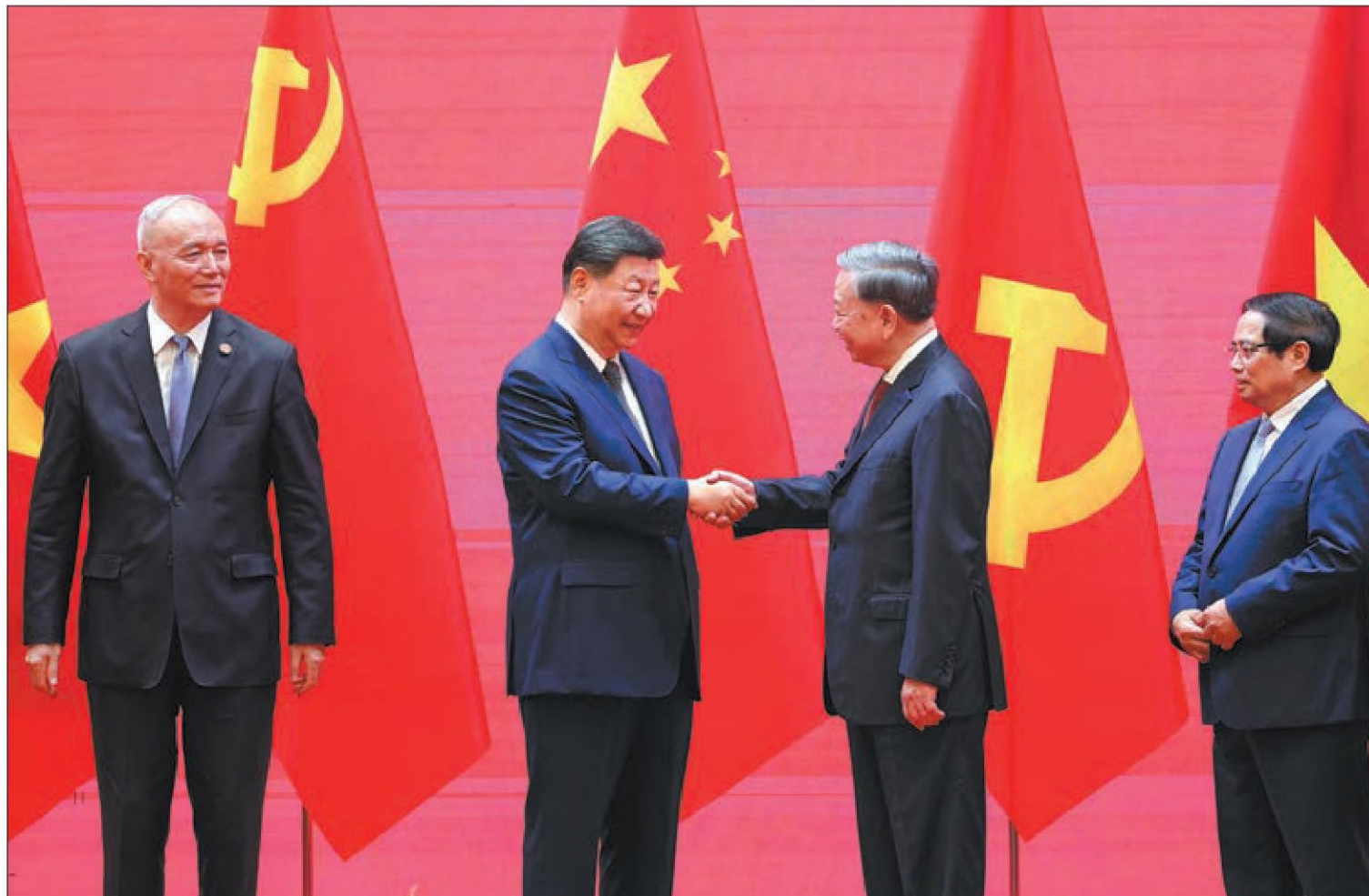


## XI'S VISIT

See news updates on [www.chinadaily.com.cn](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn) | Special Coverage, pages 2-4

## CHINA DAILY

GLOBAL EDITION 中国日报 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025



Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, shakes hands with To Lam, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, on Tuesday at the launching ceremony of the China-Vietnam railway cooperation mechanism in Hanoi. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (first from right) and other Chinese and Vietnamese officials also attended the ceremony. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

WORLD WATCH  
By Jon Taylor

## Nation stays on growth trajectory in spite of headwinds

China, which has positioned itself as a leading force in international trade, has long been regarded as one of the drivers of the global economy. However, as Premier Li Qiang noted in the 2025 Government Work Report delivered at the third session of the 14th National People's Congress, China faces some challenges triggered by domestic factors and an increasingly complex external environment.

In recent years, the country's economic growth has slowed, raising concerns about its impact both domestically and globally. Addressing these concerns requires acknowledging that private sector confidence needs to be improved. Restoring private sector trust, actively expanding investment and aligning them with the needs of high-quality development are key components in China's economic recovery.

One of the biggest questions going into this year's two sessions — the annual meetings of the NPC, China's top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body — was how much attention would be given to policy proposals promoting economic growth. Those questions were answered by the 2025 Government Work Report, which prioritizes a broad-based approach to economic stabilization via policies aimed at increasing consumption.

The government aims to address the root causes of job market challenges and real estate instability by implementing policies that will increase incomes, expand employment and reduce financial burdens.

Efforts to stimulate immediate consumption during the past year have focused on trade-in programs and service sectors like tourism.

While early data shows success in both the trade-in programs and tourism, broader measures will be implemented to enhance overall consumption.

China's economic recovery has sparked optimism both domestically and internationally, thanks to proactive measures and some promising indicators. Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that China's industrial production, consumer spending and investment have all shown faster year-on-year growth.

The recent stimulus proposals in the two sessions, including cutting interest rates and supporting the property sector aim to boost consumer demand and stabilize the economy. While some challenges remain, these efforts reflect China's commitment to revitalizing growth.

See *Growth*, page 12

## Xi: People key to Beijing-Hanoi bond

Initiative announced to invite Vietnamese youth for 'Red Study Tours' over next 3 years

By MO JINGXI in Hanoi  
[mofingxi@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:mofingxi@chinadaily.com.cn)

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that the time-tested China-Vietnam relations are rooted in the people, upheld by the people and strengthened with the support of the people, and he called on the two countries to converge the small creeks of friendly people-to-people interactions into a mighty river of China-Vietnam friendship.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with representatives who attended the Chinese and Vietnamese People's Friendship Meeting in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. To Lam, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee,

and Vietnamese President Luong Cuong also attended the event.

In a speech delivered at the meeting, Xi said that people are the creators of history, and it is the endorsement and the support of the two peoples that have provided a solid foundation for building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future.

Speaking to the representatives, most of whom were young people, Xi announced that China will invite young people from Vietnam for "Red Study Tours" in the country in the next three years.

The tours will allow them to retrace the revolutionary footsteps of the elder generation of leaders of both parties and countries and experience in-person the vibrancy of Chinese modernization, he said.

The late Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh was engaged in revolu-

tionary activities in China for 12 years, during which time he established the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and later founded the Communist Party of Vietnam in Hong Kong.

Xi urged the young people of both sides to pool strength for the two countries' respective socialist cause and for building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future that carries strategic significance.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and is also the China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

The socialist neighbor was the first stop of Xi's first overseas trip this year. The two-day visit, which wrapped up on Tuesday, was also his fourth state visit to the country.

For a long time, the Chinese and Vietnamese people have stood together through thick and thin, from jointly sowing the seeds of revolution

to save the nations, to fighting side by side for national independence and liberation, and now embarking together on the journey of modernization, he said.

Xi said the China-Vietnam friendship has been sustained and upgraded as the two countries firmly defend international fairness and justice, and consistently stand on the right side of history and on the progressive side of the times. Doing so, the two sides are providing more stability and positive energy for Asia and the world, he said.

To Lam said that friendship and cooperation have been the mainstream of Vietnam-China relations.

Hailing young people as the hope for inheriting and developing the traditional friendship between the two countries, To Lam said Vietnamese and Chinese young people should shoulder their historical mission of passing down the traditional friendship, which was nurtured and cultivated by generations

of leaders from both countries.

He also called on them to deepen the China-Vietnam friendship of "comrades and brothers", and play a leading role in the two countries' respective modernization drive.

The important role of people in terms of developing the China-Vietnam relationship and fostering friendship is a recurring topic of Xi's state visits to Vietnam.

In a signed article published ahead of his visit in 2015, Xi said that the development of China-Vietnam relations cannot be separated from the understanding and support of the people of both countries.

On the first day of his state visit to Vietnam in 2017, Xi attended the inauguration and handover ceremony of the Vietnam-China Friendship Palace.

During his visit in 2023, he met with representatives of young Chinese and Vietnamese people who have contributed to China-Vietnam friendship, and he encouraged them to take the lead in promoting this friendship.

## Sino-Malaysian relations to be cemented

By CAO DESHENG  
[caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:caodesheng@chinadaily.com.cn)

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China is committed to working with Malaysia and other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to combat the undercurrents of geopolitical and camp-based confrontation as well as the countercurrents of unilateralism and protectionism, in order to promote the building of a community with a shared future.

Xi made the remarks in a signed article titled "May the Ship of China-Malaysia Friendship Sail Toward an Even Brighter Future", which was published by Malaysian media, including the leading English newspaper *The Star*, as he started his state visit to the Southeast Asian nation on Tuesday afternoon.

In the article, Xi hailed the sound development of China-Malaysia ties and China-ASEAN cooperation, and reiterated the country's commit-

ment to promoting global peace, development and shared prosperity with other countries through mutually beneficial cooperation.

He said that China and Malaysia are friendly neighbors across the sea, and the maritime Silk Road has been witness to the millennium-old friendly exchanges between the two countries. They have set an exemplary model for two countries to prosper together through mutually beneficial cooperation, he added.

"As a community with a shared future, China and Malaysia share the smooth times and the rough, stand united in peace and crisis, and thrive and endure together," Xi said.

He called on both countries to work together to give fresh momentum to the "ship of friendship" that has sailed through the long river of history, and ensure that it forges ahead steadily toward brighter horizons.

"We must expand results-oriented cooperation which serves as the bal-

last that steadies our ship of friendship," Xi said.

In 2024, China-Malaysia trade reached \$212 billion. China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner for 16 consecutive years. The countries have mutual visa-exemption policies.

Xi called for advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation between the two countries and strengthening partnership on industrial and supply chains, with a focus on the digital economy, green economy, blue economy and tourism economy.

He underlined the need for both countries to uphold the multilateral trading system, keep global industrial and supply chains stable, and maintain an international environment of openness and cooperation.

On China-ASEAN cooperation, Xi said that having weathered storms of the times, the friendly relations and cooperation between China and ASEAN countries have emerged stronger and more resilient. "China-



President Xi Jinping is warmly welcomed by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim upon his arrival at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Tuesday. Xi is making a state visit to the Southeast Asian country. WANG ZHUANGFEI / CHINA DAILY

ASEAN cooperation is the most results-oriented and productive in the region," he said.

In 2024, China-ASEAN trade exceeded \$980 billion, making the two sides each other's largest trad-

ing partner for five consecutive years. The China-ASEAN Free Trade Area 3.0 Upgrade Negotiations have concluded.

See *Article*, page 3[www.chinadailyglobal.com](http://www.chinadailyglobal.com)

A member of ANN China Daily Global ©2025 All Rights Reserved

Newsstand prices:  
US \$1 Canada C\$1  
UK 1.15 EU 1.15  
Korea 50 Kenya Shilling  
Asia Pacific: Thailand 120  
thb; Philippines 120 php; Myanmar 2000 kyat;  
Japan 210 yen; Dubai 10 dirham; Pakistan 300 rupee

## XI'S VISIT

## Chinese investors boost growth in Malaysia

Cultural similarities give companies confidence to pump money into nation

By PRIME SARMIENTO  
in Hong Kong  
prime@chinadaily.com

Mazlim Husin, chief commercial officer of Kuantan Port, has personally seen how Chinese investments have transformed Kuantan — the capital city of the state of Pahang, which is located on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia.

For Mazlim, the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park, or MCKIP, has “changed the landscape of the whole industrial development in Kuantan”.

The park opened in 2013 and is located in the East Coast Economic Region. It covers more than 14 square kilometers and caters to heavy, medium and light industries, and features both residential and commercial facilities.

Alliance Steel, one of the biggest steelmakers in Malaysia, is based in MCKIP. Mazlim said the company's presence in Kuantan not only encourages other companies to invest in the city, but also helps boost socioeconomic development in the community as it provides jobs and sources iron ore and other minerals from the local community.

“You can see a lot of improvement and changes around us now. (The investments) just bring people together, and we just want (Kuantan) to grow,” Mazlim told China Daily.

The MCKIP and the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park in Qinzhou, Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, are part of the “Two Countries, Twin Parks” collaboration model between China and Malaysia. More important, this model is a concrete representation of how Chinese investments have grown in Malaysia and have helped strengthen economic ties between the two nations.

#### ‘Win-win scenario’

China is one of the largest sources of foreign investments for Malaysia. Last year, China invested 28.2 billion ringgit (\$6.4 billion) in Malaysia, accounting for over 16 percent of Malaysia's 170.4 billion ringgit foreign investment revenue, according to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority, or MIDA. The amount is nearly double the 14.5 billion ringgit Chinese investors posted in 2023 and is expected to create over 20,000 new jobs.

Safwan Nizar Johari, acting investment consul for the Malaysian consulate in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, said that in the past few years, most Chinese investments have been in the EV, battery and related industries. He said the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2024, and this strong diplomatic relationship has made Chinese companies more confident about investing in Malaysia.

Safwan said Malaysia implements business-friendly policies — including tax incentives, a 100 percent foreign equity ownership and long-term work visas for expatriates — that entice a lot of foreign investors. He said Malaysia is an “open and trading country”.

Like China, Malaysia is a member

of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's biggest free trade pact. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Malaysia is also part of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area.

Malaysia's multicultural population is also a huge draw for Chinese investors. Ethnic Chinese comprise about 20 percent of the Malaysian population — over 35 million people — and they can speak several languages, including Malay, Chinese and English.

“This contributes to the decision making of a Chinese company (in choosing an) investment destination in ASEAN,” Safwan said.

“When they choose Malaysia, it feels like home. (It is) very comfortable for them to set up (a business) in Malaysia,” he told China Daily.

And with Malaysia as this year's ASEAN chair, Safwan said Malaysia is inviting Chinese and other foreign companies to invest in Malaysia as a gateway to ASEAN and beyond.

“The theme of ASEAN this year is inclusivity and sustainability. So this is really in line with our main goal to invite and attract foreign companies to come to our country to invest and make Malaysia a hub, not just to penetrate the local market, but also to export globally,” Safwan said, adding that in enticing foreign investors, Malaysia doesn't believe in a zero-sum game.

“We believe in the win-win scenario. When they invest in Malaysia, we want to grow with the other ASEAN countries. This is why we want to make Malaysia a (regional) hub and expand beyond Malaysia,” he said.

Daniel Chua, senior vice-president of GP Energy Tech International, a subsidiary of battery manufacturer Gold Peak Technology Group, concurs with Safwan.

Chua said Chinese companies feel “comfortable” investing in Malaysia thanks to cultural similarities, common language and the Malaysians' cordial relationship with Chinese investors and employees.

Gold Peak, a Hong Kong-listed company, has three manufacturing plants in the southern Malaysian state of Johor. On Feb 19, the company submitted a letter of intent to Invest Johor, the state government's principal investment promotion agency, to build a \$150 million nickel-based battery manufacturing facility and research and development center in the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, or JS-SEZ.

Chua said when Gold Peak invests in Malaysia, they introduce new technology, create jobs and contribute to regional development. The company employs locals for various positions, mostly in professional, managerial and executive capacities. The proposed plant in JS-SEZ, for example, is expected to create as many as 180 new jobs.

“This was actually the whole idea behind in terms of manpower and talent attraction,” Chua said. “That's what we want to create for the local economy. At the same time, we try to find local suppliers.”

Gold Peak is just one of many Chinese companies that have been investing in Malaysia — Southeast



**Top:** A production facility of Alliance Steel is in operation at the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park in Pahang, Malaysia, on June 13, 2024. CHENG YIHENG / XINHUA **Above:** Workers process palm oil imported from Malaysia on a production line at the factory owned by COFCO Corp at the China-Malaysia Qinzhou Industrial Park in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on June 13, 2024. ZHANG AILIN / XINHUA

Asia's third-largest economy — over the past 20 years as part of their global expansion plans. Among the earliest investors are Huawei, which entered Malaysia in 2001, and ZTE, which arrived in 2004. To this day, Malaysia remains crucial in

these two technology companies' international business operations.

Kuala Lumpur is home to Huawei's Asia-Pacific regional headquarters, global training center, global technical and solutions center and customer solution innovation center.

On Feb 18, Huawei launched Mate XT, the world's first trifold smartphone, in Malaysia's capital city.

Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Zafrul Aziz said 95 percent of ZTE's 5G equipment includes chips from

Malaysia, proof of Malaysia's significance in ZTE's global operations. In a post published in December 2024 on his social media account X (formerly known as Twitter), Zafrul said ZTE is planning to invest 200 million ringgit in Malaysia to establish two innovation centers, and bring the latest 5G technology through collaboration with local operators.

#### Auto investors

Chinese investors are not confined to the technology space.

In 2015, the China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation opened its first overseas manufacturing base in the northwest Malaysian state of Perak. Located on a 20.2-hectare complex, the plant can manufacture up to 200 carriages per year and has also provided new jobs to the local community, with more than 80 percent of its total staff locally recruited.

In 2017, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province-based carmaker Geely Holding Group acquired a 49.9 percent stake in Malaysia's national car company Proton to transform it into the top car brand in Malaysia and one of the leading brands in ASEAN.

In December 2024, Geely and its partner Malaysian conglomerate DRB-HICOM signed a memorandum of understanding with MIDA to develop the Automotive Hi-Tech Valley in Tanjong Malim, Perak, to promote Malaysia as ASEAN's hub for electric vehicles. Two months after the MOU signing, Proton announced on Feb 7 that it had started construction on a new EV production plant in Tanjong Malim, according to local media reports. The \$2 million-ringgit plant is expected to be completed by the end of this year and will produce several models, including the Proton eMAS 7, the first EV car made by a Malaysian car company.

Chin Yew Sin, president of the Asia-Pacific Strategy Research Center, a Kuala Lumpur-based think tank, said China's investment in Malaysia represents “a closely tied partnership ingrained in cultural, economic and strategic advantages”.

Chin said Chinese companies have capitalized on Malaysia's investment-friendly environment and multicultural society. In recent years, Chin said the diversification of global and regional supply chains and the adoption of the ‘China+1’ strategy have boosted the influx of investments to Malaysia and other ASEAN countries.

For Ian Yoong Kah Yin, a private equity investor and former investment banker in Malaysia, the main purpose for diversifying investments in Malaysia is to pursue the China +1 strategy, which calls for maintaining production in China while setting up additional facilities in other nations.

“Channel checks reveal that there are many Chinese companies that are expediting the setting up of manufacturing operations in Malaysia,” he said.

Yoong welcomed these investments because the presence of Chinese companies has encouraged the transfer of skills and also serves as “role models to Malaysians in creating world-class businesses”.

Xu Weiwei in Hong Kong and Xinhua News Agency contributed to this story.

## Countries benefiting from collaborative research

By LI XIAOYUN in Kuala Lumpur  
irishi@chinadaily.com

Growing China-Malaysia exchanges have opened up fresh avenues for collaborative research, cultivating young professionals who are not only steeped in Chinese culture, but are also savvy about Southeast Asia's development.

“There's a notable uptick in education and research cooperation between the two countries,” said Wang Ruifang, president of Xiamen University Malaysia, or XMUM. An increasing number of Malaysian students and scholars are pursuing studies and research in China, and more Chinese university representatives have visited Malaysia to seek partnerships, he said.

XMUM is the first overseas campus established by a Chinese education institution that is included in the Double First-Class Initiative — a government program with selected universities to enhance the country's higher education capabilities.

Ong Wee Jun, a Malaysian professor and assistant dean of the university's School of Energy and Chemical Engineering, has firsthand experience with the research exchanges. As a foreign expert, he has been deeply involved in a clean energy project funded by the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

The project has gained global recognition, with findings published this year in *Advanced Functional Materials*, one of the Nature-indexed journals, the professor said.

After completing a four-year program in new energy science and engineering at Ong's school, Malaysian graduate Loong Mun Wah joined the Malaysian branch of technology giant Huawei as a technical service engineer last year. He believes he was recruited by Huawei, which is based in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, due to his understanding of both China and Malaysia.

Han Lei, a professor at XMUM's

China-ASEAN College of Marine Sciences, has also been active in cross-border research. Established in 2016, the college marks China's first foray into expanding its marine education abroad to nurture marine talent for Southeast Asia.

He had worked with experts from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and a local marine research institute on a four-year project investigating the phenomenon of upwelling — a process in which deep, cold water rises to the surface of the sea — along the east coast of the Malay Peninsula.

Han said the project employed a numerical model tailored for Malaysia's east coast — a tool previously unavailable in the country — and provided scientific references for assessing local fishery resources and strengthening marine ecosystem conservation.

XMUM now has more than 9,000 students from 48 countries and regions, including nearly 5,000 Malaysian students and some 2,500 from China. Indonesia

is the next largest source of students, contributing over 600.

University President Wang said perfect timing contributed to the creation of the campus, as China's economy was taking off and bilateral relations were deepening. The Malaysian government saw the need for such an institution to cultivate talent familiar with China. Its founding also coincided with the launch of China's global connectivity push — the Belt and Road Initiative — in 2013, creating demand for the country to enrich its talent pool with a deep understanding of the BRI participants, including Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations.

Wang said the most sought-after program among local students is international business, which could prepare them for future business dealings with China. Traditional Chinese Medicine is also a very popular major, with more than 400 students having enrolled in the course, a figure exceeding that of its counterpart at the main campus in China.



Students from different countries and regions study at Xiamen University Malaysia, which has over 9,000 students from 48 different countries and regions, in Selangor, Malaysia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Besides the growing interest among young Malaysians in understanding China, the Southeast Asian nation is fast emerging as a favored option for Chinese students seeking education abroad, thanks to its stable social environment, its use of English as the medium of instruction and the

competitive costs, Wang said.

According to Education Malaysia Global Services, China is the largest source of international students in Malaysia. Last year, more than 33,000 of non-local students in the country were from China — an almost 25 percent increase year-on-year.

# XI'S VISIT



Xi Jinping (center), general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese president, To Lam (second from right), general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, and Luong Cuong (left), Vietnamese president, enter the International Convention Center in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Tuesday to meet representatives of the China-Vietnam people friendship festival. PHOTOS BY FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

## President highlights the fruitful results of busy trip to Vietnam

Beijing, Hanoi stress need to resist external risks and safeguard peace, stability in the region

By ZHAO JIA  
zhaojia@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping expressed strong confidence on Tuesday in the future of Sino-Vietnamese relations, urging both nations to fully implement the outcomes of his visit and to advance the building of a China-Vietnam community with a shared future.

Xi made the remarks as he wrapped up his two-day state visit to Vietnam, bidding farewell to To Lam, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee.

Xi noted that the visit, though brief, had a busy schedule and yielded fruitful results.

He said that both sides have reaffirmed their political will to strengthen the cause of world socialism and expressed shared anticipation for comprehensively advancing strategic cooperation in line with the overarching goals characterized by "six mores" — stronger political mutual trust, more substantive security cooperation, deeper practical cooperation, more solid popular foundation, closer coordination and collaboration on multilateral affairs, and better management and resolution of differences.

Both nations also emphasized the need to resist external risks and challenges while safeguarding regional peace and stability, and international fairness and justice, he added.

To Lam told Xi that a series of key common understandings reached during the visit would significantly boost strategic collaboration between the two parties and nations,



Representatives attend the China-Vietnam people friendship festival on Tuesday at the International Convention Center in Hanoi.

strengthen Vietnam's confidence in overcoming challenges, and elevate the friendship between their peoples to new heights.

To Lam pledged that Vietnam would actively implement outcomes of the visit and advance the development of relations between the two parties and nations, ushering in a future of shared prosperity.

On Tuesday, Xi and To Lam also witnessed the launching ceremony for the China-Vietnam railway cooperation mechanism in Hanoi.

During Monday's talks with To Lam, Xi called for expanding higher quality, mutually beneficial cooperation, including realizing the

comprehensive connection of standard-gauge railways, highways and smart ports at an early date.

To Lam said earlier in an article that both sides should focus on implementing major projects that will serve as new symbols of Vietnam-China cooperation, with the highest priority given to the development of three standard-gauge railway lines linking the two countries in strategic infrastructure connectivity.

Du Lan, deputy head of the China Institute of International Studies' Asia-Pacific Studies Department, said that Xi's choice of Vietnam as the first stop of his first overseas visit in 2025 underscores "the strategic

importance of China-Vietnam ties".

China's six initiatives on strategic mutual trust, security, mutually beneficial cooperation, people-to-people ties, multilateral coordination and maritime interaction will transform the vision of a community with shared future between the two neighbors into reality, she added.

Du highlighted that bilateral agreements reached during the visit in a range of areas including artificial intelligence will elevate bilateral cooperation to new levels.

As Vietnam is China's largest trading partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, while China is Vietnam's top trading partner, Du said Vietnam's partnership with China serves as a model for regional South-South cooperation.

Amid rising unilateralism and protectionism, Du emphasized that both nations' commitment to multilateral efforts and opposition to trade protectionism will help strengthen regional economic resilience.

In another development, Cai Qi, a senior official of the Communist Party of China, met on Monday with Tran Cam Tu, a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee and a permanent member of the Secretariat of the CPV Central Committee.

Cai, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and a member of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee, emphasized efforts to promote the building of a China-Vietnam community with a shared future with high level, quality and standards.

on a solid foundation, with multiple strengths, high resilience and vast potential for growth.

"The core conditions supporting its long-term positive growth remain firmly in place, with the underlying upward trend unchanged," he said.

Noting that China has set its target for economic growth at around 5 percent for 2025, Xi said the country will continue to pursue high-quality development and expand high-standard opening-up to share development opportunities with other countries and bring

greater stability and certainty to the regional and global economy.

In a written statement delivered at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Tuesday, Xi said he will take his three-day state visit as an opportunity to further deepen the traditional friendship between the two countries, enhance their political mutual trust and promote cooperation on modernization efforts to take the China-Malaysia community with a shared future to a new level, ushering in a new "Golden 50 Years" for bilateral ties.

**Editor's note:** President Xi Jinping held separate meetings on Monday and Tuesday in Hanoi with Vietnamese President Luong Cuong, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and Chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam Tran Thanh Man. Following are the highlights of the meetings.

## Opposing unilateralism and power politics urged

China and Vietnam should respond to external uncertainties with the stability of bilateral, friendly cooperation and the advantages of the socialist system, in order to steer their community with a shared future forward in the correct direction, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday.

Xi made the remarks when meeting with Vietnamese President Luong Cuong in Hanoi.

Engaging in a trade war undermines the international trading system, destabilizes the global economic order and harms the legitimate interests of all countries, especially the vast number of developing nations, he emphasized.

Calling both countries important forces of the Global South, he called for China and Vietnam to strengthen coordination and cooperation, uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, and jointly oppose power politics and unilateralism.

Evolving over the past 75 years from the traditional friendship of "comrades and brothers" to a community with a shared future that carries strategic significance, the China-Vietnam relationship has

set a good example of friendly mutual support, solidarity and cooperation between countries, the Chinese president noted.

He called on the two neighbors to maintain high-level strategic communication and strengthen mutual learning and exchanges of experiences in party and state governance.

Beijing and Hanoi should continue deepening cooperation in defense and law enforcement, he said, urging both sides to implement the cooperation plan for synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative with Vietnam's Two Corridors and One Economic Circle strategy.

Luong Cuong said Vietnam firmly adheres to the one-China policy and resolutely opposes "Taiwan independence" separatist activities.

The country also supports China's positions on issues related to Xinjiang, Xizang and Hong Kong, and opposes all external interference in China's internal affairs, he added.



Luong Cuong

## Beijing, Hanoi called on to bolster coordination

President Xi Jinping has urged China and Vietnam to jointly oppose hegemonism, unilateralism and protectionism, and work together to safeguard international fairness and justice, as well as peace, stability, development and prosperity in Asia and the world.

In his meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on Monday, Xi said that China and Vietnam should strengthen strategic coordination and consolidate the political foundation for building a China-Vietnam community with a shared future.

Xi said that China and Vietnam should give full play to their geographical advantages of being connected by land and sea, strengthen the alignment of development strategies and further tap the potential of industrial cooperation.

He called for the two countries to steadily advance cooperation in infrastructure development, enhance connectivity and ensure a smooth flow of trade, and to expand cooperation in trade, investment and emerging industries such as 5G, artificial intelligence, clean energy and digital economy.

Xi also said that China and Vietnam should firmly uphold the multilateral trading system, and work together to push for economic globalization that is more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all.

He urged the two sides to ensure the success of the series of activities held to celebrate the 75th anniversary of China-Vietnam diplomatic ties and the China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

Pham Minh Chinh said that Xi's state visit to Vietnam is the most important high-level exchange between the two countries this year, which will surely lead Vietnam-China relations to greater development and give strong impetus to bilateral cooperation.

Vietnam hopes to learn from China's experience in the governance of the Party and the country, its spirit of self-reliance and its development philosophy and model, he said.



Pham Minh Chinh

## Legislatures encouraged to strengthen exchanges

President Xi Jinping has called for China and Vietnam to strengthen confidence in their paths and systems, enhance solidarity and coordination, and continue to build a China-Vietnam community with a shared future that carries strategic significance.

On Monday, during his meeting with Tran Thanh Man, chairman of the National Assembly of Vietnam, Xi also urged the two sides to join hands to march toward modernization and inject more stability and positive energy into the world.

At present, China is comprehensively advancing the building of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation through Chinese modernization, and Vietnam will usher in a new era of national rise, Xi said, adding that both sides are at a crucial stage of their respective development and rejuvenation.

He said the top leaders of the two parties and countries should exchange views on bilateral relations and major issues of common concern in a timely manner, and continue to build consensus. It is necessary to maintain exchanges and cooperation between the two

parties, legislative bodies and political consultative organizations, and to keep sharing governance experiences, he added.

Recognizing the frequent exchanges and fruitful cooperation between China's National People's Congress and Vietnam's National Assembly, Xi said the two countries' legislatures should do more to strengthen the traditional friendship, ensure practical cooperation, strengthen multilateral coordination, and carry out exchanges on the development of socialist democracy and rule of law.

Tran Thanh Man said that Vietnam's National Assembly looks forward to conducting close communication and cooperation with China's NPC, and contributing to the common prosperity and development of the two countries and the friendship between the two peoples.



Tran Thanh Man

ZHOU JIN

## Article: China firmly supports ASEAN unity, Xi says

From page 1

"China firmly supports ASEAN unity and community-building, and supports ASEAN centrality in the regional architecture," Xi said. "China fully supports Malaysia in its role as the ASEAN Chair for 2025 and looks forward to Malaysia serving as a stronger bridge between the two sides as the Country Coordinator for China-ASEAN Dialogue Relations."

In the article, Xi also talked about China's economic growth, saying that the Chinese economy is built

“The core conditions supporting its long-term positive growth remain firmly in place, with the underlying upward trend unchanged.”

President Xi Jinping

## XI'S VISIT



China and the World Roundtable | China-Malaysia Relations

**Editor's note:** In the over 50 years since establishing diplomatic ties, China and Malaysia have remained committed to the independence of strategies, win-win cooperation and mutual support. In the face of global uncertainties, the two countries should enhance traditional friendship and consolidate the foundation for bilateral relations. Three experts share their views on the issue with China Daily.

Ong Tee Keat

## Time to back BRI amid US coercion

The endorsement of the Belt and Road Initiative by more than 150 countries, through participation, speaks volumes of the initiative's relevance in global governance. The Global South countries across the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America constitute the bulk of the Belt and Road partner economies.

In the past 12 years after its inauguration, the Belt and Road Initiative has helped improve infrastructure connectivity and sharpen the Global South's economic competitiveness remarkably. Alongside this, the mammoth endeavour has helped reset the modality of multilateral cooperation, making it more inclusive and equitable for the developing world.

In pursuit of the legitimate developmental priorities of the Global South countries — which have long been marginalized by the West — China has played the key role of an enabler, helping meet their needs for partnership diversification. It offers a viable alternative to the reigning hegemon's modality in the evolving world order.

While the trillion-dollar Belt and Road endeavour has become a major contributor to infrastructure finance, new multilateral development banks, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank, offer further practical solutions for narrowing the yawning infrastructure finance gap. They complement the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in meeting the development needs of the Global South while offering an alternative option to the existing dynamics of global financial governance that favors the developed economies.

Prompted by the geopolitical ambition to stifle China's expansive growth in the sphere of global influence, Western critics have been relentlessly seeking to put the Belt and Road Initiative under microscopic scrutiny, casting aspersions on China by accusing it of pushing developing countries toward "debt traps", environmental degradation and governance failure.

Yet the initiative has engineered a paradigm shift by promoting "high-quality" development with the inclusion of the digital economy and green transition as the new economic drivers in its new phase of implementation. That being said, critics from the collective West never cease to raise new concerns over cybersecurity, digital sovereignty and cross-border data exchange protection in their bids to test the Belt and Road Initiative's resilience, purportedly in the interests of national security.

Amid such a challenging environ-



The author is president of the Malaysia-based Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia-Pacific.

ment, the Global South countries are now facing a binary choice: either to remain an easy prey by toeing the predatory unilateral world order dictated by the West or embark on a new trajectory of building an egalitarian order in pursuit of their aspirations aligning with the evolving multipolarity.

While the US administration's tariff turmoil is taking its toll on economies worldwide, the Global South's vulnerabilities look set to be weaponized by the reigning hegemon in defence of the latter's core interests.

Announcement of the present "reciprocal tariff" by Donald Trump, notably the imposition of a series of tariffs on Chinese goods (as high as 145 percent), is a naked act of intimidation to bring friends and foes alike, to their knees.

With the world still reeling from the effects of uncertainties induced by the US' capricious tariff policies, South-South cooperation may well turn out to be one of the key targets of the US administration.

In addition to subjugating individual emerging economies through multiple means of economic coercion, another upcoming shock for the Global South may be the potential retaliatory blows Trump promised to deal to some developing countries which seek to ditch the green-back in the cross-border trade settlement. In this context, the use of local currency for the purpose is not spared either. Trump's 100 percent punitive tariff intimidation directed at the BRICS grouping has, in fact, been on the cards long before the roll-out of his "reciprocal tariffs".

Against such a gloomy landscape, will the emerging economies and developing countries succumb to the US' "economic bullying"? Or will the threat

be a blessing in disguise to promote cohesiveness within the Global South? Nobody is yet to have a crystal ball to gaze at for a solution.

At such a crossroad, the unfolding geopolitical reality further corroborates the necessity and relevance to build a community with a shared future in the evolving multipolar world order, more so in the face of multi-dimensional challenges amid growing protectionism and exceptionalism.

As the Belt and Road Initiative is a proven vehicle that best fits the bill of realizing the collective aspirations, the partner countries should use their wisdom by rallying behind a proven choice that is well poised to reshape their destiny, instead of offering themselves as easy prey to the reigning hegemon's economic coercion and thuggery.

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



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Sufian Jusoh

## China, Malaysia can turn crisis into opportunity

On April 2, the whole world was shocked by the US administration's move to impose tariffs on goods imported from almost all US trading partners, including China and Malaysia. Malaysian goods have been hit with 24 percent tariffs, whereas the tariffs on Chinese goods are as high as 145 percent.

China and Malaysia are close trading partners, with the bilateral trade reaching \$212.04 billion in 2024. The two countries are trying to weather the storm of the latest international trade headwinds. Hence, the state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Malaysia (chair of ASEAN in 2025), from Tuesday to Thursday, comes at an opportune time.

However, over the weekend, US President Donald Trump changed his stance and adopted a vague policy regarding whether Chinese-made smartphones and other electronics would be exempt from tariffs.

China manufactures several smartphone brands and assembles Apple's iPhones, and imports some of the chips used in them from Malaysia. With higher tariffs, smartphones exported from China to the US will become more expensive, which could reduce the demand for such smartphones. This in turn will reduce the demand for chips and hence affect one of Malaysia's main manufacturing exports to China. The importance of Malaysian chip exports to China can

be gauged from the fact that Malaysia exported \$18.5 billion worth of integrated circuits to China in 2023.

It is clear therefore that China and Malaysia are closely integrated on the supply chain, with Malaysia producing the chips, which China needs to manufacture smartphones that it exports to not just the US but also the rest of the world.

Malaysia's chip exports to China will not be affected by not only the latest series of US tariffs but also the US CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, which bars the export of any products containing US technology to China. Malaysia is placed in tier-2 of the US' "Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion", which limits access to its advanced AI chips.

The US' punitive tariffs and the disruptions they have caused will lead to short-term chaos for trade policymakers, as they try their best to utilize tariff diplomacy to seek redemption from the US administration.

On the other hand, the US' increased tariffs provide an opportunity for coun-



The author is a professor of international trade and investment at the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies, The National University of Malaysia.

tries to reset their trade and investment policies, and build a new supply chain. To do so, countries across the world should encourage people to change their lifestyle by, among other things, not attending US universities, not watching Hollywood movies, not flying US airlines, not eating American fried chicken and not drinking US-made coffee, because all these are services (including intellectual property and franchise fees) the US has not taken into consideration while calculating its trade balance. The US' trade surplus in services was \$278 billion in 2023, driven mainly by the digital economy sector.

This development provides a big opportunity for China, Malaysia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to reinvigorate the regional supply chain, and learn to trade in intermediate and finished goods and services within the region. China, Malaysia and the rest of ASEAN member states are parties to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement and the upgraded ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, which is expected to be signed in Malaysia this year.

The RCEP has the largest free trade area in the world, covering 30 percent of the global GDP and more than 30 percent of the world's population, with total RCEP-zone trade reaching \$5.6 trillion, or about 20 percent of the total world trade volume in 2023 and about 90 percent of all trade within the RCEP

zone being tariff-free.

Besides, the RCEP's services liberalization will enable China, Malaysia and the rest of RCEP members to develop important services for regional high-tech supply chain. The services include those incidental to manufacturing, specialized logistics, research and development, and conformity assessments.

Moreover, the RCEP members should reduce the behind-the-borders trade barriers or non-tariff barriers, including licences, quotas, talent mobility restrictions and sub-national regulations, while China, Malaysia and other RCEP members should develop their own key technologies through regional R&D and enhanced intellectual property protection. These are critical areas that the RCEP members need to address so as to enhance the regional semiconductor supply chain.

In fact, this is an opportunity for China and Malaysia to build top-of-the-range smartphones, comparable to or better than US brands, and communicate with regional parties using data centers, technologies and servers belonging to countries in the region, but not the US. Life is full of junctions, and this is the time to make the right decisions. The US administration has made the US' bed and will happily lie in it.

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

Andy Heng

## 'Bandung spirit' inspiring for dynamic Southeast Asia

Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Malaysia from Tuesday to Thursday marks a pivotal moment in the deepening of bilateral relations. His visit, 12 years since his first visit to Malaysia in 2013, comes at a cathartic moment when the world is moving toward a multipolar order.

Following high-level leaders' mutual visits in the past two years, President Xi's visit this year is expected to further enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative. Malaysia's pivotal role as the ASEAN Chair for this year, the enduring legacy of the 1955 Bandung Conference, and the goal to strengthen regional stability all contribute to the significance of this visit.

The Belt and Road Initiative has become a cornerstone of China-Malaysia relations, fostering significant infrastructure development and economic integration. A flagship bilateral collaboration project under the initiative is the East Coast Rail Link, which covers 665 kilometers and connects Port Klang on Malaysia's west coast to Kota Bharu on the east coast.

The ECRL, a vital artery of economic transformation, will cut travel time across peninsular Malaysia by more than half and make freight transport more efficient by linking industrial zones directly to ports. Once completed, it will catalyze the economic revitalization of Malaysia's east coast and foster greater connectivity with Thailand, Laos, and southern China.

Complementing the ECRL are the sister free trade zones of Qinzhou in China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, and Kuantan in Pahang, Malaysia. Together, they form a model of "dual-port" cooperation that has already attracted billions of dollars in foreign investment, setting a standard for other Belt and Road corridors.

The tangible benefits of these collaborations are evident in the trade statistics. Sino-Malaysian trade reached \$212.04 billion in 2024, marking the 16th consecutive year that China has remained Malaysia's largest trading partner. This robust trade relationship was bolstered by the visits of 3.7 million Chinese tourists to Malaysia in 2024, which generated an estimated \$3.6 billion in tourism revenue.

Malaysia's New Industrial Master Plan 2030 aligns well with China's push for high-quality, tech-driven BRI projects, ensuring that both countries continue to prosper together.

As the ASEAN Chair for 2025, Malaysia faces the complex task of steering the region through a landscape marked by escalating tensions between major powers, particularly the United States and China. The tariff war the US has launched against China and other economies will have far-reaching implications for ASEAN economies.

Against this background, the Chinese leaders' engagement with Malaysian leaders can expedite some strategic initiatives including significantly raising China-Malaysia bilateral currency swap arrangement from the existing 180 billion yuan (\$24.62 billion) to match the bilateral trade volume of more than \$260 billion; making tariff-free the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement 3.0, whose trade volume of about \$1 trillion is close to US-European Union (goods) trade; and working on a China-ASEAN central bank digital currency.

Imagine the economic energy unleashed by zero tariffs on \$1 trillion of goods transacted in a safe neighborhood.

Also, ASEAN is becoming a key player in the global digital economy, and Malaysia, as the second-biggest QR code user only next to China in the world, is championing initiatives that harmonize digital regulations and enhance cybersecurity.

China's collaboration in this domain, particularly through cross-border e-commerce and fintech innovation, could be transformative, especially for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises across Southeast Asia. A record 815,000 vehicles were sold in Malaysia in 2024, and the country would be happy to have more electric vehicle brands such as BYD and Geely from China at a more affordable price to accelerate its green transformation.

Furthermore, the 1955 Bandung Conference was a seminal moment in international relations, bringing together Asian and African countries to promote economic and cultural cooperation and oppose colonialism. At the Bandung Conference, former Chinese premier Zhou Enlai famously said, "We should seek common ground while reserving differences." This principle, which laid the groundwork for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among newly independent nations, remains profoundly relevant today, when the world once again faces rising tensions, economic nationalism and ideological polarization. To invoke the Bandung spirit to promote a new era of South-South cooperation can help promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

By grounding contemporary initiatives in historical values, the China-Malaysia partnership can lead by example and propose a modern-day "Bandung 2.0" framework. By strengthening economic collaboration under the Belt and Road Initiative, supporting Malaysia's leadership of ASEAN, and reviving the cooperative spirit of the Bandung Conference, the Chinese president's visit is likely to set the stage for a future marked by mutual prosperity and regional stability.

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



The author is the advisor of New Gen, a Kuala Lumpur-based AI company.

## CHINA

## CROSSING THE STRAIT

**Editor's note:** The Taiwan question is a key focus for China and the international community. China Daily is publishing a series of reports to track hot Taiwan-related topics and address disinformation from the Democratic Progressive Party administration.

# DPP breaking apart families for political gain

Actions of island's authorities in splitting up cross-Straits couples against human rights

By ZHANG YI  
zhangyi@chinadaily.com.cn

Chen Li-chun, a young artist from Taiwan, created a caricature to satirize the recent actions of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authorities in breaking up cross-Straits marriage families, which she views as a violation of human rights.

Liu Zhenya, a social media influencer from the mainland with nearly 500,000 followers on short video platform Douyin, who is also known as Ya Ya in Taiwan, was recently forced by the DPP authorities to leave the island. Liu and her husband, who was born in Taiwan, have three children.

Authorities in Taiwan revoked her residence permit and forced her to leave the island on March 25, accusing her of "jeopardizing security and social stability" because of her previous comments on reunification.

Chen said that upon seeing news footage of Liu bidding farewell to her husband and children at the airport in Taiwan and witnessing her young daughter in tears, unwilling to be separated from her mother, she felt compelled to create the picture to express her anger and sadness.

Hailing from Taiwan's Changhua and currently pursuing her postgraduate studies in art at Jinan University in Guangdong province, Chen depicted Taiwan's leader, Lai Ching-te, in a gesture similar to the Statue of Liberty in her artwork, mocking the so-called democracy of the DPP authorities.

In the picture, Lai is portrayed holding a book labeled "Freedom" in his left hand while raising a blood-stained spear in his right hand, pointing toward Liu's embracing family below. Slogans with "Go back" from separatists float in the air.

"If freedom entails authorities harming unarmed individuals and resorting to violence against truth-speakers, we would rather abandon such 'freedom'," Chen said.

She shared the picture on social media to show support for Liu and other cross-Straits families, receiving both backing and criticism. Chen said she hopes to tell Liu that "You are not alone."

Since March, a total of five mainland spouses residing in Taiwan, who are pro-reunification online influencers like Liu, have been forced by the island authorities to leave. This has led to the separation of families in cross-Straits marriages, sparking protests across the Strait.

Earlier this month, the authorities in Taiwan once again demanded that mainland spouses renounce their mainland household registration, otherwise, they would risk losing their "settlement residency" status in Taiwan.

According to data from the island authorities, there are 360,000 mainland spouses in cross-Straits marriages, out of which over 140,000 individuals have obtained residency in Taiwan.

Taiwan leader Lai has referred to the mainland as "foreign hostile forces" and outlined 17 "strategies" last month to counter so-called threats



## Q & A

**Q: When will non-peaceful means be used to achieve reunification?**

**A:** In the event that the "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces should act under any name or by any means to cause the fact of Taiwan's secession from China, or that major incidents entailing Taiwan's secession from China should occur, or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, the State shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The State Council and the Central Military Commission shall decide on and execute the non-peaceful means

from the mainland. These include raising public awareness about "risks" associated with mainland travel, applying for mainland residence permits and regulating behaviors of Taiwan entertainers on the mainland.

### Anxious moves

Liu Guoshen, a professor of cross-Straits relations at Xiamen University, said Lai is actually in a dilemma

and other necessary measures as provided for and shall promptly report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

In the event of employing and executing non-peaceful means and other necessary measures as provided for in this law, the State shall exert its utmost to protect the lives, property and other legitimate rights and interests of Taiwan civilians and foreign nationals in Taiwan, and to minimize losses. At the same time, the State shall protect the rights and interests of the Taiwan compatriots in other parts of China in accordance with law.

SOURCE: ANTI-SECESSION LAW

both internally and externally, and his recent series of manipulations in cross-Straits relations reflect his anxiety and fear.

From the perspective of cross-Straits relations, in recent years, the mainland's governance ability over Taiwan has been increasing, and the DPP, which holds an "independence" stance, feels extremely fearful and anxious about the future, Liu said.

In this situation, in order to appease the "pro-independence" forces and "reduce" the pressure from the mainland, it is very important for the DPP to escalate confrontation between the two sides, he said.

Another reason is that the current administration in the United States has been too preoccupied to pay attention to Taiwan, causing great anxiety for the DPP. In this situation, the DPP has actually implied a sense of "complaining" to the US, he added.

Internally, the opposition Chinese Kuomintang and the Taiwan People's Party have been confronting the DPP in the "legislature" for nearly a year, and recently, Lai's budget proposal has been consistently suppressed, which has left him feeling frustrated, Liu said.

In Taiwan's "legislature", the opposition has formed a fragile but effective majority. The main opposition KMT, which promotes cross-Straits exchanges, holds 52 of the 113 legislative seats, together with the smaller TPP, which has eight seats, and two independents.

The DPP, which held a legislative majority from 2016 to 2024, now holds 51 seats, which led to a sweeping recall campaign this year aimed at unseating opposition lawmakers, in a bid to regain control of the "legislature".

Chou Hsi-wei, a former magistrate of Taipei county and vice-chairman of Want Want China, a Taiwan-based enterprise, said that Lai's push for a recall campaign is because he is afraid of losing the next election and people rising up in resistance.

"Therefore, he wants to control the majority in the 'legislature' to amend laws, and then completely control the people," he said.

Chou said that Lai's governance is very poor and in order to win the next election, his current policy which treats the mainland as an enemy, aims at creating estrangement, hatred and misunderstanding between people of the two sides.

It won't last long for a ruling party in Taiwan to adopt such a divisive approach, causing people to be unable to engage in business and have friendly interactions with their mainland compatriots as these are all regressive and inhumane practices, he said.

"Elections have produced a demon today; he is not a good person, and he is certainly not someone who will take care of the people," Chou said. "He completely denies himself as Chinese, how long can such practices deceive people?"

The DPP's practice of suppressing mainland spouses and forcing them

to return to the mainland is extremely "ugly", completely violating human nature and human rights, he said, adding that people's grievances will surface during the coming elections.

Despite the DPP's moves to obstruct cross-Straits exchanges, they will not succeed, he added.

According to the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, in 2024, there were 4.41 million cross-Straits visits, representing a year-on-year increase of 53.8 percent.

Liu, the mainland professor, said the more the Lai administration intimidates the people of Taiwan and creates obstacles for cross-Straits exchanges, the more the mainland will go against the tide.

"We should consider, manage and govern the Taiwan question from the perspective of promoting a better life for the Chinese people on both sides of the Strait, further improving policies and measures to care for our Taiwan compatriots," Liu said.

Regarding Taiwan's recent investigation into residence permits on the mainland, the mainland is taking a different approach by announcing more convenient measures including online processing for lost documents without the need for intermediary agencies, he said.

## Village chief returns ashes to ancestral homelands

By ZHANG YI

This year, before Qingming Festival, or Tomb Sweeping Day, fell on April 4, Liu Te-wen, from Taiwan, made several trips to the Chinese mainland.

He hoped to fulfill the wishes of veterans who, after passing away in Taiwan, wanted to have their ashes taken back to their hometowns on the mainland.

On the evening of March 11, Liu landed at an airport in Qingdao, Shandong province, his red backpack bearing the words "Taking you home". Within it was a 12-kilogram urn containing the ashes of a deceased veteran born in Qingdao, who had been stranded in Taiwan since 1947 due to the separation between the two shores.

Upon seeing Liu at the airport, the grandson of the deceased said: "Grandpa, your grandson is here to take you home. Grandpa, you're home."

As Liu stepped forward, the relatives waiting at the airport approached, their eyes shimmering with tears, kneeling down to pay their respects.

Liu carefully took out the urn from his bag and placed it on the ground to signify the return home. The urn, wrapped in red cloth, is a symbol of Liu's belief that homecoming is a joyous occasion.

Liu is the chief of Xianghe village in Kaohsiung, where there used to live nearly 2,000 veterans from the mainland who had no families in Taiwan. The buildings are now empty, a sign that most veterans have passed away.

He handles all matters in the area, but what he cares about most is the lives of the veterans. He arranges regular checkups for them, meal deliveries and organizes various activities during holidays.

During traditional festivals he delivers *zongzi* and mooncakes,

doing everything he can to make them feel at home. Day after day, with his love and care Liu has forged deep bonds with the veterans.

One day in 2003, a veteran named Wen, originally from Hunan province, made a request to Liu for him to take his ashes back to his hometown when he dies and bury them in front of his parents' grave, as he wished to fulfill his duty as a son.

"Even now after more than 20 years I still remember his words clearly," Liu said.

In 2003, direct travel routes across the Taiwan Strait hadn't been fully established and there were no high-speed trains. After Wen passed away, Liu departed from Kaohsiung on Dec 31, 2003, passing through Hong Kong, Hunan's Changsha and Changde, and on Jan 1, 2004, he finally delivered the veteran's ashes to his home in the countryside of Taoyuan county for burial.

"A promise is to be kept," he said.

From then on for over 20 years Liu has escorted over 300 veterans' ashes back home to the mainland.

At first, Liu only helped veterans from his community whom he knew well personally, but with the spread of the internet, more requests from veterans' relatives from the mainland made his cross-Straits trips more frequent.

On March 12, at the exit of Weifang Railway Station, Ju Zhiliang, 50, finally received the ashes of his grandpa, who had been away from home for 77 years. He buried the ashes shortly before Qingming Festival.

Last year, Ju came across news of Liu escorting the ashes of elderly veterans back to their hometowns on the mainland and was deeply moved. He eventually contacted Liu.

"It was my father's long-held wish for decades. What Chief Liu is doing is deeply moving for those of us with elders residing in Taiwan," Ju said.



**Left:** Liu Te-wen arrives at Qingdao airport railway station in Shandong province during his trip to return a mainland veteran's ashes last month. **Right:** Liu and a relative of another deceased veteran kneel in respect upon their meeting. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Among all the trips, one to Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, brought Liu an unexpected discovery about his own family roots.

While escorting a veteran's ashes home to their relatives on the mainland he was asked about his family name. Liu told the locals it was Pengcheng, to which the local said: "Oh Pengcheng is an old name for Xuzhou."

"As a child, I'd seen the family name plaque... Only then did I real-

ize that my ancestors came from there," Liu said.

"We are born of the same roots from one family. We should stay connected and visit more. It's our shared belief that we must never be separated," he said.



Online  
Scan the code  
to see more.

## CHINA

# Music therapy holds keys to healing

Treatment has vital role in palliative care, improving dementia

By CHEN NAN  
chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

The therapy began with a simple greeting.

Wang Hanlin, strumming his guitar, gently played the opening notes of the *Hello Song*, and introduced himself with the lyrics: "Hello, my name is..."

Gu, a man in his 80s suffering from mild cognitive impairment — his condition makes him forget not only the names of loved ones, but even his own sometimes — was invited to complete the phrase.

Slowly, with some encouragement, he eventually uttered his name. This sparked an emotional response and signaled a shift from passive observation to active participation. It was a small, but crucial step in his rehabilitation.

In the corners of hospitals, nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, music therapy is tapping into the healing power of sound and rhythm.

Wang is a young music therapist who works in a nursing home in Beijing. He has been using songs and therapy initiatives to help spark seniors' memories, soothe their anxieties, and encourage social interactions.

Group sessions often begin with sing-alongs or playing a simple instrument, such as a drum. One-on-one sessions allow for more personalized musical experiences, whether it be the playing of a cherished tune or guiding one of the residents through a relaxation exercise.

"My job is a delicate balance of therapy and artistry, creating a space where music becomes a bridge to connect, comfort and bring joy to those living with the challenges of aging," said Wang, 35.

## Hits and memories

For Gu, the next step in his therapy involved connecting the song to visual cues.

Gu's family had long been concerned about his memory lapses, such as forgetting his own name or events that had happened that day. Despite his forgetfulness, they noticed something intriguing — Gu would occasionally hum the tune of *The Unfading Sun on the Grassland*. The song had been his favorite when he was young, and worked in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Wang recognized the healing potential of this song, and after discussions with Gu's family, he decided to design a music therapy plan centered around it.

The young therapist presented Gu with images of blue skies, wide-open grasslands, galloping horses, and soaring birds. Each scene was linked to a song lyric.

Wang encouraged the octogenarian to recall the lyrics that matched the pictures, and as Gu looked at the photographs fragments of memories were triggered.

"Blue skies, white clouds floating by," Gu began to sing, his voice shaky at first, then gaining strength.

With each session, Gu's ability to remember and sing the song's lyrics improved. Over time, he could sing the entire song without hesitation.

As Gu's connection to the song deepened, something extraordinary began to happen: his memory, which had been confined to a few disjointed moments, began to expand.

He started to recall more details, not just about the song, but about his entire life. The song unlocked a trove of forgotten memories, and enabled him to speak about important events from his past.

"Music can stimulate both emotional and cognitive responses in ways that are not possible through words alone," said Wang. "For patients with a cognitive impairment, music provides a unique way to connect the brain's neural pathways, often bypassing areas that have been damaged by age or illness."

"Music can reach parts of the brain that are often inaccessible through other therapies," he said.

## Inspiring legacies

Music therapy began in the 20th century, when musicians played for World War I and World War II veterans in hospitals across the United States, said Liu Mingming, director of the Music Therapy Research Center at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, who is responsible for teaching the music therapy program.

In 1980, music therapy was introduced to China for the first time when Professor Marjory Bong-Ray Liu, from the music therapy program at Arizona State University, gave a lecture on the topic at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.

In 1996, China's first music therapist Gao Tian, who was certified by the American Music Therapy Association, returned to China from Temple University in the US. The same year, the Central Conservatory of Music established the Music Therapy Research Center.

In 1999, it began admitting master's students, and in 2003 started enrolling undergraduate students.

Since then, music therapy in China has



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

matured and aligned with global standards.

Wang, from Liaoning province, said his music therapy calling began when he was a teenager.

During his third year of middle school he saw Gao being interviewed on television. Gao talked about his work and some of the success stories of using music as a healing tool, such as helping dementia patients with memory loss, and stroke victims regain motor functions.

The interview had a profound impact on Wang.

"I had been studying piano for 10 years at that point, but I had never thought of it in this way — how music could help people physically and emotionally," Wang recalled.

In 2009, he enrolled to study music therapy at the Central Conservatory of Music, where he graduated in 2014.

"I knew this was what I wanted to do," Wang said. "It was a combination of music and healing, two things I loved and wanted to dedicate myself to."

From 2014 to 2016, Wang worked as a music therapist at a hospital in Beijing. In 2016, he joined the Beijing nursing home where he still works.

"People often think music therapists just play songs or lead singalongs, but it's far more intricate," Wang explained. "We're trained to assess the patients' strengths and weaknesses and then design activities that target those areas, improving their cognitive or emotional health."

This ability to connect with patients on a deeper level is what makes his work so meaningful, he said. Wang has treated many elderly dementia patients, and says he feels the shadows of physical and emotional pain they carry.

"Elderly people often face the reality of aging — diseases, medication, memory loss," he said.

"But I want people to understand that there are non-drug interventions, like music therapy, that can be just as powerful

in improving their health," he said.

Liu Mingming, from the Music Therapy Research Center, said being a "musician" in a hospital ward isn't about performing, but about helping patients become joyful.

What was once viewed as simply singing or playing instruments for patients has now evolved into a profession that is urgently needed in many rehabilitation centers and medical institutions, she said.

"Music therapy is an interdisciplinary field, and part of creative arts therapies that include music therapy, art therapy, dance therapy, drama therapy, and play therapy. All of these are forms of creative arts," Liu said. "For instance, dance therapy often uses music, and in music therapy, we frequently incorporate physical movement."

Different patients have different responses to music therapy, she said.

For example, some enjoy the sound of low-pitched instruments because they help them feel calm. The sound of the cello feels warm and "makes you feel like your whole body can move with the music," Liu said, which is an experience very different from the bright sensation evoked by a violin.

For some children with hearing impairment, therapy focuses on helping them experience music through the vibrations of sounds and instruments.

The ability to design personalized musical interventions is crucial for music therapy, which emphasizes not only the technical skills of playing music, but also the critical thinking necessary to apply it therapeutically.

## Goodbye lullaby

One of the first music therapy projects Liu was involved with was working with Zhou Xuan, a doctor at Beijing Children's Hospital and founder of Daisy Home in Beijing.

Established in 2017, Daisy Home provides end-of-life care for children with terminal blood disorders and cancer, as well as support for their families.

Dudu, a boy with a malignant brain tumor, was a significant challenge for Liu.

"When I first met Dudu, the little boy's condition was already quite severe. He was only five years old at the time, but this young life had already reached the end stages. How can a five-year-old child understand death and separation? How can you guide his feelings of regret and reluctance? How can you help him fill his limited time with less pain and more color and joy?" recalled Liu.

Dudu was no longer able to speak. Occasionally, he would smile when he was very happy, but he could not see anything. His hearing was still good, though, and his mind was clear.

Liu learned from Dudu's parents that the boy liked cartoons, songs from those cartoons, animated characters, and little toy cars. One of his favorite things was a little bookshelf filled with tiny toy cars.

Inspired by this, Liu wrote a song on a guitar, with the lyrics: "I have a magical world in my heart. Blue skies, white clouds, flowers everywhere. I run up the mountains with my little cars. Then we run, sweating all over, laughing out loud."

Liu said musical ability is essential for a good music therapist, but just as important are human qualities, particularly empathy, and the ability to step into another person's world.

"You try to use your musical skills, combined with musical elements familiar to them, to help them cope with physical pain, emotional struggles, and spiritual pain," said Liu. "Empathy is crucial for a music therapist — it's about listening well, understanding, feeling and being able to empathize with the person's inner world."

## Soothe the savage beast

With the fast pace of modern life, many people use music to cope with stress, anxiety or sadness. They listen to their favorite songs, playlists or genres to find calm, or

feel energized and uplifted. However, engagement with a music therapist is a more structured, therapeutic process aimed at long-term emotional, mental and sometimes physical healing, Liu said.

On Feb 16, the Music Heals the Heart — Music and Psychology Interactive Event was launched by the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, as a science popularization event focusing on mental health. It was also a chance for some people to experience relaxation through music for the first time.

As the gentle sound of piano music began, the event kicked off with the classic piece *Traumerei* from Robert Schumann's piano suite *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood), a representation of the German composer's childhood dreams woven through musical notes. Schumann's life was, in fact, plagued by mental illness.

Wang Gang, director of the Beijing Anding Hospital, said at the event that music has a regulatory effect on the brain cortex and emotion-related neural pathways. Currently, 85 countries around the world have included music in complementary therapies.

"Music therapy is not limited to appreciation and enjoyment; it is a scientific intervention that engages perception, movement, and social systems," he said.

During the interactive segment, Liu guided the audience to feel and create an inner world of imagination through gentle music.

The audience members were also guided on using their bodies as percussion instruments, creating rich rhythms and beats.

In the final "drum circle" activity, over 200 audience members holding African drums, tambourines, maracas and other instruments, participated in an interactive performance.

"Music is not just for listening," Liu said.

"Everyone can sing and participate in playing instruments. Just like the word 'play' in English, which means both to perform and to have fun, we are here to enjoy music in a relaxed and playful way."

## WORLD

# Carmakers in Germany face US tariff woes

Supply chain disruptions cautioned as auto industry stares at price hikes

By ZHENG WANYIN in London  
zhengwanyin@mail.chinadailyuk.com

The United States' latest 25 percent tariffs on all auto imports is set to deal another blow to Germany's already struggling car industry, experts say, warning of potential fallout for the export-reliant sector.

The US was the top destination for German car exports last year, accounting for 13.1 percent of the total, according to the German Federal Statistical Office.

For specific brands, Porsche derives 24.5 percent of its global unit sales from the US, while Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and BMW each sees more than 16 percent of sales coming from the country, according to a March analysis by ING Think, the research division of Dutch bank ING.

The new tariffs are expected to significantly raise the prices of imported cars in the US, hindering the German auto sector whose growth has long been fueled by exports.

Hildegard Mueller, president of the German Association of the Automotive Industry, said in statements that the tariffs could pose a "massive burden and challenge" for carmakers and the global automotive supply chain.

She urged the European Union to "put all options" on the negotiation table and called on the German government to "do everything possible" to boost industrial competitiveness.

The German auto industry operates across more than 2,000 locations and employs about 138,000 people in the US, which Mueller described as "the best example of local production that has existed in the US for decades and is deeply interwoven with the US value chain".

However, even having a US presence does not make German carmakers immune to the tariffs, as duties also apply to certain auto parts, adding another layer of costs on top of the existing 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum.

As a result, car prices are expected to rise between \$5,000 and \$10,000 on average, and by as much as \$50,000 in the luxury sector, The Guardian reported.

## Halting deliveries

Many auto companies are already bracing for that impact. Audi, which has no production sites in the US, has suspended deliveries of vehicles that arrived at US ports after April 2. A spokesperson said shipments would be frozen "until further notice".

BMW told The Wall Street Journal last month that the tariffs would shrink earnings by \$1.1 billion this year.

US President Donald Trump has long complained about the trade deficits the US runs with the EU.

Last year, 757,654 new vehicles were exported from the EU to the US, valued at 38.9 billion euros (\$44.1 billion), while only 169,152 new US-made cars went in the opposite direction, for 7.8 billion euros, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat.

Another "unfairness" noted by the White House is that US duties on imported passenger cars stand at just 2.5 percent, much lower than the EU rate of 10 percent.

However, Ferdinand Dudenhofer, director of Center Automotive Research in Bochum, Germany, told China Daily that the calculation was "fake news".

"There is a 25 percent 'chicken tax' that applies to light trucks imported into the US. So, it's unfair to tell the public that the EU has advantages against the US."

The "chicken tax", introduced in the 1960s in retaliation for tariffs by France and the then West Germany on US poultry, still applies to vehicles such as utility vans and pickup trucks. According to the digital auto publication CarBuzz, the measure has long benefited US automakers, helping them edge out European models and dominate the truck market.

## Consumer preferences

In addition, Dudenhofer said the trade imbalance was mainly driven by consumer preferences, as pickups with bigger engines and higher fuel consumption — favored by US customers — have little market in Europe, where fuel is more expensive than in the US. "So, the second fake news is that Europe has blockades to bring cars from the US."

Despite that, Trump insists on the tariffs as "medicine" and believes they will lead to a reshoring of manufacturing and investment.

Dudenhofer said it remains uncertain whether the "medicine" will really work.

"Nobody knows exactly what is going on in the US. Nobody knows how long the taxes will be in place, maybe three months, two years, or 10 years. Nobody knows how the prices will change for products. So, why should I invest in a country where I don't know anything about its future?"

Inga Fechner and Rico Luman, senior economists at ING Think, wrote in an analysis that even if manufacturers relocate to the US, the idea of "one-stop shopping" is an "illusion", because the auto industry is deeply globalized, with parts sourced from all over the world.

Dudenhofer said the present automotive production system has been shaped by manufacturers setting up bases around the world for specific models tailored to local demand, in order to achieve scale effect.

For Germany's struggling auto industry — burdened by a delayed transition to electric mobility, rising labor and energy costs, and intensifying foreign competition — Dudenhofer called for a consistent long-term strategy domestically and more collaborations with Chinese counterparts.

"We are in a century where we can learn from China," he said. "In the past, China learned from us. Now, China has innovations that are very important for our carmakers and suppliers to become successful in the future. We need the politicians to understand that. Because that will be a win-win game."



This image provided by Commonwealth Media Services shows damage after a fire at the Pennsylvania governor's mansion while Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro and his family slept inside on Sunday, April 13, 2025, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. AP

# Arson at governor's residence latest act of US political violence

By SHI GUANG in New York  
For China Daily

An arson at the Pennsylvania governor's mansion was the latest in a string of politically motivated attacks in the United States, which also include widespread vandalism against Tesla cars and dealerships.

At around 2 am EDT on Sunday, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and his family were awakened by State Police banging on their door to evacuate them from their official residence in Harrisburg, the state capital, after a suspect had set fire to the home.

No one was injured, but the house sustained "significant damage" from the attack, according to police. Photos showed smoke billowing from a window of the residence.

Shapiro later on social media called for an end to political violence, which he said is "becoming far too common in our society".

On March 19, US Attorney General Pam Bondi called the attacks on Tesla — whose CEO, multi-billionaire Elon Musk, was appointed by US President Donald Trump to lead the federal budget-cutting Department of Government Efficiency — "nothing short of domestic terrorism".

She said that the Department of Justice "will continue investigations that impose severe consequences on those involved in the attacks, including those operating behind the scenes".

Shapiro also wrote, "I don't give a

damn if it's coming from one particular side or the other, directed at one particular party or another... it is not OK and it has to stop."

The arson suspect, Cody Balmer, 38, of Harrisburg, turned himself in to police and told them that he was "harboring hatred" for the governor and had planned to beat him with a hammer if he had found him in the burning residence.

Balmer gained access by scaling a fence at the mansion, police said. Security footage showed the suspect breaking a window in the home's piano room and throwing a Molotov cocktail into the house. CBS News reported. Photos posted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania show heavy damage to the southern area of the mansion.

Balmer also had made social media posts critical of the president and of former president Joe Biden. Online records showed that Balmer's house in the city was put in foreclosure and was sold in September for \$60,000, USA Today reported.

In February and March, there were more than 50 acts of vandalism against Tesla vehicles. Five vehicles were firebombed and hit by gunfire at a Tesla dealership in Las Vegas.

On Jan 1, Matthew Livelsberger, a decorated former US Army Green Beret, fatally shot himself inside a Tesla Cybertruck he had parked outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas immediately before a time bomb inside the vehicle exploded, causing minor injuries to seven

people.

In one of his writings about domestic politics and international issues, Livelsberger complained of the US being "terminally ill and headed toward collapse".

Trump himself narrowly survived an assassination attempt on July 13 in Butler, Pennsylvania. The shooter, Thomas Crooks, 20, who used an AR-15 style rifle, was killed by a Secret Service sniper. One of the rounds wounded Trump in the ear.

The acts of political violence and growing polarization among Americans have taken place against an economic backdrop of high inflation and federal debt. Trump has instituted sweeping tariffs, federal layoffs and cutbacks by DOGE, along with foreign aid cuts to the US Agency for International Development.

The stock and bond markets also have experienced high volatility in the past week, with wild swings in shares resulting from tariff announcements and pauses.

A Wall Street Journal poll, conducted from March 27 to April 1, shows partisan divisions have sharpened over tariffs and foreign aid cuts: 77 percent of Republicans held a positive view of the tariffs, saying they would create jobs, while 93 percent of Democrats expressed concern that they would raise prices.

On foreign aid, 92 percent of Republicans supported broad cuts such as Trump has proposed, while 85 percent of Democrats opposed them.

# Advocacy group files lawsuit over import taxes

NEW YORK — A legal advocacy group on Monday asked the United States Court of International Trade to block President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on foreign trading partners, arguing the president overstepped his authority.

The lawsuit was filed by the non-partisan Liberty Justice Center on behalf of five small US businesses that import goods from countries targeted by the tariffs. The businesses range from a New York wine and spirits importer to a Virginia-based maker of educational kits and musical instruments.

The lawsuit challenges Trump's April 2 "Liberation Day" tariffs, as well as duties he separately levied against China.

"No one person should have the power to impose taxes that have such vast global economic consequences," Liberty Justice Center senior counsel Jeffrey Schwab said in a statement. "The Constitution gives the power to set tax rates — including tariffs — to Congress, not the president."

White House spokesman Harrison Fields defended Trump's tariffs in a statement.

"Never Trumpers will always oppose him, but President Trump is standing up for Main Street by putting an end to our trading partners — especially China — exploiting the US. His plan levels the playing field for businesses and workers to address our country's national emergency of chronic trade deficits."

The president's executive order invoked laws, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which gives presidents special powers to combat unusual or extraordinary threats to the US.

In Monday's lawsuit, the Liberty Justice Center said the law does not give presidents the authority to impose tariffs.

"There is no precedent for using the IEEPA to impose tariffs. No other president has ever done so or ever claimed the power to do so," the lawsuit said.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has taken its next steps toward imposing more tariffs on key imports, launching investigations into imports of computer chips, chipmaking equipment and pharmaceuticals.

The Department of Commerce posted notices about the probes late on Monday on the Federal Register, seeking public comment within three weeks. It had not formally announced them earlier.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

# Japan says in no rush for deal ahead of levy talks

By JIANG XUEQING in Tokyo  
jiangxueqing@chinadaily.com.cn

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has signaled a tough negotiating stance ahead of tariff talks with the United States, making it clear that Tokyo will not be rushed into an agreement or make major concessions.

"We do not intend to make one compromise after another just to conclude negotiations quickly," Ishiba said on Monday, adding the government will "take the necessary time and make utmost efforts to secure the best outcome".

Ryosei Akazawa, Japan's minister in charge of economic revitalization and chief tariff negotiator, will visit Washington from Wednesday to Friday to meet US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

"We intend to approach this with the most thorough and detailed analysis possible," Ishiba said of the upcoming talks.

In preparation for the negotiations, the Japanese government has started identifying "nontariff barriers". The review will target regulations and subsidy programs that the US deems barriers to trade, with particular focus on Japan's vehicle certification systems and its distribution system for agricultural products.

US President Donald Trump has announced a 24 percent "reciprocal tariff" on Japanese goods. While it has been put on hold for 90 days, a baseline 10 percent levy remains in

place, alongside the additional 25 percent tariffs on automobiles, steel and aluminum.

"We are well aware that it has the possibility, or risk, to fundamentally change the global economic order," Ishiba said. "At such a time, we need to consider what response is in the best interests of our country and in the best interests of the world as a whole."

A Kyodo News survey released on Sunday found that 84.2 percent of respondents in Japan believe the US tariff hikes will undermine their livelihoods, while 73.9 percent view the policy as unjustified.

Questioned in the lower house of parliament on Monday about his administration's response, Ishiba ruled out retaliatory measures for now, saying escalation would not be in Japan's national interest. He also expressed hesitation about taking the issue to the World Trade Organization, opting instead for bilateral negotiations with the US.

## United response

At the session of the Budget Committee of the House of Representatives, Yoshihiko Noda, leader of the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, voiced support for a united response.

"I share the prime minister's view that this is a national crisis," Noda said, arguing that Japan should challenge the US over violations of international trade rules and its commitments under the US-Japan Trade Agreement. Hidetoshi Tashiro, chief economist



A container ship is docked at a cargo terminal in Tokyo on April 9.

HIRO KOMAE / AP

at Japanese consultancy Infinity LLC, warned that Washington's "reciprocal tariffs" and additional duties on automobiles will deal a severe blow to Japan's auto industry, pushing some companies to the brink of collapse.

"Based on a preliminary calculation on April 3, Toyota's profits are projected to fall by 27 percent, Honda's by 28 percent, Mazda's by 139 percent, and Nissan's by a staggering 300 percent," Tashiro said.

"This means Mazda and Nissan are likely to post losses in their financial reports. For Nissan especially, the situation is dire — this is a critical moment that could determine the company's survival."

Beyond the damage to Japan's economy, Tashiro said the US tariff measures will fuel inflation in the

US and send shock waves through global trade.

"This policy will cause a marked contraction in global trade volume," he said. "Export production worldwide will decline. These tariffs are entirely irrational — not just for the global economy, but even for the US economy itself."

Also on Monday, Ishiba had a phone conversation with Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, discussing issues including the effects of US tariff measures on the global economy and the multilateral free trade system.

He said the situation is grave for Japanese companies operating in Southeast Asia, stressing the importance of maintaining close communication with countries in the region.

## CHINA DAILY USA

### NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS

1500 Broadway, Suite 2800,  
New York, NY 10036

Telephone: 212-537-8888

Fax: 212-537-8898

editor@chinadailyusa.com

readers@chinadailyusa.com

Subscription: 212-537-8899

Advertising: 212-537-8916

Follow us on:

x.com/chinadaily

facebook.com/chinadaily

usa.chinadaily.com.cn

These materials are distributed by China Daily

Distribution Corp. on behalf of China Daily Beijing

China. Additional information is on file with the

Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON

National Press Bldg., Suite 1108 529 14th Street NW

Washington, DC 20045

Tel: 202-662-7249

Fax: 202-662-7247

## SAN FRANCISCO

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 900,

San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel: 415-348-8288

Fax: 415-348-8388

SEATTLE

800 Fifth Ave., Suite 4100

Seattle, WA 98104

Tel: 206-922-2866

HOUSTON

1001 South Dairy Ashford Suite 300

Houston, TX 77077

Tel: 713-595-7660

CANADA | TORONTO

4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor

Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8

Tel: 416-481-5706

CHINA DAILY (ISSN 0748-6154) is published

daily except weekends by China Daily USA, 1500

Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and

additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send

address changes to CHINA DAILY USA, 1500

Broadway, Suite 2800, New York, NY 10036.

Vol. 38 - No.1558

## WORLD

## Sudan marks two years of fighting with no end in sight

By OTIATO OPALI  
in Nairobi, Kenya  
otiato@chinadaily.com.cn

As Sudan marked the second anniversary of its brutal civil conflict on Tuesday, global leaders, foreign ministers and international organizations gathered in London in an attempt to chart an avenue through which the warring factions can negotiate peace and end the conflict.

The conference, which was hosted by the British government and the African Union and supported by other European allies, was, however, not attended by representatives from Sudan.

Earlier this month, Ali Youssef, Sudan's foreign minister sent a letter to British Foreign Secretary David Lammy in which he protested organizing a conference on Sudan without inviting the Sudanese government.

Ahead of the conference, Doctors Without Borders, an international medical humanitarian organization, on Monday reported that they witnessed more than 10,000 people fleeing from Sudan's Zamzam refugee camp in the country's Darfur region over the weekend following attacks by the Rapid Support Forces militia group.

This came as the RSF militia on Sunday announced that it took control of the famine-hit Zamzam camp after two days of heavy shelling and gunfire that killed at least 100 people, including children and aid workers, according to the UN.

Mahmoud Ali Youssef, chairman of the African Union Commission, on Monday cited credible reports of intensified attacks in Zamzam and Abu Shouk camps that caused the deaths of civilians, including children and humanitarian workers — which is an unacceptable and grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.

"The African Union urges all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint, and refrain from any actions that could exacerbate tensions. The well-being of the Sudanese people must remain the foremost priority, and all efforts must be directed towards ensuring an environment conducive to lasting peace and development," Youssouf said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday Sudan remains a high priority for the United Nations and he will continue to engage with regional and global leaders on means to enhance collective efforts for peace.

## Political efforts urged

"Two years into a devastating war, comprehensive, revitalized and well-coordinated political efforts are urgently needed to prevent Sudan's further fragmentation. As an international community, we must find ways to help the Sudanese people, bring this unspeakable catastrophe to an end and establish acceptable transitional arrangements," Guterres said.

Latest figures from the UN indicate that nearly 13 million people have been uprooted from their homes with almost 4 million crossing into the neighboring countries of Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Libya, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, and further afield into Uganda. In addition, more than 30,000 people have been reported killed across Sudan, though the actual death toll is likely much higher due to indirect causes such as the spread of disease, malnutrition, and lack of adequate healthcare.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has warned that as the conflict and displacement intensify, funding continues to lag with the regional response coming at less than 10 percent of what is needed.



Sudanese refugees hug each other at an assembly point for buses in Cairo arranged for their voluntary return from Egypt to Sudan on Saturday. MOHAMED HOSSAM / EPA-EFE

## Briefly

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
Death toll in roof collapse rises to 231

The death toll in last week's nightclub roof collapse in the capital of the Dominican Republic rose to 231, the Minister of Interior and Police said on Monday, as families of victims began filing lawsuits against the nightclub's owners. The Holy Week will be different this year in the Caribbean tourist destination, with multiple events and activities canceled and beach parties banned, according to the Dominican Navy. Municipal authorities have also suspended the traditional Easter activities that take place in public squares and parks.

SINGAPORE  
President dissolves parliament, polls soon

Singaporean President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on Tuesday dissolved the parliament, initiating the process for the country's next general election, local media reported. A Writ of Election is expected to be issued soon, specifying the polling day. Prime Minister Lawrence Wong will lead the

ruling People's Action Party into the contest. The upcoming election will have four more seats compared to the last vote in 2020, with 97 lawmakers elected from 15 single-member electoral divisions and 18 divisions with 4 or 5 members each.

NIGERIA  
Over 40 killed in attack by gunmen

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu on Monday confirmed that over 40 people were killed in an attack by a group of unknown gunmen who wreaked havoc in a local community in the country's north-central Plateau State. The attack occurred late on Sunday night when the gunmen stormed the Zike community in the Bassa local government area of Plateau State, shooting indiscriminately at residents, local authorities said. In a statement on Monday night, Tinubu expressed "profound sorrow" over the deaths and instructed security agencies to thoroughly investigate the crisis and identify those responsible for orchestrating the violent acts in Plateau State.

XINHUA-AGENCIES



A boy walks past broken solar panels amidst rubble in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on Monday. BASHAR TALEB / AFP

## Gazans continue to bear brunt of conflict

Palestinians face humanitarian crisis as Israel, Hamas tussle over truce deal

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong  
jan@chinadailyapac.com

Nearly 70 percent of Gaza is now under Israeli-issued displacement orders or within a "no-go" zone in the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations, leaving Palestinians in dire straits as Tel Aviv and Hamas tussle over reaching a deal amid incessant bombings and starvation.

With no tangible progress and significant gaps, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the fighting. UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the humanitarian crisis is likely to be the worst since the conflict broke out on Oct 7, 2023, with the death toll nearing 51,000, as of Tuesday, and lifesaving supplies dwindling.

Gaza health authorities had also said last week that around 60,000 children were facing life-threatening malnutrition owing to the continued closure of border crossings by Israel, preventing the entry of food, humanitarian assistance, and medical supplies.

Belal Alakhras, a political analyst and researcher at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, told China Daily that Israeli authorities have "weaponized essential human needs as instruments of collective pressure and genocide in Gaza".

This Israeli approach, he said, appears designed to achieve what military operations alone could not accomplish over the past 18 months: population displacement and military settlement over Palestinian movements.

"Basic necessities are being lev-

eraged as bargaining chips against Hamas and other Palestinian factions, yet this strategy has produced not tactical success but rather an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe," said Alakhras.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on April 2 that the Israel Defense Forces were "seizing territory, striking terrorists and destroying the infrastructure".

But with the attack on hospitals and other critical civilian infrastructure in recent days, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said on April 11 that the increasing issuance by Israeli forces of "evacuation orders" — which are, in effect, displacement orders — have resulted in the forcible transfer of Palestinians in Gaza with little to no access to services, including water, food and shelter.

Since March 18, Israel has issued 21 "evacuation orders," according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, or OHCHR.

## Concerns aired

OHCHR spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani acknowledged that the temporary evacuation of civilians in certain areas could be legal, under strict conditions.

But she also said the nature and scope of the evacuation orders raised serious concerns that Israel intends to permanently remove the civilian population from these areas in order to create a so-called buffer zone.

"Permanently displacing the civilian population within occupied territory amounts to forcible transfer,

which is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a crime against humanity," said Shamdasani. Alakhras said Israeli policy appears "emboldened by extensive US support", including substantial weapons transfers and diplomatic protection.

In the latest development, Palestinian militant group Hamas said it was reviewing a new ceasefire proposal delivered by Egypt and Qatar from Israel. It also rejected demands to disarm, unless it received Israeli guarantees of a serious prisoner-hostage swap and a permanent end to the conflict.

The new proposal reportedly included Hamas laying down its weapons and a 45-day temporary ceasefire in exchange for Hamas releasing half of the Israeli hostages, according to a report by Xinhua.

But Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas official, reportedly expressed surprise at the inclusion of a clause related to the movement's disarmament. He said disarmament was "not on the table" and that any agreement must begin with a "cessation of Israeli aggression and the forces' withdrawal from the Gaza Strip".

Elsewhere, on Monday, King Abdullah II of Jordan and visiting Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto condemned Israeli violations against the Al-Aqsa Mosque and attempts to divide it both "temporally and spatially," according to a statement by Jordan's Royal Court.

About 700 Israeli settlers also stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque in groups from the Mughrabi Gate, performing Talmudic rituals and conducting provocative tours of its courtyards on the third day of the Jewish Passover holiday, Al Jazeera reported on Tuesday.

## Teheran says next round of talks again in Muscat

ROME — Talks between Iran and the United States over Teheran's nuclear program appeared ready to leave the Middle East on Monday, as an Italian source and others said the next round of negotiations would take place in Rome. But early on Tuesday, Iran insisted the next round would again be held in Muscat, the capital of Oman.

It wasn't immediately clear where the negotiations would be held after Teheran's overnight announcement. US officials have not said where the talks would be held. US President Donald Trump separately complained on Monday about the pace of nuclear talks between the United States and Iran — as the two countries start a new round of pivotal negotiations.

"I think they're tapping us along," he said in the Oval Office during a meeting with El Salvador's president.

According to a source in the Italian government who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press, the next meeting was expected to take place in Rome on Saturday. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also signaled the talks would take place there.

Then early on Tuesday, the state-run IRNA news agency quoted Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei as saying the talks would continue in Oman. Easter Sunday will be in this coming weekend, a major holiday in Rome which surrounds Vatican City, the home of the Roman Catholic Church.

"Following consultations, it was decided that Muscat continues to be the host of the second round of the negotiations, which are scheduled to be held on Saturday," the semi-official Mehr news agency quoted Baghaei as saying.

Meanwhile, Iran's foreign minister is to visit Russia this week to discuss the negotiations with the US, ahead of a new round of talks.

White House Special Envoy Steve Witkoff said on Monday that a diplomatic agreement with Iran will depend on working out details around verification of the country's uranium enrichment and weapons programs.

"This is going to be much about verification on the enrichment program, and then ultimately verification on weaponization," Witkoff said in an interview on Fox News' *Hannity*. "That includes missiles, the type of missiles that they have stockpiled there, and it includes the trigger for a bomb."

The first round of talks took place in Oman over the past weekend.

The talks will follow a visit to Iran by International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi later this week. "Continued engagement and cooperation with the agency is essential at a time when diplomatic solutions are urgently needed," Grossi wrote on X.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Europe fastest-warming continent, report finds

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

Europe had its warmest year on record in 2024 and is the fastest-warming continent, becoming hotter at twice the global average rate, a United Nations report has said.

The second annual European State of the Climate report, which includes inputs from around 100 scientists and experts, said extreme weather, record temperatures and heavy rainfall that ravaged Europe were a direct result of man-made climate change.

The report, which the UN World Meteorological Organization, or WMO, and the Copernicus Climate Change Service, or C3S, released on Tuesday, said 2024 was a year of extremes. It found 45 percent of Europe's days were much warmer than average, and 12 percent were the warmest on record.

"This report highlights that Europe is the fastest-warming continent and is experiencing serious impacts from extreme weather and climate change," WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo explained. "Every additional fraction of a degree of temperature rise matters because



Several people clean up among piled up cars that were damaged in flooding in Valencia, Spain, on Nov 5. Experts said in a newly released report that extreme weather, record temperatures and heavy rainfall that ravaged Europe were a direct result of man-made climate change. EUROPA PRESS VIA AP

it accentuates the risks to our lives, to economies, and to the planet."

The study said storms were more severe in Europe in 2024, and flooding was more prevalent than at any time since 2013, with swollen rivers claiming at least 335 lives and negatively impacting 413,000 people.

The experts said Europe will be more seriously impacted by climate

change in the future than other continents, with a global temperature rise of 1.5 C likely to kill an additional 30,000 Europeans.

Florence Rabier, director-general of the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasts, which implements the C3S, said: "The 2024 report reveals that almost one third of the river network exceeded

the high flood threshold, and heat stress continues to increase in Europe, highlighting the importance of building greater resilience."

She said 51 percent of European cities now have dedicated climate adaptation plans that use climate change information to mitigate the problems.

Saulo said "adaptation is a must" for European nations and that WMO and its partners will intensify their efforts "to strengthen early warning systems and climate services to help decision-makers and society at large to be more resilient".

"We are making progress, but need to go further and need to go faster, and we need to go together," she added.

The report said unprecedented high annual temperatures were recorded across half of the continent, and that sea surface temperatures hit record highs throughout Europe, some 0.7 C above average.

The extra hot temperatures caused wildfires throughout Europe — with one in Portugal in September torching 110,000 hectares in a week. The temperature rise across the continent also led to a loss of ice in Scandinavia, where glaciers shrank at alarming rates.

## WORLD



People gather for a protest outside the embassy of the United States in Copenhagen, Denmark, on March 29. Earlier this year, US President Donald Trump floated proposals to seize Greenland as part of a broader effort to bolster US national security. NILS MEILVANG / EPA-EFE

## US expansionism poses threat to world order

Washington's foreign policy shift risks triggering wave of land grabs: Experts

By CAI HONG  
caihong@chinadaily.com.cn

The US administration's revival of territorial ambitions — a central feature of its foreign policy agenda — poses a significant threat to the post-World War II rules-based international order. Experts warn that such US expansionism risks triggering a wave of international land grabs.

On April 9, Panama reaffirmed that the United States recognizes its sovereignty over the Panama Canal, despite the increasingly aggressive rhetoric from Washington. The announcement came as the two countries signed agreements to expand US military training in the Central American country.

Earlier this year, US President Donald Trump floated proposals to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal — by military force if necessary — as part of a broader effort to bolster US national security. He also suggested transforming Gaza into the "Riviera of the Middle East" and floated the idea of annexing Canada as the 51st US state. One of his earliest executive orders even renamed the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America".

Experts say these proposals reflect a deeper shift in the new US administration's foreign policy toward assertive nationalism and unilateralism.

In response to Trump's renewed calls to acquire Greenland, the territory's newly sworn-in Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen declared, "The United States won't get that," adding, "We determine our own future."

A January poll by Danish newspaper Berlingske, conducted by pollster Verian, revealed that 85 percent of Greenlanders oppose becoming part of the US, with only 6 percent in favor and 9 percent undecided.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking at an Arctic policy forum in Murmansk last month, said the US administration's interest in Greenland was unsurprising given the US' long-standing strategic interest in the mineral-rich region. He noted that the US first explored acquiring Greenland in the 19th century and later offered to purchase it from Denmark following World War II.

"It's obvious that the United States will continue to systematically advance its geostrategic, military-political and economic interests in the Arctic," Putin said. He emphasized that the Arctic's growing significance — driven by climate change and evolving global trade routes — has intensified geopolitical competition in the region.

Analysts have compared the US administration's territorial ambitions and economic policies to the late 19th-century expansionism under president William McKinley, who oversaw the acquisition of Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

The combination of US global power, nationalist populism and the Trump administration's corporate-driven, predatory approach makes for a dangerous dynamic."

Ilan Kapoor, a professor of critical development studies at York University in Canada



Ilan Kapoor, a professor of critical development studies at York University in Canada, wrote in a blog post that seizing land, waterways and mineral wealth is central to the current US administration's vision of ushering in a new "Golden Age" of corporate capitalism.

"The combination of US global power, nationalist populism and the Trump administration's corporate-driven, predatory approach makes for a dangerous dynamic," Kapoor warned.

Trump's "America First" agenda, he said, aims to reposition the United States as the dominant global power by leveraging economic and military strength to secure favorable trade deals and strategic assets.

Jian Junbo, director of the Center for China-Europe Relations at Fudan University in Shanghai, noted that Greenland's vast mineral reserves — particularly rare earth elements, cobalt, copper and nickel — are critical to both the US military-industrial complex and the emerging green economy.

### Powerful foothold

"These resources could significantly enhance the self-reliance and global dominance of the US industrial supply chain," Jian said. "From a military standpoint, much of Greenland lies within the Arctic Circle. A stronger American military presence there would also increase deterrence against Russia. Moreover, as melting ice opens Arctic shipping lanes, control of Greenland would give the US a powerful foothold along these vital new routes."

Geopolitically, the control of Greenland by the US could limit other global powers' influence in the Arctic. Jian said the US might not be seeking full control over Greenland but could be using the idea as leverage in negotiations with the European Union.

"There is ample space for US-EU coordination and mutual benefit,"

Jian noted, "But the approach of coercion and intimidation to alter sovereignty runs counter to the values of Denmark, Europe and Panama, and violates the norms of international order and multilateralism. The global community must remain alert and resolute in rejecting such tactics."

Zhao Yongsheng, a research fellow at the Academy of China Open Economy Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the US interest in Greenland has remained persistent throughout both of Trump's presidential terms. From a geopolitical perspective, US control over Greenland would allow for a contiguous Arctic front alongside Alaska and northern Canada.

"This would dramatically strengthen the US strategic positioning in the Arctic," Zhao said.

"Whether in artificial intelligence or green technology, rare metals are essential — and currently, China controls much of the global supply. Access to Greenland's resources could shift that balance in favor of the US."

Shi Guannan, a researcher at the Institute of American Studies under the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, noted that although international law makes it unlikely the US could seize Greenland by force, global warming and the rising importance of Arctic shipping routes may elevate the island's strategic value.

"With Trump's mix of pressure and incentives, Denmark may be compelled to grant Greenland greater autonomy and enhance its security," Shi said. He also predicted deeper US-Greenland military and economic cooperation, alongside intensifying competition in the Arctic among the US, Europe and Russia.

This could further strain US-Europe relations. On one hand, Denmark — a NATO member and long-standing US ally — has repeatedly faced pressure from the new administration to sell territory, prompting alarm across the European continent. Such moves threaten to weaken trans-Atlantic ties and force Europe into a more reactive posture on strategic autonomy. On the other hand, the Trump administration's aggressive tactics could embolden far-right forces within Europe, amplifying internal divisions and instability.

Gao Ruidong, chief economist at China's Everbright Securities, wrote in a blog post that the current US administration's territorial provocations are likely to increase geopolitical risk for global investors. Whether the US administration attempts to acquire land through financial deals or military threats, the implications are deeply destabilizing.

"Since World War II, the borders of major sovereign nations have remained largely stable. No great power has so openly expressed an intent to occupy the territory of another," Gao said.

## Trump wants to halve State Dept budget

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump's administration wants to slash the State Department budget by about half, according to internal planning documents, a reduction that could see nearly 30 US missions shut and steep cuts to foreign aid.

The proposed cuts of nearly \$30 billion in fiscal 2026 are outlined in a so-called Passback, the response by the White House budget office — the Office of Management and Budget, or OMB — to State Department funding requests for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins on Oct 1.

While the department can request revisions, one US official said the final version likely will be changed only "a tad" before it is submitted for approval to Congress, where "the chances are high" that some funds will be restored.

The internal document was first reported by the Washington Post.

As part of the plan — which is yet to be finalized — the administration is considering a recommendation to close at least 27 US missions largely in Africa and Europe, according to a separate internal memo. Ten of those missions are embassies and the rest are consulates.

According to the notes from an internal State Department meeting,



A Federal worker (right) who lost her job gets help carrying some of her belongings from her office at the US Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC, on April 1. ROBERTO SCHMIDT / AFP

the budget proposal also calls for eliminating funding to the United Nations and other major organizations, including NATO.

The deliberations come as the Trump administration and billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency pursue a rapid and massive downsizing of the federal government, cutting billions of dollars in spending and terminating thousands of employees.

The summary of the OMB Passback

reviewed by Reuters calls for a FY2026 budget for the State Department of \$28.4 billion, compared to \$54.4 billion for the current fiscal year.

The OMB document noted that the administration is closing USAID, merging some of its functions into the State Department and terminating programs that "are duplicative or inconsistent with administration priorities".

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## Katy Perry tours space with all-female crew

WASHINGTON — US pop star Katy Perry and five other women launched into space on a Blue Origin rocket and successfully returned to Earth on Monday, marking the first all-female spaceflight in more than 60 years.

The crew lifted off from West Texas at 9:31 am and traveled to the edge of space, where they experienced a brief period of weightlessness before returning to Earth in a flight lasting around 11 minutes, according to a live broadcast by Blue Origin, the space company founded by billionaire Jeff Bezos.

The spaceflight was a high-profile

success for Bezos' New Shepard launch vehicle, which has been developed for space tourism.

The six-person crew also included Bezos' fiancée Lauren Sanchez, CBS host Gayle King, former NASA rocket scientist Aisha Bowe, scientist Amanda Nguyen and film producer Kierianne Flynn.

It was the first all-female spaceflight since Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova — the first woman in space — orbited Earth during a nearly three-day solo flight in 1963.

Blue Origin does not disclose the average cost of a seat on one of its rockets. On its website, the company

says potential passengers have to pay \$150,000 in the form of a refundable deposit to start the "order process". In 2021, the company revealed the highest bid for a seat on its New Shepard spacecraft was \$28 million.

Loizos Heracleous, a professor of strategy and organization at Warwick Business School in Britain, estimates each launch of the New Shepard costs between \$1 and \$3 million.

"It will take a long long time before space tourism can be a financially sustainable business available to the public at large," Heracleous said.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

## US tariffs prompt Latin American nations to push for diversification

By YANG GAO in Toronto  
gaoyang@chinadailyusa.com

As the United States moves ahead with global tariffs, experts say that growing economic uncertainty is moving Latin American nations to renew their efforts to reduce reliance on Washington.

Welber Barral, a former foreign trade secretary of Brazil, noted that the recent US tariffs move may prompt significant adjustments among Latin America's key trading partners.

"What's happening now isn't new. Trump has followed this approach for years," Barral told China Daily.

He showed concern that the measures' full impact on international trade remains unclear, despite their predictable nature.

"I don't think Trump fully understands the impacts on international trade — all the negative consequences," he said.

Latin American leaders gathered in Tegucigalpa on April 9 for the ninth summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), where 11 heads of state criticized US tariffs and migration restrictions.

"Trade wars have no winners," said Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, highlighting that "arbitrary tariffs destabilize the international economy and raise prices."

He added that the region's "autonomy is in jeopardy" due to "attempts to restore former hegemonies."

CELAC's incoming chair, Colombian President Gustavo Petro, called for stronger regional coordination. "We must decide whether we help each other or retreat into loneliness," he said.

Focusing on Latin America, Barral provided a nuanced assessment of tariff effects on exports from countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Peru.

"We export a variety of products to the United States," he said. Using Brazil as an example, he pointed out that "one-third of Brazilian exports are not affected with products like oil, certain pharmaceuticals and lumber exempt under the executive act's annex.

Yet sectors reliant on raw materials face harsher terms. "For this sector we have a problem because 25 percent is too high," Barral said regarding exports of materials like iron and metals that are critical to US manufacturing.

He noted that while some Brazilian exports would continue despite the tariff, the higher rates "are going to create more pressure upon Trump to review the tariffs."

Barral also said that mounting US pressure is prompting Latin American countries to diversify their export markets.

"Everybody, especially those that export a lot to the United States, is going to look for alternatives," he said, hinting at a strategic pivot away from a US-dominated market.

Barral highlighted the role of China in regional trade. "China is investing in Latin America," he said.

As of early 2025, 21 out of 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries had joined China's Belt and Road Initiative, according to a report by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

The same report also noted that China has become the top trading partner of major South American countries, including Brazil, Peru and Chile.

"China plays a significant role in Latin America," Barral said. "I talked to some Latin Americans here in Brasilia, and there's a lot of talk regarding the recent China-CELAC Forum."

He added that "the relevance of this moment for the bilateral relationship between China and Latin America is not lost on regional leaders."

On the shifting trade landscape, Barral concluded, "In this situation, the barriers the US is creating offer a very good opportunity to promote other agreements."

He emphasized that rising tariffs may ultimately catalyze deeper intra-regional partnerships and enhance Latin America's collective bargaining power on the global stage.

Barral also acknowledged that US policy remains unpredictable. "Of course, you can never predict what Trump is thinking and what is going to do," he said.

Juan Carlos Baker, former Mexican

vice-minister for foreign trade, says Mexico must brace for economic uncertainty and prepare to push back if necessary.

"The US tariff policy really is to rewrite the rules for international trade and to change the narrative," he told China Daily.

"The announcement reflects a shift toward a much more unilateral and transactional approach to trade," Baker said, referring to US President Donald Trump's push for across-the-board tariffs.

"It's ironic that it was the US who helped build a rules-based global trade system, and now it's openly questioning its core principles," he said.

Although Trump has suspended the tariffs for 90 days, Baker noted that a 25 percent tariff on auto imports is still casting long shadows across North America's integrated supply chains.

Baker argued that such measures, if sustained, could shake investor confidence and destabilize key Mexican industries.

"Mexico risks losing its relative advantage in key sectors like autos, steel and electronics," he said. "The uncertainty also complicates investment decisions and may reduce Mexico's attractiveness in the eyes of long-term investors."

Baker said that while Mexico remains committed to dialogue, it is not without options.

"President Sheinbaum has stated that we privilege conversation and dialogue, but she has not ruled out the use of other mechanisms — dispute resolution and perhaps even tariff retaliation," he said.

That flexibility marks a subtle but important shift. "Retaliation is not off the table, it's just not the first tool we reach for," he said.

Responding to suggestions that US tariffs could drive companies to relocate manufacturing from Mexico to the US, Baker was blunt. "I am very skeptical of that."

"Relocating entire production networks is costly, complex and time-consuming," he said. "Tariffs can change cost structures, but they don't erase the fundamental logic of North American value chains."

# BUSINESS

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

## Guangzhou offers new subsidies to boost spending

By ZHENG CAIXIONG  
in Guangzhou  
zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, has put in place trade-in subsidies for compatriots from Taiwan and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions as well as foreign nationals, in order to further spur and expand consumption.

The move also aims to help the large number of merchants and business representatives from outside the mainland who attend the 137th China Import and Export Fair, enhance their shopping experiences as well as fully sense the charm of the southern metropolis, which is an international consumption center.

The trade fair, the largest such event in the country, opened in the city on Tuesday and will last until May 5. It is expected to attract a large number of overseas merchants and business people in the following weeks.

More than 253,000 offshore buyers and business representatives from 214 countries and regions attended the previous fair, commonly known as Canton Fair, which was held in the city in October.

According to the guidelines for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan compatriots and foreigners participating in the Guangzhou 2025 consumer goods trade in program, the trade-in subsidies are subject to a total amount limit, and subsidy eligibility is on a first-come, first-served basis until fully utilized.

Huang Fei, head of the department of circulation business development at the Guangzhou Bureau of Commerce, said the launch of the guidelines is expected to provide more affordable, convenient and green consumption choices for overseas merchants and business people.

"To this end, the bureau will continue to optimize service processes, increase publicity efforts and continuously expand the scope of policy benefits, allowing more consumers to experience the openness and inclusiveness of Guangzhou, known as a 'millennium commercial capital', in the following months," Huang said.

Under the guidelines, which is effective till the end of the year, consumers are encouraged to trade in old for new from vehicles, mobile phones, computers, smartwatches, home appliances digital products and a related wide range of products, he said.

All compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan and foreign nationals who hold valid passports, permanent residence identity cards and related travel documents in the city are qualified to apply for and enjoy the trade-in subsidies if they have a local mobile phone with the WeChat payment wallet and a bank account, he said.

The subsidies will reach up to 20,000 yuan (\$2,816) if the consumers trade in their old vehicle for a new energy car, and 2,000 yuan, or 20 percent of the prices, for a household appliance, according to the guidelines. Each person can utilize the trade-in subsidies to purchase a maximum of three air conditioners.

## Live wire work



Maintenance staff members from State Grid Changzhou Power Supply Co use live-line working methods to install a new intelligent pole-mounted switch to the 10-kilovolt Heke Line in Jiangsu province on Monday, ushering in remote control in fault detection and raising the automation level of power distribution.

XIA BING / FOR CHINA DAILY

## HK bourse shines as US-listed Chinese firms may return home

By OSWALD CHAN in Hong Kong  
oswald@chinadailyhk.com

Financial analysts say the anticipated return of an unknown number mainland companies to the Hong Kong capital market for listings will enhance the city's capital-raising role and will further propel trading volume of the city's stock exchange.

"We note that the capital raising of American Depository Receipts has diminished in recent years while Hong Kong's role has increased. Furthermore, the level of trading volume in Hong Kong has also picked up materially in recent periods with the velocity almost on par with the United States," said James Wang, head of China Strategy at UBS Investment Bank Research.

Wang expects share prices of such US-listed Chinese stocks without dual listings — with higher gearing levels, negative cash flows and smaller market caps — will be most impacted by the delisting tendency.

Hong Kong Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said on Sunday that he has instructed Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Ltd and the Securities and Futures Commission to prepare and ensure that "Hong Kong must be the preferred listing destination" of overseas-listed Chinese mainland firms seeking to return.

He added that Hong Kong has now established a regulatory framework to facilitate dual listings or secondary listings of companies listed overseas in Hong Kong.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent earlier indicated the possibility for US-listed Chinese ADRs to be delisted as a part of the conditions for trade negotiations.

A China ADR is a negotiable certificate issued by a US bank that represents securities issued by a Chinese company and is traded in US financial markets, providing US investors access to investing in Chinese companies.

Wang stressed that a delisting from the US capital market would lead to reduced Chinese enterprises' access to the deeper capital pool in the US market, lower trading volume, and potentially lower valuation multiples due to diminishment of the investor base and lower liquidity.

US investment bank Goldman Sachs said that if relevant US-listed Chinese mainland companies can pursue a dual primary listing or secondary listing in Hong Kong, the potential listing prospects in Hong Kong may catalyze a re-rating of such mainland companies.

The investment bank estimates that 27 US-listed Chinese mainland companies with a total market value of \$184 billion will be eligible for dual primary listings or secondary listings in Hong Kong.

If US-listed Chinese shares return to the Hong Kong equity market for dual or secondary listings, Morgan Stanley said, the Hong Kong bourse can make up for the trading volume lost in the US market over the long run, and larger companies in particular are expected to meet the conditions for inclusion in the Shanghai-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Stock Connect.

It said that 80 percent of the market value of Chinese ADRs have already been dual-listed in Hong Kong.

But Morgan Stanley warned that delisting will represent a significant escalation of Sino-US geopolitics, which will be accompanied by an increase in risk premium and pressure on valuations.

Global auditing advisory firms Deloitte and KPMG say Hong Kong's IPO market is likely poised to rebound this year, as more A-share issuers, leading mainland companies, Middle East and ASEAN companies — as well as US-listed mainland companies — are expected to list in Hong Kong.

This is attributable to the enhancements in listing application procedures for A-share issuers, mainland authorities' support for leading mainland enterprises to list in Hong Kong and heightened geopolitical tensions.

On Tuesday, the Hong Kong bourse's benchmark Hang Seng Index edged up 0.23 percent to finish at 21466 whereas Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing — the operator of Hong Kong stock exchange — dipped 1.67 percent to close at HK\$328.4 (\$42.1) per share.

Buoyed by expectations that US-listed mainland stocks may return to Hong Kong for listing, HKEX's share price soared 6.9 percent on Monday.

## EXPO

# Giant domestic mkt hedge against tariffs

Government to help guide exporters to find more business opportunities

By ZHU WENQIAN in Haikou  
zhuwenqian@chinadaily.com.cn

As the complexity, severity and uncertainty of the external environment continue to intensify, China's foreign trade has been seeing certain pressure, and the government will help guide the nation's exporters to find more business opportunities in the super large-scale domestic market, a senior official said.

Sheng Qiuping, vice-minister of commerce, made the remarks during the ongoing fifth China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan province, which will conclude on Friday.

China has been the largest country in terms of merchandise trade for eight consecutive years. Last year, the country's foreign trade business value topped 4.3 trillion yuan (\$588.2 billion) for the first time, up 5 percent year-on-year, said the General Administration of Customs.

Amid tariff increases by the United States and growing economic fragmentation worldwide, the global industrial chain has been impacted, and increasing duties place significant pressure on China's foreign trade sector.

"We will guide local governments, business associations and e-commerce platforms to help China's foreign trade companies expand their domestic market by utilizing the advantage of the country's super-large scale market and resist the impact of foreign trade pressures," Sheng said.

He added that the government would mainly help 10 provinces with high volume foreign trade business and consumption by expanding domestic sales channels. For instance, the government will help cultivate an integrated services platform for domestic and foreign trade, and guide enterprises to achieve more orders and stabilize operations.

China's major e-commerce platform JD said that beginning May 1, the company will invest 200 billion yuan to purchase foreign trade products for domestic sales, and establish a special section for sales of high-quality foreign trade products, relying on its self-operated model and supply chains.

For offline business, foreign trade enterprises will be guided to showcase and sell their products at pedestrian streets and commercial complexes in major cities, and the Ministry of Commerce will hold more types of promotional events in the next step.

Such an effort will help build a dual-circulation development pattern, the ministry said, meaning internal economic circulation will act as the mainstay of economic growth, while domestic and external markets will complement each other.

China wields great power when it comes to tackling trade pressure, as it has a huge domestic market with 1.4 billion potential consumers.

With the ongoing consumption upgrade trend, the country has a lot of opportunities to expand the domestic market if there are sup-

plies of high-quality, new type products that meet the needs of domestic consumers, said Peng Jianzhen, president of the China Chain Store and Franchise Association.

"Chinese retailers such as Yonghui Superstores said they welcome foreign trade companies to discuss potential cooperative deals with them. In addition, business associations that are responsible for exports and domestic sales have united together to help foreign trade companies overcome difficulties," Peng said.

As early as April last year, Hainan released a group of optimization measures to help accelerate the integration of domestic and foreign trade, and the province's government work report this year stated that it will promote the integrated development of domestic and foreign trade.

In developed countries, after average annual per capita GDP exceeds \$10,000, residents will accelerate their transition from material consumption to mid-to-high-end and personalized consumption, and China is undergoing such a transformation, said a report by CITIC Think Tank.

About 260 million Generation Z consumers — those born between 1995 and 2009 — stand as the core force driving growth of such a trend, and their purchasing power is on the rise, the report said.

"We expect a clear upward trend for goods consumption such as fragrances, jewelry, beauty supplies, luxury products and IP products. For services consumption, leisure, entertainment and wellness consumption is on the rise," said Jiang Ya, chief consumer industry analyst from CITIC Securities.



Visitors gather at the low-altitude economy display section during the ongoing fifth China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan province. LUO YUNFEI / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Low-altitude economy rising quickly

By LIU YUKUN in Haikou  
liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

China's policy support and increased capital spending are propelling its low-altitude economy to potentially lead the global market, following the trajectory set by electric vehicles, said business leaders attending the ongoing China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, Hainan province.

At the expo, industry leaders such as eHang and Autoflight have come together to showcase a range of cutting-edge products, including drones and electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft (eVTOL), as well as services such as three-dimensional traffic control systems and low-altitude flying scenario applications.

The term "low-altitude economy" typically refers to economic activities conducted within an airspace below 1,000 meters, encompassing various fields such as drone logistics, low-altitude tourism and aircraft production. The Civil Aviation Administration of China has previously forecast that the low-altitude economy could reach 3.5 trillion yuan (\$479.3 billion) by 2035.

Currently, application scenarios of eVTOLs and drones, such as transportation, logistics, agricultural protection, cultural tourism, urban management and public services, are being implemented in various regions across the country, the administration said.

Supportive policies are also in place. In March, an action plan to boost consumption, released by the State Council, mentioned the development of the low-altitude economy, emphasizing the orderly growth of low-altitude tourism, air sports and consumer-grade drones. Last year, 27 provincial-level regions in China included the low-altitude economy in their government work reports, outlining short-term development goals.

Sun Ming, senior vice-president of Autoflight, said the company is showcasing a 2-metric-ton eVTOL for the first time at the expo, presenting future aerial traffic solutions.

"We aim to attract more partners to jointly develop the low-altitude economy, discuss industry policy support and technological development, and expand commercial operation models. Hainan's unique

geographical environment and tourism advantages provide rich low-altitude flying scenarios for eVTOLs and there will be increasing demand for eVTOLs going ahead," Sun said.

Wang Zhao, COO of eHang, said: "Currently, our main customers are government and enterprises in tourism. It won't be long before individuals own aircraft, but it will take some time. We also need to consider airspace opening processes, aircraft parking and maintenance." "Our next step is to upgrade a maintenance system, allowing eVTOLs to automatically return to our hubs for charging and maintenance when not in use. This network establishment will facilitate broader coverage of such aircraft," Wang said.

"Although the development of the low-altitude economy is still at an early stage, and the current application scenarios mainly focus on scenic spots, it can be used for intracity or intercity transportation in the future. Aircraft can enter urban areas, rooftops, residential areas, bus depots, schools and factories, and require minimal taking off areas," he said.

## Briefly

### Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 14 pips to 7.2096 against the US dollar on Tuesday, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trade System. In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day. The central parity rate of the yuan against the US dol-

lar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

### Bank issues bonds to support foreign trade

The Export-Import Bank of China (China EximBank) said it has issued two themed financial bonds totaling 12 billion yuan (\$1.66 billion) in the interbank bond market. The bonds, issued last Thursday and Friday, aim

to facilitate the quality and efficiency improvements of China's foreign trade and support connectivity in foreign trade-related infrastructure, according to the bank. Issued in one-year and 10-year maturities, the bonds attracted broad participation from domestic and international institutional investors, said the bank, noting that funds raised will specifically target foreign trade credit loans.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

# BUSINESS

## New rail-sea route boosts auto exports to Middle East

NANNING—A “ro-ro” (roll-on/roll-off) vessel recently departed from South China’s Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, marking the launch of the first such route from Beibu Gulf Port, and its first direct maritime link with Dubai’s Jebel Ali Port.

Carrying 1,500 vehicles, the ship is expected to reach the Middle East’s largest port after a voyage of approximately 18 days.

The 4,700-nautical-mile route links growing auto manufacturing hubs in western China with the Middle East’s thriving auto market, cutting transit times by four to 10 days and boosting logistics efficiency by 10 to 15 percent compared to traditional routes.

The shipment included 200 vehicles from Chongqing Changan Automobile. Nestled in a mountainous inland region, Chongqing has long faced logistical challenges, with auto exports traditionally dependent on river transport along the Yangtze River or lengthy road journeys to the east coast, both marked by lengthy transit times and multiple loading and unloading procedures.

Today, the rail-sea intermodal transportation model offers enterprises in western China a more streamlined and efficient pathway for exports.

Chen Weijie, general manager of the logistics center at Changan Auto, said he has seen a marked improvement in transportation processes and efficiency.

After rolling off the production line, the vehicles are transported to a local freight station by designated trucks, then loaded onto car-carrying freight trains equipped with reinforced protective structures to prevent damage during transit.

Upon arrival at the ro-ro terminal, the vehicles are driven directly from the trains onto the ship via ramps, eliminating the need for

intermediate loading and unloading steps.

“This innovative approach cuts transportation time and reduces logistics costs for companies by almost 10 percent,” said Chen, adding that the improved logistics have bolstered the company’s confidence in market growth in the Middle East. This route is part of the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a key logistics network connecting China’s western regions to global markets. As of early March, the trade corridor’s cargo services connected 158 locations across 73 domestic cities and accessed 556 ports in 127 countries and regions.

“Rail-sea intermodal transport provides a more competitive logistics route for western China’s automakers to access the Middle East, Southeast Asia and other markets,” said Ma Zhengguo, vice-chairman and general manager of Beibu Gulf Port Group.

“We will strengthen cooperation with automakers, logistics companies and the maritime sector to enhance export efficiency and provide tailored, end-to-end logistics services for companies,” Ma said.

Chinese autos have been well-received in the Middle East in recent years. Customs data show that about 420,000 passenger vehicles were shipped to the Middle East in the first half of 2024, making it China’s largest export market over the period.

“Seeing the market opportunities, our logistics company is enhancing export services and expects further growth this year. As routes from the Beibu Gulf to the Middle East become more frequent, shipments from central and western China will become more efficient and accessible,” said Li Dunfeng, assistant to the general manager of Changan Minsheng APLL Logistics Co Ltd.

XINHUA

## Vital conduit



The construction of the Haitai Yangtze River Tunnel in Jiangsu province is progressing smoothly, with many State builders joining forces to build the world’s longest underwater highway TBM tunnel. Notably, China Railway 24th Bureau Group Corp reported that its workers had installed 190 precast concrete girders for a cross-highway bridge as of Sunday, a milestone enabling accelerated deck construction. The tunnel is a key project to forge a major trans-river road link under China’s longest river. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Royal Philips CEO ‘excited’ about strength, outlook of Chinese economy

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
ouyangshijia@chinadaily.com.cn

Dutch multinational health technology company Royal Philips is doubling down on its long-term commitment to China, banking on the country’s accelerating shift toward smart, digital and sustainable healthcare under the Health China 2030 blueprint and its high-quality development agenda.

“The China market is very important for Philips. It’s around 10 percent of our total global revenue,” Roy Jakobs, CEO of Royal Philips, said during a recent interview with China Daily. “We are very excited about the strength and the outlook of the Chinese economy.”

Despite ongoing global uncertainties and rising geopolitical tensions, Philips remains optimistic about China’s economic prospects — betting on opportunities arising from China’s aging population, continued healthcare reform and rapidly advancing digital ecosystem to drive sustainable business growth.

Jakobs noted signs of stabilization in the economy, supported by both consumer activity and healthcare demand.

“We see consumer confidence and consumer spending rising, which is really encouraging,” he said. “On the

healthcare side, we see a strong fundamental need for supporting patients and the growing elderly population in China. We see healthy fundamentals in China. And we believe this will strengthen now and in the years to come.”

Having established its first joint venture in China four decades ago, Philips has embedded local research and development and innovation into its China strategy. The company currently operates five innovation hubs in the country, with approximately 90 percent of its products sold in China being locally manufactured and delivered.

“We see China as a source of inspiration for innovation and for talent, and it’s an ecosystem that we leverage for the benefit of global delivery of products and services,” Jakobs added.

“There are around 10 million engineering talents graduating in China every year. China’s strong clinical base — which includes strong and large-scale hospitals that serve numerous patients — provides rich opportunities to accumulate research interests, experience and data. And China’s strong supply chain enables innovation and competitive product development.”

So far, the company has more than 7,000 patents in China, and the



Visitors observe an informational display showcasing virtual power plants during the 13th Energy Storage International Summit and Exhibition 2025 in Beijing on Friday. DU JIANPO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Nation charts development path for VPPs to secure power supply

### New guidelines in place to boost grid flexibility, clean energy integration

By ZHENG XIN  
zhengxin@chinadaily.com.cn

China is banking on virtual power plants (VPPs) as a crucial tool to enhance its power grid’s flexibility and accelerate the integration of renewable energy sources, according to new policy guidelines.

As the world’s largest market for low-carbon energy investment, China is aggressively pursuing VPPs to bolster its grid flexibility and renewable energy integration, setting ambitious targets to reach 20 gigawatts of virtual power plant capacity by 2027 and 50 GW by 2030, according to new guidelines.

The directives, jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Energy Administration, highlight the increasing importance of VPPs in China’s evolving power system and electricity market.

A virtual power plant is a network of decentralized energy resources that are controlled via software to function as a single, flexible power source. It allows these dispersed resources to operate in a way that mimics the behavior of a traditional power plant,

providing electricity to the grid or responding to changes in demand.

With advanced technology used to manage aggregations of distributed energy resources like renewables, storage and controllable loads, VPPs are seen as crucial for enhancing power supply security, facilitating renewable energy consumption and improving electricity market mechanisms, according to the NEA.

By fully leveraging the regulatory potential of virtual power plants, the operational costs are significantly reduced, it said.

The virtual power plant market in China, according to estimates by Huatai Securities, is projected to reach 10.2 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) this year and further grow to over 100 billion yuan by 2030. These developments offer new opportunities for the diversified growth of private enterprises in the new energy sector, it said.

According to Deng Simeng, a senior analyst for renewables and power research at global consultancy Rystad Energy, around 80 percent of China’s power consumption and generation will be transacted through competitive markets this year, significantly up from the 61 percent traded in 2024.

While regions like Guangdong, Shandong and Shanxi provinces have seen initial VPP development, the NEA acknowledged the sector is still nascent nationwide.

Challenges remain in establishing unified definitions, management frameworks, market mechanisms and standards. The new guidelines aim to address these issues, promoting localized development and improved operational management for VPPs, it said.

China is also encouraging diverse business models for VPPs, urging their participation in electricity markets and demand response programs to generate revenue. Beyond grid services, VPP operators are encouraged to explore value-added services such as energy efficiency consulting, data analytics, and carbon trading support, expanding their revenue streams.

Industry experts believe that the development of VPPs is a key measure to encourage private sector investment in the energy sector.

VPPs, boasting lower capital requirements and flexible operations compared to traditional power plants, are well-suited for private companies, said Lin Boqiang, head of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University.

Shenzhen in Guangdong, among other regions, already sees private

firms as major players in VPP investment and operation, and the guidelines explicitly support further private sector engagement.

Private companies are also actively laying out plans to develop VPPs across the country.

Zhu Gongshan, chairman of GCL (Group) Holdings Co Ltd, China’s largest private power conglomerate, said the company is very optimistic about the virtual power plant market in China.

A more market-driven energy sector could lead to increased efficiency in the allocation of resources, as the government has been stepping up efforts to deepen market-oriented price reforms of new energies while promoting the integration of new energy sources like wind and solar power into the electricity market, he said.

With a population exceeding 1.4 billion, China’s vast market presents significant energy demand. New national policies promoting the full integration of new energy into the market, coupled with improving electricity market trading mechanisms, are opening up substantial opportunities for new energy companies in areas such as ancillary services and virtual power plants, said Zhu.

The company predicts over 50 percent growth in its VPP business this year.



Visitors gather at Philips’ booth during an expo in Shanghai in March. CHEN YUYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

in China. “We keep expanding and seeking how we can deliver the best products and services to the Chinese market from Suzhou, Jiangsu province, which is a very important site for us to develop the latest hardware,” he said.

According to the Government Work Report, China will strive to develop new quality productive forces in light of local conditions and accelerate the development of a modernized industrial system.

Li Chao, chief economist at Zhe-

shang Securities, said developing new quality productive forces will be key to boosting China’s long-term growth potential, with AI and other emerging fields set for intensified development.

Jakobs said China’s push to cultivate new quality productive forces aligns with Philips’ strategy to scale up local innovation and bolster its innovation infrastructure in the country.

“The strength of the Chinese market from an innovation perspective is that the government is supporting the ecosystem,” he noted.

Looking forward, Jakobs sees a steady macroeconomic outlook and clear policy direction — particularly around innovation, sustainability, and healthcare digitization — as reasons to remain bullish on the Chinese market.

“China is a very significant country with a huge population in need of a sufficient and good healthcare system,” Jakobs said. “We need to invest in productivity to serve more patients, and deliver better and more care.”

## COMMENT

## Editorials

## Twin trade events show China will not close its doors in face of tariff attack

While the United States tries to create a new trade order that is exclusively beneficial to itself with its so-called reciprocal tariffs, more than 30,000 domestic companies and over 200,000 overseas buyers are attending the 137th China Import and Export Fair, which opened in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Tuesday. Their participation is testimony to a common desire that the global economy and international trade should be mutually beneficial.

At a time when the US administration's bullying and threats are creating increasing uncertainty, the Canton Fair, as it is commonly known, is being widely viewed as a "barometer" of China's continued commitment to opening-up and its willingness to share its development opportunities with the world.

Forty-plus years ago, when China launched its reform and opening-up policy, the event was mainly a market for foreign buyers to purchase agricultural produce, handicrafts and local specialties, and a window for the Chinese to see the outside world. Now it has become a major platform for multinational companies to access the Chinese market, and promote cooperation between foreign entities with their partners in the world's second-largest economy.

Highlighting this transformation, the event this year has for the first time set up a service robot zone, reflecting the new pulse of the industry. And other emerging industry-related exhibition zones that are catching high attention include smart-life products, smart logistics and warehousing equipment, digital factories and smart manufacturing production lines, wind energy, hydrogen energy and other new energy products, and smart travel-related technologies. Notably, the number of enterprises with titles such as national high-tech, specialized and new "little giants", and manufacturing champions in their respective niche exceeds 9,700, an increase of 20 percent over the previous event.

The fair is also promoting face-to-face inter-business, inter-company, inter-lab and inter-person exchanges in recognition of vitality and impetus that such exchanges can create. China is more than willing to provide the platform for such interactions, as it firmly believes the future belongs to those who are willing to cooperate and collaborate. It is with that belief that the country is doubling down on its efforts to promote new quality productive forces, cultivate new foreign trade momentum, and optimize its foreign trade structure, the achievements of which are vividly reflected in the new exhibits being showcased at the fair.

It is this spirit that has not only enabled the phenomenal rise of new kids on the tech-block, such as DeepSeek, but also generated an insatiable industrial and market yearning for collaboration and openness as a means to innovations. Although the protectionist policies of some countries might hinder trade temporarily, they cannot kill that desire as it is a fundamental part of human nature and social progress.

Chinese policymakers are committed to creating a world-class business environment featuring stability, predictability and transparency to facilitate cooperation and collaboration among market entities, so they can transform ideas, initiatives, plans and projects into results. So those viewing the fair as a barometer of China's openness in the wake of the US administration's tariff barrage will see it reads no change.

Another large-scale event being held at the same time that is also a strong proof of that is the Fifth China International Consumer Products Expo, which opened in Haikou from Sunday to Friday. Attracting more than 4,100 brands from around the world, the event demonstrates the scale advantages and upgrading potential of China's consumer market in multiple fields such as green, smart, health and digital consumption. In doing so, it is serving to reaffirm China's position as a vital marketplace for multinational enterprises.

China's economy is as vast as the ocean, not only because of its huge population and complete industrial system, but more importantly because of its openness to the world. Although the country still has some way to go to become the better self it aims to be in economy, trade and technology, it has never ceased its endeavors in that regard. As part of those efforts, it has been and will continue to be committed to maintaining the stability of the global industry and supply chains, and fostering a fair world trade order.

Taken together, the message sent by the two events is that openness and cooperation are the general trend, and rather than retreating into unilateralism and protectionism in the face of the US onslaught on international trade and economic partnerships, China will continue to work with other like-minded countries to defend the multilateral trading system.

## Rip-off claims hoodwinking of US public

The US administration has long accused foreign countries of taking advantage of the United States at the expense of domestic jobs and US industries. In US President Donald Trump's view, the US has received less return value and resources for what it has given the world in terms of the amount of money, trade preferences and other resources. "They're ripping us off" is his constant refrain.

It is this fabricated premise of a long-standing grievance that has been the launchpad for his administration's sweeping "Liberation Day" tariffs targeting almost all foreign imports, and which have set up a global trade war and promise to upend the decades-old global trading order.

Though the US leader hit a 90-day pause button on many of the tariffs after his radical power play resulted in US stocks volatility, bond yields surging and recession fears intensifying, his administration's haughty demolition job on the global trade system is far from over, not least because there is still a 10 percent tariff on virtually all exports to the United States. This provides leverage for the US administration to extract concessions in terms of the real trade war it is waging against China and in reshaping the bilateral relations with the US' other trade partners in favor of the US by extorting undue concessions.

One of the aims of the US administration is to use the tariffs to close, if not reverse, the trade deficits with nearly all of the US' trade partners. The preoccupation with trade deficits stems from a warped idea that they are proof that the US has been exploited by other countries. This has also made the US president and his trade advisers wrongly claim that the current rules governing global trade have put the US at a distinct disadvantage.

This is contrary to the belief of mainstream economists that a trade deficit simply means a country is importing more goods and services from a given country than it is exporting to that market, and has nothing to do with the state of a country's economic health.

While bemoaning surging deficits in the US' trade of goods with other countries, the US administration has deliberately ignored the fact that the US sells far more services than it buys from other countries, which means the US' service sector enjoys a trade surplus with almost every trading partner around the world, including those at the center of the ongoing trade war such as China and the European Union. The service sector includes retailers, software, internet and telecom providers, movie studios, as well as health care providers, law firms and accounting agencies. According to the US Commerce Department, the US' trade surplus in services rose to \$293 billion in 2024, up 5 percent from 2023, and 25 percent from 2022.

Trade in services, especially finance, legal, entertainment, and high-tech services, has become a major source of US economic strength. In 2023, US services exports were worth more than \$1 trillion, accounting for 13 percent of the global total, and they expanded a further 8 percent last year, according to the World Trade Organization. "Global trade in services... is booming. And there is a clear winner on this front: the United States," wrote Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, WTO director-general.

Moreover, Trump's claim that foreign countries steal US manufacturing jobs through unfair trade practices, and that only sweeping tariffs will help the US reverse the decades-long decline in manufacturing and create related jobs is out of step with historical realities.

This is because service sector jobs have long driven the US economy — the sector employed 57 percent of private sector nonfarm workers in 1939, when the US Labor Department started tracking US employment, and today, service sector businesses account for 84 percent of those jobs.

The modern manufacturing reality suggests that, even if US companies do reshore, the cost of labor in the US means it is more economically viable for machines to do the work than humans.

The US is not getting ripped off by anybody. The problem is the US has been living beyond its means for decades. It consumes more than it produces. It has outsourced its manufacturing and borrowed money in order to have a higher standard of living than it's entitled to based on its productivity. Rather than being "cheated", the US has been taking a free ride on the globalization train.

The US should stop whining about itself being a victim in global trade and put an end to its capricious and destructive behavior. Instead, it should commit itself to working with its trading partners to establish a fair, free and WTO-centered multilateral trading system that is in line with the times.

Luo Jie



## Opinion Line

## No room for complacency with data security in cyberattacks era

The Harbin Public Security Bureau in Northeast China's Heilongjiang province announced on Tuesday that three individuals — Kathryn A. Wilson, Robert J. Snelling, and Stephen W. Johnson, who are believed to be attached to the US National Security Agency — are wanted for their suspected role in launching cyberattacks against China during the Asian Winter Games in Harbin in February.

That the Chinese authorities could identify the suspects within two months speaks volumes about China's growing capability to defend itself in cyberspace.

The investigation attributed the cyberattacks to the NSA's Tailored Access Operations unit, a specialized division known for its sophisticated cyber espionage. To obscure their tracks, the attackers reportedly used proxy networks, purchasing IP addresses from multiple countries and leasing servers across Europe

and Asia. The precision and scale of the operation left one in little doubt about the intent behind it.

Targeting the Asian Winter Games, a major international sporting event, demonstrates that Washington's cyber aggression shows no bounds. And it is not an isolated case. The US has long leveraged its technological dominance to conduct cyber operations against not only its perceived adversaries but even its allies.

The US enjoys significant advantages in cyber warfare. With 10 of the 13 Domain Name System or DNS servers based in its territory, US intelligence agencies benefit from structural advantages in global internet governance, although their actual surveillance capabilities rely more on direct partnerships with tech companies and physical network interception. The NSA, in collaboration with the Five Eyes alliance, maintains probably the most extensive surveillance network in history. Advanced

malware, zero-day exploits, and deep integration with private tech companies further enhance its offensive capabilities. The US Cyber Command operates under a "defend forward" doctrine, which means defending with preemptive strikes.

For China, the lesson is clear: it is not enough to rely on passive defense. It has been forced to strengthen its cyber defenses. The only viable path is continuous advancement in cybersecurity, threat detection, and counter-intelligence. But this is not just China's challenge. When strategic interests are at stake, even friendly nations can be on the receiving end of cyberattacks, a lesson the US allies should make note of.

The Asian Winter Games incident is a reminder that in the digital age, no country can afford complacency. The US will continue to exploit its cyber dominance. The only question is — who will be next?

—ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

## 'Color-blind' officials paint new picture of old problem

The authorities of Sanhe, Langfang city, Hebei province, are caught up in a whirlwind these days after they enforced a sweeping ban prohibiting shop signs, advertisement boards or other public signs using the colors of black, red and blue.

The local government has instructed that the three colors be replaced with green, a color that local officials claim gives the county a more international look. So even the red cross used to identify clinics and hospitals has been changed to green.

Despite the wide complaints of the shop owners who think the authorities have gone too far with this absurd move, local officials insist they have just carried out a policy of the county.

It is reported the only "legitimate" base for the "color revolution" to promote the "green development" of the

county is a guideline on urban planning, construction and management the county issued late last year.

So the question is whether the public had been fully consulted in making the guideline, and, if not, whether the watchdog departments in the county can play their due roles to prevent a problematic guideline from being carried out by force in the face of public opposition to its preemptory implementation.

The sweeping ban on the three colors and the authorities' efforts to enforce it have gone viral on social media, triggering a heated discussion on the role of the authorities in the process of building a rule-of-law business environment.

Under mounting public pressure, the major persons in charge of the Sanhe authorities were removed from their posts for investigation on

Tuesday, according to the superior Langfang authorities.

But be they found at fault or not, the incident has exposed the old problem of effectively supervising grassroots power-holders remains unresolved, despite so many laws, regulations and rules being introduced to that effect.

Whether grassroots officials act reasonably in fulfilling their duties has a direct bearing on people's sense of gain and happiness.

As the "last mile" in the implementation of the central authorities' guidelines and policies, the performance of the officials at the county and lower levels is of vital importance to social security, stability and prosperity.

Green development is more than color, and law-based governance goes far beyond the law.

—LIYANG, CHINA DAILY

## Growth: New policies to facilitate foreign businesses

From page 1

Despite these challenges, China's economic resilience and strategic policy adaptations are poised for growth opportunities, particularly in technology and green energy sectors, with innovation expected to play a major role in driving recovery.

The strength of China's economic recovery will depend in large part on the magnitude and allocation of policy stimulus. Implementing proactive fiscal policies aimed at stimulating domestic demand and addressing challenges such as weak consumption, a struggling real estate market and local government debt will make a substantial difference in economic growth in the months ahead.

Additionally, policies aimed at attracting and retaining foreign investment are a key component, which will create a more favorable environment for foreign companies.

The two sessions had substantial discussions on strategies aimed at

strengthening China's market access for foreign investors, easing financial restrictions on foreign companies, encouraging a level playing field for foreign businesses, reducing regulatory hurdles, and improving legal protections for foreign firms.

During the two sessions, China announced that it achieved 5 percent growth last year, and for this year, the growth target continues to be around 5 percent. China's positive outlook on fiscal policy and the GDP growth target — including raising the fiscal deficit target to approximately 4 percent of GDP for 2025 — signals confidence that the country can maintain steady growth despite heightened external uncertainties. That said, I think that we'll see some moves to address concerns about managing local government debt levels by setting annual caps on bond issuance and improving debt reporting transparency. The bottom line is to ensure fiscal stability and promote consumer spending.

Contrary to some Western pundits, China's economic recovery in 2025 is

showing some promising signs in retail sales and industrial output, foreign trade, service industry growth, and the labor market. While some serious challenges remain, particularly in the local property sector, a looming trade war with the United States, and fears of a potential global economic downturn, China has shown remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of uncertainties caused by a shifting global economy. The country has reduced its dependency on US markets, encouraged non-US trade partnerships, fostered domestic consumption, and successfully nurtured homegrown high-tech and artificial intelligence innovations. China's performance thus far for the year suggests that the nation is poised for steady economic growth in 2025.

The author is a professor of Political Science at the University of Texas at San Antonio, the US. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## CHINA DAILY WORLDWIDE

Contact us at:

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

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

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

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

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

## GLOBAL VIEWS

GRZEGORZ W. KOLODKO

## Uncontainable ascent

The playbook the US used to foil Japan's economic rise will not work against China

China is attempting to maintain development momentum by changing the internal drivers of growth from a massive investment expansion to more consumption-driven growth, while increasing capital exports and pursuing various foreign direct investments. While some welcome such development because they need the capital and technology that China has at its disposal, others worry because their relative position in the global economy is weakening.



There is no straightforward analogy here, but some comparisons with the US-Japanese rivalry of the past come to mind. Although it was occupied by the United States for seven years after World War II, Japan was quickly able to put its economy on a path of rapid growth. While in the 1960s, the US' average annual rate of GDP growth was around 4.5 percent, it was as high as 10.4 percent in Japan (at this rate, income doubles in seven years). In the 1970s, the respective growth rates were around 3.2 percent and around 5.2 percent. In total, over the entire two decades, Japan's GDP grew by 347 percent, while the US' GDP grew by 113 percent. The acceleration of Japan's economic growth was the result of a policy of state interventionism, unique at the time, which some Southeast Asian countries later tried to emulate with varying degrees of success. However, the hegemonic position of US was challenged by the expansion of Japan, given the size of its economy and then still growing population. Although the two countries, lying on opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, moved closer together within the same political camp, their economic relations were tense. It would be difficult to describe them as friendly.

Peacetime had arrived and the Cold War was being fought on other dividing lines. Japan and the US became allies in the Cold War — and remained until today — but that did not stop Washington and Tokyo from waging a trade war. At that time, an adage was circulating in the corridors of power in Tokyo that trade is war. Japan wanted to win it, or, more accurately, this was a way to pay back for the humiliating defeat suffered by a generation or two earlier in the hot war. In Washington, they understandably wanted to win the war as well. A series of restrictions and protectionism were meant to slow down the growth rate of the Japanese economy, a supposed friend, but nevertheless a rival. For a long

period, this did not work, but together with other factors, over time, it has had the desired effect for the US. In relation to Japan, it is often said that two decades were wasted. From the point of view of national income, this is how it can be described. According to World Bank data at constant 2015 prices, Japan's GDP in 2023 was \$4.61 trillion, slightly larger than 20 years earlier, when it was \$4.07 trillion. The US' GDP was \$22.06 trillion in 2023 and \$14.48 trillion in 2003. In other words, while the US' GDP grew by 52.3 percent over the two-decade period, it grew by only 13.3 percent in Japan.

Something similar is currently being plotted by the US with regard to China, but this time, it is a dream that is impossible to come true. And that is for many reasons, starting with the fact that China has a population over 11 times larger than Japan's and more than four times that of the US. Yet even more important is the diversity of economic dynamics. The differences in growth rates of China and the US in the next two decades will be smaller than in the previous 20 years, but unless some extraordinary circumstances occur, the average growth rate of the Chinese economy will still be higher than that of the US economy. One of the main reasons for that trend is the relatively larger share of industrial production in China's GDP, which has consistently declined but is still more than double that of the US — the respective ratios are about 38.3 and about 17.6 percent.

There is a big game being played to rationalize globalization. Alongside security and environmental concerns, this is the question of "to be or not to be" for our civilization. China can significantly help co-shape the desired future, limiting global dangers and the risk of a major catastrophe far beyond the economic field. The world is likely to face such a catastrophe if the economy is directed back onto the neoliberal business-as-usual track, and if the escalation of a new nationalism, including — or perhaps especially — that of "America First" and "Make America Great Again" is not contained. We can only hope that neither the neoliberal nor new nationalism biases will triumph, and this is largely — as increasingly recognized — owing to China.

Of all the countries involved in globalization over the past three decades, China has been able to benefit the most through its wise and consistent policies. Importantly, it has done so not at the expense of others, but rather in positive synergy with foreign partners. This is one of the main differences between the approach to the globalization in China and the US,

which is now clearly visible during Donald Trump's second presidency. I wrote more about this in my forthcoming book *Trump 2.0: Global Disruptions and Power Shifts*. Globalization is a long-term process of liberalization and integration of previously somewhat isolated national economies into an interdependent global market for goods, capital and technology. Particularly in technology transfer, China has benefited from globalization, first by absorbing a lot of it from more developed countries, but also in recent years by transferring a lot of capital and technology to others, helping poorer economies to accelerate their development.

Who is bothered by this? Why is it that, instead of praising China for its contribution to the development not only of its own economy, but also for stimulating the development of the world economy and helping other countries, we hear critical, even condemnatory opinions about Chinese development? Such criticisms often arise from misunderstandings or misplaced concerns, and they can sometimes provoke unnecessary jealousy, especially on the other side of the oceans — the Atlantic, looking from Europe, and the Pacific, looking from Asia. Some voices argue that China has hegemonic tendencies and its economic expansion as well as political and diplomatic activities are supposed to serve them, however, these views overlook China's consistent commitment to promoting mutual respect and win-win cooperation in international relations, emphasizing on open and inclusive development.

Some voices claim that it is the US' "values, however imperfectly they are realized, that still attract people from all across the planet, in a way that Chinese communism does not". During Trump's second presidency, they will attract less and less. As a result of the pro-development nature of the Belt and Road Initiative, and particularly the positive example set by the achievements of the Chinese way out of poverty, US values are losing their attractiveness in the eyes of the less economically advanced countries, while China's values are becoming increasingly appealing.

*The author is director of TIGER — Transformation, Integration and Globalization Economic Research — at Kozminski University in Warsaw, former deputy prime minister and minister of finance of Poland, and a distinguished professor at the Belt and Road School at Beijing Normal University. 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.*



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

ZHANG YUN

## Bandung continues to show the way

Despite international relations being in a state of uncertainty and chaos, the evolution of security practices in the Global South gives hope

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, the first international meeting of leaders from Asian and African nations. It also marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the establishment of the United Nations. However, the



Ukraine crisis and the Gaza conflict have once again placed global peace at a crossroads. This year is also the 30th anniversary of the founding of the World Trade Organization, while the Donald Trump administration's trade war with the rest of the world has undermined the fundamental principles of free trade, bringing global prosperity to yet another historical crossroads.

Looking back, international relations were similarly fraught with risks and uncertainties 70 years ago. In February 1955, the United States, borrowing the NATO model, established the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in the Asian region and in the same year created a military alliance in the Middle East called the Baghdad Pact. The Cold War and ideological blocs cast a huge shadow over the Asia-Pacific and African regions. The Bandung Conference became a milestone for newly independent nations to raise their collective voice in the post-colonial era.

Seventy years later, in the face of the current chaotic state of international relations, we must approach the meaning of the Bandung Conference from historical and strategic perspectives, especially within the context of the Global South's collective rise, an unprecedented development in over a century. Understanding the Bandung Conference in this light allows us to recognize it as the starting point for the non-Western world's exploration of global peace, and it also serves as the historical and intellectual foundation for the Global South security concept.

First, the Bandung Conference laid down the principle of respecting the diversity of international actors, establishing that only by constructing truly equal and inclusive new norms can sustainable international relations be ensured. After the Industrial Revolution, Western countries expanded globally, and defined their governance models as standards for judging international relations. Western nations established treaties based on the principle of sovereign equality. Meanwhile, countries that did not meet Western standards in governance structures were forced into

unequal treaties. For regions deemed "uncivilized", colonization was justified as a "civilizing mission". At that time, international society was limited to the "civilized" Western nations. After World War II, the ideological divisions of the Cold War continued this denial of international diversity, maintaining the basic structure of a hierarchical international system.

Against such a backdrop, the Bandung Conference helped set new standards and procedures for international relations. One of the major highlights of the Bandung Conference was the invitation extended to the newly established People's Republic of China, sending a clear signal that political systems and ideologies should not be barriers to the development of normal relations and international cooperation between nations on an equal footing. For decades, whether through the practices of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the idea of equal, inclusive and cooperative security has always been upheld. China's Global Security Initiative clearly states that "all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community". The initiative advocates the adherence to sovereignty, independence and equality. History has shown that inequality and injustice are key sources of imbalance in international relations and armed conflicts, as evidenced by the Ukraine crisis and the Gaza conflict.

Second, the Bandung Conference provided a basic framework for the relationship between regional nations and outside powers, offering a warning about the dangers of military alliances formed by outside powers, which could potentially escalate regional security issues. A key background to the Bandung Conference was the military alliances of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization established by the US. Advocates of the conference, such as then-Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, viewed the US-led Southeast Asia Treaty Organization as dangerous to peace. However, countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan, which participated in the Bandung Conference, were also members of the military alliances.

Faced with the risk of division over the issue of military alliances, the Bandung Conference adopted a principled and flexible approach. The fifth of the Bandung Principles outlined in the Bandung Conference's declaration underscored "respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively,

in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations", and the legitimacy of exercising this right under the framework of the UN is acknowledged. This means that the conference did not deny the right of attending countries to participate in military alliances for collective self-defense. However, the sixth principle clarified: "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers, abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries".

Over time, we have seen some countries withdraw from alliances, while others have reduced their dependence on alliances by establishing independent regional organizations. Thailand, for example, has retained its military alliance with the US but actively participated in the establishment of ASEAN, finding a new international identity within the organization. ASEAN has consistently refused to become a collective defense military group, and it can be said that ASEAN has successfully inherited the spirit of the Bandung Conference. Similarly, the SCO has adhered to the principle of "partnership over alliance" from the outset, and its military exercises focus not on third countries, but on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism. China's Global Security Initiative clearly emphasizes the importance of respecting the legitimate security concerns of all countries, emphasizing that humanity is an indivisible security community, and one country's security should not come at the expense of others'. The history of security practices in the Global South demonstrates that the rejection of military alliances based on imagined enemies and deterrence has led to the establishment of a common regional home built on dialogue and negotiation to resolve security disputes. In fact, military alliances, exemplified by NATO, are not universal security solutions but rather exceptions.

At present, international relations are in a state of great uncertainty and chaos. However, based on the evolution of the security practices and ideas in the Global South, we are confident in the future of global security. This is the greatest significance of commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Bandung Conference.

*The author is a professor at the School of International Studies at Nanjing University. 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.*



JIN DING / CHINA DAILY

## Z WEEKLY

All about Gen Z

## Z WEEKLY

## Social Media Digest

## Fleeting companions

Instead of the usual image of cats curled up on laps, some young people in China are choosing crabs, praying mantises, and hamsters as pets.

Referred to as "short-lived pets" by netizens due to their brief life spans and minimal care requirements, these creatures resonate with busy urbanites seeking companionship without the time and energy demands of traditional pets like cats and dogs.

Despite their simplicity, these low-maintenance companions offer fleeting yet meaningful connections, providing a gentle escape from monotony and a source of tranquility in daily life.

"When we feel lonely, we may resort to impulsive spending. But caring for a short-lived pet offers a more soothing remedy for solitude," a netizen told Sanlian Life Weekly, a media outlet in China.

Beyond addressing feelings of isolation, adopting short-lived pets also encourages a more mindful approach to life. "One might gradually come to accept that change is a natural part of life, or recognize that some things unfold at their own pace without the need for interference," another netizen shared.

While these pets may only be around for a short time, that doesn't stop people from forming real connections with them. For many, it's less about long-term commitment and more about enjoying the moment.



Low-maintenance pets like hamsters have become popular among young people in China. vcg

## AI-poured art

Latte art, a cherished pastime among young enthusiasts yet challenging to master, is undergoing a technological makeover.

No longer limited to the steady hand of a skilled barista, robots are now bringing new precision and flair to this creative craft — transforming steamed milk into intricate swan patterns, personalized corporate logos, and culturally inspired designs like Teracotta Warrior portraits.

This innovation took center stage at the fifth China International Consumer Products Expo in Haikou, capital of South China's Hainan province, where AI-powered coffee machines captivated attendees by grinding beans, brewing, and pouring with remarkable accuracy.

Through the use of high-precision robotic arms and motion-capture technology, consumers could indulge in a customized cup of coffee with varying temperatures, selecting flavors through a touch screen interface within two minutes. This entire process operated without the need for human intervention.

This technological advancement transcends the realm of coffee craftsmanship. The applications for collaborative robots are expanding to include bartending, ice cream production, and noodle-making robots. This not only highlights the rapid progress of China's robotics technology but also unveils the limitless possibilities of intelligent robots seamlessly integrating into daily life.

"This synergy optimizes both productivity and workforce potential," said Han Yongguang, president of Aubo, a Beijing-based robotics company, in an interview with CCTV. "Let humans focus on what they excel at — creativity and service — while robots handle precision tasks."

GUO JIATONG



Robots can now create latte art with impressive precision. vcg

## Under the blossoms, a village blooms

Once facing rural decline, Xinghua village in Hubei province now thrives through agritourism, e-commerce, and community-driven ecological reform.



Top: Tourists enjoy a picnic and take a stroll through the apricot orchards in Xinghua village, Danjiangkou, Hubei province. LI SHUANGXI / FOR CHINA DAILY  
Above left: Wei Mingjun showcases his kiwi fruit harvest. Above right: A drone view of Xinghua village. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By GUO JIATONG  
and LIU KUN in Wuhan

Chen Meimei, a 26-year-old from Shiyuan, Hubei province, recently spent a weekend in Xinghua village in Danjiangkou, less than two hours away. She arrived just in time for the village's annual "Three Blossoms Festival", which celebrates the blooming of apricot, peach, and rape flowers — and the experience was unlike any she'd had before.

"All the orchards I'd visited in the past only allowed daytime tours, but Xinghua village offered nighttime strolls through the blossoms," she said. "The gentle evening breeze carried the fragrance of the flowers, which looked even more beautiful under the starlight."

Chen also stayed in one of the village's lodges nestled in the middle of an apricot orchard. "I got to wake up to a sea of blossoms right outside my window," she said. "It was so refreshing."

Chen was one of more than 100,000 tourists who visited the village during this year's festival, which began on March 15, according to Wei Mingjun, a 30-year-old local entrepreneur.

Wei runs an e-commerce company focused on the village's organic apricots and kiwis. Through a mix of online and offline channels, he has steadily built the brand, generating around 150,000 yuan (\$20,595) in offline sales and another 200,000 yuan online each year.

But Xinghua village's transformation into a rural tourism destination didn't happen overnight. Spanning 12.6 square kilometers and home to 2,657 residents, it once faced challenges common to many rural communities — a steady outflow



By making videos of the flowers, we're showing potential customers the natural growth cycle of our products, creating a connection."

Wei Mingjun, an entrepreneur in Xinghua village, Danjiangkou, Hubei

of young people and poor transportation links. "The benefits of rural development through agriculture take time to show, making it difficult to attract or retain young talent with technical skills," Wei noted.

To tackle these challenges, Wei and local leaders trained village committee members in short video production and livestreaming to boost digital engagement. He also worked with online influencers to scale up sales, which resulted in larger order volumes and enabled him to negotiate lower shipping and packaging costs with logistics providers.

Wei also created a year-round sales model in collaboration with local farmers: fresh apricots in summer, dried fruit snacks in autumn, and special themed products during festival seasons. However, marketing efforts began as early as the flowering stage each spring.

"By making videos of the flowers, we're showing potential customers the natural growth cycle of our products, creating a connection," he explained. "We managed to turn the blooming

period into a story."

While entrepreneurs like Wei are driving e-commerce initiatives, the local government has also introduced supportive measures.

According to Zhang Xingxing, the 36-year-old deputy secretary of the village Party branch, one important step was transforming unused village homes and forest areas into shared assets for a homestay program.

This has generated new revenue streams, allowing the village to improve public facilities, such as modern restrooms, parking areas, and upgraded hiking paths — greatly enhancing the overall visitor experience.

## Collaborative efforts

The village is also working to attract more tourists by offering creative, hands-on activities.

For example, this year's festival — now in its ninth year — went beyond traditional flower-viewing: visitors could hike a 3-kilometer floral trail, dress in *hanfu* (traditional Chinese attire) for photo shoots, craft lacquer fans, take part in outdoor tea ceremonies, and enjoy folk performances.

"Making my own spring-themed lacquer fan with vibrant blue, green, and pink dyes was a highlight — it's a one-of-a-kind souvenir," said Chen. "I also joined the parade in *hanfu* and had beautiful photos taken. It was a truly immersive experience."

While prioritizing economic development, the village also made a strong commitment to ecological preservation. However, villagers were initially hesitant, especially when it came to sewage management reforms.

"Public participation was limited, and many villagers were wary of change," Zhang admitted. "The tradi-

tional governance model made it difficult to mobilize the community's enthusiasm."

To bridge these gaps, the village introduced a point-based rewards system that encourages residents to keep streets and public spaces clean. Weekly town hall meetings and volunteer patrols also provided new opportunities for dialogue, gradually turning skeptics into active participants.

One particularly creative solution to river pollution — caused by traditional laundry and vegetable washing practices — was to build decentralized washing stations and sewage treatment facilities.

This approach protects the Danjiangkou Reservoir while also respecting local customs, striking a thoughtful balance between tradition and sustainability.

The village's efforts have paid off. It has achieved zero direct sewage discharge and received national recognition as a model for "community co-governance, resource symbiosis, and shared benefits".

Looking ahead, Zhang said the village plans to deepen the integration of ecological protection with agritourism. Over the next five years, it aims to turn more than 800 million yuan worth of ecological assets into economic value, increasing the village's collective income by over 1 million yuan.

For tourists like Chen, Xinghua village offers more than just a scenic escape — it's a glimpse into rural revitalization in action.

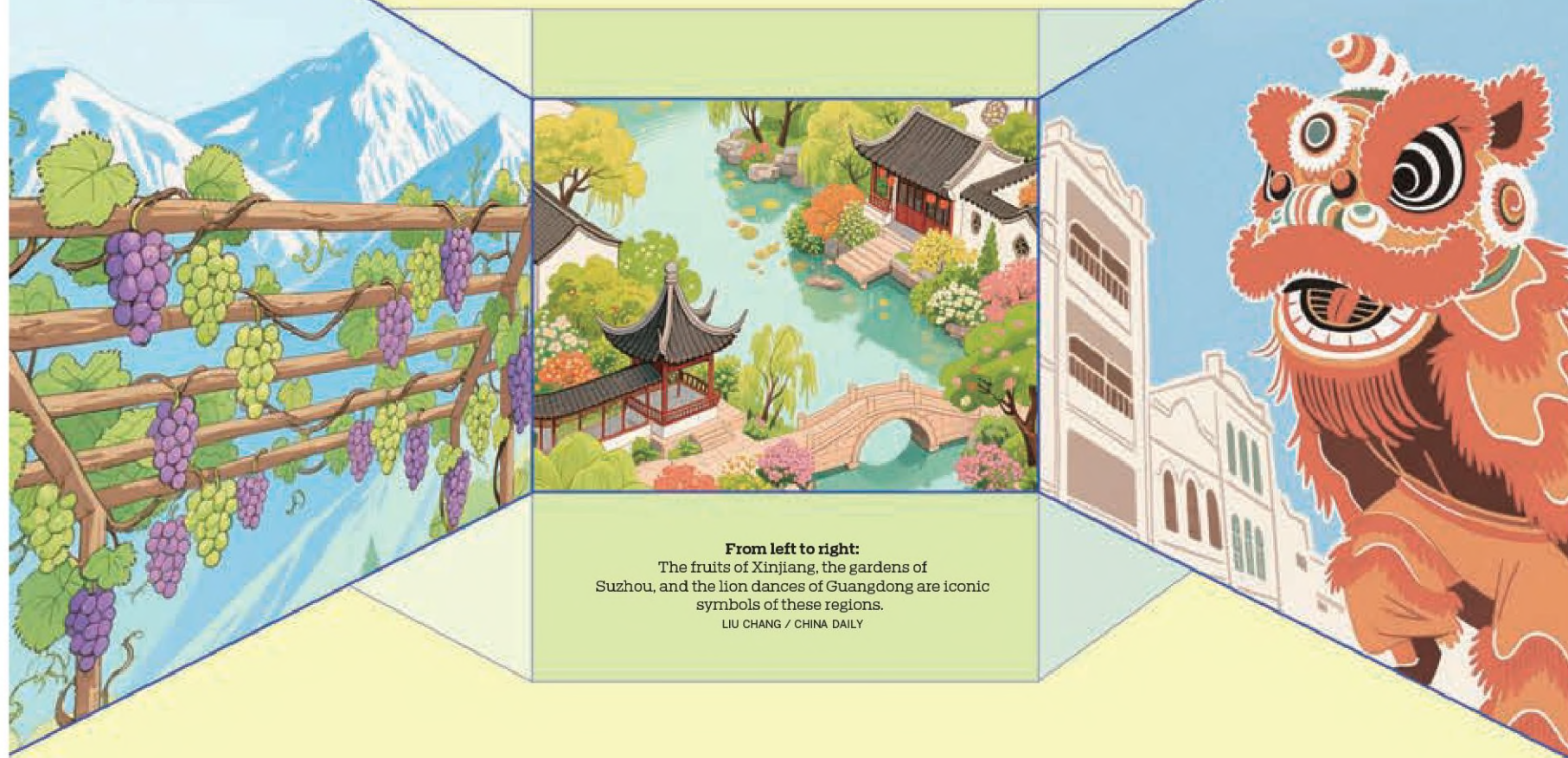
"This trip made me see the immense potential of rural development," she said. "In the future, I hope to not just visit as a tourist, but to take part in it."

Contact the writers at  
guojiatong@i21st.cn

## Z WEEKLY

## Dialects with a twist

With punchlines, parody, and plenty of personality, young Chinese are making local dialects cool again — and sparking a nationwide language revival, **Gui Qian** reports.



From left to right: The fruits of Xinjiang, the gardens of Suzhou, and the lion dances of Guangdong are iconic symbols of these regions.  
LIU CHANG / CHINA DAILY

"Has the grain been filled?" is a playful way of asking, "Have you eaten?" Similarly, "Your hands are like excavators, with the strength of bears, wolves, and leopards" means "You have a strong grip."

These expressions, marked by grammatical quirks and vivid metaphors, are known as *Nangyanwen* or "Nan Chinese."

Nan, a type of baked flatbread, is a staple food for the Uygur, Kazakh, and some other ethnic groups in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Recently, *Nangyanwen* has gone viral across major Chinese social media platforms, with many people eager to imitate and learn these distinctive expressions.

One of the key figures promoting this trend is Mardanjan Ruzi, a vlogger from Xinjiang.

Since February, he has released seven videos featuring the dialect, each garnering tens of millions of views.

He explains that *Nangyanwen* is a "hybrid" of Mandarin and Uygur ways of thinking — when Mandarin fails to precisely convey a thought, speakers borrow key elements from Uygur sentence structures, creating uniquely inverted phrases and imaginative metaphors.

"*Nangyanwen* is lively because it's deeply rooted in the daily lives of Xinjiang people," Ruzi said, recalling his early videos from 2022, when he referred to this style as "Xinjiang talk", before the term *Nangyanwen* was coined.

At the time, however, many people saw accented, locally flavored languages as "rustic" and felt embarrassed to speak them.

"Thanks to this online trend, 'Xinjiang talk' is now seen as humorous and fun, and Xinjiang people as warm and friendly. It encourages everyone to connect with us and learn our way of speaking," he said.

Ruzi believes that *Nangyanwen* has gained popularity across China because it's easy to pick up.

Unlike some dialects that require systematic study, *Nangyanwen's* appeal lies in having "a foundation in Mandarin with a regional twist". It mainly involves adjusting word order and adding distinctive vocabulary, making this form of "micro-innovation" more accessible to a wider audience.

In Ruzi's view, *Nangyanwen* acts as a bridge between pure Xinjiang dialect and Mandarin. By connecting the two, it allows Xinjiang's language and culture to be better preserved and shared.



“Thanks to this online trend, 'Xinjiang talk' is now seen as humorous and fun, and Xinjiang people as warm and friendly.”

**Mardanjan Ruzi**, a vlogger in Xinjiang

#### Laughter in dialect

Around 3,200 kilometers away in Suzhou, Jiangsu province, the local dialect is facing a preservation crisis.

Wang Yue, 24, is tackling the issue in an unconventional way — through comedic videos.

In front of the camera, she wears a traditional Suzhou-style *qipao* and plays the role of a sarcastic teacher, delivering her lines entirely in the Suzhou dialect. She also adds absurd plot twists to her skits to keep her audience engaged.

"Formal teaching would be too boring," she said.

Her creative approach comes in response to a harsh reality: according to Jiangsu TV, only 2.2 percent of teenagers in Suzhou can speak the dialect fluently — among the lowest rates nationwide.

Wang's philosophy is simple: "use interest to combat extinction". She realized that many children in Suzhou no longer have opportunities to hear or speak the dialect in daily life. But through her videos, they discover how fun it can be, which encourages them to speak it more at home, discuss her videos with friends, or mimic her tone at school.



“I don't think we should worry too much about accents; what matters more is passing the Suzhou dialect down.”

**Wang Yue**, a vlogger in Suzhou, Jiangsu

Wang said she's thrilled whenever parents send her videos of their kids imitating her in Suzhou dialect.

However, not all feedback is positive. Wang has faced what she calls "internal contempt".

"People from the old city criticize the suburban Suzhou dialect as 'pidgin', while rural residents mock the urban dialect as 'assimilated by outsiders'," she explained.

However, after reviewing many linguistic papers, Wang found that dialects are fluid, with tones and vocabulary changing over time and across regions.

"I don't think we should worry too much about accents; what matters more is passing the Suzhou dialect down," she said. "Dialects inherently have no specific standard. There is no such thing as 'authenticity'."

She also noted that instead of criticizing someone's dialect as "nonstandard", it's better to celebrate its uniqueness and focus on how to keep it alive in daily life.

Wang is not alone. In Suzhou, a group of young people is actively promoting the local dialect in creative ways.

"I've seen them use Suzhou dialect to dub movies, voice anime characters, and



“Being a vlogger in my native language and promoting our dialect and culture feels like a unique mission — it truly means a lot to me.”

**Yuan Xiaoting**, a vlogger in Shenzhen, Guangdong

even rap," Wang said. "The more fun they have with it, the more interest it sparks in others."

#### Language as identity

While many dialects are gradually disappearing, Cantonese remains vibrant and widely used.

Yuan Xiaoting, from Shenzhen in Guangdong province, is a renowned language vlogger and educator who has been actively contributing to its preservation.

Yuan graduated with a degree in Spanish, won national English speaking competition awards, and worked as a translator in Latin America. Now, her focus has shifted to her native dialect — teaching Cantonese online.

According to Yuan, efforts to promote Cantonese have made steady progress in recent years.

"A few years ago, primary and secondary schools in Guangzhou and Shenzhen began incorporating Cantonese into their curricula. The Guangdong Provincial Language and Writing Committee has also taken major steps to preserve Cantonese materials," she explained. "We also owe a lot to Hong Kong's entertainment industry

— its movies, TV dramas, music, and bands have helped transmit Cantonese across generations."

Three years ago, Yuan casually uploaded a video of herself singing a Cantonese adaptation of a popular song. To her surprise, she gained two million followers overnight. This experience made her realize the widespread interest in Cantonese.

"It felt like I had suddenly discovered my purpose, and I knew I could do more to promote the language," she recalled.

Yuan began creating a series of short videos to showcase the beauty of Cantonese.

She recited classical Chinese poetry in Cantonese, noting, "Sometimes it rhymes better than in Mandarin."

She also made videos correcting common pronunciation mistakes and exploring the cultural quirks of the region — such as why people in Guangdong avoid phone numbers with 167, or why Lululemon isn't a popular brand there.

Beyond short videos, Yuan developed a comprehensive course titled "Learn Cantonese from Scratch in 40 Days". Starting with basic grammar structures and the nuances of tones and pitches, the course gradually introduces practical exercises for everyday situations.

She even incorporates AI tools into her teaching, encouraging students to practice conversations with a virtual Cantonese-speaking partner on Doubao, a Chinese AI app.

The course currently has more than 30,000 students around the world.

In 2024, Yuan launched an international version of the course, taught entirely in English. She tailored the content to suit the thinking patterns and grammatical habits of non-native speakers, drawing on methods commonly used in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

The deeper Yuan delves into Cantonese, the more she appreciates the sense of familiarity, belonging, and pride it brings.

"Language is closely tied to our identity. When you speak Cantonese, you can almost smell the aroma of rice noodle rolls and sampan congee," she said.

"After exploring Spanish and English, I've finally found my roots in Cantonese. Being a vlogger in my native language and promoting our dialect and culture feels like a unique mission — it truly means a lot to me," she added.

Contact the writer at [guiqian@i21st.cn](mailto:guiqian@i21st.cn)

## Z WEEKLY

## A teen's quest to summit the world

At 18, Xu Zhuoyuan pushes the boundaries of mountaineering, inspiring a new generation of female adventurers.

By XU WANYANG and MENG WENJIE

In May 2023, on the eve of her summit attempt on Mount Qomolangma (Mount Everest), 16-year-old Xu Zhuoyuan encountered a fierce snowstorm during her ascent.

Howling winds and heavy snowfall relentlessly battered her team, and her oxygen mask kept freezing. Despite her stiff fingers, icy eyelashes, and frozen hair, Xu reached the summit at 5:46 am the following day, making her the youngest Chinese woman to conquer the world's highest peak from the southern slope.

"Standing on the same ridge my father climbed 16 years ago from the northern slope felt like a meeting across time and space," recalled Xu, now 18 and in her third year of high school.

In 2007, when Xu was just 1 year old, her father became the first person from Central China's Hunan province to summit Mount Qomolangma.

Growing up in a mountaineering environment, Xu's life was naturally shaped by a passion for the mountains.

"I went on my first high-altitude adventure when I was 4," Xu said. "My father noticed I didn't suffer from altitude sickness, so he gradually started taking me on more outdoor explorations."

When Xu graduated from elementary school, her father took her to Mount Qomolangma's base camp. Unfortunately, thick clouds hid the summit from view.

"I asked him, 'Did you start from here when you climbed it?' He explained that his camp back then was farther into the mountains. At that moment, I knew I wanted to reach the same place he had," Xu said. "I hoped that one day, like my father, I could stand at the highest point on Earth."

Over the years, Xu has climbed several challenging peaks across China, including Mount Siguniang and Banji Peak in Sichuan, and Muztagh Ata in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, which prepared her for the ultimate challenge — Mount Qomolangma.

"My father climbed from the north; I chose the south. This is our shared legacy," she said.

The seven-day ascent to the summit was a constant struggle against nature. Although the blizzard didn't stop her, the real test came during the descent.

"I was completely exhausted, and my legs felt beyond my control," Xu recalled. "It was pitch black — just me and my guide making our way through the vast, unforgiving mountain. In that moment, I truly felt the solitude of being human."

After summiting Mount Qomolangma, Xu didn't stop. In 2024, she climbed Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, in January, and Elbrus, Europe's highest, in August. These expeditions are part of her ambitious "7+2" plan — referring to the highest peaks on each of the seven continents, along with the North and South Poles.

Each climb brought its own challenges and

**Right:** In 2023, Xu Zhuoyuan reached the summit of Mount Qomolangma at the age of 16.  
**Below:** In 2024, Xu conquered Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe.  
PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



revelations. At the base of Mount Kilimanjaro, for example, Xu was struck by the contrast between the tropical surroundings and the snow-capped summit.



Xu Zhuoyuan

"The temperature changed drastically, shifting from tropical rainforests to cold zones," she explained. "It was also my first time experiencing rain on a snow mountain — hot, humid, and completely unfamiliar."

On the day she reached the summit — New Year's Day 2024 — she was greeted by locals singing and dancing on the mountain. In that moment, she let herself fully absorb the warmth and joy of African culture.

For Xu, the appeal of extreme sports lies in pushing personal limits and experiencing the awe of nature.

"Mountaineering relies heavily on luck — especially the weather," she said, recalling how a friend's recent attempt to climb Mount Fuji in Japan was cut short by an unexpected snowstorm.

News of climber injuries or deaths is a constant reminder of the risks. "Every climber knows they might not return. We train hard, then savor the journey," she said.

#### Mountains know no gender

Xu shared that in extreme sports like mountaineering, many stereotypes about women still exist. "Some believe women are too fragile to handle the tough, demanding nature of these sports," she said.

However, she pointed out that many women — from teenagers to those in their 40s and 50s — are active climbers. "We are proving through our actions that these biases are wrong," Xu said.

She acknowledged that, due to physiological differences, women may face certain challenges in high-altitude climbing, such as heightened altitude sickness during menstruation and lower physical endurance.

"But our mental resilience stands out. We stay calmer, more patient, and more detail-oriented in crises," she explained. "In extreme sports, women can achieve as much as men — and sometimes even excel."

Behind every mountaineer's achievements lies a physical toll. Xu noted that many climbers suffer significant damage to their knees, lower back, shoulders, and neck. Her father, for instance, has worn down the cartilage in his knees after years of climbing.

Now in her senior year of high school, Xu has decided to pursue university studies in sports injury rehabilitation. "I hope to support this beloved sport from a new perspective and help others recover so they can continue chasing their passion," she said.

Contact the writers at [xuwanyang@i21st.cn](mailto:xuwanyang@i21st.cn)



Online

Watch the video by scanning the code.

#### Overseas Report

## A taste of Lanzhou in the heart of Stockholm

By GUO JIATONG and MA JINGNA in Lanzhou

Amid the savory aroma of simmering beef broth and the rhythmic movements of a noodle-pulling chef, Ox Lan attracts a lively crowd.

But this bustling restaurant isn't hidden in a Chinese city — it's in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, where a traditional Lanzhou delicacy has unexpectedly become a culinary sensation.

Founded by Zhou Yan, a 32-year-old native of Gansu province in Northwest China, Ox Lan is more than just a business — it's a heartfelt mission to bring a centuries-old Chinese tradition to the world.

"As a devoted lover of beef hand-pulled noodles, I feel compelled to share the culinary heritage of my hometown, which dates back to 1915, with a wider audience," Zhou said.

The idea took root during a 2023 trip to Stockholm, where Zhou

noticed something missing from the city's otherwise vibrant Asian food scene: while Japanese ramen and Vietnamese pho were easy to find, authentic Chinese noodles were noticeably absent.

Zhou saw an opportunity to introduce Swedes — already familiar with broth-based dishes — to Lanzhou beef noodles.

"I've always found it curious that KFC and McDonald's are everywhere, yet there are no major Chinese fast-food chains abroad," Zhou explained. "My dream is to make Chinese fast food — like beef noodles — just as popular and widespread."

Zhou quickly began making thorough preparations. He studied local business regulations, hired an experienced noodle-pulling chef, secured a location, and eventually opened Sweden's first Lanzhou beef noodles restaurant.

The response was immediate and enthusiastic. Since opening, Ox Lan

has seen a steady stream of patrons — 70 percent of them Swedish.

"Customers are captivated by the artistry of hand-pulled noodles," Zhou said. "They're used to ramen and pho, which are often pre-made. Watching dough transform into noodles in front of them is a whole new experience."

Another unique feature that fascinates local customers is the option to choose the width of the noodles.

Zhou offers seven variations, from a delicate 0.5 mm to a robust 50 mm strand. "In Lanzhou, the most popular choice is *erxi* — the fourth thinnest — for its perfect balance of texture and bite," he said. "But in Sweden, there isn't a favorite yet. People are open to trying all seven options."

#### Cultural phenomenon

The noodle-making process has also become a hit on social media. Local influencers frequently post videos of the mesmerizing hand-

pulling process, turning the restaurant into an unexpected cultural ambassador.

"Some content creators even research Lanzhou's history and share it with their followers," Zhou noted. "It's a beautiful form of cultural exchange."

But Zhou's dedication goes beyond visual spectacle. Each bowl at Ox Lan strictly follows the traditional "five elements" of Lanzhou beef noodles: crystal-clear broth, white radish slices, chili oil, green garlic sprouts, and golden wheat noodles.

Of these, Zhou pays particular attention to the broth, which simmers for five to eight hours each day. It combines 50 kilograms of beef and marrow-rich ox bones with 20 carefully chosen spices including star anise, clove, and pepper.

To ensure consistency, Zhou personally tastes each batch every morning. He believes the soul of Lanzhou beef noodles lies in the



Zhou Yan tries his hand at pulling noodles at Ox Lan in Stockholm, Sweden, in May 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

subtle interplay of spice and noodle width.

"The spices add depth to the broth without overwhelming its natural flavor," he said. "That's what

gives the soup its clear appearance yet rich taste."

This delicate balance has captivated generations of Lanzhou residents. "Each shop in Lanzhou offers a slightly different experience," Zhou explained. "Choosing your preferred noodle width and savoring the broth is part of the joy."

According to Zhou, Lanzhou, a city of four million people, is home to an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 beef noodle shops, with roughly half the population enjoying a bowl every day. "Here, beef noodles aren't just food — they're a cultural icon," he said.

Zhou is now planning to launch more locations around the world, with three new spots already in the works in Spain. "I want to introduce Chinese fast food to more major European cities," he said. "France and Italy are next on my list."

Contact the writers at [guojiatong@i21st.cn](mailto:guojiatong@i21st.cn)