

Hats off to Xizang

Designer incorporates Tibetan aesthetics into modern fashion CHINA, PAGE 6



Tariffs likely to jeopardize US youths' health WORLD, PAGE 10



Footprints on the land

Expats explore Chinese culture through a journey of discovery LIFE, PAGE 15

# CHINA DAILY

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## Venting their ire



Protesters hold placards that read "Dismiss Yoon Suk-yeol immediately" on Monday during a demonstration against the impeached South Korean President in the capital Seoul, ahead of his impeachment verdict. JUNG YEON-JE / AFP

## NBS: Economy on track to sustain recovery momentum

By OUYANG SHIJIA ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

China's retail sales and investment growth accelerated in the January-February period, official data showed on Monday, signaling a strong start to the year and offering an early boost for the country's goal of achieving an annual growth target of around 5 percent.

Officials and economists said the better-than-expected demand and supply performance indicates the economy gained steam in the first two months, setting the stage for a robust performance in the first quarter, which will also be driven by a steady recovery in domestic demand.

"Compared with the figures in December, we see some moderation in industrial production growth and acceleration in fixed-asset investment and retail sales growth," said Lu Ting, chief China economist at Nomura. "Since last year was a leap year with one more day in February, the year-on-year growth data might have been a bit higher if adjusted accordingly."

Retail sales — a key measurement of consumer spending — increased 4 percent year-on-year in the January-February period, after a 3.7 percent rise in December, according to data released on Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics.

China's value-added industrial output grew 5.9 percent year-on-year in the first two months, after a 6.2 percent increase in December, while fixed-asset investment grew 4.1 percent in the January-February period compared with a 3.2 percent rise during the whole of 2024.

"The data supports our forecast of 5 percent year-on-year GDP growth for the first quarter. We expect the country to step up supportive measures after midyear to try and achieve the around 5 percent GDP growth target," Lu said.

Addressing a news conference on Monday in Beijing, NBS spokesman Fu Linghui said that China's economy is on track to sustain the momentum for recovery this year. The economy will likely get off to a steady start in the first quarter, thanks to the continued recovery trend, the gradual improvement in domestic demand, macro policies taking effect gradually and the improvement in market confidence and expectations, Fu said.

Stimulating domestic demand

and boosting consumption are among China's top priorities this year as it seeks to buffer the impact of the United States' tariff hikes.

On Sunday, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a special action plan to boost consumption. According to the plan, the country will ramp up its support for trade-in programs for consumer goods and utilize more fiscal funds to empower local authorities in expanding these initiatives.

In its 2025 Government Work Report, delivered during the annual two sessions, China announced that it will double ultra-long-term special treasury bonds earmarked for its trade-in program to 300 billion yuan (\$41.48 billion) this year.

Speaking at a separate news conference held in Beijing on Monday, Li Chunlin, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said the first allotment of 81 billion yuan had been distributed among local governments in early January.

Under the trade-in program, retail sales of new energy passenger vehicles nationwide reached around

1.34 million units in the first two months, while sales of home appliances with high energy efficiency totaled 24.1 billion yuan during the same period, marking a year-on-year increase of 26 percent and 36 percent, respectively, Li said.

Guo Chunli, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Macroeconomic Research, said, "China's consumption is projected to see a robust recovery this year, with existing policies taking effect gradually and more stimulus measures in the pipeline."

Concerted efforts to stabilize the capital market and reverse declines in the property sector are expected to anchor asset valuations and improve consumers' willingness to spend, she said.

Guo noted that China is extending its program for large-scale equipment renewals and trade-in deals for consumer goods and expanding the scope to more consumption fields. New types of consumption related to the debut economy, the ice and snow economy, and the silver economy are becoming new consumption momentum, she said.

Tan Guoling contributed to this story.

## XI'S VISION | HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

# New engines set to drive innovation

Nation's support for cutting-edge tech to help develop advanced productive forces

By MA SI mast@chinadaily.com.cn

China's latest commitment to advancing cutting-edge technologies — including quantum computing, artificial intelligence and 6G — will solidify its position as a global leader in innovation, and the strategic push will enable the country to navigate global uncertainties while sustaining its competitive advantage, experts and business executives said.

Inside Underscoring the importance of securing technological breakthroughs and efficiently commercializing them, they said that China's push for new quality productive forces will create vast opportunities for domestic and international businesses.

Their comments follow President Xi Jinping's remark that technological innovation and industrial innovation constitute the fundamental pathways for developing new quality productive forces.

Xi made the remark when participating in a deliberation in Beijing on March 5 with his fellow deputies from Jiangsu province during the third session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's top legislature. China's 2025 Government Work Report also said the nation "will establish a mechanism to increase funding for industries of the future and foster industries such as bio-manufacturing, quantum technology, embodied AI and 6G technology."

Wang Yiming, vice-chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, said, "China's economy has entered a critical period of transitioning between old and new growth drivers." He said future-oriented technologies are not only at the forefront of innovation, but are also strategic pillars for reshaping industrial competition and boosting productivity.

"Their significance lies in both upgrading traditional industries and securing a leading position in emerging sectors," Wang said. Guo Guoping, deputy director of the Key Lab of Quantum Information at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said he was deeply impressed by China's support for quantum technology.

He compared quantum technology to an aircraft, with quantum computing serving as its "engine", providing exponential computational power for fields such as national defense, biomedicine and AI.

"Quantum computing is transitioning from the lab to industrialization. China has become the third country in the world capable of delivering quantum computers, after Canada and the United States, positioning Beijing in the global first tier of quantum research. But challenges remain in some areas," Guo said.

He stressed the need for increased investment in basic research and advocated leveraging China's advantages in mobilizing resources to tackle core technological challenges.

China's research and development spending climbed to 3.6 trillion yuan (\$497 billion) in 2024, an 8 percent year-on-year increase, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. Of this total, funding allocated to basic research accounted for 6.91 percent of the R&D budget, underscoring heightened investment in foundational scientific exploration.

Meanwhile, more than 570 Chinese industrial companies have made it to the global top 2,500 companies in terms of R&D investment, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

Xu Lijin, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the nation's top political advisory body, and chairman of Wuhu Robot Industry Development Group, said that embodied AI, as highlighted in the Government Work Report, refers to AI that is integrated into physical hardware such as robots. It represents a significant leap in intelligent systems capable of interacting with and adapting to their environments.

"Robotics and AI are dual engines driving economic and social development in the era of global digital transformation," Xu said.

Qiao Hong, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said, "Over the past three years, China has accounted for more than half of the global installation of industrial robots, and its lunar exploration robots have successfully returned lunar soil samples."

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## Strong pillars secure China's growth amid headwinds

WORLD WATCH By Ishrat Husain

for a mature economy like China to shift gear for high-quality momentum. It is ironic that other advanced economies achieving 2 to 3 percent growth rate is celebrated but China's 5 percent growth is dismissed as evidence of underperformance.

Today's China is the world's largest trading nation, importing and exporting almost \$6 trillion worth of merchandise. It is also the world's factory with 30 percent of the global manufacturing capacity, exceeding that of the United States, Germany, France and Japan combined. China has already become the world leader in solar panels, batteries, wind turbines and electric vehicles to mitigate carbon emissions.

China's success in countering challenges has been buttressed by strong foundational pillars on which the economy is built, marked by flexibility and agility to quickly adapt to changing circumstances.

See Success, page 3

## UTOPIA FORGED BY WOMEN A MODERN MODEL OF HARMONY

Mosuo ethnic people in Yunnan's 'Shangri-La' boost tourism, maintain matriarchal culture

By HOU CHENCHEN and LI YINGQING in Lijiang, Yunnan

In-depth

In a society where women hold the reins, what it is like to be a man?

On the shores of Lugu Lake in Yunnan province, visitors from around the globe have come to explore that question in a wooden house in Luoshui village, Lijiang.

Geze Duoji, 54, a member of the Mosuo ethnic people who number more than 50,000, sits in what is traditionally called a "grandmother's room", sharing stories of his group's unique culture and how it has evolved in modern society.

Here, in one of the world's last matrilineal societies, women lead the way — and relationships follow a path unlike anywhere else on the planet.

"We practice a system called zouhun, or walking marriage," Geze tells the visitors, adding that for Mosuo people relationships are based purely on mutual affection, free of economic or social pressures.

See Mosuo, page 2

## Harrowing aftermath



Relatives and survivors walk outside a hospital in the town of Kocani, North Macedonia, on Sunday, following a massive fire in a nightclub in the early hours of the day. The fire tore through the packed club during a live concert, leaving 59 people dead and more than 150 injured. VISAR KRYEZIU / AP See story, page 10

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# PAGE TWO



## Mosuo: Women nurture, adapt to progress

From page 1

"In a walking marriage, men visit their partners at night. They arrive after the woman's family has gone to sleep, usually around midnight, and leave before dawn to return to their own family."

In Mosuo society, extended families are centered around grandmothers, forming tight-knit households where belongings are shared equally among all. Both men and women take responsibility for raising all the children in the family, irrespective of who the parents are, creating a collective approach to child care.

Children inherit their mother's surname, and decisions about family planning, such as how many children to have and when, are primarily made by the women, often in consultation with other family members.

"Our language doesn't even have a word for aunt," Geze tells his audience. "Your mother's sisters are all your mothers. It doesn't matter who gave birth to you."

Thanks to this unique social structure, Geze said, male-female relationships are free from possessiveness, jealousy, or concerns about economic status. In fact, Mosuo society has virtually no widows, orphans, war or crime, he said. It is a utopia sought by Westerners sometimes compared to the mythical "Shangri-La".

### Looking for 'Shangri-La'

Christiane Marchais, a tour guide from the French cultural travel agency Intermedes in Paris, has chosen Lijiang as one of her top destinations for exploring China's ethnic groups. In October, she led a French team to delve into the rich cultural tapestry of Southwest China.

"Yunnan is a melting pot of ethnic cultures and a popular destination for Western travelers. We came here in search of the legendary Shangri-La and to explore the mysterious ethnic cultures," Marchais said.

The concept of "Shangri-La" was popularized by British novelist James Hilton in his 1933 novel *Lost Horizon*. Hilton described a small, harmonious village nestled in the Kunlun Mountains where the inhabitants lived in eternal happiness and youth. This mythical place has since become synonymous with an earthly paradise.

In China, the Greater Shangri-La Cultural Circle spans the tri-border area of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces and the Xizang autonomous region. Lijiang, a city within this



Top: Tourists take a boat ride on Lugu Lake in Lijiang, Yunnan province, in December. GONG JINZU / XINHUA Above left: A woman and her granddaughter introduce traditional woven textiles in a Mosuo village by Lugu Lake. Above right: Villagers watch a traditional Mosuo performance during an intangible cultural heritage show in the village. PHOTOS BY WANG LEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

region, has emerged as a key destination for both domestic and international tourists.

Before the 1990s, the domestic tourism market was virtually nonexistent, Geze recalls. Those who did visit tended to be academics and photographers looking to gain some insight into the region's highly unusual culture. These visitors were primarily foreign backpackers and official delegations.

"Many female European tourists were amazed by the lifestyle of Mosuo women, and they considered it a true form of feminism. Some even said they would like to replicate a Mosuo-style matriarchal village back in the United Kingdom," Geze said.

Initially, the Mosuo people were unfamiliar with monetary transactions and relied on a barter system. In the early days, visitors would come to the village, and the Mosuo would provide food and accommodation, but get little in return.

This resulted in village resources being depleted, Geze said. Local governments eventually intervened and established a system of fees, and a regulated tourism industry was born.

A portion of the 3 billion yuan (\$423 million) earmarked for tourism development is being allocated to preserving the Mosuo culture. The economic push is expected to create jobs for locals and markedly lift living standards.

Today, Geze's family hosts several tour groups daily for "Mosuo home visits", allowing tourists to see firsthand how Mosuo people live.

"From complete dependence on the land to gradually moving away from it, the transformation in lifestyle has brought more choices and freedom. Although climate affects crop yields, the income from tourism ensures a stable livelihood," Geze said.

### Green development

"According to the legends we are brought up with, anyone sully the waters of Lake Lugu or felling the trees around it faces the eternal wrath of the mountains and gods," Geze said.

Lugu Lake, revered by the Mosuo people as a holy lake, holds a sacred place in their hearts and culture. For generations, the Mosuo have lived in harmony with the lake, guided by a deep sense of reverence.

However, the 1990s brought a wave of change that threatened this delicate balance. The rapid growth of tourism, while economically beneficial, led to increasing pollution and ecological degradation. The lake, once pristine, began to suffer under the weight of human activity.

In response, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces have collaborated to protect and manage Lugu Lake through the introduction of a protection convention.

As of 2024, significant progress has been made. According to the Lijiang authorities, 17 waterfront platforms and six piers have been dismantled and those areas of the lake restored to their natural state. In addition, 160 residential inns within the 80-meter ecological red line have been removed, freeing up 118,900 square meters of land.

This land has been repurposed for the construction of ecological corridors and wetland buffer zones, marking a major shift from "human encroachment" to "ecological restoration".

To ensure long-term sustainability, local authorities have also implemented strict regulations on lake activities and surrounding business-



es. Boating zones have been designated, and fuel-powered, motorized and metal boats are now prohibited from entering the lake.

These measures have paid off. Lugu Lake's water quality now consistently meets Class 1 standards, making it one of China's cleanest freshwater lakes, with underwater visibility reaching up to 12 meters.

Geze, a lifelong resident, has noticed the change. "Now, I can see the sea vegetable flowers (*Ottelia acuminata*) waving on the lake again, just like when I was a child," he said. The return of this rare aquatic plant, a type of water lily, is a testament to the lake's ecological recovery.

With the environment on the mend, green tourism has flourished around the lake. The local government has introduced architectural planning measures to preserve 127 Mosuo traditional houses and 25 ancient villages.

Efforts to promote Mosuo culture include supporting regional intangible cultural heritage inheritors and organizing traditional festivals. A range of cultural tourism products, such as Mosuo highland red rice, preserved pork, and handmade textiles, have also been developed to enrich the visitor experience.

In 2023, the number of tourists entering the scenic area from Lijiang reached 1.58 million, a 176 percent increase from the previous year. Tourism revenue soared to 92 million yuan, up 232 percent.

Local residents have reaped the benefits, with per capita annual income rising from 829 yuan in 2003 to 34,500 yuan in 2023 — a more than 40-fold increase, according to local tourism authorities.

Today, most Mosuo villagers work in tourism-related roles, from hospitality and boating to traditional

glass," he said, adding that his 2025 renovation plan proposes a compromise — preserving external woodwork while modernizing interiors. "Even as we meet customer demand, remaining true to our cultural heritage is paramount."

Yet transformation runs deeper than architecture.

While half of Mosuo families retain local traditions — where spouses live separately with their maternal clans — the other half now embrace nuclear family units. Even his children have adopted Han-style wedding ceremonies, Dashi said.

Ciren Duoji, director of the Mosuo Museum in Lijiang, said that Mosuo family structures are diversifying, a process that began in the 1950s. Policies back then encouraged monogamy, and outsiders portrayed walking marriage customs as "lagging behind the times".

However, the economic growth in the 1980s brought an unexpected revival in interest in old matrilineal ways.

"When allowed to choose freely after experiencing different models, many Mosuo consciously returned to walking marriages as both modern and culturally resonant," wrote Duma Lamu of Lijiang Culture and Tourism College in a research article.

Dashi, the hotel owner, said: "Modernity's pull grows stronger as tourism wealth sends Mosuo youth flocking to cities. Many settle outside and start nuclear families."

But he remains optimistic, saying: "With prosperity comes renewed interest in preserving roots. Cultural conservation and development aren't enemies — they're partners."

Ciren said: "Today's youth have bold visions, and society increasingly embraces diverse marital choices. While elders may have worries, most choose understanding over opposition."

As sunlight dances on Lugu Lake, Dashi's lodge stands as a metaphor for his people's navigation of modernity. Within its timber walls, Wi-Fi routers will soon nestle beside ancestral carvings — a testament to the Mosuo's enduring truth: that progress need not erase tradition, so long as cultural codes evolve with care.

"Whether in matrilineal compounds or urban apartments, the Mosuo compass remains fixed on mutual support," Ciren said.

"Our culture's essence isn't about household structure, but about how we lean on each other to find happiness in changing tides."

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Left: Green tourism has flourished around Lugu Lake in recent years. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Right: An inheritor of Mosuo traditional costume-making weaves cloth in a village by the Lugu Lake. WANG LEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## TOP NEWS

## Calm urged as US, Houthis vow attacks

UN warns of grave risk to already dire situation in Yemen after targeting of Red Sea fleet

By CUI HAIPEI in Dubai, UAE and MIKE GU in Hong Kong

The international community has expressed concerns over both the United States and the Houthi group vowing escalation after US President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes on Yemen, which has so far left 53 dead, including five children.

The Houthis claimed on Monday to have twice attacked a US fleet within 24 hours, calling it retaliation for Saturday's US strikes.

According to a US official, the Houthis did fire drones and at least one missile in response to the US attack.

Meanwhile, China on Monday called for dialogue and de-escalation of tensions in the Red Sea.

"China opposes any action that escalates the situation in the Red Sea," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a news conference in Beijing.

"The reasons behind the situation in the Red Sea and the Yemen issue are complex and should be properly resolved through dialogue and negotiation."

In a statement, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for "utmost restraint and a cessation of all military activities", while warning of "grave risks" to the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen.

"Any additional escalation could exacerbate regional tensions, fuel cycles of retaliation that may further destabilize Yemen and the region, and pose grave risks to the already dire humanitarian situation in the country," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

The warning came after the Houthi Supreme Political Council — the group's highest governing authority — vowed a "painful" retaliation, warning the US attacks as support for Israel and warning they would "drag the situation to a more severe and painful level".

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea initially said they had launched 18 missiles and a drone at the "aircraft carrier USS *Harry Truman* and its accompanying warships" in the Red Sea, hours later claiming to have fired a second round.

In a televised address, Houthi leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi said US cargo ships would be targeted "as long as it continues its aggression". He called for a million Yemenis to march on Monday in defiance. "If they continue their aggression, we will continue the escalation," he said.

The US airstrikes came days after the Houthis said they would resume their attacks on Israeli-linked ships until the crossings of the Gaza Strip were reopened and aid allowed in.

Washington has vowed to keep striking Yemen until the Houthis stop attacking Israeli-linked ships on the Red Sea, with Trump warning he will use "overwhelming lethal force".

US National Security Adviser Mike Waltz told ABC News that Sat-

China opposes any action that escalates the situation in the Red Sea. The reasons behind the situation in the Red Sea and the Yemen issue are complex and should be properly resolved through dialogue and negotiation."

Mao Ning, spokeswoman of China's Foreign Ministry

urday's strikes "targeted multiple Houthi leaders and took them out". Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth vowed an "unrelenting" missile campaign until the Houthi attacks stop.

Saturday's attacks on the capital Sanaa as well as Saada, Al-Bayda and Radaa killed 53 people and wounded 98, said Anees al-Asbahi, spokesman for the Houthi-run health authorities, late on Sunday, updating an earlier toll.

Houthi media reported more explosions on Sunday night, accusing the US of targeting a cotton ginning factory in the western region of Hodeidah as well as the *Galaxy Leader*, an Israeli ship captured more than a year ago.

Speaking on CBS News' *Face the Nation* program, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said: "There's no way the ... Houthis would have the ability to do this kind of thing unless they had support from Iran. And so this was a message to Iran: Don't keep supporting them."

In response, Hossein Salami, the top commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, said the Houthis made their own decisions, and his country was in no way involved. "We warn our enemies that Iran will respond decisively and destructively if they carry out their threats," he told state media.

Given the existing high tensions, these attacks — especially if the US suspects that Iran is continuing to assist the Houthis — will bring Tehran and Washington closer to confrontation, said Danny Citrinovic, a nonresident fellow with the Atlantic Council's Middle East Programs.

In a telephone call with Hegseth on Sunday, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani emphasized that de-escalation and dialogue are the most effective paths to resolving crises in a region as sensitive and vital as the Middle East.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called Rubio to urge an "immediate cessation of the use of force and the importance for all sides to engage in political dialogue", his ministry said.

*Agencies and Xinhua contributed to this story.*

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## Laughter amid hardship



Children use discarded iceboxes as makeshift rafts on Sunday after heavy rain caused a river to overflow, submerging several houses in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. TIMUR MATAHARI / AFP

## Success: Economy adaptable to changes

From page 1

A country once heavily reliant on coal power has become the world leader in renewable energy in just a few years. People all over the world are left impressed by the marvel of infrastructure of high and durable quality that has transformed China, connecting various distant parts of the country into a unified market economy, and making the flow of goods competitive.

The real story is its silent revolution in building human capital. The qualities of discipline, entrepreneurship, effort and strong ethics already inherent in the working-age population have been fortified by investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics at the formal school and university levels, while developing technical and vocational skills. This combination of high-end scientists and engineers working with well-trained and skilled shop floor technicians has brought about the revolution.

Just to cite one figure: Until 2000, the United States produced more PhDs in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. By 2017 the two countries equaled the number but by 2025 China produced 70,000 PhDs while the US turned out only 35,000. In all, about 6 million young Chinese trained abroad, mostly in the US, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, and then returned home between 1978 and 2021, according to data from the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think tank. Some of them were funded to set up their own laboratories under a govern-

ment support program. Data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization showed over 1 million Chinese youths are studying abroad, making China the world's largest source of students.

Chinese universities such as Tsinghua University and Peking University are now rated among the world's top universities. The number of STEM graduates produced annually is 5 million out of 12 million students. The team members at DeepSeek, a Chinese artificial intelligence firm that has shaken Silicon Valley, were all trained in Chinese universities. Investment in research and development — among the highest in the world — is beginning to pay off and will continue to provide the edge to China.

China's State system is run by technocrats and highly educated officials who are selected on merit and their promotions are based on performance and output on the job. The unique feature of the governance system in China is that policies are made at the central level but implementation takes place at the local level. Greater devolution of power, authority and resources have led to efficient allocation and utilization of resources. State guidance at the macro level and market mechanisms at the micro level explain rapid growth spurts and technological uptake in such a short span of time. Fast decision-making, tight cost controls and first-rate management characterize the Chinese governance system.

China creates the framework for the market and promotes entrepreneurship, protects private property rights and ensures the

economic actors contribute toward the planned goals.

Intangible goods — systems, rules and policies — increase production efficiency, promote competition, facilitate specialization, protect the environment, and reduce risks and uncertainty. The private sector accounted for nearly all the growth in employment and two-thirds of overall growth between 1978 and 2012. The share of State-owned enterprises has declined from two-thirds in 2000 to one-third. Local governments improve local business environment to allow village enterprises to compete in attracting investment and developing infrastructure.

Strong integration with the global economy and opening-up to foreign investors have produced a cadre of highly competent professionals, especially managerial and technical professionals who have incorporated best global practices in their operations. A high savings rate has made it possible to invest in large infrastructure projects and raise productivity. The large and growing middle-income group with aspirations for global goods and services is a positive for China even if international trade and capital flows are disrupted.

These foundational pillars will enable China to meet fierce global trade turbulence and other challenges in future with fortitude.

*The author is a former governor of State Bank of Pakistan, former adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan, and former chief economist for East Asia and Pacific at the World Bank. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*

## Innovation: AI-powered 6G unlocks potential

From page 1

However, challenges remain. For instance, high-end sensors like precision lidar, short for light detection and ranging, still rely on imports, and domestic alternatives lag in accuracy and stability, experts added.

Zhang Li, president of the China Center for Information Industry Development, said: "Leveraging its robust and comprehensive industrial ecosystem, China creates expansive real-world testing grounds and vast market opportunities for technological innovation. This infrastructure not only accelerates the development of emerging industries, but also provides a resilient foundation for nurturing future-oriented sectors poised to redefine global markets."

As the world's largest manufacturing country, China ranks first globally in terms of output for more than 40 percent of the world's 500 major industrial products, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed.

Industrial innovation must remain rooted in the real economy, Zhang said, noting that China's economy "has historically relied on the real economy, and it is through this foundation that it will continue to progress."

Ding Haiyu, deputy head of the China Mobile Research Institute, said that 6G "has entered its tech standardization phase this year, as we aim to commercialize the technology around 2030. AI-powered 6G will unlock significant opportunities."

Zheng Yongnian, dean of the School of Public Policy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), said, "To cultivate new quality productive forces, a country should prioritize three foundational pillars — advancing fundamental scientific research, bridging the gap between theoretical discoveries and applied technological solutions, and fostering a financial ecosystem capable of sustaining innovation-driven growth."

"Expanding institutional opening-up is the strategic guarantee for nurturing new quality productive forces," Zheng said.

David Poon, president of Infineon Technologies Greater China, said China's focus on green, low-carbon and high-quality development aligns with the German chipmaker's strengths and opens new growth opportunities.

"With our 'In China, For China' strategy, we plan to increase local production of general-purpose semiconductors to address customer needs regarding supply resilience," Poon said.

## Firms take action on working overtime

By CHENG SI [chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn)

Employees in China may get a chance to take a breath from the grueling "996 work culture", where people work from 9 am to 9 pm, six days a week, after several Chinese companies issued internal reminders to prevent formalistic overtime working and workplace rat race.

The central government has also shown greater determination to regulate the unwholesome "work culture".

In an action plan released recently by the State Council, China's Cabinet, local authorities have been urged to better protect workers' right to rest and tighten supervision of employers' behavior of illegally lengthening employees' working hours.

Before the release of the action plan, several Chinese companies sought to relax their tiring working schedules.

Shenzhen-based drone manufacturer DJI became a trending topic on social media platform Sina Weibo recently after some of its employees posted their experiences of not being allowed to work overtime after 9 pm.

The posts said that DJI's human

resources managers patrolled around the building and asked the employees to leave by 9 pm.

Midea, a home appliance manufacturer, issued an internal notice in late January, asking its staff members to streamline their working patterns. Midea confirmed the existence of the notice, according to Shanghai-based news outlet The Paper.

The group asked the employees not to have meetings or work overtime, reduce the number of work-related WeChat groups and prohibit any formalistic behavior.

As employees have seen increased working hours in recent years, even longer than the length regulated by the nation's Labor Law, their complaints about the unreasonable schedules intensified after the "996 work culture" was promoted by some large companies or industrial titans.

"My colleagues and I usually joke that we get a 'sense of shame' by leaving the office at 6 pm sharp. It has become a stereotype that you are not hardworking if you don't stay very late to work in the office," said Wang Xiaofeng, a telecommunications engineer in Beijing, who works from 9 am to 8 pm and on Saturday every other week.

The 30-year-old said he was happy to see this news and hopes that his company can relax its working schedules, as the job has almost taken all of his time so far. However, he expressed his concerns that it may be hard to quantify the overtime work and overtime fees if an employee has to continue work after returning home.

Figures from the National Bureau of Statistics show that employees at domestic companies have had longer working hours in recent years — reaching 49 hours a week in 2024, up from 47.9 hours in 2022.

However, based on the Labor Law, employees should work no more than eight hours a day and a maximum of 44 hours a week. Employers can lengthen the working day by one hour at most after negotiating with trade unions and employees.

Experts and industry insiders said the measures taken by companies to shorten working hours or optimize working patterns will help protect employees' rights and their physical and psychological health.

"As job seekers' views about careers, labor relations and working patterns have changed in the

new era, employers may find that the employees are losing their passion for or loyalty to the job after being asked to work overtime," said Li Qiang, vice-president of recruitment portal Zhaopin.

Noting that work schedules like "996" have hurt people's working rights, Li Chang'an, a professor at the Academy of China Open Economy Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said that employees find it hard to achieve a work-life balance and may have health or marriage problems because of those unreasonable schedules.

He said that steps taken by these companies to improve their working schedules will help promote high-quality employment, with their working hours being more in line with the national regulations.

"The companies themselves can also improve their attractiveness to workers, as corporate social responsibility and sound protection of workers' right to rest have become an important part of their competitiveness in the market," Li said.

He said he hopes that more companies can adopt a reasonable and humanistic work culture to ease the workload, which can help create harmonious working relationships, expand consumption and increase the marriage rate.



Local residents clean broken glass from the streets on Sunday after overnight airstrikes by the US in Sanaa, Yemen.

MOHAMMED MOHAMMED / XINHUA

## CHINA

# Separatist cyberattack team exposed

Group promoting DPP agenda uses bot accounts to manipulate people

By CUI JIA  
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China's Ministry of State Security on Monday revealed the identities of four senior members of the "Information, Communications and Electronic Force Command" of Taiwan, which serves as the main component of the island's "Taiwan independence" separatist forces tasked with carrying out cyber operations against the Chinese mainland.

ICEFCOM, which was established in June 2017 and was restructured in 2022 as a direct agency under the island's "defense department", has been hiring social hackers and cybersecurity companies as external forces to carry out cyber warfare directives issued by the Democratic Progressive Party authorities engaging in cyber espionage and sabotage activities against the mainland, the ministry said in a post on its official public WeChat account.

The ministry posted the pictures, dates of birth and ID numbers of four key members of ICEFCOM. It warned them that "Taiwan independence" separatist activities are a "path of no return", and urged them to abandon the illusion of "Taiwan independence" separatism and cease criminal cyber activities that divide the country.

The national security agencies will resolutely defend the country's sovereignty, security and development interests. All necessary punitive measures will be taken against the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces, and they will be held accountable for life in accordance with the law.

The ministry said common tactics used by ICEFCOM's cyberattack forces include infiltrating key information infrastructure such as the mainland's water, electricity, gas, heat, communication and camera networks. They have also targeted key units of the Communist Party of China, the central government, the military and enterprises by sending phishing emails and emails with content maligning national reunification.

In addition, the cyberattack forces have gained control of livestreaming platforms, electronic display screens, IP network intercom systems and portal websites by stealing login credentials. In those instances, they inserted videos and images promoting the anti-reunification agenda, the ministry said.

It added that the attackers have been lurking on social media platforms and operating a large number of "bot" accounts, which they use to spread false information to manipulate public opinions and create misunderstandings among residents of the Chinese mainland and Taiwan. They also use the accounts to monitor and suppress dissenters on the island.

Since 2023, under the guise of organizations including "Anonymous 64", they have been spreading false information on social media platforms, actively promoting the DPP authorities' separatist agenda.

But with the extensive use of open-source tools, such attacks can be easily discovered by national security forces. Recently, the national security agencies have traced and seized dozens of cyberattack platforms used by ICEFCOM, foiling their operations and attempts to steal secrets from key sectors on the mainland, the ministry said.

It also reminded internet service providers, operators and users to implement cybersecurity measures, update and upgrade their systems in a timely manner, close technical loopholes, enhance password strength and boost inspections to prevent cyberattacks from "Taiwan independence" separatists.

The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council also condemned Taiwan's cyber forces for continuing efforts to undermine the Chinese mainland's security. Chen Binhua, spokesperson for the office, accused Taiwan's cyber troops of persisting in their actions under the direction of the DPP.

"The unification of Taiwan with the mainland is an irreversible historical trend, while 'Taiwan independence' is a dangerous and misguided path," Chen said.

## From Africa via Hunan



A customs officer conducts a quarantine inspection on an ornamental fish imported from Ethiopia at Changsha Huanghua International Airport in Changsha, Hunan province, on Sunday. It was the first time African ornamental fish had been imported through a port in Hunan. GU PENGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Hong Kong property tycoon, philanthropist Lee Shau-kee dies at 97

By WILLIAM XU in Hong Kong  
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Lee Shau-kee, founder of Hong Kong's Henderson Land Development and one of the city's most successful property businessmen and philanthropists, died on Monday at age 97.

Lee passed away peacefully at dusk, surrounded by his family, according to a statement by Henderson.

Born in 1928 to a merchant family in Shunde, Guangdong province, Lee started his business in Hong Kong in his 20s and established Henderson in 1976.

Lee's decadeslong success in real estate development and investment made him one of the wealthiest people in the world.

In 1996, he was ranked by Forbes as the fourth-richest person globally, with a total fortune of \$12.7 billion.

## Tree bouquet



A tree adorned with giant foam roses stands in the middle of a pedestrian street at the Three Lanes and Seven Alleys area of Fuzhou, Fujian province, on Monday. Thirteen trees were decorated as "bouquets" at the area, with each one consisting of 10 foam flowers, including jasmine, roses, daisies and magnolias. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## PLA ready to 'crush' forces thwarting unity and protect nation's sovereignty

By ZHAO LEI  
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The Eastern Theater Command of China's People's Liberation Army is prepared to "smash" any attempt to challenge the country's national unity and will safeguard its sovereignty, security and interests, its commander said.

Speaking on Friday at a symposium in Beijing marking the 20th anniversary of the Anti-Secession Law, General Lin Xiangyang said the PLA has intensified efforts to modernize its forces and strengthen combat-readiness.

Lin said China's armed forces

have accelerated military reforms, expanded joint exercises and training, and introduced advanced weapons and equipment, bolstering their ability to win informatized and intelligent warfare.

"If 'Taiwan independence' separatists persist in their course and take reckless actions, and if external forces continue to create tension and turmoil across the Taiwan Strait, the PLA, together with the Chinese people, including those in Taiwan, will take all necessary measures to deter and crush them," Lin said.

He added that the PLA has received broad support from the Chinese public in its long-standing

struggle against separatism and foreign interference.

"We are confident and capable of crushing any activities that seek to undermine national unity and split the country," Lin said.

He emphasized that the Eastern Theater Command follows the Communist Party of China's strategy for resolving the Taiwan question and remains on high combat alert, ready to act at any moment.

"We have been building more reliable means and stronger capabilities to make thorough and solid military preparations for the complete reunification of the motherland," he said.

## New robots introduced in Zhejiang to aid flood prevention, real-time alerts

By CHEN YE in Hangzhou  
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Zhejiang province has introduced artificial intelligence-powered water conservancy robots to enhance flood prevention, emergency response and water management, the provincial water resources department announced.

Developed in collaboration with several companies, the robots, named Smart Xiao Yu and Smart Xiao Chuan, incorporate advanced AI functions such as human-machine interaction and intelligent computing. Officials said the initiative reflects Zhejiang's efforts to integrate AI with digital water conservancy platforms.

During flood prevention and emergency operations, the robots act as real-time "think tanks", engaging in multi-round interactions through voice, text and click-and-select methods. By analyzing real-time rainfall, water levels and construction progress, they generate risk warnings and response recommendations.

The robots also serve as data "navigators", allowing personnel to quickly access and analyze dynamic information for informed deci-

sion-making. Their deployment has significantly improved basin forecasting and scheduling, reducing the time needed to generate scheduling plans from 30 minutes to 30 seconds. The system is also designed to be accessible to non-specialists.

Zhejiang is not alone in using AI for water management. In Qingdao, Shandong province, authorities have integrated the DeepSeek AI model into a smart water management platform, creating a dynamic knowledge base to improve real-time responses and decision-making. In Hubei province, the Hubei Water Resources Research Institute has localized the deployment of DeepSeek, positioning AI as a "smart brain" for the industry.

On Feb 28, Beijing hosted an event to promote smart water robots, featuring AI-powered machines designed for inspections, river dredging, water quality monitoring and emergency rescue.

A wheeled inspection robot equipped with advanced sensors drew significant attention at the event. It can navigate obstacles and maneuver through complex terrain, including collapses, caves and potholes. Sun Changqi, the project

leader, said the robot can read instruments, identify compliance issues, detect overheating, analyze abnormal sounds and recognize flames and smoke.

"The robot functions like a person using different devices for inspections in various environments," Sun told China National Radio. "For example, an electronic nose allows it to detect specific sewage or harmful gases, reducing health risks for front-line personnel."

Another featured robot specializes in water quality monitoring. Zhao Jiade, the technical leader, said it is capable of routine and emergency video inspections, pollution tracing, water level monitoring and environmental data collection.

"Equipped with a water quality sensor array, the robot provides real-time data and can collect seven bottles of 500-milliliter water samples," Zhao said. "A digital platform records its historical data, ensuring full traceability."

China has been expanding its use of AI-driven technologies across various sectors, including environmental management, to improve efficiency and safety.

## Unmanned cargo plane undergoes debut test in Qingdao

By ZHAO LEI  
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A large, unmanned cargo plane developed by Yitong UAV System made its debut flight on Saturday in Qingdao, Shandong province.

A prototype of the TP1000 drone took off and then landed at Laixi Dianbu Airport in Qingdao, spending 26 minutes in the air to check the model's flight stability, maneuverability and power systems. The test results were satisfactory, testifying to the reliability of designs, the company said in a news release.

The TP1000 measures nearly 11 meters long with a wingspan of about 15 meters. It has a take-off weight of 3.3 metric tons, a payload capacity of 1 ton, a maximum range of 1,000 kilometers when fully loaded and a 7-cubic-meter cargo bay.

The pilotless plane features a modular configuration, long flight range, large carrying capacity and low operational costs, according to the company.

Yitong UAV System, a private drone maker in Yantai, Shandong, aims to obtain an airworthiness certification for the TP1000 later this year, with commercial operations expected to begin in 2026 after regulatory approval, it said.

Yitong added that 30 TP1000s have been ordered. Buyers include delivery company ZTO Express and general-aviation firm Jiangsu Yajie Aviation Development Group.

The TP1000 is equipped with a large rear cargo door, enabling intelligent airdrop for material delivery and emergency rescue in various scenarios, Science and Technology Daily reported on Monday.

"In addition to transporting goods, the TP1000 can be quickly modified according to customer needs for marine monitoring, scientific exploration, resource development and regional infrastructure projects due to its excellent flight performance, load capacity and lower operating costs," the newspaper quoted Yitong's General Manager Jin Ge as saying.

By the end of this year, the company hopes to establish an annual production capacity of 100 large drones, he told the newspaper.



Lee Shau-kee

Beyond his business achievements, Lee was also celebrated for his charitable works.

In 2008, Lee and Henderson together donated nearly HK\$600 million (\$77.2 million) to assist people struck by the magnitude 8 Wenchuan earth-

quake in West China's Sichuan province.

Lee's charity foundations have also generously supported students and universities throughout Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, promoting educational development.

Lee was awarded the Grand Bauhinia Medal by the SAR government in 2007 in recognition of his contributions.

In a statement released on Mon-

day night, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu expressed his condolences on Lee's death.

Praising Lee as an exceptional business leader and entrepreneur, the chief executive said he contributed greatly to the economic development, prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

His generous donations and his support for talent also contributed to the development of education and research, John Lee said.

## CHINA

By YAN DONGJIE

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A revolutionary land management model is being applied across the fields of Northeast China to restore its precious and fertile black soil.

Black soil, characterized by its dark topsoil, is considered the "food basket" of the world because of its rich organic carbon and high degree of productivity. It contributes to 25 percent of China's grain production and one-third of its total grain output, serving as an important pillar of the country's food security.

However, China's black soil has been degraded over the years by poor land management practices and the heavy use of chemical fertilizers.

"The formation process of black soil is extremely slow, requiring hundreds of years to form a 1-centimeter-thick layer under natural conditions," said Jia Zhongjun, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Jia is among the experts who have introduced new land management models aimed at restoring China's black soil.

In January, these models won the 2024 Outstanding Scientific and Technological Achievement Award of the CAS.

"It represents the hard work of CAS researchers for decades in soil sciences and their great contributions to the holistic understandings of black soil protection under distinct utilization scenarios," Jia said.

For years, Jia has walked in the fields with colleagues, considering the issue of land degradation in black soil areas from the perspective of farmers and agricultural sustainability. The Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology of the CAS, where he works, launched a science and technological research campaign in 2021 to prevent land degradation in black soil areas and increase yields.

Northeast China is one of the world's four major black soil regions, with the others being in Ukraine, the United States and Argentina.

From the 1950s, the black soil in Northeast China attracted a large number of settlers, transforming the plain from the once unknown "northern wasteland" into an important commercial grain production base known as China's "northern granary".

However, in the 1990s, a growing number of farmers, including those in Lishu county, Jilin province, a major maize-producing county, found that the black soil was revealing yellow layers, and grain yields began to decline.

A 2020 survey revealed that the thickness of the black soil layer in Northeast China had decreased by 30 to 50 percent compared to half a century earlier, with some areas having less than 20 cm of black soil, and decreasing at a rate of 1 to 2 millimeters per year.

"Increasingly intensified activities of farming practices and natural factors leading to soil erosion have caused the black soil layer to thin and the organic matter content to decline. The problem of thinning, impoverishment and hardening of black soil in Northeast China has become prominent," said Jia, who is also the chief engineer of the Sci-Tech Innovation Campaign for the Black Soil Granary of the CAS.

Despite farmers applying a large amount of fertilizer, grain production has not continued to increase.



Left: As part of a comparative experiment on black soil usage, a farmer is hired to plow a field with a mule in the traditional way at a base of the Institute of Applied Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, in Lishu, Jilin province, in May 2021. SUN ZIFA / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Right: Researchers from the CAS' Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology check a section of black soil at a farm in Huanan, Heilongjiang province, in September. SHI FENG / XINHUA

## Land management model restoring nation's black soil

Food security dependent on protecting fertile growing grounds



Clockwise from top: Harvesters collect rice from black soil paddy fields at a farm in Huachuan, Heilongjiang province, in October. ZHANG GUOJUN / XINHUA A drone returns after completing a paddy field patrol at a modern agriculture experimental station in Shuangyashan, Heilongjiang, in September. SHI FENG / XINHUA Zhang Jiabao (second from left) and Jia Zhongjun (second from right), chief adviser and chief engineer of the Sci-Tech Innovation Campaign for the Black Soil Granary of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, are appointed members of the expert panel for Hulun Buir State Farm on innovative black soil management in Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia, in September 2022. SUN ZIFA / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Instead, crop resilience has decreased, posing great challenges to agricultural sustainability and food security.

"As a scientist for soil and agriculture, staying in the laboratory is far from enough to truly help farmers solve problems. We need to go into the fields, spend day and night with

farmers," Jia said. "Farmers are most concerned about grain production, but it is often difficult for them to give up traditional agricultural management and adopt new methods to fertilize and increase yields, which is where our scientific research and methods come in.

"A seed entering the soil in spring

grows into a 2-meter-high corn plant in autumn, with an increase in biomass of approximately 3,000 times. Almost all of this large biomass comes from the soil," Jia said.

"Yields come from organic matter in the soil, and such matter comes from organic fertilizers from plant residues and manure. After farmers

harvest, the straw must be returned to the field to scientifically renew the organic matter and protect nutrient sustainability in the soil," said Jia.

Achieving straw return is not easy. Past excessive use of chemical fertilizers has led to soil acidification and compaction, meaning that the northeastern black soil region faces

increased problems caused by low winter temperatures and freeze-thaw cycles, Jia said.

According to different conditions and areas, the team explored various organic matter return models tailored to Changchun, Jilin province, Liaohu, Liaoning province, and other cities.

"Clay soil, sandy soil, loamy soil and compacted soil require different methods for straw return. Regardless of the type of soil, we have managed to increase soil organic matter content by around 2 percent and achieve a yield increase of about 10 percent," he said.

Taking Heilongjiang as an example, the province has 15 types of soil, including black soil, black calcareous soil, sandy soil and saline-alkali soil, due to its diverse natural conditions.

"Targeted measures must be taken for different plots of land. Through continuous research and exploration, the team developed the Longjiang Model, which focuses on straw burial deep in the soil," Jia said.

For low-lying flatlands in the eastern part of the Songnen Plain, straw is crushed and buried deep to replenish soil organic matter.

For soils affected by wind and water erosion and thin black soil in medium- and low-yield fields, straw and organic fertilizers are mixed and buried underground. Additionally, corn and soybeans need to be rotated to build a fertile plow layer and nurture the soil, Jia added.

"In the western part of the Songnen Plain, where drought and salinization are severe, we advocate no-tillage management. This is largely attributed to high temperatures that could enhance the microbial activity of straw decomposition in this area to nourish the land," he said.

In the Lesser Hingan Mountains area, where the farmland drainage flow varies greatly, the focus of land protection is on preventing soil erosion. Measures such as planting across contours, building dikes and planting biological hedges have been adopted, he said.

These four models are collectively referred to as the Longjiang Model, which has effectively addressed the issue of black soil degradation across the province.

"Through these methods, the thickness of the plow layer in the demonstration area has stabilized at around 30 cm, organic matter has increased by 2-3 grams per kilogram and crop yields have increased by over 10 percent," Jia said.

"Land management is a long and complex process that requires collective efforts to further pass these methods to the farmers. We must adhere to the combination of land use and land conservation," he said.

Regarding the outstanding achievement award, Jia said: "This is a collective honor. The restoration of black soil involves multiple disciplines such as agricultural machinery, soil science, fertilizers and plants, reflecting the collaborative efforts of outstanding researchers in various fields. The cooperation is something that Chinese scientists can be proud of."

According to data from the CAS, the black soil restoration team has established dozens of demonstration areas in Northeast China and has promoted methods to increase soil organic matter content to millions of farmers, improving 173 million hectares of farmland.

Shi Yudie contributed to this story.

## Pioneer laid foundation for China's battery brilliance

By YAN DONGJIE

China is the world's largest producer and consumer of lithium batteries, powering everything from electric vehicles to renewable energy storage systems. According to the 2025 China Lithium Battery Industry Data Report, in 2024, the country's lithium battery production exceeded 10 million metric tons, with a market value reaching trillions of yuan.

This remarkable achievement, however, has not been an overnight success. It is the result of decades of relentless innovation and dedication by pioneers like Chen Liqun, a visionary scientist who laid the foundation for China's lithium battery industry.

Last year, Chen, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was awarded the CAS Outstanding Scientific and Technological Achievement Award, a recognition for a lifetime of groundbreaking contributions.

From developing China's first all-solid-state lithium metal battery to mentoring a new generation of scientists and entrepreneurs, Chen's work has been instrumental in transforming China from a follower to a



Chen Liqun

global leader in battery technology.

Chen's journey into the world of energy science began in 1976, during a study visit to Germany's Max Planck Institute for Solid State Research. Originally tasked with studying crystal growth, Chen stumbled upon a material that would change the course of his career — and China's energy future.

"A German colleague told me about lithium nitride, a superionic conductor that could be used to make solid-state batteries for electric cars," Chen recalled. "That moment sparked something in me. I knew this was the future."

Determined to introduce this technology to China, Chen wrote to the CAS requesting a shift in his research focus. His request was approved, and within five months, he completed his original crystal growth project and dove headfirst into solid-state ionics — a field that was virtually nonexistent in China at the time.

In 1988, his team created China's

first solid-state lithium battery, a milestone that marked the beginning of the country's lithium battery research. However, the technology was far from ready for mass production.

The landscape shifted dramatically in 1991 when Japan's Sony Corporation commercialized liquid lithium-ion batteries. Recognizing the urgency, Chen made a bold decision: "We had to pivot. Liquid lithium-ion batteries were the immediate future, but we couldn't abandon our long-term goal of solid-state batteries."

By 1995, Chen's team had developed China's first liquid lithium-ion battery, and in 1998, they built the country's first pilot production line for cylindrical lithium-ion batteries.

"We used our own technology, our own equipment and our own raw materials," said Chen. "It was a modest start, but it was ours."

Chen's vision extended beyond the lab. He understood that for China to compete globally, it needed a robust industrial base. In the late 1990s, he played a key role in establishing China's first lithium-ion battery production line, which produced 200,000 units annually.

"This was the foundation of China's lithium battery industry," Chen said.

The scientist's influence extends far beyond his scientific achievements; he is also a revered mentor who has shaped the careers of countless scientists and entrepreneurs in China's lithium battery industry.

His students, many of whom now hold key positions in academia, research institutions and leading companies, describe him as a visionary scientist with an unwavering commitment to nurturing talent.

Now in his 80s, Chen continues to spend long hours in the lab, reviewing data, discussing new ideas and offering feedback.

His former student Zeng Yuqun, founder of CATL, the world's largest battery manufacturer, credits Chen with inspiring him to pursue innovation and excellence in the field of energy storage.

"He didn't just teach us how to make batteries, he taught us how to think big and dream bigger," Zeng said.

Chen believes that true innovation comes from understanding every aspect of the research and production process.



A worker monitors a production line for the battery casings for new energy vehicles in Ningde, Fujian province, last month. WANG WANGWANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

"He often went to the lab with us and got his hands dirty alongside us," recalled Li Hong, one of Chen's students, who is now a researcher at the Institute of Physics at the CAS, and a leading scientist in the field of solid-state batteries in China.

Together with Chen, he was the first to propose and industrialize the in situ solidification technology route for solid-state batteries on a global scale.

"He taught us that to solve real-world problems, you need to be deeply involved in every step, from material synthesis to battery assembly," Li said.

"He always told us that our work wasn't just about science; it was about securing the future of our country," said Huang Xuejie, another prominent student who now leads research at the Institute of Physics.

His students, now leaders in their own right, carry forward his vision of an "Electric China," where clean energy and advanced battery technology power the nation's future.

As Chen himself puts it: "The work we do today will shape the world of tomorrow. And I have no doubt that the next generation will take it even further."

## CHINA

## Fashion designer finds inspiration in Xizang

Traditional clothes create 'medium for dialogue between humans and nature'

By YAN DONGJIE

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Zhao Juan, a renowned Chinese fashion designer who served as design director and CEO for multiple companies, has seen her creations showcased at global events from the Shanghai International Fashion Expo to the Canton Fair. However, a 2016 fieldwork trip to the Xizang autonomous region transformed her understanding of fashion.

That year, she traveled there to gather inspiration for the design of a wool felt hat. "I encountered many people there dedicating themselves to building Xizang through their own efforts. Their selflessness deeply moved me," Zhao said.

Song Ming, a teacher at a handicraft school in Lhasa, capital of the region, left a profound impression on her. A 1998 graduate of Nanjing Arts Institute with a background in oil painting, Song could have pursued his artistic career in major cities such as Beijing or Shanghai. Instead, he chose to teach art in Lhasa.

In 2010, Song founded a nonprofit school to offer free education, meals and housing to underprivileged children, teaching traditional crafts such as *thangka* painting and bronze casting to preserve Tibetan culture and rejuvenate traditional Tibetan handicrafts. To date, the school has trained over 500 intangible cultural heritage artisans.

"I wondered — as someone in the arts — what could I contribute?"

Zhao said. "Later, I met a team called Friends of Himalayan Creatures. They are doing something very interesting — giving a voice to the voiceless wildlife."

The team members recorded the stories of plateau creatures such as pikas, Tibetan antelopes and black-necked cranes through filming documentaries, presenting to audiences the grandeur and fragility of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

"Their stories inspired me a lot. At that moment, I suddenly realized that ethnic headdresses are not only aesthetic symbols but also a medium for dialogue between humans and nature," Zhao said.

Her design philosophy shifted radically. She immersed herself in Tibetan culture and ecology, integrating elements of highland wildlife into her hat designs. Her products now blend aesthetics with cultural depth and sustainability.

In Xizang, she discovered the centrality of natural storytelling in Tibetan culture, often expressed through yak wool motifs. "Hat patterns are a powerful lens to interpret these narratives," she said.

Her collections now span felt hats, yak wool dolls and brooches inspired by Tibetan culture and plateau wildlife species.

"For instance, the *wado* — a traditional Tibetan woolen sling essential to nomads — was incorporated into hat designs with yak wool. These pieces gained popularity at a charity sale in August," Zhao said.

"I aim to amplify elements like wild yaks, Tibetan antelope and black-necked cranes in my work, letting these creatures 'speak' for themselves. I want more people to understand their stories and know how to protect them."

As a female designer, Zhao prioritizes the livelihoods of Tibetan wom-

en. In late 2023, she founded a workshop providing handicraft training to empower women economically while preserving cultural heritage.

"Many local women rely on government subsidies. I want to equip them with skills to improve their lives and find self-worth," said Zhao, who is also a member of the national handicraft empowerment expert group.

The workshop offers free training and distributes orders to participants, fostering financial independence. Over 500 women have been trained to date. "They're passionate. After finishing a piece, they often ask, 'What's next?'" Zhao said.

The workshop also hosts cultural immersion programs for tourists, blending craft-making with lessons on Xizang's ecology. "These items are not just souvenirs — they carry stories of harmony between humans and nature," she said.

Zhao and her team plan to add QR codes to products this year, allowing users to scan and listen to narrated wildlife tales.

Despite geographic isolation hindering visibility, Zhao's team launched livestreams in August to showcase their crafts.

"Livestreams bridge Xizang with inland audiences, fostering mutual understanding," she said.

She's also embracing artificial intelligence tools to boost efficiency and language learning. "I hope to teach these technologies to Tibetans, easing communication and skill-building," Zhao said.

As a mentor at Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology, Zhao integrates her philosophy into curricula. Students engage in design, production and management, grasping sustainable fashion's significance through practice. "I've mentored five groups of students. Many are inspired — one



**Clockwise from top:** Fashion designer Zhao Juan (middle) displays her hats with participants of her handicraft training workshop in Lhasa, Xizang autonomous region. Zhao rides a motorcycle in Xizang. Zhao (right) works with her colleagues. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

student even volunteered to teach in Xizang," she said.

Her dedication extends to her family. She frequently takes her son on fieldwork trips, sharing the values behind her designs and sparking his interest in biology and geology.

"My fifth-grader has grown to love biology, geology and chemistry, and his curiosity strengthens my determination," Zhao said.

The designer's transformation was filled with challenges, the first of which was the harsh natural environment of the plateau, pushing her body to its limits.

"When I first arrived in Xizang, I suffered from severe altitude sickness. I kept vomiting, and eventually even vomited blood, and was rushed to the hospital. There were several times when I almost gave up, but as soon as I got home and thought of the people and living beings there, I wanted to go back," Zhao said.

Her choice also faced early skepticism. "People joked, 'Why endure hardship there?'" she recalled. Yet her persistence gradually won support.

"After years of effort, even skeptics admire what we've achieved," Zhao

said. Collaborations with enterprises in Beijing as well as Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Guangdong provinces continue to expand her team's reach.

"I'll dedicate more energy to this cause. Greater breakthroughs lie ahead," she said.

Looking forward, Zhao aims to globalize her vision.

"Ethnic heritage belongs to the world. Just like the movie *Ne Zha*, our stories and products should transcend borders — reaching not just China but the globe," she said.

Shi Yudie contributed to this story.



**From left:** Cheng Xinxiang works on an embroidery at the Hunan Embroidery Research Institute Co in Changsha, Hunan province. Cheng (standing) watches her embroiders working at the institute. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



## Deputy passes down traditional embroidery heritage

By ZOU SHUO in Changsha

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As a two-term deputy to the National People's Congress and a leading inheritor of Hunan embroidery, a national intangible cultural heritage, Cheng Xinxiang has spent decades weaving tradition into modernity, in order to keep the ancient craft surviving and thriving in the digital era.

Over the past year, her dual roles as a national legislator and cultural inheritor have converged into a single mission: to redefine the future of Chinese embroidery through innovation, policy advocacy and youth empowerment.

Cheng, general manager of the Hunan Embroidery Research Institute Co, proposed at last year's two sessions — the annual meetings of the nation's top legislative and political advisory bodies — to utilize technology to empower traditional Chinese culture, which has become a catalyst for change.

Collaborating with tech experts, the 52-year-old pioneered a program to use artificial intelligence in the digital generation of Hunan embroidery.

This innovation slashed the time required to draft traditional blueprints for embroidery patterns from weeks to hours, greatly enhancing production efficiency, she said.

The use of technology fueled their collaborations with institutions like the Changsha Museum

Chinese embroidery is a living library of our civilization. International recognition would inspire cross-cultural dialogue and help protect our legacy."

**Cheng Xinxiang**, NPC deputy and general manager of the Hunan Embroidery Research Institute Co

to launch digital embroidery postcards that feature iconic cultural relics and whimsical jewelry lines, blending historical motifs with contemporary aesthetics, Cheng said.

She has also championed a digital ecosystem that integrates R&D, production, inventory and sales management for the Hunan embroidery industry.

During this year's two sessions, her vision turned global.

Teaming up with Suzhou embroidery master Yao Jianping, who is also a NPC deputy, she proposed working toward getting China's diverse embroidery traditions onto UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

"Chinese embroidery is a living library of our civilization," she

said. "International recognition would inspire cross-cultural dialogue and help protect our legacy."

Cheng is also paying special attention to cultivating young talent for embroidery.

To combat the exodus of young talent, she has established three mentorship studios to provide training for over 60 artisans, three of whom have been named provincial-level inheritors.

She said the difficulties faced by young embroiderers in terms of career advancement posed the main challenge for the industry's development.

More than that, some enterprises have tarnished the brand of Hunan embroidery by selling substandard pieces.

She suggested that the government provide more career opportunities and salary incentives for embroidery inheritors and actively promote their stories on media platforms.

To win over young fans, Cheng said her team has repositioned traditional embroidery as a dynamic and relatable craft. Through collaborations with popular milk tea brand Chayan Yuese, from dairy packaging to the decoration of trendy tea shops, they have further embedded embroidery into daily life.

The latest breakthrough of Cheng's team — 3D embroidery — epitomizes their innovative spirit.

Cheng is a fourth-generation inheritor of the *pengmao* stitch in

Hunan embroidery, which is a specialized needlework technique that creates realistic, 3D animal fur textures through layered, irregular stitching.

By reimagining the traditional *pengmao* stitch, her team created hyper-realistic embroidered horse images that appear to leap from the canvas, blending depth, light and texture.

Despite progress, challenges remain. Cheng said over 80 percent of Hunan embroiderers are older than 50 years old, highlighting an urgent need for youth engagement. "We must meet young people wherever they are," she said.

Reflecting on her 36-year journey, she credits her mentors for giving her unwavering dedication. "As an apprentice, I nearly quit countless times. But my teachers taught me that mastery demands 'eating bitterness' — persisting through monotony and setbacks," she said.

Becoming an embroidery master is a pilgrimage of the body and mind, she said. Today, as a mentor, her pride lies in nurturing a new generation.

"When I see a 20-year-old's embroidery skill rivaling a master's, I know the craft will live on."

For Cheng, the fight to preserve Hunan embroidery is a deeply personal choice. "Every stitch carries the soul of our ancestors. My duty is to ensure those threads weave into tomorrow's tapestry," she said.

## Contract farming secures overseas pumpkin orders

Yang Chuang, a farmer in a remote village in Guizhou province, harvested over 700 metric tons of pumpkins last year, which were processed into dried pumpkin strips and exported to South Korea.

Yang is reaping the benefits of contract-based farming, which sees farmers sell their produce wholesale to companies before they are even grown. In Yang's case, his pumpkins are bought by Nongyao Agricultural Development Co, based in Zhijian county. In 2023, with technical guidance from the company, Yang planted just 2 hectares of pumpkins as a trial. The company purchased his entire yield at a guaranteed price, bringing him significant profits.

Encouraged by the success, the 27-year-old expanded his plantation tenfold last year, and sold 700 tons of pumpkins to the company.

The contract-based farming model not only relieves farmers of sales concerns but also ensures a stable supply of raw materials for processing enterprises.

Nongyao, a key agricultural export enterprise in Zhijian, temporarily halted production at the end of last year after selling all its pumpkin products.

To meet growing demand, the company is actively securing pumpkin supply contracts with partners across Guizhou and neighboring provinces including Hubei, Sichuan and Yunnan.

"We're not worried about foreign trade orders. Our biggest challenge is securing enough fresh pumpkins. If we had enough stock, we could keep

production running continuously," said Zeng Aisheng, chairman of the company.

Currently, the enterprise has the capacity to produce 7,500 tons of pumpkin strips and granules a year, in addition to 3,000 tons of other dehydrated vegetables.

For this year, the company has already signed contracts to export pumpkin, chili pepper, tomato and other processed agricultural products to South Korea, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and other countries.

Known as one of China's "hometowns of pumpkins," Zhijian produces over 100,000 tons of pumpkins a year. The industry employs over 30,000 local farmers.

With the support of local governments and leading enterprises like Nongyao, pumpkin growing has expanded from Zhijian to over 10 neighboring counties.

In 2025, the province plans to scale up contract-based pumpkin cultivation to over 13,000 hectares, with an estimated output of 500,000 tons, further advancing the development of agriculture based on its mountainous terrain.

Zhijian is among the first pilot areas for "rural foreign trade" in Guizhou. Since 2023, the province has been integrating rural industries with foreign trade, fostering enterprises and products with strong local characteristics and export potential, thereby opening international markets for high-quality agricultural goods.

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Pumpkin is stored before processing at a factory in Zhijian county, Guizhou province. LUO DAFU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## BUSINESS

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## Green electricity trading sees sparkling growth

By ZHENG XIN  
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More than 50 percent of China's new energy power generation was consumed through market-based transactions last year, a milestone that underscores the significant progress of China's electricity market reforms over the past decade, according to the country's top energy authority.

China's national installed capacity for new energy reached 1.45 billion kilowatts last year, making up 43 percent of the country's total installed capacity, figures released by the National Energy Administration reveal.

The combined trading volume of green electricity certificates (GEC) meanwhile reached 446 billion kilowatt-hours, a dramatic 364 percent increase year-on-year. This means that roughly one-quarter of all new energy production realized its environmental value through the green certificate and green electricity market, it said.

GECs are the sole proof of the environmental attributes of renewable energy power in China and serve as the only certificate for verifying renewable energy production and consumption, according to relevant rules.

China's issuance of green electricity certificates saw a significant increase in January as the country continues accelerating its push for sustainable development.

The NEA issued 231.2 million GECs in January, including 94.74 million from wind power, about 40 percent of the total, 81.82 million from hydropower and 39.43 million from solar power, all of which represent an increase of 225 percent year-on-year.

China introduced the GEC system as a pilot program in 2017. In December 2023, the NEA issued the first batch of GECs after being designated as the authority responsible for green electricity certificate management. By the end of January, China had cumulatively issued 5.19 billion green electricity certificates, according to the NEA.

The figures highlight the deepening impact of power sector reforms initiated in 2015. Market-based electricity trading volume has surged from 1.1 trillion kilowatt-hours in 2016 to 6.2 trillion kWh in 2024 and now accounts for 63 percent of total electricity consumption nationwide.

Inter-provincial and inter-regional market trading has seen even more dramatic growth, reaching 1.4 trillion kWh in 2024, a more than tenfold increase

compared to 2016, according to the NEA.

The number of participants in the market has also exploded. Registered market entities have increased nearly 20-fold, from 42,000 in 2016 to 816,000 currently. This diverse group includes power generators and consumers across various energy sources, from coal-fired plants to new energy and nuclear power facilities.

Industry experts suggest that the continued deepening of China's electricity market reforms is not only effectively promoting the consumption of clean energy, but also laying the foundation for a more efficient, flexible and sustainable power system, vital for China's green energy transition and high-quality economic development.

A major challenge for renewable energy is its variability and the potential for curtailment. Market-based transactions provide a mechanism to better match supply and demand, incentivizing consumption when renewable energy is available and reducing curtailment, said Lin Boqiang, head of Xiamen University's China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy.

China is deploying renewable energy at an unprecedented scale.

To make this sustainable, it needs efficient mechanisms to consume this power. Market mechanisms are essential for managing the variability and scale of renewable generation, ensuring it's not just installed but actually used, he said.

"Market-based transactions allow for more efficient allocation of electricity resources. Prices signal scarcity and abundance, guiding generation and consumption decisions toward the most economically and environmentally sound options."

Hao Ruifeng, director of the NEA's market supervision department, noted that China's electricity market now boasts a comprehensive trading system, encompassing medium- and long-term contracts, spot markets, ancillary services and green electricity certificates and trading.

Medium- and long-term trading is now operating routinely, and spot market development is advancing rapidly. Market mechanisms have become a crucial tool for optimizing electricity resource allocation across China, said Hao.

China has maintained a new energy utilization rate above 95 percent. In 2024, green electricity trading volume reached 233.6 billion kWh, a year-on-year jump of 235 percent, according to NEA data.



A saleswoman (left) addresses consumer queries about a washing machine at a shopping center in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on March 5. DING GENHOU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## New plan in place to boost consumption

Expanding property income channels, stabilizing bourse high on govt agenda

By FAN FEIFEI  
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China's latest push to boost consumption — a top priority on the country's policy agenda for the year ahead — is expected to shore up consumer confidence, unleash domestic demand potential and inject strong momentum into high-quality economic growth, said government officials and experts.

Their comments came as the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a special action plan on Sunday to vigorously boost consumption, stimulate domestic demand across the board and increase purchasing power by raising salaries and strengthening employment support.

Li Chunlin, deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission, said the plan places an emphasis on stepping up policy support on the demand side, such as promoting reasonable wage growth, and improving minimum wage standards in a scientific and reasonable manner.

It also includes expanding property income channels through measures to stabilize the stock market, Li said at a news conference in Beijing on Monday, adding that the country will increase the diversified supply of health, eldercare and childcare services to reduce financial burdens on households.

China will issue ultra-long term special treasury bonds totaling 300 billion yuan (\$41.4 billion) to support the expansion of the consumer goods trade-in program in 2025, compared with last year's

150 billion yuan allocated for the campaign, Li added.

He said sales of new energy vehicles nationwide reached 1.34 million units in the first two months, up 26 percent year-on-year, while turnover of home appliances featuring the highest level of energy efficiency surged 36 percent to 24.1 billion yuan.

The country has announced a raft of measures to expand the scope of the consumer goods trade-in program this year, including new subsidies for purchasing digital products like smartphones, tablets, smartwatches and wristbands, as well as the increased number of categories for home appliances.

Li also emphasized the significance of improving the consumption environment to strengthen spending appetites, and leveraging cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology to foster new consumption growth points.

The action plan stated that China will accelerate the development and application of new technologies and products such as autonomous driving, smart wearables, ultra-high-definition video, brain-computer interfaces and robotics to create new high-growth consumption sectors, according to the plan.

Li Gang, director-general of the Department of Market Operation and Consumption Promotion of the Ministry of Commerce, said more efforts will be made to promote the development of service-based consumption and nurture diversified purchasing scenarios and new types of consumption to further stimulate buying sentiment and unleash consumption potential.

The Ministry of Finance has

vowed to increase fiscal spending in areas such as healthcare, education, eldercare and employment to alleviate financial burdens on households and boost consumption capacity.

The National Bureau of Statistics said retail sales, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, climbed 4 percent year-on-year during the January-February period, after a 3.7 percent rise in December. Online retail sales jumped 7.3 percent year-on-year in the first two months.

"Consumption is playing an increasingly important role in bolstering growth," said Zou Yunhan, deputy director of the Macroeconomic Research Office at the State Information Center's Department of Economic Forecasting, adding China's consumer market is poised for steady growth this year fueled by a series of supportive measures.

Zou said new business forms and new models related to consumption can better meet people's demand for consumption upgrades and stimulate their purchasing enthusiasm, which will provide new impetus and strong support for sustained growth of the economy.

Zhu Keli, founding director of the China Institute of New Economy, said the action plan, as a top-level guideline boosting consumption, will be conducive to bolstering economic transformation and upgrading, and fostering a new development pattern.

Zhu said the initiative focuses on optimizing the consumption environment and improving the buying experience so as to boost people's willingness and ability to purchase goods and services amid downward pressure and external uncertainties, adding that the country's consumption-boosting efforts will lay a solid foundation for sustained and healthy economic growth.

## Investors upbeat about nation's sci-tech sector

BEIJING — China's rapid advancements in the artificial intelligence sector, exemplified by DeepSeek, a cost-competitive newcomer among global AI models, have captured global attention and driven capital inflows into the country's sci-tech capital market.

Since February, following Deutsche Bank's high-profile report declaring that "2025 is the year the investing world realizes China is outcompeting the rest of the world", several international investment banks have upgraded their ratings or raised target prices for the Chinese capital market.

Citi recently upgraded its rating for Chinese stocks to overweight. Chinese shares look attractive even after their recent rally, Citi strategists wrote, citing DeepSeek's AI technology breakthrough, the government's support for the tech sector and "still-cheap valuations".

Goldman Sachs anticipates that the widespread adoption of AI over the next decade could boost the overall earnings of Chinese stocks by 2.5 percent annually. It has also raised its targets for the MSCI China Index and CSI 300 Index to 85 and 4,700, respectively, signaling potential double-digit growth for both indexes over the next year.

CITIC Securities described the current moment as a "pivotal historic opportunity" for global capital to invest in the Chinese stock market. The widespread application of AI across industries has significantly improved the efficiency and profitability of China's real economy.

During China's annual two sessions earlier this month, the rise of DeepSeek and its global impact became a focal point. Wu Qing, head of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, emphasized that DeepSeek's success has not only impressed the global AI industry but also redefined the world's perception of China's capabilities in technological innovation.

This achievement has driven a reevaluation of Chinese assets, he noted. China will support the development of sci-tech innovation enterprises — both listed and those in the pipeline — to further enhance the appeal and investment value of the Chinese stock market, according to the CSRC.

"We are optimistic about the medium-term prospects for Chinese equities," stated Morningstar Investment Management research teams in their 2025 Outlook.

They expect stimulus measures initiated in 2024 to continue evolving, while citing a more benign regulatory backdrop, expectations of moderate earnings growth from Chinese companies, and a positive outlook on several of the major technology firms as consumers regain their footing.

XINHUA



A technician conducts maintenance work on a high-voltage power line in Nantong, Jiangsu province, on Feb 27.

SHI JUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Briefly

## Financial sector to enhance support

The China Banking Association and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce jointly issued a proposal on Monday, calling on the country's financial institutions to use more concrete measures to enhance services for private enterprises. The proposal calls for optimizing credit services for private enterprises by setting annual service targets, increasing credit supply and expanding service coverage. It emphasizes stable and effective incremental credit

support for private businesses, and greater support for small and micro enterprises in obtaining first-time loans, roll-over loans and credit loans.

## Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 50 pips to 7.1688 against the US dollar on Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System.

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

## Market diversity trusty elixir to tariffs

By ZHONG NAN  
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Facing headwinds from trade protectionism and a slowing global economy, Chinese manufacturers are driving industrial upgrades to sharpen their edges, with tech-intensive green products gaining increasing traction in emerging markets.

Exporters noted that rapid urbanization and industrialization were boosting the demand for advanced electromechanical solutions. As a result, many Chinese firms are actively expanding beyond traditional Western markets, capitalizing on initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative to strengthen their footholds and unlock new consumer opportunities.

Risen Energy Co Ltd, a Ningbo, Zhejiang province-based solar cell and module maker, has been heading in that direction. It sealed a deal with Brazil's MTR Solar Group to jointly develop 1 gigawatt-hour of battery energy storage system solutions last month, further enhancing their ties in the Latin American market.

"In the past, our exports were primarily focused on the United States and Southeast Asia. However, with increasing tariff threats, we have been actively expanding our international sales network and have established numerous partnerships in regions and countries such as Eastern Europe, Latin America and Australia," said Tian Ye, Risen Energy's head of logistics.

The Chinese company's exports of energy storage products reached 50 million yuan (\$6.9 million) in the first two months of this year, jumping 870 percent year-on-year, data from Ningbo Customs showed.

Liaoning province-based Shenyang Yuanda Aluminium Industry Engineering Co Ltd, a producer of curtain walls for buildings, is also capitalizing on such a trend. Its workers are actively engaged across multiple workshops, manufacturing PV curtain walls and intelligent shading equipment to fulfill orders from Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore, ensuring timely delivery.

The company's newly signed contracts surpassed 1 billion yuan

between January and February, reflecting a 35 percent year-on-year increase. Among them, international orders totaled 700 million yuan, with products mainly exported to Mongolia, the United Kingdom and Qatar, according to Shenyang Customs.

"To establish a strong foothold in the global market, we have integrated high-efficiency solar cell technology into our PV curtain walls, ensuring both functional performance and energy efficiency for buildings," said Pei Tong, the company's president of international marketing branch, adding that its products are now used in more than 140 countries and regions.

As many emerging economies undergo rapid urbanization, driving increased infrastructure projects, smart city initiatives and industrial expansion, high-end mechanical and electrical products — such as intelligent manufacturing equipment and renewable energy solutions — have become essential for modernizing these sectors, said Yuan Bo, a researcher specializing in foreign trade at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and

Economic Cooperation in Beijing.

Moreover, excessive reliance on developed markets could expose Chinese exporters to geopolitical risks, prompting a strategic shift toward market diversification, Yuan said.

Despite protectionist moves and the disruption of global supply chains, the US reliance on goods from China has not substantially decreased to date, according to the DHL Trade Atlas 2025, a report that features insights and analysis on global trade growth trends and prospects, released last week.

The study, published by DHL Group, a German logistics services provider, and New York University's Stern School of Business, said Made-in-China products have found new routes to the US. The share of US imports coming directly from China continues to fall, but US reliance on Made-in-China content has not declined much. US imports from other countries contain more inputs from China, and US direct imports from China may be underreported.

Even if all tariff increases proposed by the US government are implemented and countries retaliate in return, global trade is forecast to continue to expand — but at a much slower pace, said the DHL report.

## BUSINESS



Children experience a smart driving system at a science demo in Zhengzhou, Henan province, in September. ZHANG TAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Automakers betting on smarter driving perks

Intelligent features going mainstream in a bid to rejuvenate revenue

By LI FUSHENG  
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Smart driving features, including automatic parking, are set to become a key competitive factor as Chinese carmakers jostle for more market share by making intelligent driving features standard in mass-market vehicles.

Typically, such features have required buyers of new vehicles to fork out more money to enjoy their convenience. However, BYD, China's largest electric vehicle manufacturer, has fired the first salvo in the race to expand access to smart driving features even in mass-market vehicles.

BYD announced last month that it is equipping its entire lineup with the Advanced Driving-Assistance System, or ADAS. Among its functions, the system enables vehicles to drive themselves on expressways and to park automatically.

The most affordable of its first 21 models with the feature on the market is the Seagull, priced at 69,800 yuan (\$9,640).

Models with similar functions in the Chinese market are usually priced from 150,000 yuan, according to consulting firm McKinsey.

BYD said its move aims to offer volume car owners access to intelligent driving features to increase safety. It said 21 percent of traffic accidents in China are attributable to fatigued drivers, which can be prevented by automatic emergency braking or steering.

"We believe that intelligent driving should not be a luxury but a

**“We believe that intelligent driving should not be a luxury but a standard feature for all consumers.”**

Wang Chuanfu, chairman and president of BYD

standard feature for all consumers," said Wang Chuanfu, chairman and president of BYD.

"By making high-level smart driving available across our range, we are accelerating the transition toward smarter, safer mobility," said Wang.

Also in February, State-owned automaker Changan, which is a partner of Ford and Mazda, unveiled its smart strategy. Chairman Zhu Huarong said it will equip vehicles priced around 100,000 yuan with LiDAR technology, which is crucial to smart driving, this year.

Geely followed, announcing earlier this month a smart driving system, the new G-Pilot, which will be available on cars under the Geely Auto, Galaxy, Lynk & Co and Zeekr brands.

Analysts said that the move by these major automakers, especially BYD, will force competitors to follow suit, potentially triggering a wave of industry-wide adoption of smart driving systems as standard offerings.

This will put pressure on both domestic startups and international automakers operating in China to accelerate their own ADAS deployment.

Traditionally, advanced features such as lane-keeping assistance, adaptive cruise control and automatic emergency braking have been reserved for premium brands.

Tesla, Xpeng and Nio have offered high-level ADAS as part of their differentiation strategy, with some, like Tesla, charging thousands of dollars for its Full Self-Driving package.

"The competitive advantage in the car industry is shifting rapidly toward AI-driven intelligence.

"Future development must be based on this new competitive landscape," said Zhang Yongwei, secretary-general of the China EV 100, an NEV industry think tank.

But automotive executives are divided on the trend of availing smart driving features in mass-market cars.

Yu Chengdong, head of Huawei's smart driving solutions, said there is a big difference between "it manages to work" and "it works well," in a thinly veiled jab at BYD, which develops its own smart driving system.

Huawei is widely accepted as a top-level smart driving solutions provider in China, which has attracted partners including traditional carmakers BAIC and JAC.

But Xpeng CEO He Xiaopeng has applauded the move by automakers including BYD on Sina Weibo, saying that they are helping to popularize smart driving in China and across the world, more so as Chinese vehicles are getting popular in overseas markets.

## Yadea expands production in Tianjin

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin  
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Chinese electric motorcycle maker Yadea Technology Group has further expanded its production line in Tianjin, to support its ambitious "go global" plan of exporting its new energy vehicles to more overseas markets, a senior executive of the company said.

The Wuxi, Jiangsu province-based company completed expanding and started operations of the second phase of its production line in Tianjin in November.

The newly upgraded line is expected to roll out 2 million new energy motorcycles annually, the largest among Yadea's eight production centers globally.

With an expected output of 2 billion yuan (\$276.3 million) this year, the new line — built with an investment of 500 million yuan — has started producing battery-powered motorcycles for more than 100 markets globally.

"The new production line in Tianjin's Beichen district has ramped up technological upgrades to roll out top-notch new energy products and expand its global presence," said Zhang Xiaogang, vice-president of Yadea and general manager of its Tianjin branch.

From its founding in 2001 to December last year, Yadea's total sales had reached 100 million units, making it top-ranking globally in terms of electric motorcycle sales for the past eight years.

With the newly upgraded second-phase production line, the total area

of Yadea's production facilities in Tianjin has expanded to more than 530,000 square meters. Its Tianjin facility also functions as an innovation base for the group, Zhang said.

Its other domestic production plants are in Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong provinces, as well as the municipality of Chongqing. Yadea has also set up two overseas centers, in Vietnam and Indonesia.

Zhang said the company has been enhancing its Tianjin center's research strength for the production of electric motorcycles and related parts. He said, "The Tianjin production line has also attracted more than 50 upstream and downstream companies to Beichen, forming an industrial chain that covers motorcycle parts manufacturing, assembly and testing."

So far, the company has invested nearly 5 billion yuan in R&D, with significant achievements seen in various sectors.

In the internet of things, for example, the company has made breakthroughs in sensor fusion algorithms and higher-level autonomous driving technologies for electric two-wheelers, such as automatic following, lane changing and parking assistance.

"Looking forward, we will take steps to launch mass production and application of autonomous driving models. Such technologies are expected to be widely applied in scenarios such as daily commuting, express delivery and shared mobility, continuously reshaping the

industry ecosystem and leading the wave of intelligent transformation in the sector," Zhang said.

The company also plans to expand its presence in Vietnam and Indonesia and build intelligent manufacturing lines for motorcycle production.

On Yadea's global expansion, Zhang said there are many challenges, making its "go global" path a bumpy one.

"Fossil fuel-powered motorcycles have long dominated the Southeast Asian markets, so the company is confronted with an underdeveloped awareness among local consumers, which leads to limited acceptance of electric motorcycles. To make Yadea more popular, we have to make electric motorcycles more popular," he said.

Guo Shulong, an associate professor at the Business School of Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, suggested that Tianjin must enhance its trade measures and Customs services, including better utilization of its autonomous driving dock, to accelerate exports.

"Upgraded industrial chains are expected to form in the city for synergistic production," he said.

Additionally, Guo urged Yadea to develop more products suited to Vietnam's rainy weather and optimize its after-sales services for better market presence.

In response, Zhang said, "We need to launch strategies to address the mountainous terrain and frequent rainfall in Vietnam, including long battery life, large wheel diameter, and extended wheelbase to better meet the needs of local users."

## Shanxi aims to curb carbon emissions

By ZHU WENQIAN in Beijing  
and ZHU XINGXIN in Taiyuan

North China's Shanxi province, the largest coal producer in the country and host to several carbon-intensive industries, aims to curb its carbon emissions to meet the national carbon peak and neutrality goals by upgrading China's first zero-carbon airport.

Taiyuan Wusu International Airport, located in the provincial capital Taiyuan, is hoping for an "energy revolution" by building a zero-carbon terminal in its third phase expansion project, which is expected to be operational by 2026.

Once completed, the airport is forecast to emerge as a brand-new aviation hub with an annual throughput capacity of 40 million passenger trips and a cargo and mail throughput of 300,000 metric tons, according to the local government.

According to the Government Work Report delivered on March 5 at the annual session of the 14th National People's Congress, China will actively and steadily promote its dual-carbon goals — peaking carbon emissions before 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

Specifically, China plans to build a group of zero-carbon industrial parks and factories and expand the coverage of its national carbon emission



Ma Tonggui

trading market to include more industries. Besides, the country will carry out carbon emission statistics and accounting, establish a management system for the carbon footprint of products, a carbon labeling certification system, and actively respond to green trade barriers, the report said.

Ma Tonggui, a deputy to the 14th NPC, has been maintaining civil aviation equipment for 23 years and dealing with nearly 600 pieces of equipment daily. Each day, Ma and his colleagues inspect the circuits of the luggage transfer system early in the morning.

Ma said he deeply understands the necessity for promoting low-carbon technologies and zero-carbon airports.

After he was elected a deputy to the NPC in 2023, Ma started paying close attention to the application of green power at airports. Through systematic research, he found that there is room for further improvement in the stable supply of green electricity.

This year, he proposed to strengthen the application of green power at the new zero-carbon terminal and

promote a coordinated development model of direct green power supply and virtual power plant, a network of decentralized energy resources that are controlled via software to function as a single and flexible power source. The application of a virtual power plant at an airport is the first such attempt in China.

"The conditions for building distributed photovoltaic and wind power generation and other green power projects within the airport are limited," Ma said.

"Yet, the industries that serve the airport, such as aviation catering, aircraft maintenance, warehousing and logistics, are located within the airport's economic zone and possess the basic conditions for developing and applying green power resources," he said.

The zero-carbon project of Taiyuan airport aim to build a unified energy management digital system for multiple scenarios at the airport, including terminal buildings, tarmac and office areas.

In his proposal, Ma has suggested an increase in financial subsidies for the use and research and development of clean energy equipment at airports.

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# 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.

## Tech powerhouses keen on China innovation



**Frederic Morel**  
President of Lectra Asia Pacific



**Tim Ding**  
General Manager of Veeva China



**Cui Jingyi**  
Vice-President and  
General Manager of Aveva China



**Victor Tsao**  
Vice-President of Red Hat and  
General Manager of Red Hat  
Greater China

**Q1** What's your view on this year's 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?

**MOREL:** As China approaches the conclusion of its 14th Five-Year Plan, we hope that the two sessions will continue to prioritize policies that sustain economic growth and drive innovation, particularly in digital transformation and sustainable development. China's commitment to high-level opening-up has been promising, and we would welcome further steps to enhance the business environment. This could include measures such as enhanced regulatory transparency, streamlined processes for market access, and stronger intellectual property protections. Such initiatives would not only further bolster China's appeal as a destination for international investment, but also provide greater opportunities for companies like Lectra to expand, innovate and thrive within this dynamic market.

**DING:** As general manager of Veeva China, I very much look forward to the country further deepening reforms and expanding high-level opening-up of the Chinese economy. Especially in the healthcare and technology sectors, I expect the government to introduce more innovative support policies and strengthen intellectual property rights protection to create a fairer, more transparent and more predictable market environment for foreign companies. In addition, promoting the development of digital healthcare and smart healthcare will also bring new growth points for the pharmaceutical industry. Currently, the size of China's digital healthcare market has exceeded 100 billion yuan (\$13.8 billion) and is maintaining a rapid growth trend. The pharmaceutical sector is a special industry related to people's health and safety. I hope the government can provide more policy support for the digital transformation and upgrading of the pharmaceutical industry, so that more patients can have access to safe, effective and affordable medicines faster by encouraging pharmaceutical companies to adopt digital technology to achieve compliant operations and efficient management in the process of drug development, production and marketing.

**CUI:** As China concludes its 14th Five-Year Plan, the high-quality development, innovation, and open economy will be reiterated during the two sessions. Recent initiatives including strengthening intellectual property protection for foreign enterprises and 2025 Action Plan for Stabilizing Foreign Investment were unveiled to further open up the economy and attract global capital. We're looking forward to further improvements in market access and regulatory transparency, further streamlining administrative procedures, ensuring policy consistency, and facilitating cross-border data flows, which will help strengthen investor confidence. China's ongoing commitment to openness and innovation presents new opportunities for multinational companies like Aveva to contribute to, and benefit from, its economic transformation.

**TSAO:** We look forward to the two sessions further advancing high-quality development and market-oriented reforms, creating a more transparent and fairer business environment for innovation. At Red Hat, we are committed to leveraging open-source technologies and services to collaborate with Chinese partners under open and mutually beneficial policies, helping enterprises build new productive forces and expand globally. Only through more open and fair business policies can we foster global technological innovation and international cooperation, ultimately creating more opportunities for all stakeholders.

**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?

**MOREL:** At Lectra, we are fully aligned with China's vision of upgrading industrial productivity through the development of "new quality productive forces". We contribute to it by providing advanced solutions that drive industrial transformation across key sectors such as fashion, automobiles and furniture. Our offerings empower Chinese manufacturers to improve product quality, reduce material waste and enhance productivity in their production processes. By enabling greater efficiency and sustainability, we support the upgrade of industries to meet higher standards. In addition, we also collaborate with local partners and educational institutions to develop talent and foster innovation in these key sectors. Through these initiatives, Lectra is ultimately contributing to the long-term success of China's industrial upgrades and high-quality development goals.

**DING:** "New quality productive forces" is widely seen as key to helping China achieve industrial upgrades and high-quality development. Veeva introduces international advanced management concepts and digital technology tools to help pharmaceutical companies improve operational efficiency, product quality and market competitiveness. For example, in China, our China Commercial Cloud solution, Veeva China CRM Suite, is tailored for the Chinese market, helping many pharmaceutical companies digitally manage the entire process of marketing their drugs to market, enabling them to achieve operational compliance, reduce costs and increase efficiency in the commercialization process. Veeva contributes to China's pharmaceutical industry by providing more high-quality digital solutions in line with international standards through continuous technological innovation and promoting the overall digitalization and upgrading of China's pharmaceutical industry.

**CUI:** "New quality productive forces" is key to promoting the upgrading of China's industry and high-quality development. Collaborating with leading enterprises across various industries, like chemicals, power, and manufacturing, especially semiconductors, we use technologies like big data analysis and cloud computing to optimize production processes, improve product quality, and reduce energy consumption and costs. Additionally, training and technical support are leveraged to enhance enterprise competitiveness and contribute to the high-quality development of China's industry, while the offices in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou also serve as training centers where periodic training sessions are conducted for different products. Scientific and technological innovation and industrial transformation are essential for China to achieve its high-quality development goals.

**TSAO:** Red Hat has been committed to fostering new quality productive forces in China. On the technology front, with 20 years of deep-rooted experience in the Chinese mainland, we have provided enterprise-grade open-source technologies and services to thousands of businesses. Leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as cloud computing, containerization, edge computing and AI, we help enterprises unlock data value and enhance operational efficiency. At the same time, we actively promote technical exchange and collaboration, serving as a bridge for communication between China and the world. This enables Chinese enterprises to absorb global best practices, accelerate digital transformation, strengthen independent innovation, and drive industrial upgrading and high-quality development.

**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?

**MOREL:** AI presents tremendous opportunities for business in the coming years. As an advocate and pioneer of Industry 4.0, Lectra has already integrated cloud, big data, internet of things and AI in its products and services. AI plays a critical role in enabling increased automation, improved decision-making and higher precision in production processes, offering a competitive edge to businesses across sectors. As China continues to lead in AI development, we see great potential for AI-powered solutions. China has demonstrated the ability to sustain innovation in its thriving tech ecosystem, and we look forward to being part of that journey, leveraging AI to meet the evolving needs of industries we serve.

**DING:** From drug development to commercialization, AI is transforming the pharmaceutical industry and becoming an important force driving its development. According to market research organizations, the global market size of AI applications in healthcare will reach tens of billions of dollars by 2025. Veeva has always been at the forefront of technological innovation, and Veeva's GenAI strategy is focused on enabling our customers to create value for them. Our AI solutions are currently helping many pharmaceutical companies realize data-driven decision-making, improve R&D efficiency and marketing effectiveness, accelerate drugs to market faster and bring new therapies to patients. With the continuous maturity of AI technology and the expansion of application scenarios, as well as the Chinese government's continued investment in, and support of, science and technology innovation, Veeva will continue to deepen its cooperation with its customers to jointly explore new applications of AI in the pharmaceutical industry, and to provide strong support for the digital-intelligent transformation of China's pharmaceutical companies.

**CUI:** The rise of AI technologies like DeepSeek is indeed remarkable and signifies the deep integration of AI with various industries worldwide. China is also becoming the market with the most extensive application of AI technologies globally, bringing new opportunities for many companies including Aveva. We see AI as humanity's tool, an exciting innovation that will help meet the sustainability goals and do more with less. Industrial tech — in particular AI — can turbocharge industries' progress toward efficiency and sustainability. We are currently working with customers across the world to drive the ramping-up of AI to boost productivity and decarbonization. Aveva is confident in China's ability to maintain its innovation capacity in breakthrough technologies in future with strong innovation capabilities and broad prospects for AI applications.

**TSAO:** The explosive popularity of DeepSeek once again validates Red Hat's vision that "the future of AI is open". Red Hat remains committed to providing efficient, flexible and cost-optimized enterprise-grade open-source AI solutions for businesses worldwide, including in China. We see tremendous growth opportunities in the Chinese market. With its strong R&D capabilities and vast market potential, China's rapid advancements in AI, cloud computing and other fields are fueling global technological innovation. By further expanding openness, and increasing investment in technological innovation, China is well positioned to achieve continuous breakthroughs in AI and other cutting-edge domains, driving industry leadership.

**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?

**MOREL:** China's large and growing consumer market presents a significant opportunity. As domestic consumption becomes a key driver of economic growth, we see an increasing demand for personalized, sustainable, and high-quality products. This shift aligns perfectly with the solutions we provide to the fashion, automotive and furniture industries and we expect increasing demand from manufacturing companies in these sectors for more efficient, agile and high-quality production technologies. For example, in the automotive sector, the demand for new energy vehicles keeps rising and consumers are increasingly prioritizing comfort and intelligent in-car experiences, requiring higher agility and shorter time-to-market from NEV suppliers. We bring solutions to our customers to adapt to and optimize their processes to meet these expectations and address the changing market dynamics.

**DING:** China's consumer market has huge potential, especially in the healthcare sector. According to statistics of the National Health Commission, the total scale of China's healthcare industry reached 18.6 trillion yuan last year and is maintaining a rapid growth trend. With the increasing health awareness of people and the aging population trend, the pharmaceutical industry will see great development opportunities. Consumers' growing demand for high-quality pharmaceutical products and healthcare services will inject new vitality into the economy and bring great development opportunities for the pharmaceutical industry. Veeva will leverage its digital technology advantages and service experience in the pharmaceutical industry, and by promoting and supporting the digital transformation of the pharmaceutical industry and pharmaceutical companies, we will help pharmaceutical companies improve operational efficiency and quality throughout the entire process of R&D, manufacturing, and commercialization. At the same time, we are optimistic about the long-term development prospects of the Chinese market and expect our business in China to continue to grow.

**CUI:** Driving domestic consumption is one of China's key tasks to promote economic growth. And with the continuous development of China's economy, the domestic consumption market has enormous potential. Especially among the younger generation of consumers, there is a greater emphasis on quality and service, which will drive industrial and consumption upgrades. The prosperity of the domestic consumption market presents significant business opportunities, since the clients provide essential goods such as energy, food and medicine. Aveva will closely monitor market trends and promptly adjust product strategies and service models to meet the diverse needs of consumers. At the same time, we are looking forward to enhancing the brand influence through technological innovation and product upgrades.

**TSAO:** China's push for consumption-driven economic growth holds immense potential. Consumption upgrades will accelerate enterprises' digital transformation and drive them toward higher-value segments of the market. In this process, businesses will seek more cost-effective and innovative technology products and services. With globally leading, full-stack enterprise open-source technologies and services, Red Hat is well positioned to support the transformation and growth of enterprises across various industries. We remain highly optimistic about the future and expect our business to continue strong growth this year, with profitability improving accordingly.

**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?

**MOREL:** As China pursues its path to modernization, the transition to high-quality development presents significant opportunities for Lectra. As part of our long-term commitment, we are exploring investment opportunities in China to expand our production and service capabilities. In November last year, we inaugurated a new factory in Suzhou (Jiangsu province), which reflects our long-term dedication to the Chinese market and part of our "Made in China for China" strategy. We aim at continuing to strengthen our footprint in the country, and providing more Industry 4.0 solutions to the automotive, fashion and furniture sectors to support and accelerate their modernization.

**DING:** China's high-quality development path brings unprecedented opportunities for Veeva. We will continue to increase our investment in China, especially in product development and innovation, talent training and market expansion, and work hand in hand with more Chinese partners to jointly promote the digital transformation and upgrading of China's pharmaceutical industry. It is Veeva China's mission to build an industry cloud for China's life sciences industry, and China is a strategic focus market for Veeva. We will continue to expand the Veeva China CRM Suite, a commercial solution developed exclusively for the Chinese market, as well as continuously upgrade our solutions for clinical R&D, regulatory, quality, data and consulting to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire process. Veeva is committed to the long-term development of China, and we will continue to be a strategic partner connecting global innovation with local needs to help the life sciences sector achieve high-quality and sustainable development through technology, talent and collaboration.

**CUI:** As China continues to pursue high-quality development along the path of Chinese-style modernization, we see tremendous business opportunities. High-quality development not only requires improving production efficiency and quality, but also emphasizes sustainable development and environmental protection, which provides a vast market space for Aveva. In the coming years, we will continue to increase investments in China, aiming to continuously introduce global innovations to strengthen cooperation with local enterprises, optimize local business development models and jointly develop products and services that meet the needs of the market. Additionally, we will expand the business scope to cover more industry sectors, such as smart manufacturing and green energy.

**TSAO:** We see significant business opportunities in enterprise AI, cloud infrastructure, IT automation management, and supporting Chinese enterprises in expanding globally. We will continue to invest in China, including developing more open-source technology talent for various industries. At the same time, we will strengthen and deepen collaboration with local ecosystem partners to better serve niche industries and expand our reach into more second- and third-tier cities.

## WORLD

## China's aesthetic of bronze in spotlight at NYC exhibition

By MINGMEILI in New York  
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Collectors in the US and China share a curiosity about Chinese history and culture, but they preserve artifacts differently based on their aesthetic and scholarly priorities.

The Minneapolis Institute of Art, or MIA, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, brought a collection of ancient Chinese bronzes to the China Institute in New York for an exhibition, titled Eternal Offerings, from March 6 to July 13.

More than 70 objects are showcased at the China Institute Gallery, including a late Shang Dynasty (c. 16th century-11th century BC) wine vessel and a Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24) celestial horse sculpture.

The emergence of the culture of bronze — an alloy of copper, tin, and lead — remains a crucial chapter in the history of human civilization. Chinese bronzes from this period are unique in world history because of their variety and intricacy, the ritual context in which they developed, and the sheer number that have been unearthed over China's vast territory.

The people of the Bronze Age of China believed in the hierarchy of beings. They created their art to maintain this order on earth and in the afterlife. They made a wide range of bronze vessels to acknowledge the powers invested in those of high rank in ceremonies and sacrifices.

"At that time, American collectors of bronzes had different tastes compared to traditional Chinese collectors. Traditional Chinese collectors preferred bronzes with inscriptions, as they were interest-

ed in studying the inscriptions and the historical, religious, political, and military information they conveyed," said Liu Yang, Chair of Asian Art and Curator of Chinese Art at the MIA.

"In contrast, Western collectors were more drawn to the form of the bronzes, focusing more on their aesthetic appeal."

For example, many of the bronzes in this exhibition feature exceptionally intricate patterns, including beast-faced motifs, animal-shaped designs, and open-work carvings, he said.

"Through this exhibition, you can also see the evolution and development of bronze craftsmanship from the Shang Dynasty to the Han Dynasty," said Liu. "This is a way for people to learn about Chinese history through these artifacts."

Liu introduced that the MIA is one of the top museums with the finest collection of Chinese bronzes.

Most museums in the United States are private institutions, with their collections largely built through donations from local philanthropists.

US collector Alfred Pillsbury developed a deep curiosity about the stories behind these artifacts. Starting in the 1990s, he shifted his funding from Western art to acquiring Chinese artifacts. Thanks to such donations, the museum has amassed a vast collection of unique Chinese artworks.

"Bronze culture is an extremely important chapter in the development of Chinese history and art. It is a brilliant and unique part of Chinese heritage, something that does not exist in Western cultures," the curator said.



A visitor looks at a bronze artifact at an exhibition titled Eternal Offerings in New York, on March 5. LIAO PAN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

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## Salt on wound



A worker collects sea salt at a salt farm in Chachoengsao Province, on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand, in this photo released on Monday. According to a Bangkok Post video released in February, the industry is facing challenges with declining salt prices and rising labor costs. ATHIT PERAWONGMETH / REUTERS

## Tariffs expected to take a toll on US youths' health

Sports goods industry raises concerns about implications of trade measures

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
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The recent tariffs imposed on Chinese imports are creating more than just economic challenges for US families, but potentially harming their mental and physical health, with a disproportionate impact on youth from low-income households.

Industry leaders have raised serious concerns about the implications of the trade measures, as the United States relies heavily on China for sports goods and equipment.

"Our nation's physical and mental well-being hangs in the balance. Let's avoid these unforced turn-overs in trade policy and keep all Americans in the game," Todd Smith, president and CEO of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, or SFIA, wrote in an article published by sports industry news site Sportico.

Smith emphasized that the tariffs against China "threaten to reverse our nation's progress in physical activity" and called for the government to "abandon their implementation entirely".

The tariffs that US President Donald Trump imposed on Chinese imports during his first term significantly affected sports and fitness-related activities across the country, according to SFIA data.

Following the 2017 tariffs, national inactivity rates among US citizens increased from 81.4 million to 82.1 million in just one year. Even more concerning was the effect on lower-income households. Families earning under \$25,000 annually saw inactivity rates surge from 44.6 percent to 47.4 percent between 2017 and 2018.

The Trump administration imposed an additional 10 percent

tariff on all Chinese goods on Feb 4 and doubled that levy to 20 percent just one month later.

China is a major supplier of sports equipment to the US, accounting for more than 40 percent of US footwear imports. The US imported \$13.1 billion worth of footwear and \$31.6 billion worth of toys and sports equipment from China in 2023, the most recent year with complete data, according to a recent report by researchers at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

The figures indicate that imports of sports equipment will suffer the most under the new tariffs.

The new tariffs will be felt directly by US households, the researchers said.

## Ultimate impact

"While the ultimate impact on US prices will depend on import demand and supply elasticities, research on the US-China trade war has found resounding evidence of complete pass-through of tariffs to importers," the report explained.

"This implies that American consumers and firms will bear the effects of higher tariffs, with substantial costs for the average American household and a burden that falls more heavily on lower-income households," it said.

Emphasizing the link between tariffs and increased equipment costs, Smith pointed out the "hidden cost of tariffs" — the declining health of US citizens, particularly among low-income families.

In 2017, equipping a young athlete with basic soccer gear — cleats, shin guards, uniform and a ball — cost a family \$115. By 2023, those same items jumped to \$167.50, a 46 percent increase driven heavily by

tariffs, which for some imported equipment items can reach as high as 25 percent, according to the SFIA.

Household income significantly affects youth participation in sports, said Smith, and the cost barrier leads to a drastic participation gap for US youths.

In 2023, only 24 percent of children from households earning under \$25,000 regularly participated in sports, in comparison to 41 percent of children from households earning \$100,000 and above regularly participating in sports.

"When essential sports equipment becomes more expensive due to tariffs, families are forced to the sidelines," said Smith.

The additional costs from tariffs come at a particularly challenging time for many households, as inflation continues to keep prices high.

Economists with Morgan Stanley Research said in a report earlier this month that they expect inflation in 2025 to rise 2.5 percent, up from their previous forecast in December of 2.3 percent. Analysts at Goldman Sachs have also projected higher inflation, largely attributing this increase to the new tariffs.

Though Trump has stated that his "America First Trade Policy" benefits US manufacturers and businesses, experts suggest the tariffs would increase the cost of machinery, electronics and equipment imported from China, with much of the burden falling on US-based businesses and consumers.

Margaret M. Pearson, a professor in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, College Park, addressed those concerns in a new report published by the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

"US policy should acknowledge the substantial costs to US consumers and businesses of a securitization of everything," Pearson wrote.

## Deadly blaze leaves North Macedonia in mourning

KOCANI, North Macedonia — After North Macedonia's deadliest tragedy in recent memory, with dozens dying in a nightclub inferno, the Balkan nation is struggling to grapple with so many young lives lost while trying to hold those responsible to account and prevent another calamity.

The fire tore through the overcrowded nightclub early on Sunday in the eastern town of Kocani, leaving 59 people dead and 155 injured from burns, smoke inhalation and being trampled in the panicked escape toward the building's single exit.

People as young as 16 were among the casualties, and the nation declared seven days of mourning.

"We are all in shock, and I am shocked myself: as a mother, as a person, as a president," North Macedonia's President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova said in an address to the nation on Sunday.

"I still cannot believe that the terrible tragedy in Kocani is a reality. I do not know with what words to express my condolences to the parents and loved ones of the deceased," she said. "No one responsible should escape the law, justice and punishment! Let us not allow anyone to endanger the lives of innocent people anymore."

The fire that shook the nation of 2 million — where close-knit extended family bonds made the disaster personal to many — was the latest deadly nightclub fire around the world.

Authorities say they are investigating allegations of bribery surrounding the nightclub that was crammed with young revelers and at double capacity. And North Macedonia's government ordered a sweeping three-day inspection to be carried out at all nightclubs and cabarets across the country, starting on Monday.

## Harrowing scenes

The country was in mourning as people watched harrowing scenes in the town of 25,000, where rescuers for hours carried out their grim task of removing the charred bodies of clubgoers. The fire caused the roof of the single-story building to partially collapse, revealing the charred remains of wooden beams and debris.

Anxious parents gathered outside hospitals in Kocani and the capital Skopje, some 115 kilometers to the west, for updates about the injured. Many of the most seriously injured were receiving treatment in Greece and other neighboring countries.

Although the investigation into the fire's cause is ongoing, videos showed sparking pyrotechnics on the stage hitting Club Pulse's ceiling and igniting the blaze as a band played.

Interior Minister Panche Toshkovski said 15 people had been detained for questioning after a preliminary inspection revealed that the club was operating without a proper license. He said the number of people inside the club was at least double its official capacity of 250.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Trump plans talks with Putin over truce

WASHINGTON/MOSCOW — US President Donald Trump said he plans to talk with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday about setting the conflict in Ukraine, US media reported.

"We're doing pretty well, I think, with Russia ... I'll be speaking to President Putin on Tuesday. A lot of work's been done over the weekend." Trump told reporters on board Air Force One during a flight from Florida to Washington on Sunday evening.

Trump, who is working to finalize a 30-day cease-fire agreement between Russia and Ukraine, said that land and power plants will be part of his conversation with the Russian leader.

"We want to see if we can bring

that war to an end. Maybe we can, maybe we can't, but I think we have a very good chance," he said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday morning confirmed the plans for the two leaders to speak on Tuesday, but refused to disclose what the conversation will be about, saying that "we never get ahead of events" and "the content of conversations between two presidents are not subject to any prior discussion".

Trump's envoy for the conflict, Steve Witkoff, who met for several hours with Putin days ago, told CNN that he thinks "the two presidents are going to have a really good and positive discussion this week."

But officials also hinted strongly that Ukraine will likely have to

make some major concessions if a deal is to be reached.

Michael Waltz, Trump's national security adviser, suggested on Sunday that Ukraine would likely have to both cede some territory to the Russians and give up any aspirations for NATO membership in the foreseeable future.

Russia has long drawn a line against NATO membership for Ukraine.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said in an interview with local media on Sunday that Russia will demand concrete security guarantees from the United States and NATO as part of any agreement on Ukraine.

Ukraine's neutral status and NATO's rejection of Ukraine's

membership must be central to these guarantees, said Grushko.

Since 2019, the number of military contingents on NATO's eastern flank has doubled, posing a significant threat to Russia, he said, adding that the ongoing rearmament of European countries adds to Moscow's security concerns.

He said the deployment of peacekeepers to Ukraine would only be feasible if both parties to the conflict deem it necessary.

Moscow remains open to separate negotiations with the European Union if Brussels signals a willingness to engage, he added.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in an interview on Saturday that, "Ukraine is sovereign. If it asks for allied forces to be on its territory, it's not something for Russia to accept or not."

XINHUA-AGENCIES

## Flower power



A woman smiles as she holds sunflowers in a sunflower field during the sunset at Rancho San Juan Diego in Tlajomulco de Zuniga, Jalisco State, Mexico, on Sunday. Rancho San Juan Diego is a floriculture company that seasonally runs tours for visitors. ULISES RUIZ / AFP

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## EU trying to deflect US' trade attack onto China will only worsen its plight

**A**mong all the officials of US allies and partners that have tried to point a diverting finger at China as the target for US tariffs, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas is undoubtedly the most incorrigible.

China is "laughing", Kallas told the media during a G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Canada last week. "It's really benefiting from the US having a trade war with Europe."

She made the remarks as the European Union imposed 50 percent tariffs on US whiskey in retaliation for US tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, including those from the EU.

This represents at least the third time Kallas has made such a comment since the US presidential election in November, even before taking office as EU foreign policy chief.

But she's wrong.

Trade wars have no winners. A trade war between such major economies as the United States and the EU will impact the stability of the global industry and supply chains sending shock waves around the world economy.

Both the US and the EU are important trading partners of China, and their trade war will inevitably harm China as it will aggravate the headwinds in its external environment.

Kallas' seeming belief that if the US buys her view, it will ease up on its tariff attack on the EU is nothing but wishful thinking.

In fact, turning a deaf ear to her appeal, the US administration threatened a 200 percent tariff on EU-imported alcohol such as champagne and wine in response to the EU's 50 percent tariffs on US whiskey. And the US president is standing firm on his threat, telling reporters on Thursday that he will not reconsider upcoming tariffs that will take effect on April 2. He called on the EU to drop its tariffs on US whiskey or face reciprocal tariffs.

The EU's top diplomat should realize that what the US leader cares about is the EU's tens of billions of dollars of trade surplus against the US, which China has no influence on.

The only "rationality" behind her painstaking peddling of that distorted view on China originates from the Cold War mentality ingrained in her mind, and the minds of some other EU politicians, which the previous US administration took advantage of to try and form a "united front" with the EU against China.

Defending the US' tariff war, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told the media on Sunday that "This is global. It's not against Canada ... it's not against Mexico, it's not against the EU, it's everybody", adding that once there was a baseline level of fairness and reciprocity, then the US would engage in negotiations about new trade agreements.

In her meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Munich last month, Kallas had said the EU highly values its relations with China, and expressed the EU's readiness to cooperate with China in upholding multilateralism and safeguarding the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

To that end, Kallas should stop making irresponsible remarks on China, and match her words with deeds.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of China-EU diplomatic relations. Over the past five decades, China-EU cooperation has come a long way. Bilateral trade has expanded from \$2.4 billion to \$780 billion. Investment has increased from almost zero to close to \$260 billion.

The two sides should take this as an opportunity to review the experiences of their successful cooperation, reaffirm their strategic partnership, uphold dialogue and cooperation as the guiding principles, stick to the fundamental tone of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and remain strategic partners based on mutual respect, trust and long-term stability.

How the US and the EU get along is up to them, as Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. But it is not going to help the EU get along with China if it tries to deflect its trade tensions with the US onto it.

Kallas should bear in mind that China as a friend in a time of need is a true friend indeed.

## All should hold fire to give peace a chance

**O**ver the past year or so, tensions in the Middle East have continued to escalate, with the regional security situation deteriorating significantly and burning issues emerging one after another.

In the latest such development, the United States launched air strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen on Saturday, adding more uncertainties to the Israel-Hamas ceasefire process.

In what the US president described on social media as a "decisive and powerful military action" in response to the Houthis' "unrelenting campaign of piracy, violence, and terrorism against American, and other, ships, aircraft, and drones"; US warships and jets launched attacks across Yemen, targeting radars, air defense sites and drone launch points.

The Houthi-run health ministry said at least 31 people were killed, and 101 injured in the strikes as of the weekend, which appear to be just the start of a US campaign against the Houthis. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Sunday that US air strikes against the Houthis will not stop until the group ends its attacks on US ships and drones.

The air strikes have raised tensions in the region that was just beginning to see some signs of de-escalation after Israel and Hamas concluded a 42-day ceasefire earlier this month. They have also cast a shadow over the Israel-Hamas talks that began last week in the Qatari capital of Doha on the commencement of the second phase of the ceasefire deal.

Since the latest conflict between Israel and Hamas broke out in October 2023, the Houthi group, claiming to be acting in solidarity with the Palestinians, has targeted merchant vessels with missiles, drones and small boat attacks in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden; the group has also targeted US aircraft carriers and naval vessels in the region. This prompted the US State Department to reinstate the group as a "foreign terrorist organization" earlier this month.

During the Israel-Hamas ceasefire the Houthis paused their attacks on shipping, but last week they threatened to resume attacks on Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea in an attempt to pressure Israel to reopen the border crossings for the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Israel's decision to block humanitarian aid to Gaza since earlier this month, a move Tel Aviv said is aimed at pressuring Hamas into accepting an extension to the ceasefire deal, has fueled fierce condemnation from Palestinians, regional countries and international organizations.

What is happening in the Middle East lays bare the hard truth that the US and its ally Israel do not sincerely spare a thought for the fate of the people in the region as they pursue their strategic aim of weakening Iran. Israel, with the unwavering support of the US, has seemingly not only debilitated both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon but also the influence of their backer Iran, its archrival in the region. Israel's war machine has reshaped the region's power balance which has further dimmed hopes for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

For the sake of regional peace and stability and to uphold international justice and fairness, it is essential that Israel and the US act in a more responsible and humane manner, giving due regard to resolving the humanitarian crisis they have created in Gaza.

There has already been too much blood spilled in the Middle East, and all parties should focus on addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an unresolved historical injustice that is at the heart of the violent fractiousness in the region, rather than sparking new tensions or even crises that will only lead to even more bloodshed.

As a responsible major country, China remains committed to peace and stability in the Middle East, as shown by Foreign Minister Wang Yi's talks in Beijing on Friday with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov Sergey Alexeevich and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi on the Iranian nuclear issue, in which he put forward China's five-point proposal for the proper settlement of the issue.

Although the negotiations between Israel and Hamas remain on a knife's edge, peace remains within reach, and the pursuit of peace should not be abandoned, as Wang urged. All parties should refrain from the use of force and instead jointly contribute to de-escalating tensions in the region so as to pave the way for a permanent ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, which is the first stepping stone to peace in the region as a whole.

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Jin Ding



## Opinion Line

## Spurring boost to incomes can stimulate domestic consumption

The central authorities have made public a plan on special initiatives to boost consumption.

Consumption has always been the "ballast stone" of economic growth and the primary driver of China's economic development. However, the vitality of consumption hinges directly on the purchasing power and willingness of entities, both of which are fundamentally supported by sustained and stable income growth.

Only with increased income and sufficient cash flow can businesses invest in expanding production and provide more job opportunities.

It is worth noting that the central authorities' plan prioritizes ensuring and supporting consumption capacity. Education, medical insurance and raising a family have been key con-

cerns that have long constrained consumption capacity. For this reason, focusing on income growth can effectively remove constraints on consumption.

Overall, the highlight of this action plan is constructing a system that spans income growth, foundational support, supply innovation and ecological optimization. When residents' wallets become fuller and enterprises' cash flows are more active, the consumption engine of the entire economic system gains sustained momentum. This connection is especially critical amid China's ongoing economic transformation and upgrading.

By focusing on income growth and complementing it with supply-side structural reforms, the authorities

can better align demand and supply, sustaining stable economic growth.

In the context of multiple uncertainties surrounding the global economic recovery, China's choice to stimulate consumption by boosting income growth is not merely an emergency measure to address short-term demand shortages. It is also a strategic move to promote the smooth functioning of the economic cycle encompassing production, distribution, circulation and consumption.

This consumption revitalization action plan, if well implemented, can help establish a genuine two-way circulation between income and consumption, thereby driving long-term and high-quality economic development.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

## UK putting itself on horns of dilemma

Leaders of more than 20 countries and regional organizations held a video conference on Saturday, under the chairmanship of UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, to discuss the Ukraine crisis. This meeting of the Western leaders highlights the United Kingdom's delicate and somewhat contradictory position between Europe and the United States.

On the one hand, the UK is attempting to assume a leadership role in European defense.

Starmer mentioned the European military powers will meet next week to elevate peace moves to an "operational phase", which indicates that the UK not only aims to play a big role on the Ukraine crisis but also hopes to spearhead collective European defense efforts.

Starmer said they agreed to keep the military aid flowing to Ukraine, and increasing the pressure on Russia by tightening restrictions on its economy. The meeting decided to convene a conference of military personnel in the UK on Thursday to further refine plans for long-term support of Ukraine's defense capabilities. Whether the UK's policy of maximum pressure on Russia will yield any substantial results remains to be seen.

On the other hand, Starmer has been stressing on the close relationship between the UK and the US. Despite the UK's efforts to try and play a leading role in Europe's defense, Starmer's remarks show a high level of dependence on the US. He explicitly stated that achieving

peace in Ukraine must be done in partnership with the US, and emphasized that the UK's strategic stance toward the US has not changed.

The stance reflects the UK's continuous difficulty in breaking free of US constraints on major foreign and security policies.

As calls for Europe's defense autonomy grow louder, the UK's role between the US and Europe will increasingly put it in a dilemma. Will the UK seize the opportunity to establish its own leadership on the Ukraine crisis, or will it continue to waver between the US and continental Europe for survival? The upcoming military conference in the UK on Thursday will give further insight into the latest direction of UK policy.

— CHINA MEDIA GROUP

## What They Say

## Neighbors nurture improved relations with goodwill

During his conversation with the host of a YouTube podcast on the weekend, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the need to strengthen relations with China despite past tensions, emphasizing dialogue over discord and cooperation over conflict.

"We are now working to restore conditions to how they were before 2020. Slowly but surely, trust, enthusiasm, and energy will return. But of course, it will take some time, since there's been a five-year gap," said Modi. "Our cooperation isn't just beneficial, it's also essential for global stability and prosperity. And since the 21st century is Asia's century, we want India and China to compete in a healthy and natural way. Competition is not a bad thing, but it should never turn into conflict."

This latest positive comment of the Indian side on Sino-Indian relations reciprocates that of the Chinese side.

In his meeting with the media in Beijing on March 7 on the sidelines of the annual gathering of the top legislature, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China and India should be partners that contribute to each

other's success, and stressed that this is the only right choice for both sides.

This round of exchange of goodwill between Beijing and New Delhi represents a continuation of the positive momentum that has been generated since the meeting between the Indian and Chinese leaders in October.

During that meeting between Modi and the top Chinese leader in Kazan, Russia, on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit, the two heads of state agreed to view and handle bilateral ties from a strategic and long-term perspective, and not allow their differences to affect the overall development of their relationship.

Since then, the two neighbors have markedly accelerated their joint efforts to restore the relations.

Wang and India's special representative for the China-India boundary question, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, co-hosted the 23rd meeting of the special representatives on the issue in Beijing in December, the first of its kind in five years, and reached a six-point consensus.

In late January, China and India reached multiple consensuses, including India expressing full sup-

port for China's rotating presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and both sides agreeing to resume direct flights between the Chinese mainland and India, and facilitating personnel exchanges.

As two neighbors, two ancient civilizations, and the two largest developing countries that are seeking to accelerate their respective development, there is every reason for the two countries to support each other and work with each other.

Beijing and New Delhi have enough wisdom and capability to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas pending a fair and reasonable solution.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India, during which they have agreed to carry out media and think tank exchanges, dialogues and other people-to-people exchanges. The healthy development of Sino-Indian relations serves the fundamental interests of both countries and the two peoples, as well as those of the region and the Global South as a whole.

— LIYANG, CHINA DAILY

## COMMENT

## Zoellick: I respect China's achievements

**Editor's note:** The Chinese edition of *America in the World: A History of US Diplomacy and Foreign Policy* by Robert B. Zoellick, former World Bank president and former US deputy secretary of state, has hit bookstores this month. In an interview with China Daily's Song Wei, Zoellick offered his insights into diplomacy, reflected on China's economic and technological transformations, and explored the pivotal issues in China-US relations. Excerpts follow:

**Q: What inspired you to write *America in the World: A History of US Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*?**

**A:** I wanted to share my experience with younger generations about how to think about history and problem-solving. As you probably know, (former US secretary of state) Henry Kissinger wrote a book titled *Diplomacy* in the 1990s, but Kissinger drew primarily from the European experience. So, I wanted to try to draw from some of the American experiences.

I think the way you bring history to life is to talk about stories and people. So, as you know, each of the chapters focuses on a person or a group of people and a problem they're trying to solve.

In addition to security issues, you've got financial issues, trade issues, and technology issues. And when you wrap them all together, I have a strong belief that diplomacy is an art, not a science.

**Q: You first visited China way back in 1980, just two years after the country launched reform and opening-up. How do you see the economic and social transformation China has undergone over the past four-plus decades?**

**A:** I'm so pleased I had a chance to visit China. I was here for only a day. My wife and I were in Macao where we got the one-day sort of visitations. We visited a communal farm. We visited a city that I just remember having cinder blocks and everybody being dressed in blue and gray. But it gave me a visual reference point.

So, when I visited China over the following years, I saw a huge transformation. This is a historic change. This is a huge change. And, obviously, it lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. It created great opportunity.

I've always been fascinated by the transformation of China. At heart, what I



have felt most strongly is that when I was with the World Bank, in addition to going to Beijing or Shanghai, I tried to visit other parts of the country. My main takeaway was that the Chinese (people) were very hard-working people who wanted to create a better life, and that's something you have to respect and admire. So, for me, my purpose is that while you have differences in history, culture, and politics, how can we find the common ground to steer away from trouble and build on the common advantages?

I've a lot of respect for what China has accomplished. Within one lifetime, you saw people move from impoverished conditions and sort of just drab clothing to what you see around you. It's a huge transformation. It's amazing.

**Q: How can the US and China build a positive relationship?**

**A:** You've got the two most important countries in the world. You don't want them to clash. You want to try to do things to avoid miscalculations. Sometimes people get into trouble by assuming things or accidents that can expand and turn worse over time. You obviously want to try to rebuild some of the trust and find the commonalities of issues, whether economy, climate, pandemics, or others.

I think in the current environment, President Donald Trump believes in transaction. He's a dealmaker, and you can see that in all his comments. The stories in my book are beyond dealmaking. The stories in my book talk about systemic issues. But I'm trying to give you a sense of Trump's approach as opposed to

my approach. So he's concerned about fentanyl and narcotics. He's concerned about the illegal immigration. He's concerned about the bilateral trade deficit. He's trying to negotiate peace settlements, so the question is whether there are opportunities for some win-win cooperation there. I hope they move in the positive direction.

**Q: What does China's strategy to boost technological innovation mean for the world?**

**A:** In the artificial intelligence field, I expect the US and China to remain leaders.

The success of DeepSeek to me is interesting, not so much in China-US competition as in a new phase of AI. And what I mean by that is last year, all the discussion was on building these very expensive large language models. Very capital intensive, very energy intensive. So, it was an investment in the enabling of technology.

DeepSeek, I think, represents a phase shift not just for China but for others (as well) and the idea that technology is moving from "the enabling" to "the adapting". How do you provide uses for this? So DeepSeek is an open system, but it's also showing how you can develop, sort of, methods in a lower-cost way.

While the US and China might have somewhat separate systems, the ideas travel across borders, and they will still be transformative.

**Q: Tariffs and trade barriers remain major challenges for globalization. What are effective ways to reduce trade frictions between China and the US?**

**A:** I'm not a fan of tariffs. If you ask what's the effect of tariffs or barriers, the effect is they raise costs and lower productivity. Whether it's China or whether it's the US. So, it's not just China and the

US. The US is doing this with Canada and Mexico. It will also hurt the auto industry in North America. I don't think those are the right policies, but sometimes tariffs are used as part of a negotiation.

Maybe part of Trump's purpose is to get other countries to do various things. With China, he's talked about using tariffs to create pressure on the fentanyl and the drug issue. All I can say is he sees the world through the lens of a dealmaker.

**Q: Why can't the US increase tech exports to China to reduce deficit?**

**A:** Export controls in my view can buy you a few years, but they won't stop somebody (from developing). You can't stop the development. So, if the US limits semiconductors (export), that may serve a security purpose. But don't fool yourself. China will develop it in a few years.

What I'm trying to explain is I understand the logic for some export controls, but on the other hand, there is a danger because what it will do is (that) it will produce separate systems, and that's the era that we're now dealing with.

**Q: How do you view China's rise?**

**A:** China has grown so quickly. Many Chinese people still say, "well, we are a poor developing country". But the rest of the world sees China as a powerful giant, and when you're a powerful giant, one has to give thought to how you will be perceived. My hope is that we can continue to find a basis where not only the US and China but also Japan and South Korea, Australia and the Philippines and Europe will create a more cooperative working basis.

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



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**Kang Bing**

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## An example of how to make tourists feel more welcome

When traveling home or abroad, we tend to avoid purchasing goods or dining in restaurants near tourist sites because prices there are usually high. We dine or shop in such places only when we have a tight schedule or when buying unique souvenirs. On such occasions, we don't mind paying 20-30 percent more.

But when people think they have been cheated into paying a lot more than usual for a simple dish or drink, arguments follow, leading to a physical brawl in some cases. Then there is online condemnation of the "extortion" and appeals to market administrators to get things in order.

There have been many such scandals in China in the past 10 years or so, which in most cases have led to disastrous consequences for the local tourism industry. To restore their reputation, what most local governments do is to conduct investigations, punish the merchants involved and instruct retailers to put price tags on all goods and properly mark the prices of dishes on the menu.

Other measures include issuing a "black list" of rule breakers to deter potential offenders, rewarding those reporting such malpractices, and sending market watchdogs to conduct checks on the retailers and restaurants to ensure they are not making profits through illegal means.

## Apart from taking measures that have been implemented by many other price scandal-hit tourist sites and cities, it opened two State-owned supermarkets and a restaurant.

Such measures are effective in preventing retailers and restaurants in and around tourist sites from charging exorbitant prices, though the hide-and-seek game between local market administrators and the merchants has not altogether stopped. In fact, "extortion" scandal cases have been repeatedly reported from some cities and tourist sites, frustrating administrators.

Xuexiang (Town of Snow) in Heilongjiang province has become an exception after it did something exceptional. Located 300 kilometers southeast of the provincial capital of Harbin, Xuexiang, with its fantastic snow landscapes and colorful local culture, became a popular winter tourist attraction a dozen years ago. However, its booming tourism business was dealt a heavy blow in 2017 when some visitors reported online that local hotels refused to accommodate guests at the pre-contracted room tariffs, and restaurants and shops were ripping off customers by charging many times more than normal for goods and food.

After some mainstream media outlets reported about the scandal following thorough investigations, tourists largely deserted Xuexiang. To attract visitors back, Xuexiang, which is in fact a State-owned forest farm, did something unique. Apart from taking measures that have been implemented by many other price scandal-hit tourist sites and cities, it opened two State-owned supermarkets and a restaurant.

State-owned shops and restaurants used to be popular four decades ago. But with the intensifying of reform and opening-up, most of them have been privatized or turned into share-holding companies. So the opening of State-owned shops and restaurant was welcome relief for tourists, as they brought down prices in Xuexiang. In the State-owned supermarkets, a bottle of water costs only 1 yuan (14 US cents) and a bucket of instant noodles only 5.5 yuan, about the same as that in shops elsewhere.

The State-owned restaurant offers buffet for a little more than 50 yuan per person, the normal price in cities and towns. The low prices in the State-owned shops and restaurant have compelled hundreds of other shops and restaurants to lower their prices to a competitive level, or risk going out of business. I visited several restaurants to check their menus and found the prices reasonable. Hopefully, other tourist attractions will learn from Xuexiang's successful experience to become more visitor-friendly.

Braving strong winds and snow on Xuexiang streets, nothing is better than getting a cup of hot and sweet ginger tea from local volunteers. The tea is free, a thank-you-for-visiting token from the local authorities who are doing their best to please visitors.

But high accommodation charges remain a problem in Xuexiang — a room in a motel during peak season could cost more than 1,000 yuan per night. To address the problem, a new street, with more hotels, has been built in Xuexiang to increase the availability of rooms in a bid to lower hotel/motel room charges.

As tourists, we hope the local administrators succeed in their bid to make life easy for visitors.

Matin Qaim

## Agri-food system modernization key to food security

Hunger and malnutrition remain major global problems, and the lack of decisive action could worsen the situation. With the world population continuing to increase, mostly in Africa and Asia — it is expected to reach almost 10 billion by 2050 — a considerable increase in food production is required to feed the additional people. But this is difficult to achieve because of land and water scarcity and other environmental issues. What complicates the matter further is the climate change-induced decline in food production growth in many parts of the world.

In January 2025, more than 150 Nobel Prize and World Food Prize winners, mostly scientists, urged global leaders to prioritize research and development in agriculture, and develop "moonshot" technologies to address the tragic mismatch between global food supply and demand. To solve the problem, especially to boost food production and strengthen global food security, the world needs to promote smart innovation in agriculture and food systems.

An important part of the solution is harnessing new technologies, such as digital innovation and genomic-assisted breeding. These technologies can help increase crop yield while reducing fluctuations in production due to climate shocks. New technologies can also help reduce the negative environmental effects of intensive farming. For instance, digital sensors scan plants and the soil to detect diseases and nutrient deficiency, which can then be treated through precise applications. Such systems can significantly reduce the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

Genomic-assisted breeding techniques, such as gene editing and genetic engineering, help to develop crop varieties that are more resistant to pests, diseases, water stress and high temperatures. Studies conducted in China and many other countries show genetic engineering significantly increases crop yield, and often lowers pesticide use. Recent analyses show that genetically-engineered crops can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from farming and also mitigate the effects of climate change on agriculture.

Apart from increasing crop yield and reducing inputs, new technologies can also help preserve, if not restore, diversity in farmlands, food markets and people's diets. For the last 70 years, most farmers across the world have been growing a few staple crops, such as rice, wheat, maize and soybean, neglecting



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY



other crops. This means competitive seed varieties and technologies are often not available to farmers.

Gene editing can accelerate the production and yield of neglected crops, thus making them more attractive to farmers. Related breeding work on more than 60 crop species, including cassava, millet and banana, as well as many types of pulses and vegetables, is already underway. And digital technologies can also help increase diversity in agriculture.

In many middle- and high-income countries, farmlands are large and homogenous, mainly because it is easier to operate big machines on them. And the use of machines in places where labor is costly and scarce can help farmers to remain competitive.

Yet to preserve biodiversity, we need smaller fields and more diverse farms. Such diverse farms cannot easily be operated by large machines, but by

smaller robots. Obviously, the use of robots is unnecessary where human labor is cheap and abundant.

However, technological innovation always needs to be combined with social and institutional innovations to make agri-food systems sustainable, while favorable policies are necessary to ensure that new technologies are accessible to all and are safe to use. This will especially benefit smallholder farmers, who are often the most disadvantaged group.

But modernization and upgrading should not be limited to agriculture; food markets and supply chains also need to be modernized so as to increase efficiency, reduce losses and improve the accessibility and affordability of nutritious foods for consumers.

In most countries, rural residents' diets are less nutritious than those of urban people, because diverse and healthy foods are not available at affordable prices all year round in rural areas, especially in remote regions. Better infrastructure, modern food processing facilities and improved logistics can improve access and nutritional intake.

According to a study of available data from China, the increase in the number

of modern supermarkets since the early 2000s has reduced consumer food prices and further diversified food supply, contributing to better diet quality and improved nutrition, especially in rural areas. Positive nutritional effects of supermarkets have been observed in African countries too.

Another study conducted in China suggests e-commerce, too, helps improve the diets of households in rural areas. These outcomes are primarily driven by rural households getting easier access to nutritious foods, especially lightly or moderately processed foods. But it should be kept in mind that highly processed foods are less healthy because of their high sugar, fat and salt content. There is a need therefore to regulate the food industry.

The modernization of the agri-food system is necessary to make agriculture sustainable and ensure food and nutrition security for all.

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## GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

JASNA PLEVNIK

## Rooted partnership

The EU and China have all the reasons to work together and help return the world to stability and the path to prosperity

Since 1975 when China and the European Union's predecessor, the European Community, established diplomatic relations, China and Europe have shaped and implemented many strategies to create a long-term comprehensive partnership that benefits their economies and people.



More than a decade ago, China launched two distinct but interrelated initiatives that have increased Europe-China connectivity — Cooperation Between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (China-CEEC Cooperation) and the Belt and Road Initiative.

When Jean-Claude Juncker was the president of the EU's executive body, the European Commission, from 2014 to 2019, there were no concerns that cooperation with China might endanger the Western political system, economic and technological progress. The level of political trust between China and the EU was high.

Now this sounds incredible but when the Investment Plan for Europe was launched in 2014, the BRI was viewed as an initiative that was in synergy with the EU's aims.

The EU saw China as an equal partner in cutting-edge technology development and a "stakeholder" in global governance. There were no geopolitical discussions on de-risking, sanctions or calls to ban Chinese companies from competing in the European markets.

At that time, the EU pursued its policy toward China and worked to develop a more coherent strategic dialogue concentrating on economic cooperation and ignoring great power politics.

After 2019, China's European diplomacy was perceived and accepted by political coldness in Brussels under the political pressure from Western powers and the extremely biased approaches in media outlets and even academic circles.

The EU has followed the US' anti-China policy as a pattern for its relationship with China, complicating the China-EU relationship and hindering cooperation.

Despite the great challenges China has faced in Europe over the past six years it has continued to strive for harmony with the EU, awaiting Brussels taking a more autonomous stance toward trade and technological cooperation with it.

China did not follow the spirit of protectionism, de-globalization and sanctions that have not been approved by the United Nations

Security Council and has remained devoted to building a long-term stable and trustworthy type of bilateral partnership with Europe.

Nobody can predict how relations between the EU, China and other global powers will be in the next few years. Even when changes are visible, we can miss what is on the horizon, but one thing is for sure — restoring the world as it was before US President Donald Trump and the Ukraine crisis will be hard. The expansion of BRICS and the strengthening of the Global South are a good direction, but these groupings may not have the power to change the world order.

At present, the post-Cold War order is under the biggest pressure to reach its endpoint because the new US administration has the ambition to shatter the multilateralism, institutions and organizing principles of the current world order. The US shows explicitly it will not use its economic and strategic superpower to keep other countries stable and prosperous.

That is why relations between Europe and China are becoming crucial for achieving stability in the world.

In recent weeks, there has been a growing question: Will the EU seek to align with China after President Trump has increased duties across all imports to the US? China's export growth slowed in the first two months of 2025 and the same is looming for European exports.

The shift in the EU's China policy is not yet a sure bet but the new US' approach to Europe will force the EU to think about stopping the rise of its economic and strategic vulnerability at home and abroad. The EU's foreign policy dependence on Washington is now widely recognized as a vulnerability and limiting to the EU's interests.

Europe and China must read the current chaos in international relations as a huge opportunity to work together to return the world to stability by protecting the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core.

There are many similarities between the EU and China's views of international relations — both advocate the construction of a multipolar world, and the history of their relations is not burdened by geopolitics. China's steadfastness in being a friend of Europe stands as a "firewall" that preserves and protects their relations even in less good times.

Many positive things for upgrading Europe-China relations are already in the in-tray, the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment for example.

Fifty years of cooperation is the right moment for reviving up the CAI that would make it easier for

EU and Chinese companies to do business and stabilize the global trade.

China's diplomacy with Central and Eastern European countries remains a significant pillar of Europe-China relations. China-CEEC Cooperation has proved itself as cooperation that respects and accepts the EU's rules and standards and does not divide Europe. Trade with China has risen, and China's banks have opened branches in Central and Eastern European countries and Chinese capital has been invested in energy and transport infrastructure.

Today, China-CEEC relations feature a wide range of cooperation including student, academic and business exchanges focusing attention on a variety of issues of concern to its partners and in the line of sight of their leaders, but it has not reached its full potential yet.

This model of cooperation faces the challenges of rejuvenating itself and responding to changes in international relations.

China-CEEC Cooperation can enhance its agenda by connecting with the Global Civilization Initiative, emphasizing collaborative projects that focus on the shared values between Chinese and European civilizations rather than their differences.

The BRI which has made substantial progress and expanded into new geographical areas and collaborative forms should return to Europe in full glory.

Since 2013, the China-CEEC mechanism has been closely aligned with the BRI. Strengthening the connection between the BRI and China-CEEC Cooperation would make the mechanism feel less lonely in Europe and give it fresh momentum.

The EU's explicit detachment from the BRI was initiated during the Joe Biden administration of the US, which adopted a confrontational stance toward the BRI and even pressured Italy to withdraw from it.

The recent geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe, which holds a significant position within the BRI, have also diminished the BRI's influence in Europe, but the end of the Ukraine crisis is approaching and the status of the BRI in Europe can be revived.

All these impediments should be viewed as temporary, as China has not altered the strategic vision of the BRI to connect China, Asia and Europe.

The author is founder and president of the Geoeconomic Forum Croatia. 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.

ZOLTAN KISZELLY

## Looking to the future

Hungary remains committed to maintaining mutually beneficial trade with China as part of its policy of economic neutrality

What used to be the case throughout Europe is now almost unique to Hungary: cooperation between large European and Chinese transnational companies in key sectors of manufacturing and telecommunications. What used to be win-win cooperation is now turning into a zero-sum game in which Europe is losing through fault of its own, while the United States is winning big. How did we



get here and what opportunities lie ahead? Will Hungary remain the exception or will it become the role model for the well-tryed new cooperation?

Everything started so well. China joined the World Trade Organization in December 2001, accelerating the spontaneous globalization that started after the end of Cold War. Globalization can be seen as the "natural" state of the world economy, driven by comparative advantage and where all cooperating partners benefit. Production takes place where it is most economical, and the international division of labor brings new countries, regions and continents into the mainstream of the world economy, increasing prosperity and allowing previously underdeveloped regions and countries to prosper.

The East Asian pole of the world economy, however, was not content with the role assigned to it by the West, best described by the German term "extended workbench" and began conscious catch-up development. After 1945, Japan, and from the 1980s onwards the Republic of Korea and the countries known as the "Little Asian Tigers" (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines) focused on a few key sectors, in which they caught up with and with time overtook the Western companies that had been market leaders.

The Chinese market economy not only borrowed from the East Asian model, but also developed it further, providing the sustainable economic basis for China's modernization. China has clearly learned from the mistakes made during the transformation of the Central and Eastern European countries and the economic catching-up process in East Asia, and its targeted development policy in the past 40 years has made it the world's second-largest economy.

This conscious catch-up development is important to emphasize as the defining difference, as it distinguishes the pragmatic and socially engaged Chinese economic policy from purely profit-driven Western economic policy, which has, more-

over, become increasingly subordinated to ideological goals over the past two decades. In the face of China's development, the West has chosen not to cultivate mutually beneficial trade relations and to maintain international relations based on mutual respect, but to limit and contain the processes of spontaneous globalization.

This process had already begun during the Barack Obama administration and would have been embodied in free trade agreements that would have been an outplacement of Chinese companies from the participating countries. The process of spontaneous globalization was severely disrupted during Donald Trump's first term as president, when he unilaterally decided to exclude Chinese digital companies from the US market. The European Union almost joined it in this restriction. This was averted, but the win-win cooperation in the US has been replaced by a policy of decoupling, which aims to squeeze out Chinese digital technology, electric vehicles and online commerce. Washington had previously cited "human rights" as a justification for the restrictive measures, but since there was no evidence offered to give these alleged violations of human rights credence, under the Joe Biden administration, the restrictions on imports of Chinese high-tech was made under the guise of "national security".

Vulnerable to the US capital market and security guarantees, the countries of the EU and its largest economy, Germany, have benefited from economic relations with China for decades, which is why they did not immediately join the US' decoupling policy. The EU was a winner of spontaneous globalization. Its companies outsourced energy- and labor-intensive production, taking advantage of lower production costs and the proximity of new production units to emerging markets, which generated substantial profits.

European (and US) consumers with average or modest incomes have benefited from affordable, high-quality mass-market products, such as IT and communication devices, household electrical appliances and consumer goods that were previously only available to the wealthier echelons of society.

Germany, in particular, which is exposed to Chinese trade, has been hesitant to introduce restrictive measures for a long time, the best example being 5G technology (the data transmitting part). German telecommunications companies spontaneously opted for Chinese digital technology, but the federal government, under pressure from the US, imposed a five-year phase-out period until 2029.

Indeed, the EU's de-risking policy is an adoption of the US policy of decoupling aimed at reducing switching costs, which over time will mean restructuring supply chains; banning acquisitions of European companies by Chinese enterprises in strategic sectors; and clearing bilateral payments in euros (increasingly in dollars under President Trump).

As a member state of the EU, Hungary is exposed to the decoupling and de-risking policies of Western decision-making centers, but the Hungarian government has developed a policy of connectivity within its means, which offers the opportunity to maintain the cooperation model known from the period of spontaneous globalization and to save it for a later period for European and Chinese companies willing to cooperate.

Hungary is currently a laboratory where Chinese BYD electric cars will be produced for the European market and where Chinese CATL batteries will be fitted to German BMW cars. Hungarian telecommunications company 4iG signed a cooperation agreement with China's Huawei in October 2023 in Beijing, so Hungary will continue to rely on Huawei's high-tech products and services.

US and EU measures restricting online trade with China have inspired a plan to make Hungary the fulfillment hub for online orders to Central and Eastern Europe. The Hungarian government remains committed to maintaining mutually beneficial trade with China as part of its policy of economic neutrality, resulting in more Chinese direct investment in Hungary in recent years than in France and Germany combined, which are committed to de-risking.

The Hungarian government, which in 2015 became the first EU country to join the Belt and Road Initiative, does not join the ideology-driven policies of the West, which is why many Western, mainly German, companies henceforward are choosing Hungary as a place to cooperate with Chinese companies. This policy was acknowledged and reinforced by President Xi Jinping's state visit to Hungary in May 2024, where the two countries signed an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership for the new era that sets the path for the years ahead, steeped in a sense of responsibility for a global community with a shared future.

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LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Wearing traditional clothes, eating traditional food like *guthuk* stew, putting on spring couplets, raising prayer flags and setting off fireworks, residents in many areas of the Xizang autonomous region rejoiced with the coming of Tibetan New Year.

Residents in the autonomous region began to celebrate their New Year, or Losar as they call it, on the first day of the Tibetan calendar's first month, which fell on Feb 28 this year. The celebration lasted about two weeks.

An occasion for family reunion, Losar is the most important of all the traditional festivals in Xizang. It is also a grand showcase of the culture and traditions unique to this plateau region.

Tashi Gyatso, in his 70s, is a resident in Chengguan district of Lhasa, the capital city of Xizang. His neighbors affectionately call him a "living guidebook of Losar celebrations" for his seven decades of experience celebrating the event. He's always asked for advice on how to prepare for and spend the festival.

"Preparations can start two months before Losar New Year," Tashi Gyatso said. "Early winter is the best time to make dried yak meat, the staple food for Losar."

Tashi Gyatso himself did exactly that just months before the festival. "I bought two yak legs to make dried meat, which should be enough for my whole family during the period."

When the dried meat was ready, it was time to purchase various New Year goods. "Butter, milk, brown sugar, highland barley wine, *khapse* and a *cherma* box are must-buy items on my New Year goods list," Tashi Gyatso said.

*Khapse* is a type of snack similar to a deep-fried stick or twist, made of flour and yak milk butter.

"In the past, *khapse* was usually made by housewives," Tashi Gyatso said. "But now, there are plenty of *khapse* snacks in shops, giving an option to people who are too busy to make it on their own."

*Cherma* boxes also top the shopping list, Tashi Gyatso said. A *cherma* box is a container of items with symbolic and auspicious meanings. Its exterior is decorated with colorful patterns and images.

"Three things are standard with a *cherma* box: *losar metog* flowers; fried highland barley grains; and *tsampa*, or roasted barley flour," the old man said.

*Losar metog*, which Tashi Gyatso said is "the most beautiful flower in the world", is a kind of ornamental flower made of barley branches and ears dyed with bright and multiple colors.

"A *cherma* box is usually divided into two sections, each containing fried barley grains and *tsampa*. And *losar metog* flowers are arranged in both sections," Tashi Gyatso said. "All these things are symbols of good harvest and good luck."

While the first day of Losar is devoted to family reunions, residents then begin to visit relatives or friends in the following days. They greet each other with "Losar, Tashi Deleg", or "Happy New Year".

The visitors are first welcomed by a senior host who holds a *cherma* box. Guests take out some fried grains and *tsampa*, throwing some into the air and then putting the rest into their mouths.

"On the third day, we erect a prayer flag pole on the roof of the house and raise the flags, which marks the renewal of our hopes for the new year," Tashi Gyatso said.

He most appreciates the richness of rituals and their symbolic meanings during the Losar New Year celebration. "That's a tradition of a millennium, which always makes us proud of our culture and history," Tashi Gyatso said.

During the Losar New Year period, locals flocked to markets to make purchases for the celebrations. Stalls selling dried yak meat,



From left: Two Tibetan children wear traditional clothes to celebrate Losar New Year. JOGOD / XINHUA A Lhasa resident takes food from a *cherma* box displayed at Norbulingka Park. WU SISI / XINHUA



Many traditions and rituals, such as presenting *cherma* boxes to guests and erecting prayer flags, embody the values of the good and kind. These traditions are worthy of being passed down to future generations."

Tsewang, a resident of Kheme village in the city of Lhokha in the southeast of Xizang autonomous region

# Losar celebrations ring across Xizang autonomous region

Residents joyfully welcome the coming of Tibetan New Year with widespread festivities



A hostess in a Tibetan family welcomes young guests with a *cherma* box and snacks. JOGOD / XINHUA

yak butter, handmade pastries, candies, dried fruits and prayer flags have mushroomed everywhere.

The Barkhor market in Lhasa, for instance, was packed with shoppers eager to clinch a good deal during the monthlong annual Losar shopping festival.

"Despite the presence of other markets, Barkhor remains a popular spot for its vibrant atmosphere and diverse offerings," Champa Tsering, who is in charge of the market, told the local media.

This year, the Losar shopping festival highlighted an exhibition and sales of imported goods, attracting 30 merchants from South and West Asia. Exotic items such as handwoven Nepali carpets and traditional Bhutanese handicraft were up for grabs during the event.

On Losar New Year's Day, the village of Kheme in the city of Lhokha was also in a festive atmosphere with flying prayer flags and other auspicious ornaments.

Tsewang, a primary school teacher in his 50s, walked along the street near his home. He met his friends and neighbors with the typical Tibetan greeting of "Tashi Deleg".

His home behind him was filled with the fragrance of Tibetan incense. With the sun shedding light on the flowers on the window sills, the rooms seemed bright and warm. In the kitchen, his wife was preparing New Year food and snacks, ready to welcome visiting guests.

When recalling the dozens of Losar celebrations over the past decades, Tsewang said that he loves its rich traditions and rituals, as well as the steady improvements in quality of life that can be seen in the celebrations.

"When I was a child, Losar was a long-awaited occasion, as it meant a wonderful opportunity to wear new clothes and eat big meals," Tsewang said. "And in the years since, we have become less concerned with material supplies because the supplies have been sufficient all year round. This allows us to get to the roots of the traditions that have been here for more than a millennium."

"Many traditions and rituals, such as presenting *cherma* boxes to guests and erecting prayer flags, embody the values of the good and kind," Tsewang added. "These traditions are worthy of being passed down to future generations."

He added that he is happy that his two children have grown up well. His daughter became a civil servant and his son became a teacher after they both graduated from university.

"Losar marks a farewell to the past and the beginning of a brand-new future," Tsewang said. "I hope our lives will become better and better."

Losar is celebrated on different days in different parts of Xizang due to variations in altitude and the harvesting season.

While most people celebrate Losar on the first day of the first month in the Tibetan calendar, residents in many parts of Shigatse and Nagchu celebrate it at the start of the 12th month, some in Ngari celebrate it in the 11th month, and people in eastern Nyingchi mark it as early as in the 10th month.



From left: A retailer sells Losar goods at the Barkhor market in Lhasa. PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY The *losar metog* flowers and highland barley seedlings are among the auspicious ornaments for Losar New Year. JIGME DORJE / XINHUA



# Festival hails fresh start for villagers in earthquake-hit Dingri

By YUAN SHENGGAO

During the Losar holiday, or Tibetan New Year holiday, which was celebrated from Feb 27 to March 4, the people of Dingri county in the Xizang autonomous region found this festival was more meaningful than ever.

While the start of a new year is associated with festivities, fun and fortune, villagers in Shigatse's Dingri county, which was rocked by a 6.8-magnitude earthquake on Jan 7, could also look forward to

embracing the warmth of new homes.

A project to reconstruct houses damaged in the powerful quake and its multiple aftershocks is scheduled to start in March and be completed swiftly by October, giving the community hope for making a fresh start before the end of the year.

Drolma Tsering, a resident of Drakchang village in Dingri's Dramso township, said she was thrilled to hear the news about the government's expedited reconstruction

and rehabilitation efforts, adding that she and her fellow villagers are eager to embrace a new life after moving into the new houses.

Drakchang was one of the 27 villages in Dingri severely affected by the quake. Wang Xinli, deputy head of the county's bureau of housing and urban-rural development, confirmed the reconstruction plan.

"Depending on the number of members, each family will get a house measuring 80 square meters to 260 sq m. Other basic

infrastructure, such as schools for young children and health clinics, has also been planned," Wang said.

Around 5,000 villagers, who have been living in makeshift tents in Dingri's Tsogo township since the January quake, celebrated Losar New Year.

They had received daily necessities and festive packages from the authorities, and have rehearsed traditional songs and dances to usher in the new year.

"We've done our best to ensure that the people have enough food,

water and electricity to stay warm and enjoy Tibetan New Year," said Ngakwang Tenzin, head of Tsogo township.

He said that special assistance is being provided to the elderly, children and others in need, and teachers have been arranged to support students preparing for the new semester.

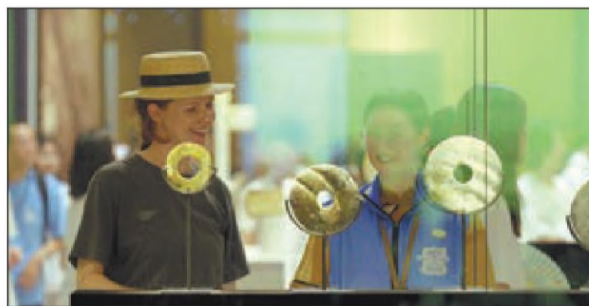
"The first Losar New Year after the earthquake is of great importance to all of us, as it offers a chance to reset and marks a new mission and a fresh start," he added.



The first Losar New Year after the earthquake is of great importance to all of us, as it offers a chance to reset and marks a new mission and a fresh start."

Ngakwang Tenzin, head of Tsogo township, which was among the hardest-hit areas in Dingri during the earthquake

# LIFE



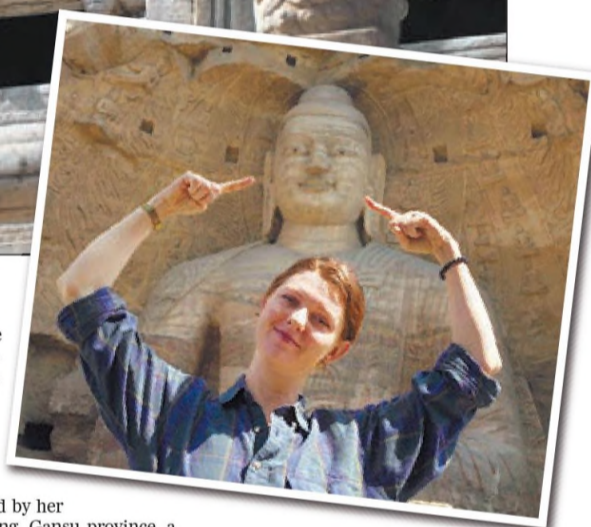
From left: In the documentary *China's Culture Journey*, Cleo Luden visits Quanzhou, Fujian province, and Liangzhu Ruins in Zhejiang province. Daniel Newham relaxes in Macao. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Documenting a grand journey

Two expats venture 20,000 kilometers across China to share the nation's rich cultural heritage with the world, **Wang Xin** reports in Shanghai.



Luden reflects at the Palace Museum of Beijing (above), and enjoys the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi province (right).



**D**aniel Newham from the United Kingdom and Cleo Luden from France are two expats who embarked on an exciting and immersive journey to discover Chinese culture last summer. They are featured in the documentary *China's Culture Journey*, which began airing every Tuesday since March 4 on Dragon TV.

Produced by Aoxue Studio of DocuChina Co owned by Shanghai Media Group, the four-episode English documentary provides global audiences with a first-person perspective of China's profound culture and modern vibe.

The documentary sheds light on the preservation of 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, the innovative development of traditional culture, the inheritance and protection of Chinese intangible cultural heritages, and the exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations.

During their 20,000-kilometer journey, the explorers visited 16 landmarks across China, including nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as Hangzhou's Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City in Zhejiang province, the Grand Canal Yangzhou section in Jiangsu province and the Temple of

Confucius in Qufu, Shandong province. Along the way, they experienced the daily lives of people from various regions and local cultures.

Having lived in China for over 25 years, Newham, 45, is no doubt an "expert". Still, he described the journey as "eye-opening, all-inspiring and heartwarming". The Green Cloud Corridor, a landmark in Sichuan province, particularly impressed him.

At about 151 kilometers in length, it is an ancient pathway built during the reign of China's first emperor Ying Zheng (259-210 BC) and was cared for by dynasty after dynasty. The corridor's name comes from the region's over 7,700 ancient cypress trees, with an average age of 1,050 years, planted on both sides, making it the largest man-made cypress forest in the world.

"It is beautiful walking among the trees and knowing that some big names in ancient Chinese history like the first emperor and great poets, such as Du Fu and Li Bai, have walked the same path and seen the same scenery unchanged over thousands of years," he says.

Newham shares with China Daily that there were many memorable moments, people and stories during

the journey. He is impressed by an archaeological team member born after 1995 at the Sanxingdui archaeological site in Sichuan, who broke the stereotype for people of such a young age. He was also intrigued by the oracle bone script callisthenics in Anyang, Henan province, which combines the mysterious ancient Chinese writing with dance exercises.

Eying new personal goals of introducing Chinese calligraphy to the world, Newham describes how he felt about the journey, inviting more global visitors to come, see, and experience China firsthand.

The other explorer, 29-year-old Luden, is pursuing her master's degree at the Shanghai Theatre Academy. She began learning Chinese at age 10 and came to China on vacation in 2008. She has lived in China on and off for about four years.

Similar to Newham, she was awestruck by the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City in Hangzhou, saying it was "indescribable and magic" when she stood in the same place as people from ancient times.

Highlighting "discovery" and "history" as keywords for the cultural journey, Luden learned a lot of specific

details on the journey, knowledge she wouldn't have gotten from everyday life or reading books. She was particularly touched by her visit to Dunhuang, Gansu province, a place she always wanted to visit.

"I am fascinated by the language, especially the writing. I'm passionate about the ancient writing system; and beautiful art in Dunhuang that has been passed down by generations to continue drawing and preserving it. I think art is also more than pretty paintings. It shows you a way of life and how people think about it. I was impressed by the beauty and whole culture that it carries," she says.

This echoes the production team's expectations. Ao Xue, director in chief of the documentary, tells China Daily: "With this documentary, I would like to show overseas audiences a culturally prosperous China. Chinese people value their culture, protect heritages, respect traditions, and have a love for education."

"Taking culture as the carrier, we

hope to show the spiritual world of the Chinese people and make audiences understand China better. It will be exciting if they gain interest in the country through this documentary and visit to see it with their own eyes," Ao says.

Having explored many Chinese cities, Luden is inviting global audiences to visit the nation, saying: "If you're not familiar with Chinese culture, it is such a different world and is so fun to discover. You will always be welcome."

"You don't have to fear anything. If you have any trouble, everybody will help you. If you are worried about the language barrier, I know Chinese people always find a way. Just go."

Contact the writer at wangxin2@chinadaily.com.cn

## Ancient principles continue to serve as guide for modern governance

By XING WEN

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The Chinese term *guanzen* refers to the moral principles and behavioral guidelines of ancient Chinese officials that emphasize integrity, impartiality, diligence and care for the people, an outline used to govern justly and responsibly for societal benefit.

The earliest recorded and enduring examples of these guidelines date back to the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC).

A recently aired documentary on Mango TV delves into this ancient wisdom, using historical books and records to explore the origins, evolution and lasting influence of classic *guanzen* principles, particularly highlighting how this ancient wisdom continues to shape China's modern governance.

The seven-episode series focuses on major themes as loyalty, fairness, integrity, trustworthiness, frugality, wise associations and moral integrity.

"These themes not only embody the core principles of governance and public service in China but



Images of ancient books from the seven-episode TV series about moral principles that served as guidelines. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

also resonate strongly with the value systems of modern society," says Wang Binren, the documentary's producer.

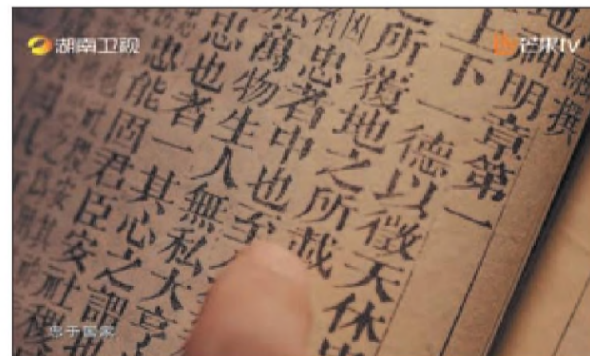
By blending historical narratives, interviews with descendants of key figures, and insights from historians, the documentary aims to show viewers the enduring wisdom of ancient texts.

For instance, the episode themed on frugality begins with the story of

general Tao Kan (259-334). Tao collected wood shavings produced during lumber processing and spread them on snowy paths to prevent slipping.

By transforming seemingly useless items into something practical, Tao demonstrated his wisdom in frugality.

His historical anecdote is linked to the modern concept of "cost reduction and improving efficiency", resonating with today's audience. By bridging ancient wisdom with contemporary themes, viewers can appreciate the relevance of traditional values in modern life.



The documentary employs cutting-edge virtual shooting technologies using native 4K ultra-high definition for a seamless production process. It has enhanced the viewing experience with superior image and sound quality, blending on-

location footage with reenactments, which vividly narrate the stories.

For the virtual shoot, three grand scenes were meticulously prepared — a battlefield teeming with soldiers and horses, the royal palace, and a snowy street from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). Despite tight deadlines and budget constraints, the production team leveraged cutting-edge technologies to achieve historical accuracy and filming

requirements of 4K 50fps (frames per second), according to Li Daping, director of Mango TV's virtual reality department.

"By employing crowd modeling, AIGC model generation, 3D scanning, and rendering optimizations, we created lifelike virtual environments. These advancements allowed for precise scene control and immersive historical recreations, ensuring a high-quality viewing experience," Li says, adding that the technical team played a pivotal role in designing scenes, art direction, and planning lighting and cinematography for the documentary.

Wang Jie, a professor with the Party School of the CPC Central Committee, comments that this documentary revives ancient codes of conduct by exploring hidden historical details from classical texts and presenting them digitally.

"It bridges traditional values with modern society, making the ancient culture of clean governance more accessible and relatable to a broader audience. By doing so, it ensures that these cultural values are shared widely and endure for generations," Wang says.

## LIFE

# Visionary sees village profit from tradition

Heritage and artistry of ethnic identity combine to provide ever-expanding opportunities,  
Yang Feiyue and Li Yingqing report.

Nestled in the lush mountains of Southwest China's Yunnan province, the small village of Laodabao was once connected to the outside world just by a rugged dirt road. Home to approximately 500 people of the Lahu ethnic group, the village offered limited opportunities for interactions with other communities. Yet, the lives of the Lahu people have never been devoid of joy.

By the edges of rice fields and around bonfires, traditional ethnic music and dance have been their unique way of expressing themselves.

For generations, these cherished traditions have transformed their village in Lancang Lahu autonomous county, Pu'er city, into a hidden cultural gem, rich with heritage and vibrant artistry.

In 2012, Laodabao was listed among the first batch of nationally recognized traditional villages in China, a testament to its rich cultural heritage and unique ethnic identity.

However, the seclusion that helped preserve the tradition had kept the locals living on the margins, until Li Naluo came on the scene.

Born and raised in the village, the Lahu woman has put Laodabao on the map by tirelessly showcasing its rich traditions on stages across the country and abroad.

Since she led local villagers to found a Lahu culture company in 2013, more than 1,300 performances have been delivered nationwide.

To date, her troupe has recruited more than 200 villagers who get to make an income, ranging from 3,000-8,000 yuan (\$415-1,106) a year, through delivering performances in their spare time.

"Our performers include people of all ages, from 3 years old to those in their 70s. It's beautiful to see everyone coming together through music and dance, while receiving extra income," says Li, who's in her 40s.

At the end of February, Li traveled to Beijing to receive the title of National March 8th Red-Banner Pacesetter, the highest honor presented by the All-China Women's Federation to recognize the country's outstanding women.

"This honor is not just mine; it belongs to everyone back in my hometown. I am deeply moved and grateful for their support," Li says.

Whether young or old, male or female, the Lahu people excel in swing dances accompanied by traditional instruments including the reed-pipe (*lusheng*) and drums, as well as a cappella singing, and harmonious choruses.

The songs of the Lahu people are deeply intertwined with nature and daily life.

They celebrate mountains, rivers, farmland, labor and love, expressing a profound reverence for the natural world and a heartfelt passion for life.

These songs are primarily passed down through oral tradition, without fixed musical scores.

The lyrics and melodies, handed down from generation to generation, retain their raw, natural charm and distinct ethnic character, while this method of transmission infuses Lahu music with a vibrant vitality



Top: Li Naluo poses with students after a training session in a village in Yunnan province. Above left: Li (front) engages in farming with fellow villagers. Above right: Li (left) weaves cloth for bags with ethnic Lahu decorations. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Li (second from left) practices Lahu songs.

and flexibility. The singing is often filled with joy and optimism, radiating a positive spirit even in the face of hardship, Li explains.

Growing up immersed in this rich cultural environment, Li says she was like any other child in the village.

"We learned to sing as soon as we could speak, and dance as soon as we could walk," she says.

One of the most enduring memories from her childhood is the image of her father playing the reed-pipe and her mother singing folk songs under the soft glow of moonlight.

When she was 13, her father introduced her to the guitar, selling a pig to afford the instrument.

With no formal training, Li taught herself to play.

"I took it upon myself to create melodies based on my feelings toward the life around me," she recalls.

In 2005, Li joined a local Lahu art organization, where her natural musical talent and deep understanding of Lahu culture quickly set her apart.

At the time, the troupe was facing significant challenges, with few performance opportunities and low visibility. Li saw these struggles and then took the initiative to work with her peers to explore new forms of performance.

Li began to promote the performance initiative among her fellow villagers and encourage them to join.

"I convinced them how it can be business mixed with pleasure, while

showcasing and preserving our culture," she says.

Things took a turn for the better in 2006 when Li led the troupe at the Yunnan Spring Festival gala, where their performance of the song *Happy Lahu* composed by Li set off waves of applause from the audience.

They continued to captivate audiences at an international tourism festival in the provincial capital Kunming in 2007.

As their fame spread, they made their way to national television programs like *China's Got Talent*. Invitations to perform in Beijing, Shanghai, and overseas destinations such as Japan, also came their way, earning the Lahu culture international acclaim.

The success had Li establish a cultural company in 2013 to better preserve and promote Lahu culture while creating sustainable economic opportunities for her community.

To better cater to the tourism market needs, Li has found innovative ways to blend tradition with modern elements.

"We have ancient Lahu tunes that record our history, and we also create modern songs that reflect contemporary life. Our traditional instruments, like the reed-pipe, are still central to our music, but we incorporate modern sounds to keep our culture vibrant and relevant," she explains.

Under her guidance, her brother Zha Nu opened a music-themed homestay in Laodabao.

Every corner, from the woven tapestries on the pillars to the murals, the stage in the main hall, and the fire pit in the courtyard, reflects his meticulous design.

"Once, I went to Beijing to pursue my music dreams, but my heart always remained with my family and talented friends in the village," Zha says.

"Now, I want to use what I've learned to preserve our culture through music and dance, and build a better home for our community," he adds.

His homestay has benefited from the rising number of tourists to the village and he has performed original songs for them.

In his spare time, he also teaches traditional music and dance to young villagers.

Huang Lingfei, a professor with the Yunnan Arts University, notes that Laodabao has successfully preserved Lahu culture through iconic performances like the reed-pipe and swing dances, as well as classic songs such as *Happy Lahu*.

The village stands as a shining example of how cultural heritage and tourism can be seamlessly integrated, creating a model for others to follow, Huang says.

Local people got out of poverty as stipulated by the country in 2016.

Looking back, Li says she sometimes still has a hard time reconciling to the fact that what she loves from childhood could help her hometown escape poverty.

Li says she also owes it to the rich opportunities for her to attend art training and learn from how other cultures transform their traditions into marketable crafts since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012.

In addition to art performance, Li has launched a handicraft program, which has now grown to involve over 60 local women. They create traditional Lahu embroidery featuring dogtooth patterns.

"They are symbols of our respect for dogs. These crafts not only preserve our culture but also provide income for families right at their doorsteps," Li says.

Speaking about her future plan, Li says she would continue to promote what her hometown has to offer.

"My mission is not just to share our music with the world but ensure that our culture thrives for generations to come," Li says.

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## French copyright of *Three-Body Problem* brings new galaxy of readers

By YANG YANG  
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Yilin Press, a literary branch of Phoenix Publishing and Media Inc, has recently sold the French copyright of the first graphic novel adaptation of *The Three-Body Problem* to Editions Glénat at the London Book Fair 2025.

The *Three-Body* trilogy has, so far, been translated into 38 languages and has sold more than 30 million copies. It has won nine major international science fiction awards, including the Hugo Award for best novel in 2015.

Created by artist Wu Qingsong and Three-Body Universe, the exclusive global rights holder for content development and commercial derivatives of the *Three-Body* intellectual property, the adaptation will cover the trilogy in six books that will be published

over the next five to six years. In the style of Chinese animation and comics, this graphic novel brings Liu Cixin's science fiction to life, offering a fresh reading experience for global audiences after the TV-series adaptations by Tencent and Netflix.

The first book, launched in January during the 37th Beijing Book Fair, covers the storyline starting from the moment when Ye Wenjie sends a signal into space and ending with Operation Guzheng, a military mission carried out by the UN to recover messages sent by the aliens.

In addition to the French edition, the graphic novel's copyrights have also been sold to Spain and Germany, with negotiations for Japanese, Turkish, and Greek editions ongoing.

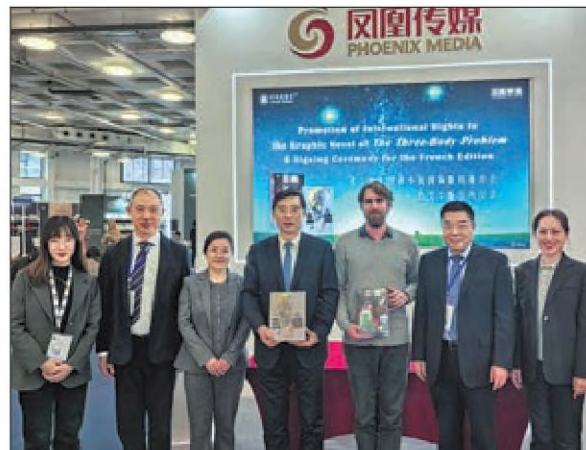
Speaking at the signing ceremony in London, Ji Yu, deputy editor-in-chief of Yilin Press, said that expanding the reach of top Chinese

sci-fi works to a wider domestic and international readership is a crucial strategic focus for Yilin. The graphic novel adaptation of *The Three-Body Problem* is central to this strategy.

Founded in 1969, Editions Glénat is a renowned French publishing house specializing in comics and graphic novels, focusing on artistic excellence of storytelling.

Before the graphic novel, Editions Glénat published another work by Wu — *Shan Hai Lu* (*The Rebels in English*, the French version is *Les Brumes Ecarlates*).

Robin Jolly, an editor at Editions Glénat, said at the ceremony that they are confident in the potential of this adaptation, and looking forward to presenting it to the vast readership of the French-speaking world, and they believe that it will bring French readers a great visual and intellectual feast.



Left: At this month's London Book Fair, Yilin Press, a literary branch of Phoenix Publishing and Media Inc, sold the French copyright of the first graphic novel adaptation of *The Three-Body Problem* to Editions Glénat. Right: The book cover of the graphic novel. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

