moviegoing, it is crucial to introduce policy innovations that break through existing barriers, fostering a healthier and more prosperous film ecosystem.

"By maximizing the use of cinema spaces and introducing different programs, cinemas can evolve into cultural venues offering various forms of entertainment," Fu said.

"Cinemas can become venues where audiences gather to watch live broadcasts of sports events, artistic performances, concerts, and other activities. By transforming cinemas into 'second venues' for cultural and sports activities with exceptional audiovisual quality, they can attract viewers who are not frequent moviegoers," he explained.

Contact the writer at xingwen@chinadaily.com.cn

Yaks, monks and poetry give zeal to *Culture Counts: Two Sessions, One World*

By ERIK NILSSON
erik_nilsson@chinadaily.com.cn

Yak rides. Prayer flags. Ethnic dances. The Potala Palace.

What do these have to do with the two sessions?

A lot more than you might think. Advisers and legislators from Xizang have journeyed from the roof of the world to the country's capital to deliberate on the autonomous region's future. And that includes cultural development.

The two sessions are often hailed as China's largest and most important annual political gathering. But they also have massive cultural consequences because the measures that are developed here will guide the country's cultural progress. This led me to the front lines again this year to discover what this means for China and the world we all share.

I've covered the meetings in the country's top legislature and advisory body feature officials being very official and speaking very officially. For good reason, they largely deliver technical reports and jargon-saturated speeches befitting the serious

business of guiding governance.

But this makes these terrifically important events dense or even dull for people who aren't policy wonks. And there are only so many visuals that come out of the meetings, so they tend to repeat year after year. I mean, they are meetings. The point is for officials to do official work — not to stage a spectacle.

In previous years, I hosted and developed with colleagues national-award winning video series with hundreds of millions of views about the two sessions using innovative storytelling approaches like my 7-year-old scrawling on a blackboard to explain the sessions in sim-



Left: China Daily journalist Erik Nilsson rides a yak in the Xizang autonomous region. He attended the recent open session of the Xizang delegation during the two sessions in Beijing and relays his insights in the creative infotainment vlog, *Culture Counts: Two Sessions, One World*. Right: Nilsson asks a question at Jilin's open session. *Culture Counts* offers visually interesting philosophical perspectives into how the serious business of governance shapes the way we have fun. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

ple terms, a Chinese language-learning program, and paper-cut animations.

This year, I essentially worked as a one-man team on a creative vlog called *Culture Counts: Two Sessions, One World*. The concept uses visually captivating images, including stop-motion collage clips and actual footage of lamb-snuggling on the "roof of the world", to show how the cultural policies developed at the two sessions shape the ways we eat, play, dress, dance and travel.

In other words, how the serious business of governance translates into how we have fun in daily life. I slogged through countless sta-



tics and terminology for sparkling snippets, like when Lhasa's mayor Wang Qiang said: "Friends, have you experienced a bicycle race across the Himalayas? Have you joined a half-marathon in Lhasa? Do you want to play a highland winter snooker game? If you'd like, I invite you to Lhasa to join the Linka celebration of the Shoton Festival and have a bowl of tasty highland yogurt."

No, I haven't done those things. And I've been to Lhasa and other destinations in Xizang several times.

This year's two sessions reveal the region is continuing to develop new

and innovative cultural travel experiences. Beyond such classic experiences as the Potala and Barkhor, the meetings show Xizang is doing more to offer more to more people from around the region, country and world.

That's worth knowing, for my next trip to Xizang — and yours.

Again, the two sessions are known for policy, not poetry. But some Jilin officials deployed lyrical prose like, "Cultural travel is a poetic journey to a distant land", and, "Tourists glide on powdery snow through the clouds. They embed their bodies in the mist that envelops towering mountains. They dash through sublime scenery, tak-



Friends, have you experienced a bicycle race across the Himalayas? Have you joined a half-marathon in Lhasa? Do you want to play a highland winter snooker game? If you'd like, I invite you to Lhasa to join the Linka celebration of the Shoton Festival and have a bowl of tasty highland yogurt."

Wang Qiang, Lhasa mayor

ing in the blue sky?"

These kinds of words evoke images that extend far beyond the two sessions, in every sense.

And they inspire a desire to write our own verses on journeys to lands that seem perhaps not so distant after all.

Wang Ru and Sun Meng contributed to this story.



Online
Scan to watch
the video.

COMMENT

Editorials

CPPCC's proposals and suggestions play pivotal role in country's policymaking

Bringing together representatives from various political parties, organizations, ethnic groups, and other sectors of society to conduct political consultation, democratic supervision, and participation in the deliberation and administration of State affairs, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference serves as a key component of the country's political system.

As the third plenary session of the 14th National Committee of the CPPCC, China's top political advisory body, concluded on Monday in Beijing, a resolution on the work report of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, a resolution on the report on how the proposals from political advisers have been handled since the previous annual session, a report on the examination of new proposals, and the political resolution on the third session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee were all approved. This reflects the hard work and dedication of the CPPCC members.

Consisting of more than 2,000 members from all walks of life, mostly experts, professionals and industry leaders in their respective fields, the 14th CPPCC National Committee has played its role well over the past year, and made its due contribution to helping the country fulfill its socioeconomic development objectives. And the significant role the top political advisory body will play in shaping China's future should not be underestimated.

In an indication of how important the CPPCC's role is as a valuable resource for the central authorities' policymaking, over the past year, the CPPCC National Committee organized research on 42 projects concerning major issues related to the country's socioeconomic development, conducted 85 discussions on issues concerning State affairs and handled more than 5,000 proposals from CPPCC members.

Despite the fact that China has achieved the objectives of its socioeconomic development in 2024, it still faces many unpredictable factors this year. To achieve the annual economic growth target of around 5 percent will be challenging given the volatile global situation and various obstacles that need to be overcome.

As such, the country's political advisers need to fully leverage their expertise, knowledge and experience to provide support in the form of practical suggestions to aid the efforts of the policymakers and lawmakers as they work to stimulate domestic demand, foster innovation and smooth the economic cycle.

There are tough challenges for the political advisers to wrap their heads around. The country needs to develop new drivers and new advantages for its high-quality economic development. It must strive to strengthen its innovation-driven development, while accelerating the transformation and upgrading of its traditional industries and making greater efforts to forge new quality productive forces. And it must enhance the resilience and competitiveness of its industry and supply chains.

At the same time, the country has to accelerate reform of its financial system, consolidate its agricultural foundation so that it can firmly hold the rice bowl in its own hands, and address the challenges posed by its fast aging society and negative population growth — China's population dropped by 1.39 million last year and 22 percent of its population is aged 60 or above.

The advisers are expected to offer valuable insights and suggestions to the policymakers in their respective sectors by finding a proper position and clear direction for their active participation in the policymaking process.

They should conduct in-depth fact-finding missions in their fields of expertise to determine what specific policy adjustments are needed to consolidate the achievements in poverty alleviation, and what government assistance enterprises need in order to make headway.

They should strengthen their cooperation with experts in various fields and other non-CPC political parties to study specific problems. Only by doing all these will they be able to proactively offer recommendations and proposals to help the government successfully complete its tasks and achieve its objectives for the year ahead.

The CPPCC plays a vital role in promoting socialist democracy, enhancing unity among different groups, and contributing to the modernization of China's governance system and capabilities. By being good advisers, helpers and partners to the policymaking authorities, its members are expected to make practical contributions to the country's social and economic development. Through their dedication and commitment to serving the nation, the CPPCC members exemplify the spirit of cooperation and solidarity that is essential for China's continued progress.

Rational view of China would benefit Canada

The governing Liberal Party elected former central banker Mark Carney its leader on Sunday. Carney will thus succeed Justin Trudeau as prime minister after he is sworn in in the coming days, at a critical juncture as Canada addresses the challenge of US President Donald Trump's trade war.

Despite having little political experience — he has never been elected as a member of parliament — Carney's long track record as governor of the Bank of Canada during the global financial crisis and governor of the Bank of England during the Brexit negotiations is believed to be the main reason for his election victory.

But the test awaiting the future Canadian leader this time is very different from that of the difficult times he once led the central banks through, as it does not originate from the imbalance of financial or economic laws, but the rise of unilateralism, protectionism and hegemony based on a surge of populism in the US. So to pass the test entails the former central banker demonstrating not only financial acumen but more importantly political wisdom, vision and courage.

Unlike his predecessor, who has appeared "weak" in front of the US' assertiveness, Carney, as predicted, talked tough on the US when addressing a crowd of Liberal supporters after the result of the leadership contest was announced on Sunday evening. "We didn't ask for this fight, but Canadians are always ready when someone else drops the gloves," he said.

But although he promised to face down Trump's threats to impose tariffs and annex Canada, saying, "America is not Canada, and Canada never, ever will be part of America in any way," how Carney will translate his strong language on the stage in Ottawa into practical solutions to those twin challenges is far less clear.

That Trudeau's 50-minute telephone call with Trump on Wednesday was reported as being "pro-fanily-laden" clearly indicates that the US leader is determined to press ahead with the pressure he is putting on Canada. Further evidence of that is the new tariffs Trump threatened to impose on Friday on Canadian lumber and dairy products, one day after offering Canada a one-month reprieve on punishing, virtually across-the-board 25 percent tariffs.

As well as Trump's trade pressure, Carney has a host of domestic political, economic and social problems to tackle. The fast rising living costs and ballooning national debt over the past nine years under the Liberal Party have undermined public confidence in his party's leadership and he will have to deal with the challenge from the opposition parties led by the Conservative Party under the stewardship of the populist leader Pierre Poilievre in parliament.

The opposition parties will be alert to how Carney will deal with the US trade blows, further squeezing the space for his maneuvers as the US leader heightens his threats.

As such, the future Canadian leader has no reason not to overhaul the Trudeau government's China policy to mend the ties with the world's second-largest economy and Canada's major trading partner. The retaliatory tariffs Beijing vowed on the weekend to impose on some Canadian imports later this month to counter the punitive duties Trudeau slapped on some Chinese imports in October under pressure from the US should be taken as a reminder to Carney of a move he can take that has the potential to save the whole situation on his gameboard.

China remains open to working with Canada to enhance understanding and handle their differences properly and to promote a partnership based on mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. The two economies are highly complementary in resources and economic structures, and they enjoy broad cooperation prospects, and will continue to do so, if Canada does not allow itself to be manipulated by the US.

CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

China Daily Africa
P.O. Box 27281-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
+254 (0) 70 436 2812 (Nairobi)
editor@chinadailyafrica.com
enquiries@chinadailyafrica.com
subscription@chinadailyafrica.com

Cai Meng



Opinion Line

Cooperation on climate change necessary to protect the planet

Participants from over 130 member countries attended the 62nd plenary session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, held recently in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Since its establishment in 1988, the IPCC has created a valuable platform for communication and cooperation among governments and experts. The vast array of scientific research findings gathered by the IPCC has deepened humanity's understanding of climate science and provided a robust scientific basis for strengthening and improving global climate governance.

For instance, IPCC reports have significantly influenced the formulation of key international climate policies, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. These reports have provided the scientific basis for governments to develop their climate

policies, energy strategies and sustainable development plans.

The Hangzhou meeting marked the first time an IPCC plenary session has been held in China, reflecting the country's active engagement in global climate governance and its commitment to assuming its international responsibilities. China has for long been a proactive contributor to IPCC scientific assessment reports. The country has consistently strengthened its scientific assessment, policy formulation and action plans related to climate change.

The China Meteorological Administration has actively organized and recommended numerous outstanding Chinese scientists to participate in IPCC scientific assessments and government reviews. To date, over 100 Chinese experts have contributed to the preparation of IPCC reports, while over 1,000 Chinese experts have participated in the review process, offer-

ing Chinese wisdom and strength to the scientific assessment of global climate change.

China continues to deepen its scientific understanding of climate issues, actively promotes the development of climate governance policies, and strives to advance innovation and research in green technologies, which it shares with the world. It also engages in joint research and project collaborations with other nations to tackle climate change.

As climate change has a bearing on the well-being and future of all humanity, addressing it requires all stakeholders to transform their visions into actionable realities. China will continue to support and advance the work of the IPCC, injecting more scientific rigor into global climate governance and collaboration with other countries.

— ECONOMIC DAILY

Around 5 percent growth realistic target to be met

China pegged the economic growth target for 2025 at around 5 percent.

The long-term goal for 2035 is to achieve the per capita GDP of a moderately developed country, which requires doubling the nation's total GDP from its 2020 level. This implies that between 2026 and 2035, China's average annual GDP growth rate must reach around 4.5 percent. Given changes in population dynamics and economic scale, experts estimate that China's potential growth rate during the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-30) will be between 4.5 and 5 percent. Therefore, setting an around 5 percent growth target ensures a smooth transition between two consecutive five-year plans.

Second, the target highlights China's determination to tackle challenges head-on. On the basis of the 5

percent GDP growth rate in 2024, several challenges are anticipated for 2025. Externally, China will likely face greater pressure due to political shifts in the United States and Europe, leading to stronger external headwinds. Internally, China's total population is falling while the aging of the population is accelerating, increasing domestic economic challenges.

The around 5 percent growth target therefore reflects the central leadership's resolve to overcome difficulties and achieve high-quality development. Which will require more proactive economic policies. The fiscal deficit ratio is pegged at around 4 percent, 1 percentage point higher than last year. The fiscal deficit is expected to reach 5.66 trillion yuan (\$779.91 billion), 1.6 trillion yuan more than last year, while

general public expenditure is projected to increase to 29.7 trillion yuan, up by 1.2 trillion yuan, and the issuance of ultra-long-term government bonds is planned at 1.3 trillion yuan, up by 30 billion yuan. These measures will ensure adequate financial support for general public expenditure.

Moreover, the Government Work Report says the government will optimize and innovate structural monetary policy tools, promote the healthy and stable development of the real estate and stock markets, and increase support for technological innovation, green development, consumption, and private and small businesses, laying a solid foundation for achieving the around 5 percent growth target.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

What They Say

Syria needs an end to chaos and sanctions

Fierce fighting broke out between Syrian security forces and armed groups opposed to the new regime in Damascus in Latakia and Tartus provinces in Syria on Thursday. The clashes have continually escalated and caused the deaths of a large number of local civilians.

The United Nations says it has received "extremely disturbing" reports of whole families being killed, and has called on the interim authorities to take "swift actions to protect Syrians".

Reportedly, Russia and the United States have asked the UN Security Council to hold closed-door consultations on the situation in western Syria. Considering Syria's former leader Bashar al-Assad fled to Russia after his regime was toppled by multiple forces, with the backing of different parties, including the US, in December. That both Moscow and Washington think such a UN Security Council emergency meeting is imperative indicates the situation in Syria has become a matter of pressing concern. After more than 14

years of civil war, the Middle East country remains an arena for geopolitical games among major powers.

Relevant parties in Syria should protect the lives and properties of civilians despite their conflicts. The holding of a national dialogue is a key step in the political transition, for which a clear timetable should be set as soon as possible and implemented steadily.

The patrons of the various factions in Syria should realize that the Syrian people, who have long been mired in sufferings and hardships caused by war and chaos, are longing for peace and stability. The countries concerned should adhere to the common bottom line that Syria must not become a safe haven for terrorists, and another blazing fuse in the Middle East after Gaza.

At this critical juncture, it is important for the international community to provide constructive assistance to Syria. China supports the promotion of a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process, and the realization

of a solution that meets the aspirations of all Syrian people through inclusive dialogue and consultations.

Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council represents the basic consensus within the international community, and provides important guidance for addressing the Syrian issue, as Chinese ambassador to the UN Fu Cong said in a recent UNSC briefing on the Syrian issue. China supports the United Nations and its special envoy playing an active role in this process, as well as the efforts of the Arab League to help Syria in its political transition and reconstruction.

The illegal unilateral sanctions on Syria imposed by the US, which should not have been imposed in the first place, have only aggravated the situation in Syria. If Washington really cares about the humanitarian situation in Syria, as it claims to, it should put an end to the harsh sanctions it has imposed on the war-torn country since more than 20 years ago.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL VIEWS

FABIO MASSIMO PARENTI

Revisionist power

US is aggressively seeking to assert its centrality in the new post-Western multipolar order

Finally, even in part of the so-called West, there is recognition that the world has changed in its interstate balances. This recognition, this newfound awareness, is particularly significant as it emerges from the new US presidency — namely, the government of the most important

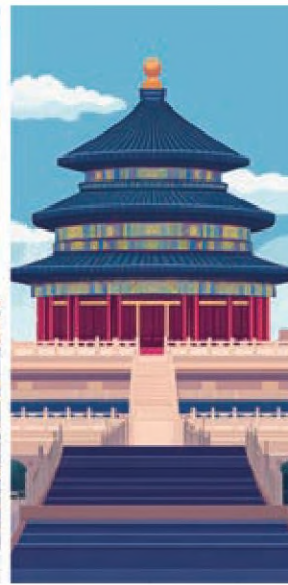


nation-pole of the West, which has been its undisputed leader for the past 80 years. We say "finally" because many

observers and scholars (as prophetic as they were ignored) had already suggested the need to adapt to these changes, calling for greater cooperation with state-civilization poles such as China, Russia, India and Iran, and more engagement with new non-Western international institutional platforms such as "BRICS Plus" cooperation model, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Eurasian Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative. At the same time, they suggested rejecting the logic of opposing blocs.

The United States, like its traditional allies, is being forced to adapt to a new world simply because it is no longer able to manipulate it at will. Therefore, Donald Trump's second term as US president will help shed even more light on the consolidation of a multipolar world. He will do so with all the contradictions and unpredictability we have come to expect from him.

In my view, many of the "Make America Great Again" ambitions of the latest occupant of the White House are unfeasible. The administration's policies are interesting insofar as they stem from the recognition of US decline — a decline highlighted by the emergence of a new international order and, more specifically, by the strategic mistakes that resulted from previous



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

resistance to adaptation in an attempt to restore a lost hegemony.

The Ukraine crisis, for instance, has demonstrated how the West has failed to isolate Russia and instead found itself more isolated from the rest of the world. This is because a new international order had already emerged, yet they pretended not to see it.

These profound changes, which have been called the "tectonics of geopolitics", should have long ago led the West to abandon its hegemonic, imperialist and supremacist logic — first rooted in Eurocentric universalism and later in Anglo-Saxon messianism — that inspired the West's global domination projects. That era is over.

China and the US are becoming comparable in terms of global economic weight. As of 2023, China accounted for 18.75 percent of glob-

al GDP in terms of purchasing power parity, compared to the US' 15 percent share. It is worth noting that GDP calculated using PPP and production-based methods rather than expenditure-based methods strongly favors China. In fact, China has, for many years, surpassed the US in industrial production, international trade and technological development, as reflected in international statistics. Not to mention the green technology sector, where China is the undisputed global leader.

It is precisely within these dynamics that Trump's remarks about the labor market, trade and war — spoken on the day of his inauguration — take on significance.

Not only will it be difficult to recover lost ground, but it will be almost impossible unless a more

"Keynesian" vision of the relationship between states and markets is restored — one that prioritizes social cohesion and justice at the center of Western political action. Otherwise, fragmentation, socioeconomic inequality and the private-interest conflicts embedded in its parliaments leave little hope for anything significant or desirable.

With the radical transformation of the world system was foreseen by some at least 20 years ago. This system has shifted from a more or less liberal, unipolar order (or a restricted multipolarity limited to a small portion of the world) to a new, expanded multipolar order structured around multiple state-poles across different continents.

With the US' open support for and complicity in Israel's ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people, the already faltering inter-

national legitimacy of the West is now definitively disappearing.

But arrogance, presumption and a sense of superiority continue to encrust the corridors of power in the West. And while recognizing that the world is changing is necessary, it will not be sufficient, because such recognition alone is unlikely to generate the new cultural and political paradigms necessary for intelligent adaptation.

The only way to serve the interests of an entire nation and ensure lasting forms of peaceful coexistence is through dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect. This will be the real challenge for those in the new Trump administration, who may believe they can resolve deep-rooted historical problems quickly — relying solely on business strategies and an approach that, in part, remains outdated, as it still requires finding enemies among competitors rather than fostering greater cooperation among equals.

We shall see, but I deeply doubt, that the imperialist "DNA" of the US-led West, along with its messianic vision, can be "revised" in the short term. Consequently, the transformation of the world system will continue to unfold through extremely contradictory processes.

The first month of Trump's second term is already revealing — unsurprisingly, except for the so-called European leaders — the growing fracture between the US and the European Union. This divide will play out both in security and defense matters and in economic and trade policies. We had already discussed this during Trump's first term, but this time, the neo-mercantilist and isolationist approach of the new administration is even more pronounced.

Trump's initial foreign policy actions appear swift and impactful. They seem genuinely aimed at reindustrializing the country and expanding domestic job opportuni-

ties, although his political agenda primarily serves the country's elites. The idea, whose effectiveness remains to be seen, of imposing tariffs on all fronts while simultaneously cutting taxes for businesses and workers and reducing energy costs is conceived within this framework.

In this light, the pursuit of military disengagement in Europe makes sense not only to save resources and benefit from Ukrainian raw material deposits, but also to concentrate efforts in the "Indo-Pacific" region and foster a closer relationship with Russia in a vain attempt to destabilize the Sino-Russian partnership. Meanwhile, the EU appears divided, diplomatically weak and incapable of constructing real strategic autonomy, making its political nonexistence evident to all.

The EU has almost always followed the US geopolitical agenda, even sacrificing its own interests to support the proxy war between the US and Russia in Ukraine. Over the past 30 years, it has gradually abandoned its political and strategic autonomy in favor of unwavering support for the US. However, interests are now diverging more sharply. As the contemporary periphery of the US empire, Europe will be forced to bear the costs of the West's decline.

The West used to label external regional powers as "revisionist powers" of the existing world order — the so-called rules-based order. Today, however, it is the US itself that is the true "revisionist power"; as it seeks to reassert the US' centrality in the new post-Western multipolar order.

The author is a member of Earth Charter International China. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

XU YANZHUO

In a lonely place

Rather than benefiting from siding with the US, Canada is now feeling the strain

Being the United States' closest ally and neighbor used to be Canada's biggest geopolitical advantages.

The two countries share the world's longest international border. The US is Canada's single most important trading partner. In 2024, the US was the destination for 75.9 percent of Canada's exports, and the bilateral trade volume was valued at over \$1 trillion. The US is also the largest investor in Canada, accounting for 46 percent of total foreign direct investment.

Unlike the criticism that is a "free-rider" voiced by the US side, Canada is a longtime supporter of the US' international strategy, even sometimes at the cost of its own interests. In 2018, Canada exported C\$31.1 billion (\$21.61 billion) to its second-largest trading partner, China. The Justin Trudeau administration was planning to further strengthen the bilateral economic partnership and promote the China-Canada Free Trade Agreement talks. However, the first Donald Trump administration put Canada in a very difficult situation by making an extradition request for the illegal detention of Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver. As a consequence, the prospect of a new "golden era" in Canada-China relations suddenly evaporated, and the bilateral relationship has deteriorated significantly since then.

Additionally, as a partner geographically far away from Asia, and with no territorial disputes with any countries in this region, Canada invested C\$2.3 billion into its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, describing China as "an increasingly disruptive global power", in order to support the US's containment of China.

After the Ukraine crisis broke out in 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz went to Canada, seeking an alternative to Russia's supply of liquefied natural gas. Instead of seizing the moment for Canadian LNG exports to Europe, the Trudeau administration introduced the "no more pipelines" law stopping the LNG infrastructure necessary to deliver gas across the Atlantic. In fact, 39.4 percent of Canadian natural gas is exported to the US for its energy security.

Such decisions not only undermined Canada's economic and diplomatic opportunity of cooperation with China, Europe and other economies, but also put the country in a risky position, as the decisions made in Washington demonstrated that the US and Canadian interests do not always overlap.

At first, Canadian commentators considered "America First" to be a negotiating sledgehammer to push Canada to invest more in border security and its military budget, and make more concessions on bilateral trade as it functioned in Trump's first term. Some even tried to shift the blame to China by arguing that the US was threatening to impose huge tariffs on allies in part to pave the way for tougher policies on China. But instead of exempting Canadian goods from tariffs as listed in the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a trade deal Trump ratified himself, the looming tariff is also used as a threat on Canada as the 51st state of the US.

When Trump's onslaught has intensified, Canada has found itself in a lonely place.

Continuously wooing the US will not help Canada get out of trouble this time. US federal statistics show that only 0.2 percent of the 21,889 pounds of fentanyl and only 1.5 percent of the 16 million illegal migrants seized at the US borders in 2024 were from

Canada. It means even if the Canadian government tries to make the figures zero, it will be of limited help to solve the US' domestic problems.

Due to the asymmetrical relationship between Canada and the US, Ottawa's dollar-for-dollar retaliation will hurt itself more than the US. According to the Brookings Institution, the combined retaliation tariff from both Canada and Mexico will only impact the US' GDP by 0.05 percent, the unemployment rate by 0.14 percent, and exports by 3 percent. In contrast, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce estimates that a 25 percent tariff from the US on Canadian goods could cause a 2.6 percent decline in Canada's GDP. This serious destructiveness will further become a bargaining chip for Trump to make exorbitant demands.

Since 2018, the Trudeau government has chosen to sour Canada's relations with the two largest developing countries — China and India — and to weaken the economic ties with Europe, while actively siding with the US. Now its GDP per capita gap with the US has doubled from \$16,662 to \$32,767. No country is standing up for Canada as it is being bullied by the US. Canada's grief tells other US allies and partners a lesson — the benefits of siding with the US might seem to be considerable, but they will not come without a price, particularly when the US decides to flex its muscles.

For Canada, a more significant concern than the devastating impact of a US-Canada tariff war on certain industries is the potential loss of the US as the maintainer of regional and international trade-based order. This shift makes it imperative for Canada to rethink and redefine its role both regionally and globally.



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

As a member of the G7 and a middle power, Canada must systematically assess its core interests, clarify its priorities and develop pragmatic strategies for these goals. To ease the Trump administration's reinforced pressure, the Canadian government needs to seek broader international cooperation, focus on substantive issues, and extend relationship networks with more strategic and multidimensional partners.

The European Union is Canada's important economic ally. Since the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement took effect in 2017, the EU has become Canada's second-largest export destination. The EU has high demand for Canada's key minerals and energy. There is a lot of potential for bilateral

cooperation in minerals, clean energy, artificial intelligence, new technologies, trade rules and supply chain stability.

China is the world's second-largest economy. Despite the fact that China-Canada relations have suffered setbacks, Canada's high-quality agricultural products, energy resources and advanced technologies still have broad potential for cooperation with China. Against the background of rebuilding global supply chains, Canada could establish mutually beneficial cooperation with China in the fields of the green economy, digital trade, biomedicine, education, tourism and infrastructure construction, through more pragmatic policies.

In addition, Canada could also expand cooperation with emerging

economies in the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, Africa and other regions to enhance strategic autonomy in a multipolar global landscape. Only by establishing a diversified international cooperation network can Canada effectively safeguard its own interests, reduce its vulnerability in international trade and diplomacy, and secure a more favorable role in the international order transition.

The author is a research fellow of the Foreign Policy Division at the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

BUSINESS

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



TWO SESSIONS

Greater role for SOEs sought in eldercare

By ZHONG NAN
zhongnan@chinadaily.com.cn

China should support capable State-owned enterprises, both centrally and locally administered, in developing community-based home care service systems, said a national legislator on Monday.

SOEs have the advantages of funding, resource allocation, brand trust and industry synergy, which enable them to effectively enhance the quality and sustainability of eldercare services, said Yu Xubo, a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature.

Driven by a trend of smaller family structures and traditional elderly care culture, more than 90 percent of senior citizens in China prefer home-based care, making the development of community-based home care services imperative, said Yu, who is also chairman of China General Technology (Group) Holding Co Ltd (Genertec), a Beijing-headquartered centrally administered SOE.

However, the current home care service market is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, which face challenges such as insufficient funding, a lack of medical resources and inconsistent service quality. This makes it challenging to provide professional, stable and sustainable medical and eldercare services at home, according to a report released by the Institute of Population and Labor Economics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences last year.



Senior citizens take rehabilitation training at an eldercare center in Rizhao, Shandong province.
CAI YANG / XINHUA

In response to these challenges, Yu hopes the government will implement specialized policies that will enable and incentivize healthcare-focused SOEs to participate in the public procurement of community-based home care services.

"It is practical for local governments to strengthen collaboration with SOEs, leveraging their expertise in healthcare to integrate medical, financial, eldercare and digital platform resources," he added.

Yu's proposal, submitted to the 14th NPC, advocates for the introduction of preferential policies to foster partnerships between SOEs and local SMEs. This initiative aims to enhance the overall quality and efficiency of home care services.

Emphasizing the need for local governments to refine bidding mechanisms to foster collaboration between SOEs and SMEs, he said this may involve permitting both parties to establish consortia for joint bidding, which will enhance the role of large businesses in driv-



Yu Xubo

ing and coordinating industry-wide advancements. China's population aged 60 and over reached nearly 297 million by the end of 2023, accounting for 21.1 percent of the total, according to the latest data released by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in October last year.

Yu said that the development of a robust and inclusive community-based home care service system requires precise policy stratification, seamless resource integration and continuous optimization of operational mechanisms to ensure efficiency, sustainability and high-quality service delivery.

"This approach ensures the survival of SMEs and leverages the technological and financial advantages of SOEs," he said, stressing that the high-quality development

of eldercare services depends on removing scale-based restrictions and creating a competitive environment focused on capability and service quality.

Zheng Wei, a professor at Peking University's School of Economics, noted that China's aging population is transitioning from prioritizing basic survival needs to emphasizing personal growth and well-being.

"This evolution extends beyond essentials such as clothing, food, housing and transportation to include healthcare and eldercare, as well as an increasing demand for leisure and entertainment," said Zheng.

Committed to building an inclusive and comprehensive eldercare system, China will encourage foreign companies to participate in key service sectors such as eldercare, culture and tourism, sports, healthcare, vocational education and finance, according to the 2025 Action Plan for Stabilizing Foreign Investment released by the government in February.

Targeted moves afoot for local govt debt relief

Multipronged package of adjustments to ease financing pressure of localities

By WANG KEJU
wangkeju@chinadaily.com.cn

China will employ a package of targeted measures to further address local government debt this year, with a particular focus on accelerating the debt swap program, reforming local government financing vehicles and curbing the accumulation of new hidden debt, officials and analysts said.

With the debt-relief package — a multipronged adjustment to ease local government financing pressure — the country is better positioned to pursue the broader agenda of fostering economic stability and progress, they added.

"We will continue to defuse debt risks in the course of development and pursue development in a debt risk-defused environment," said Premier Li Qiang last week while delivering the Government Work Report, which detailed the latest steps of world's second-largest economy to defuse local government debt risks.

Feng Lin, executive director of research at Golden Credit Rating International, said, "The key is to maintain a clear-eyed view of the interplay between debt management and economic development, and ensure that the two are mutually reinforcing, rather than conflicting priorities."

Simply concentrating on debt reduction alone could stifle local governments' ability to invest in growth-enhancing initiatives, hampering their long-term development. Conversely, a development-centric approach that neglects debt risks would also undermine the sustainability of economic progress, Feng said.

Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an said at a news conference on Thursday that this year his ministry will guide localities to expedite the issuance and utilization of a 2 trillion yuan (\$276.44 billion) bond quota to facilitate the replacement of hidden debt.

In November, the Ministry of Finance introduced a 10 trillion yuan debt swap program to help local governments alleviate their financial pressures. This initiative aims to free up more funds and resources that can be channeled toward driving economic development.

As of Wednesday, local governments had issued bonds totaling 2.96 trillion yuan aimed at replacing

existing debts. And the bonds issued last year for the replacement of 2 trillion yuan of local government debt saw an average reduction in interest rates by over 2.5 percentage points, Lan said.

It's estimated that these bonds will reduce interest payments by over 200 billion yuan over five years, significantly easing funding pressures and interest costs for local governments, Lan added.

As of end-2023, China had a total hidden debt balance of 14.3 trillion yuan, which the authorities plan to trim to 2.3 trillion yuan by 2028, according to the ministry.

Dedicated efforts will be made to strip government financing functions from local government financing vehicles and facilitate their market-oriented transformation, to prevent State-owned enterprises and public institutions from simply adopting "new disguises" to continue their debt-fueled practices, Lan said.

By making the prevention of illegal and irregular borrowing a top priority in fiscal oversight, the government is sending a clear message that it will not tolerate any further accumulation of hidden liabilities, Lan added.

That said, the Government Work Report also highlighted the need to refine existing assessment and control measures, emphasizing "a dynamic adjustment of the list of high-risk regions", to enable new investment opportunities in these areas.

The inclusion or exclusion of specific regions on the high-risk list will be subject to periodic review, taking into account evolving economic conditions, fiscal revenue and debt servicing capabilities, said Wen Lai-cheng, a professor at Central University of Finance and Economics.

"This dynamic adjustment mechanism is designed to prevent overly restrictive government investment policies from inadvertently hampering local economic development," Wen said.

The government remains committed to encouraging local government investment, but with a focus on optimizing investment structure and efficiency as well as guiding investment toward emerging sectors, such as the low-altitude economy and artificial intelligence, that are well-suited to regional comparative advantages, Wen added.

Zhongwei to have more intelligent computing centers

By FAN FEIFEI
fanfeifei@chinadaily.com.cn

Zhongwei in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region will step up efforts to establish a big data industry center and build itself into a hub for the nation's computing power sector, as part of a broader push to bolster the development of the digital economy, said its mayor Ma Honghai.

Ma, a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress, said in an interview with China Daily that Zhongwei boasts huge energy reserves such as wind power and water resources, and its cool climate is suitable for building large data centers.

According to him, the city will speed up construction of data infrastructure, including the establishment of 17 intelligent computing centers to increase its computing power supply.

The number of standard racks in

data centers is expected to reach 260,000 and its total computing power will exceed 210,000 PFLOPS, or petaflops, he said.

PFLOPS is a metric for measuring a computer's performance.

Meanwhile, Zhongwei will boost the integration of digital technologies with a wide range of fields, and speed up the construction of a number of digital projects such as digital workshops, intelligent factories and smart campuses to promote the high-quality development of traditional industries, he noted.

Ma said more efforts will be made to bolster the development of the whole industrial chain related to computing power, including IT and network equipment manufacturing, as well as data storage, computing, processing and application.

China launched the east-data-west-computing plan in 2022, a megaproject involving the construc-

tion of eight national computing hubs and 10 national data center clusters, to channel more computing resources from the country's eastern regions to its less developed, yet resource-rich western regions.

Ningxia is among eight national computing hubs, with Zhongwei included in the 10 national data centers. The project is conducive to promoting green development and utilizing green energy in the western regions, and continuously optimizing the energy efficiency of data centers, experts said.

Ma said currently Zhongwei has established the country's first batch of Wanka level intelligent computing bases, with the number of data center racks reaching 121,000, and GPU (graphics processing units) computing cards surpassing 88,000. The city's total computing power has reached 44,000 PFLOPS.

Wanka refers to a high-perform-

ance computing system composed of 10,000 or more GPU computing accelerator chips that are mainly used to train and fine-tune AI models.

Computing power, which refers to the capacity of a computer or computer system to execute complex computations and data processing tasks, is key to activating new quality productive forces in the digital economy era and unleashing China's new growth momentum.

Ma also said the city's GDP has grown by 5.5 percent on average in the last three years, and that its GDP had increased by 5.8 percent year-on-year in 2024, ranking third in the region.

The city has also made great strides in technological innovation, with the number of national high-tech enterprises reaching 60 and valid invention patents climbing to 516 in 2024, up 17 percent year-on-year, Ma added.

Briefly

Foreign exchange reserves rise

China's foreign exchange reserves reached nearly \$3.23 trillion at the end of February, up by \$18.2 billion, or 0.57 percent, compared to January.

Smart charging piles push green driving

The State Grid has upgraded select charging piles to promote green driving. Its unit in Xuzhou of Jiangsu province has installed an "intelligent monitoring platform for charging piles" as part of a digital upgrade. Sun Yiming of State Grid Xuzhou Power Supply Co said that by installing intelligent terminals the platform can collect 12 kinds of operating parameters such as voltage, current and temperatures in real time, while establishing a fault prediction model based on AI algorithms, warning of hidden dangers such as equipment overheating and aging insulation, up to seven days in advance. Last year, the average monthly failure time of charging piles decreased from 7.8 hours to 3.6 hours, a drop of 52 percent year-on-year.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

AI key force for high-quality growth

By OUYANG SHIJIA
ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

As global manufacturing rapidly shifts toward digitalization and intelligent development, the deep integration of artificial intelligence into the sector has become a key driving force for high-quality development and a key battleground in global tech competition, said Zhang Fan, a deputy to the National People's Congress.

Zhang, who is also director of the science and technology innovation department of China Electrical Equipment Group Co Ltd, highlighted the rapid evolution of AI technologies — including large language models, generative AI and embodied AI — saying that they are reshaping global industrial competition and integrating into various industries.

"With the rise of domestic companies like DeepSeek and Unitree Robotics, AI is being pushed toward an era of democratization, breaking the monopoly of Western tech giants and fueling rapid advancements in AI-powered devices such as smart glasses and



Zhang Fan

robots," he said during an exclusive interview with China Daily.

According to this year's Government Work Report, under the AI Plus initiative, the country will work to effectively combine digital technologies with China's manufacturing and market strengths. The country will support the extensive application of large-scale AI models and vigorously develop new-generation intelligent terminals and smart manufacturing equipment.

While China has introduced policy frameworks such as the next-generation AI development plan, Zhang argued that manufacturing, spanning 41 subindustries, requires more precise and sector-specific policy implementation.

Using the electrical equipment manufacturing sector as an example, Zhang pointed out gaps in industry-level AI roadmaps, insufficient guidance for high-value appli-

cations and a lack of collaborative mechanisms for tackling common technological challenges.

"The sector needs a clear, tiered national strategy — short-term breakthroughs in foundational applications, medium-term advances in core scenarios and long-term development of a tech system."

Zhang added that a major concern is inefficiency in industry-specific AI models, saying that industrial AI training is constrained by poor data availability and limited sharing.

"Industry data, the 'fuel' for AI models, suffers from both insufficient quantity and quality," he said, citing issues such as incomplete data collection, lack of standardization and concerns over data security and commercial confidentiality.

Meanwhile, the deputy also underscored a severe shortage of interdisciplinary talent proficient in both AI and industrial processes. "There is a disconnect between academia and industry, and traditional manufacturing companies lack structured AI talent training mechanisms."

To address the issues, Zhang said



China Electrical Equipment Group's booth is seen during an expo in Zhengzhou, Henan province. MA JIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

it is necessary for the nation to accelerate AI development planning for key industries.

"Given its strategic importance to energy security and China's dual-carbon goals, the electrical equipment manufacturing sector should have a dedicated AI development roadmap."

Meanwhile, he said AI innovation hubs should be formed to consolidate resources and develop industry-specific AI models that enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

More efforts should also be made

to build a high-quality industrial data ecosystem. "The government should accelerate national AI data standardization, introduce tax incentives for data sharing and foster collaboration between leading enterprises to build standardized, high-value industrial datasets," Zhang added.

Li Chao, chief economist at Zhesang Securities, said AI — in which the United States and China are seeking to gain a competitive edge — is poised to see accelerated development in the future.

BUSINESS



TWO SESSIONS



A Transfar employee works at a plant science research center in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in December. LU ZHE / XINHUA

Transfar chairman: AI key to pvt firms seeking global edge

Deeper integration into operations to further drive enterprise transformation

By CHENG YU

chengyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Private enterprises in China must make more efforts to embrace artificial intelligence in order to gain a lead globally, a national lawmaker said on the sidelines of the two sessions that end on Tuesday.

Xu Guanju, a deputy to the 14th National People's Congress and chairman of leading chemicals manufacturer Transfar Group, said private companies are currently navigating challenges, striving to become world-class entities.

"However, the future global competition is no longer about scale or volume, but about high-quality development driven by advanced technologies," Xu said, adding that AI will be a key for a lead in the future.

He said: "China has a massive market, a comprehensive industrial system, and abundant talent



Xu Guanju

With AI integration, the country is able to achieve new milestones in global competition."

Such confidence has been further boosted by the meteoric rise of Chinese AI large model DeepSeek, which is poised to challenge Silicon Valley's dominance, as well as the performance of a traditional Chinese dance by 16 humanoid robots during the country's most-watched TV event, Xu said.

"Their successes have made us proud of China's new generation of private entrepreneurs and also more inspired to boost technology and innovation, especially AI, for greater development," he added.

According to Xu, the company has collaborated with upstream and downstream partners to

overcome multiple foreign technological monopolies that had lasted for over a decade.

Over the past three years, Transfar's research and development investment has shown a compound annual growth rate of 50 percent, with innovation-related spending maintaining a high growth rate of 30 percent, he said.

To actively embrace the AI era, Xu proposed that private enterprises should fully integrate AI into their operations to drive their transformation into modern enterprises.

"On the other hand, innovative business models should amplify technological advancements, where companies can utilize manufacturing expertise and platform capabilities to foster deep AI-industry integration," he said.

Such efforts involve further opening companies' business scenarios to enhance intelligent capabilities, advancing AI applications across the country's 12 key industrial areas and 58 specific AI scenarios.

"At the same time, the country

can leverage its industrial foundation and platform strengths to provide real-world environments for embodied AI robots, including establishing training grounds, and exploring AI solutions in manufacturing, logistics and agriculture," he added.

Xu emphasized: "Only the deep integration of AI and industry can create meaningful use cases and greater value."

At the two sessions, Xu also called for more efforts to invest in forward-looking industries and breakthrough technologies to extend the corporate life cycle. At the same time, enterprises must push forward transformation efforts to evolve cutting-edge technologies into modern businesses.

In addition, major platforms must be advanced to contribute to economic growth, Xu said, adding that more technological, industrial and policy resources should be joined to create innovation-driven platforms that support industrial upgrades and regional high-quality development.

Green hydrogen and methanol touted for big roles in decarbonization

By ZHENG XIN

zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

As China intensifies efforts to achieve its carbon peaking and neutrality goals, green hydrogen and green methanol are emerging as critical solutions for deep decarbonization.

During the two sessions — the annual gatherings of the National People's Congress and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference — several NPC deputies proposed accelerating the development of these clean energy resources through coordinated policy support, technological advancements and market expansion.

Zhong Baoshen, an NPC deputy, who is also chairman of Longi Green Energy Technology Co Ltd — a key player in the photovoltaic sector — called for accelerated development of green hydrogen and methanol, underscoring their potential as renewable fuels indispensable for reducing emissions in hard-to-abate sectors.

"While 42 percent of China's carbon emissions come from the power sector, the remaining 58 percent stem from largely nonelectric industries such as transportation, chemicals, metallurgy and cement production," he said.

"For these sectors, green hydrogen, produced using renewable energy — and green methanol, derived from green hydrogen and renewable carbon sources — offer viable pathways for deep decarbonization."

Zhong expects global demand for these fuels to surge with tightening global emission regulations.

According to industry forecasts, global hydrogen demand could reach hundreds of millions of metric tons by 2050, with green hydrogen accounting for the majority. However, as of 2023, global green hydrogen production capacity remained below 1 million tons, leaving significant room for growth, he said.

Green hydrogen and methanol, on the other hand, serve as ideal partners for renewables, enabling large-scale local energy consumption while providing solutions for peak load balancing and seasonal energy storage, Zhong said.

China's renewable energy capacity has expanded rapidly, with wind and solar power installations reaching 42 percent of total capacity by the end of 2024. However, the intermittency of renewable energy poses challenges for grid integration, energy storage and transmission.

"Using wind and solar power to produce green hydrogen not only improves energy efficiency, but also enhances the stability of China's clean energy system," Zhong said.

Despite their potential, green hydrogen and methanol remain in the early stages of development and face economic challenges compared to conventional fuels. Recognizing this, developed countries have introduced subsidies and industry standards to foster growth.

Zhong urged China to strengthen policy support to accelerate their commercialization, including scaling

China's hydrogen industry has entered a rapid development phase, supported by a series of policy measures."

Zhong Baoshen, chairman of Longi Green Energy Technology Co Ltd

up large-scale renewable energy hubs integrating wind, solar, hydrogen and methanol production, removing transmission fees for renewable-powered hydrogen projects, offering preferential electricity rates to enhance economic viability, lowering loan interest rates and land costs for green hydrogen projects, as well as providing tax incentives to stimulate investment.

"Developing green hydrogen is a systemic effort requiring synchronized advancements in policy, technology and market mechanisms. It is not only a key pathway to carbon neutrality, but also a strategic move to enhance China's energy security."

Echoing these views, Zhang Qingsheng, executive director of Sinopec Zhongyuan Oilfield under China Petroleum and Chemical Corp, called for a more integrated approach to green hydrogen development.

Zhang highlighted the need for a top-down strategy to ensure coordinated growth across the entire hydrogen value chain.

"China's hydrogen industry has entered a rapid development phase, supported by a series of policy measures. The Energy Law introduced last year officially included hydrogen in China's energy management framework, representing the chemical's huge development potential and scalable application scenarios," he said.

According to the China Hydrogen Alliance, China's hydrogen demand is projected to reach 60 million tons by 2050, with an industry value of 12 trillion yuan (\$1.67 trillion), accounting for over 10 percent of the national energy mix.

However, Zhang also noted that several challenges remain, including inconsistent policy guidance across different regions, insufficient resource allocation for green hydrogen projects, as well as high production costs and limited market competitiveness.

To address these challenges, Zhang proposed strengthening national hydrogen planning, enhancing supply chain collaboration and expanding hydrogen applications.

He also called for accelerating construction of hydrogen pipelines to connect resource-rich regions with high-demand areas, thus ensuring cost-effective and large-scale hydrogen distribution.

By leveraging policy innovation, financial incentives and industrial collaboration, China is expected to solidify its leadership in the global green hydrogen economy.

Luxshare gears up for bigger share of auto parts market

By LI JIAYING

lijiaoying@chinadaily.com.cn

Eying the huge market potential brought by the rapid growth of intelligent connected vehicles, a major Chinese electronics manufacturer is accelerating its expansion in the global automotive components sector to get ahead of the curve.

"We are fully committed to seizing the high ground in new energy vehicle intelligence and keeping pace with industry developments and emerging industry trends to maintain steady growth in the global automotive market," said Wang Laichun, a member of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and chairwoman and founder of electronics manufacturer Luxshare Precision Industry Co Ltd.

Luxshare's long-term goal is to become a global top-tier automotive component supplier within the next five years, Wang said, adding that the company's foray into the automotive sector for over a decade has seen cheerful results.

"Today, we have successfully built a diversified product portfolio covering cable harnesses, connectors, intelligent driving systems and smart cockpits, with deep and

solid partnerships with our clients," she said.

The vision aligns with the country's national strategy to integrate digital technologies with manufacturing prowess, as highlighted in this year's Government Work Report, released during the two sessions, which underscored the vigorous development of intelligent connected NEVs and next-generation intelligent terminals.

According to market consultancy Allied Market Research, the global connected car market size was valued at \$115.8 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach \$501.8 billion by 2033, with a compound annual growth rate of 16.5 percent from 2024-33.

While consumer electronics still remain Luxshare's primary revenue driver, accounting for over 80 percent of total revenue, the automotive sector has emerged as its fastest-growing business segment. From 2019-23, the company's revenue in the segment surged from 2.36 billion yuan (\$324.9 million) to 9.25 billion yuan, showing robust growth momentum.

In this regard, Wang said the production of automotive components has distinct regional characteristics, prompting the company to implement a globalized manufacturing strategy to

ensure efficient responses to customer needs.

The comment came as Luxshare launched an NEV electronic components manufacturing industrial park project in Handan, Hebei province, at the end of last year, with a total planned investment of 7.8 billion yuan. The project will focus on the R&D and production of NEV connection system components and, once fully operational, will serve as a key intelligent manufacturing base in North China, the company said.

Prior to that, Luxshare announced that it would establish a new acoustics electronics and automotive components project in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, marking the establishment of its largest automotive parts manufacturing base in China.

On the global front, Luxshare took a significant step in September by acquiring a 50.1 percent stake in German automotive cable harness manufacturer Leoni AG, along with full ownership of its subsidiary Leoni Kabel GmbH.

"The acquisition marks another major step forward in our globalization efforts," Wang said, adding that the company plans to leverage Leoni's technological expertise and localized operations to extend its customer base from top domestic

automakers to major global brands.

As artificial intelligence-powered technologies continue to shape the future, Wang emphasized that these advancements also provide unprecedented opportunities for the manufacturing sector, facilitating smart production upgrades, improving supply chain resilience and accelerating product innovation.

"AI's rapid evolution has created new business opportunities, and what stands out to me the most is its role in enabling lean and intelligent manufacturing," she said.

"As AI technology continues to be integrated into consumer terminals, I believe there lies significant business and commercial potential," Wang added. She emphasized that the company will capitalize on its unique advantages in flexible automation, foundational technology innovation, process optimization and vertical integration to embrace AI-driven market demand.

"We will fully utilize our diversified product portfolio, robust precision and intelligent manufacturing capabilities, and solid technological foundation to achieve business breakthroughs across multiple categories and clients," Wang said.

Solid base



A construction worker from China Railway 24th Bureau Group monitors a crane in the middle of cement pouring for the concrete base of the Tenglong Avenue bridge in Changzhou, Jiangsu province, on Friday. The project will serve as a vital thoroughfare in Changzhou, and is designed to enhance connections between its south and north regions while promoting integrated development. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Q&A WITH CEO

Editor's Note: This year marks a critical milestone as China concludes its 14th Five-Year Plan. To help in assessing the success of the process, we have asked multinational executives to share with our readers their insights about their business achievements in the past few years and further expectations in the years to come.

Embracing latest tech to fuel growth



Xu Xin
Chairman of GE Energy
Investment (China) Co Ltd



Tetsuro Homma
Executive Vice-President of
Panasonic



Malu Nachreiner
Head of the Region Asia for the
Crop Science Division of Bayer



Zhuang Ye
VP of Baker Hughes North Asia
GeoZone

Q1 What are your expectations for the ongoing two sessions? Do you expect any specific policy measures for further deepening reforms and expanding high-standard opening-up? What more should China do to create a more enabling business environment for foreign investors?

XU: For multinational corporations, the two sessions serve as a crucial window into understanding China's political landscape, economic dynamics and social development. GE Vernova looks forward to seeing more signals of high-standard opening-up, which will drive further market openings and continuous optimization of the business environment in China. We expect to see policies that encourage greater participation of multinational corporations in China's ambitious dual-carbon goals. GE Vernova is rooted in China, actively empowers China's energy transition and is involved in China's energy development. China is an important market for GE Vernova and an integral part of the company's business. China has been and will continue to be one of the most important markets for GE Vernova.

HOMMA: I look forward to seeing more specific policy measures on deepening reforms and increasing openness. I have also noticed that China recently released the "2025 Action Plan for Stabilizing Foreign Investment", which includes the requirement to fully lift restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing sector. For areas not on the negative list for foreign investment, management will be strictly enforced to ensure equal treatment of domestic and foreign investments. It shows China's determination to further improve the business environment. China's reinstatement of visa-free entry for Japanese citizens will further promote bilateral economic relations. In addition, the economic measures being implemented by the Chinese government, such as subsidies for exchanging old items for new ones, are showing results. I hope that additional economic measures will be steadily implemented in the future.

NACHREINER: One factor that gives us significant momentum in China is the recent announcements from the government regarding its openness to foreign investment. We have heard and seen how eager the Chinese government is to welcome foreign companies, which creates a positive environment for collaboration and growth. This is what makes us very excited. We have seen this trend of opening-up for foreigners happening in every single industry. While we know there is still a way to go especially in agriculture, we are eager to explore the opportunities that we can partner and bring innovation in the biotech space. Bayer is an innovation-driven company and a global leader in biotechnology, and we firmly believe we can introduce the innovation and products to China that will ultimately benefit Chinese farmers and agriculture in the country.

ZHUANG: Baker Hughes has been rooted in the Chinese mainland market for more than 40 years and has always been optimistic about the long-term positive fundamentals of China's economic development. We will continue to cultivate the Chinese market and hope to understand the development of China's economy through the two sessions, including the Chinese government's views on economic growth, economic growth targets and content related to high-quality development. To further strengthen R&D cooperation with the national oil corporations, Baker Hughes expands smart manufacturing and improves cross-sector data-sharing frameworks to ensure that foreign companies fully contribute to innovation and sustainable development goals.

Q2 "New quality productive forces" is widely seen as key to helping China achieve industrial upgrade and "high-quality development". How can your company help cultivate such forces in China?

XU: New quality productive forces are essential for China's industrial upgrade and high-quality development, and GE Vernova is well-positioned to contribute to this goal in several key ways. China's robust push for renewable energy has revealed vast potential to GE Vernova. For example, GE Vernova is exploring the application of new fuels like hydrogen and enhancing our turbines' hydrogen combustion capabilities. This innovation not only supports China's dual-carbon goals, but also addresses national energy security by reducing reliance on imported natural gas. Given China's large-scale renewable energy growth, GE Vernova believes that China has the potential to lead in the large-scale application of green hydrogen, achieving "leapfrog development". We aim to constantly improve productivity while driving low-carbon transition with technological innovation.

HOMMA: China's development of new quality productive forces is beneficial to long-term economic stability, with technological innovation being the most crucial element. China's leading technologies and concepts in areas such as IoT, AI, electric vehicles and solar cells, as well as other sustainable energy technologies, will all contribute to the development of new quality productive forces. Panasonic has closely kept pace with China's development. In recent years, Chinese teams have been responsible for the development, manufacturing and sales of home appliances and residential equipment in China. As the country continues to promote local technological innovation, Panasonic is contributing to the advancement of new quality productive forces in China. We hope that the bases of foreign-invested enterprises in China can also be recognized as an integral part of the country's supply chain.

NACHREINER: My understanding of new quality productive forces in agriculture is to drive agriculture by scientific and technological innovation. When it comes to innovation, I would like to highlight two key projects. The first is the Drone Plus program, a digital tool designed to help farmers make better decisions regarding drone applications. This initiative involves not only farmers but also partners, providing us with an opportunity to engage more closely with farmers and assist them in their operations. The second project is the Better Life Farming initiative, which is specifically tailored to smallholder farmers in China. We understand the significance of smallholder farming for the country and last year we launched 50 Better Life Farming centers. We aim to continue expanding this initiative by providing not only solutions and products, but also facilitating knowledge transfer to help farmers improve their practices and produce more sustainably.

ZHUANG: Under the background of carbon neutrality, the global energy transformation has entered a stage of accelerated advancement. Its core is to promote the development of renewable energy and ultimately achieve a transition from a fossil energy system to a green, sustainable and renewable energy system. Baker Hughes' work unlocks the ability for technology, digital solutions and sustainable energy to power China's industrial upgrading while capturing and cutting emissions, and maximizing efficiency, productivity and reliability. It provides practical solutions for collaborating with Chinese partners on cutting-edge technologies such as geothermal drilling and training local talent in AI and green tech through partnerships with Chinese universities and vocational institutes.

Q3 DeepSeek has been a buzzword and surprised the world starting this year. AI technology has been deeply integrated with various industries around the world. What opportunities do you foresee for your business from AI technology? What's your view on China's ability to sustain innovation in breakthrough technologies in the coming years?

XU: As demand for AI computing power surges, so does the electricity consumption of data centers. This trend creates a unique opportunity for the gas turbine industry, which can provide reliable and efficient power needed to support these data centers. Gas power, with its flexibility, low carbon footprint and stability, is well-positioned to support the opportunities presented by AI, especially considering that "the end of computing power is electricity". China has shown strong potential for sustained innovation in breakthrough technologies. GE Vernova looks forward to leveraging global wisdom and experience while partnering with local stakeholders to drive low-carbon operations, invest in innovation and foster collaboration across the entire value chain of the energy industry.

HOMMA: It is evident that China is actively promoting the development of the digital economy and has launched the "AI Plus" action plan. This strategic initiative suggests that traditional industries are on the brink of a profound transformation driven by digital advancements and the application of artificial intelligence. The transition from traditional factory models to smart factories, and from basic processing and manufacturing to an era of digital and intelligent integration, is accelerating rapidly. Generative AI offers us more business opportunities. Panasonic's largest overseas software R&D base in Dalian, Liaoning province is continuously strengthening its development in AI, focusing on applying AI to products. Additionally, Panasonic employees are also embracing the use of AI in their work. We are now offering a trial version of the DeepSeek AI service to employees on the Chinese mainland to help improve their job performance.

NACHREINER: China has truly established itself as a key player in the realm of innovation as the recent progress of AI technology shows. We have witnessed how various industries in China are actively occupying the space of R&D by introducing innovations across different segments. This dynamic environment is something that greatly attracts us. Bayer believes that as a country becomes increasingly recognized as a power in the R&D arena, we can engage in meaningful partnerships. By combining our R&D and innovation efforts, we ultimately benefit farmers and consumers in China, creating a win-win situation for everyone involved. We definitely see China as a valuable R&D partner — a country and a hub for innovation that can provide customers and consumers with greater opportunities, alternatives and new ways of doing things.

ZHUANG: China's innovation ecosystem — supported by world-class talent, policy agility and massive data resources — positions it to lead in AI-driven energy solutions. Baker Hughes is an energy technology company that provides solutions for energy and industrial customers worldwide. Over the years, it has stood out from many competitors with its high-end technological advantages. Today we are leveraging decades of assets experience, a unique combination of physical-based models, advanced analytics, AI and machine learning to deliver actionable insights for critical assets, processes and systems. At the same time, we plan to work with Chinese tech firms and startups to co-develop scalable tools, ensuring China remains a global innovation powerhouse.

Q4 Driving domestic consumption is one of the top priorities for China to spur economic growth this year. How do you see China's potential to drive a consumption-led impetus for the economy? How will that affect your company's profitability this year?

XU: GE Vernova is optimistic about China's potential to drive a consumption-led impetus for the economy. China's commitment to energy transition and the expansion of its renewable energy infrastructure create significant opportunities for companies like ours. Additionally, the growth in emerging sectors such as data centers and AI, which require reliable and efficient power solutions, aligns well with our capabilities. GE Vernova built a strong foundation in 2024 with solid growth, significant margin expansion and cash generation. We also hope that the government will continue to introduce policies for energy production and consumption enterprises, which can allow energy companies to benefit and improve their profitability.

HOMMA: China has introduced a series of measures to stimulate domestic demand and promote consumption. For example, the trade-in policy is not just to boost consumption, but to enhance the value of products in the contexts where consumers use them. In other words, the trade-in policy may guide consumers toward energy-saving and smart products, providing new value to their lives. I believe that the trade-in policy can create added value for our products, deeply explore customer needs, and presents significant opportunities for us. The implementation of national subsidy policies has significantly boosted Panasonic's home appliance sales in China. Panasonic's refrigerator sales in China increased more than 60 percent from September to December 2024 compared with the same period of 2023, while washing machine sales increased by 80 percent year-on-year.

NACHREINER: China is the second-largest market for Bayer Crop Science in Asia. The country is a market with significant growth potential that we believe will remain relevant in the long term. This is our assessment of China, especially given the critical role agriculture plays in the Chinese economy. We see numerous opportunities for the industry and for players like us to contribute to the country's growth agenda. Bayer Crop Science believes that by establishing our presence here, we can tap into the Chinese domestic market and support farmers and the agricultural industry in achieving greater success.

ZHUANG: Final consumption expenditure contributed 44.5 percent to economic growth in 2024, driving GDP growth by 2.2 percentage points, demonstrating that consumption has become a key link and important engine for unblocking domestic circulation, as well as a fundamental force for driving economic growth. Global oil demand is expected to continue to maintain a relatively strong growth trend in 2025, and the recovery of aviation and road transportation will continue to support oil use. Consumption is expected to become a highlight of China's economic growth in 2025. China's focus on quality consumption — such as demand for cleaner energy — directly aligns with our strengths. This, among other trends, will drive demand for our integrated services and improve profitability.

Q5 As China continues to pursue high-quality development along a Chinese path to modernization, what opportunities do you anticipate for your business as this process gains more traction? Will you increase investment in China in the coming years? How will you further expand your footprint in China?

XU: China has always been an important market for GE Vernova and we are looking forward to continuing our commitment to the country. Currently, gas power is one of the key areas we are focusing on in the Chinese market. Gas power serves as a vital support for the construction of China's new power systems. The development of renewable energy in China has created significant opportunities for gas power. Hydrogen co-firing in gas turbines is not only a catalyst for achieving China's dual carbon goals, but also a viable pathway for national energy security. We believe that China has the potential to lead in the large-scale application of green hydrogen, achieving "leapfrog development". We will continue to invest in the Chinese market, assist in constructing a new power system and move together toward a low-carbon future.

HOMMA: The third phase of the factory of Prime Planet Energy Dalian Co Ltd, a joint venture between Panasonic and Toyota, has been completed and began mass production at the end of 2023. This factory primarily produces prismatic batteries for hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Subsequently, Panasonic aims to expand its business to cover pure electric vehicles. The Panasonic electronic materials factory in Suzhou, which focuses on the semiconductor field, held its groundbreaking ceremony in October. The capacitors needed for AI chips produced by Panasonic in Guangzhou are currently in short supply. This year, Panasonic will also expand its electronic materials factory in Fengxian district, Shanghai, with plans to start production in 2027.

NACHREINER: China has huge market potential and investing in China means being able to capitalize on this huge market to fuel the company's business growth. One key driver for us in the medium to long term is our seed industry. We believe this represents the biggest opportunity for Bayer in China. Besides, our investment in China goes beyond commercial. Regarding our product supply center, our plant in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, inaugurated in January 2025, is brand new and represents an investment of 40 million euros (\$43.3 million). We are very excited and proud of this product supply facility as it will support our operations not only in China, but also across Asia. Second, in our corn seed joint venture in China, China Seed International, we are investing around 12 percent of our annual turnover each year. This consistent investment in R&D, new varieties and products tailored to the Chinese market amounted to approximately 100 million euros by 2023.

ZHUANG: The long-term stability of China's economic growth will help the world economy recover, and China's high-quality development will also promote global common development and prosperity. We expect the "China engine" to continue to show strong momentum, especially in terms of openness, innovation and green development, and create more opportunities for common development for the world. China remains a cornerstone of Baker Hughes' global strategy and we are committed to expanding our presence in the country. Baker Hughes will continue to invest in energy transformation, digital integration, R&D and maintenance bases. Baker Hughes is proud to support China's dual goals of energy security and carbon neutrality. By blending global expertise with local innovation, we aim to be a trusted partner in powering sustainable progress at scale.