

Back to roots

Conservation drive allows rare deer to return, thrive in Tianjin
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Doubts grow as Trump hits 100-day mark
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Tradition meets trend

Beijing-themed coffee store to reinvent consumer experience
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CHINA DAILY

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Shanghai urged to be tech hub, AI incubator

President calls for launching more supportive policies and cultivating more talented people

By **MO JINGXI** in Beijing and **ZHOU WENTING** in Shanghai

President Xi Jinping has called on Shanghai to accelerate efforts to build itself into a pacesetter for scientific and technological innovation, saying that the municipality should strive to be at the forefront of artificial intelligence development and governance.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks during a fact-finding trip on Tuesday to the financial and industrial powerhouse of Shanghai.

The visit came just days after Xi, during a group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, emphasized the need for the country to promote self-reliance and strength in AI development.

During a trip to the Shanghai Foundation Model Innovation Center, an incubator for AI startups, Xi said that as AI technologies are rapidly evolving with explosive growth, it is important for Shanghai to summarize its successful experiences and expand its exploration in order to set an example for AI development and governance.

As Shanghai is establishing itself as a global hub for AI and building the world's largest AI incubator, the city's market scale of AI industry surpassed 450 billion yuan (\$61.9 billion) in 2024, according to the municipal government.

The Shanghai Foundation Model Innovation Center, established in 2023 as China's first specialized incubator for AI foundation models, has attracted more than 100 enterprises, leading to the clustering of nearly 400 enterprises in the AI sector to Shanghai's Xuhui district.

Addressing a group of young entrepreneurs who were attending a discussion session there, Xi said that AI is a young endeavor and also a pursuit of endevor.

"We are striving to build China into a great modern socialist country in all respects, and advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts. Now is the time for the younger generation to

showcase their talents and excel. The hope of realizing the great dream of the Chinese nation rests on you," he said, encouraging the young people to make contributions to Chinese modernization.

Xi also walked into an AI product experience store, where he learned about the features and sales of various innovative products and tried on a pair of smart glasses.

Noting that China has abundant data resources, a complete industrial system and a huge market and broad prospects for AI development, Xi called for efforts to roll out more supportive policies, cultivate more talented people, and strive to develop more safe, reliable and high-quality products.

Hamza Boukili, a math teacher at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Paris Elite Institute of Technology, said, "I feel fairly happy and honored to have the opportunity to exchange and share ideas with President Xi.

"He is warm, natural, without any sense of distance, making this communication extremely pleasant and unforgettable," Boukili added. Xi mentioned his visit to a technology research institute in the southern French city of Nice in the 1980s, Boukili said.

The math teacher also said that Xi told him that for Shanghai, being at the forefront of the world in terms of technological innovation is not only an opportunity, but also a responsibility.

According to Boukili, Xi emphasized that technological development should truly serve society, improve people's livelihood and achieve a safer and fairer future.

Dai Guohao, a professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University's School of Artificial Intelligence, said that President Xi's inspection of AI enterprises in Shanghai and his focus on scenarios of technological applications highlighted the importance of deep integration of academia, industry and research.

"As educators, we should concentrate on basic research, attempting to make breakthroughs in frontier challenges," Dai said.

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President Xi Jinping and Dilma Rousseff, president of the New Development Bank, greet bank staff during Xi's visit to the NDB on Tuesday in Shanghai. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Xi stresses strengthening Global South cooperation

By **ZHANG YUNBI**
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During his visit to the BRICS' New Development Bank in Shanghai on Tuesday, President Xi Jinping highlighted China's further support for the multilateral institution and called on it to better contribute to the rise of the Global South.

Launched in 2015, the bank is the first multilateral development institution created and led by emerging market nations and developing countries.

When Xi arrived in the morning, he was warmly greeted by NDB President Dilma Rousseff, four vice-presidents and the staff.

Xi noted that the bank is "a pioneering initiative for the unity and self-improvement of the Global South", and it conforms to the historical trend of reforming and improving global governance.

The bank has become an emerging force in the international financial system and an outstanding example of the Global South's cooperation, he added.

As the host country, China will consistently support the operation and development of the NDB, and is willing to strengthen cooperation

with the bank and focus on green, innovative and sustainable development to achieve more pragmatic results, Xi said.

Beijing is willing to share its development experiences through the NDB with other member countries and provide more international public goods, he added.

Xi noted that the Global South has risen as a group and become an important force in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and improving global governance.

No matter how the international landscape changes, the major direction of humanity's development and progress will not change, he said.

China's development is based on self-reliance and hard work, and the nation "will firmly safeguard its legitimate rights and interests and the common interests of the international community", he said.

Rousseff thanked China for its long-term strong support for the NDB's growth.

Unilateralism and protectionism erode the authority of international law and damage the stability of industrial and supply chains, she said.

The NDB will stick to its original aspiration, work actively and contrib-

ute to promoting the development of developing countries and emerging market countries, she added.

Wang Yiwei, a professor at Renmin University of China's School of International Studies and director of the university's Institute of International Affairs, said the BRICS mechanism and the NDB represent the vast number of developing countries, and they are aimed at boosting the voice of the Global South and promoting greater justice and fairness in the international order.

"China's push for advancing the BRICS mechanism is not aimed at countering the existing international system, but at seeking benefits for, and better enabling collaboration among, these countries," he said.

During the visit on Tuesday, Xi emphasized that "Greater BRICS Cooperation" has entered the stage of its high-quality development, and the NDB should also embark on its second golden decade of high-quality development.

When expressing his hopes for the NDB, Xi said it should fulfill its original aspiration, "closely follow the needs of development in the Global South", and provide more high-quality, low-cost and sustainable infrastructure financing.

He called on the institution to improve its management and operation, implement more projects in science and technology finance and green finance, "help developing countries bridge the digital divide" and accelerate the green and low-carbon transformation.

Xi also encouraged the NDB to be further pioneering and enterprising, amplify the voice of the Global South in discussions on reforming the international financial architecture, champion the legitimate rights and interests of the Global South, and support the Global South countries in taking their paths to modernization.

Rousseff noted that in today's volatile world, the Chinese government has set an example for the international community, as it firmly safeguards the interests of the Global South, staunchly supports multilateralism, steadfastly defends international justice, and promotes the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Under Xi's leadership, China has made extraordinary achievements in development, played an important role in advancing global governance, and will surely be able to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, she said.

Massive outage



Passengers prepare to spend the night on steps leading to a train station in Madrid, Spain, on Monday during massive power cuts in Spain, Portugal and parts of France. Power had almost fully been restored to parts of the Iberian Peninsula early Tuesday morning. OSCAR DEL POZO / AFP

TO OUR READERS

Due to the May Day holiday, we will publish holiday editions on Thursday, Friday and Monday. We will be back to our regular schedule on Tuesday, May 6.

Arab greening projects not a threat to water security

WORLD WATCH
By **Najib Saab**

When an environment and climate action advocate is invited to address an international investment conference, it sounds like a mistake. However, shock makes way for understanding when you realize that you have been invited specifically for your work in the area of environment, to discuss ways to transform urban green spaces into sustainable investment opportunities. And you feel elated upon meeting municipal executives and real estate developers from other countries who attended the conference just to discuss this aspect.

Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, which hosted the international AIM Congress — a leading investment platform — was the perfect location for discussing ways to link integrated urban development with environment and climate, combine heritage and modernity,

and incorporate renewable energy, efficiency, resource conservation, and sustainable development policies as central components of planning and programs.

So, who are the potential investors in urban greening? Given that open green spaces — forests, gardens, parks and municipal squares — are public assets and services, the public sector is primarily responsible for investing in them. However, urban greening, besides being a public service, makes green areas desirable for people to live and work in, which in turn attracts investments from the private sector and real estate developers. But attracting the private sector to invest in greening barren areas and making them available to the public free of charge requires incentives, as investors expect a lucrative financial return.

Possible measures include granting investors in greening public lands exclusive rights, such as operating shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues for a certain number of years.

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FOREIGN VISITORS IMPRESSED BY EASIER SALES TAX REFUNDS

Streamlining of system a boon for tourists, domestic consumption

By **ZHU WENQIAN**
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Anna Lanny, a 26-year-old tourist from Russia, was delighted to receive her tax refund on the spot after making purchases recently at the upmarket SKP department store in Beijing's Chaoyang district.

"It's crowded here," she said. "I bought a handbag for myself and a pair of shoes for my father, and I got cash back immediately after shopping. There is no need to complete complicated forms. It's quite convenient," she added.

On April 8, China launched a

nationwide rollout of a new tax refund policy for international tourists, replacing the traditional "refund-upon-departure" model with a more streamlined "refund-upon-purchase" one.

The new model allows eligible inbound tourists to receive tax refunds instantly, rather than having to wait until they leave the country.

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PAGE TWO

Tax refunds: Driving surge in inbound spending

From page 1

"Providing overseas travelers with a greater variety of shopping options and improved, more convenient tax refund services will help stimulate inbound consumption and support high-standard opening-up and economic growth," said Chen Binkai, vice-president of the Central University of Finance and Economics.

New incentives

On Sunday, a new package of measures aimed at further optimizing the departure tax refund policy and boosting inbound spending was announced by the Ministry of Commerce and five other government departments in a joint circular.

The measures include lowering the starting point for tax refunds from 500 yuan (\$68.6) to 200 yuan, effective immediately, and doubling the limit for cash refunds from 10,000 yuan to 20,000 yuan.

Adjustment of the starting point for refunds to 200 yuan is expected to enable more specialty stores, souvenir shops and gift shops to join the tax refund program.

The circular also outlines steps to expand the number of departure tax refund stores, increase the supply of merchandise and improve related services. More departure tax refund stores will be set up in major shopping areas, pedestrian streets, tourist sites, resorts, cultural venues, airports, passenger ports and hotels, according to the circular.

Departure tax refund stores are also being encouraged to broaden product offerings to include time-honored brands, renowned Chinese consumer goods, smart devices, intangible cultural heritage items, crafts and specialty products.

"The enhanced shopping experience will help draw more overseas tourists to China and drive an increase in shopping," said Wang Peng, an associate researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, adding that it will also contribute to improving the tourism environment and inject more vitality into the market.

Sheng Qiuping, vice-minister of commerce, said at a news conference in Beijing on Sunday, that they are encouraging, "relevant institutions to provide tax refund services through various means such as mobile payments, bank cards and cash, and better meet the diverse payment service needs of overseas travelers."

Simplicity of use

Under the new refund-upon-purchase model, tourists can claim value-added tax rebates at designated retail stores right after shopping, which means an instant discount and free cash or digital renminbi.

For instance, if a foreign tourist buys a Huawei Mate XT with an original price of 23,999 yuan (\$3,299) including tax, he or she can receive an in-store refund of about \$360.

The amount is enough for someone to take a high-speed train from Beijing to Shanghai, plus a one-night luxury hotel stay.

To get the immediate tax refund, a foreign tourist must buy eligible goods at stores displaying "Buy and Refund" signs then present the VAT invoice, tax refund application form, and their passports at the store's refund counter.

The entire time for the process can be as short as a few minutes.

When departing the country the visitor needs to submit the original tax refund form to customs officials for stamping, and then present their receipts to the tax refund counter.

Since being piloted in Shanghai, Beijing, and other places, the new mechanism has been well received by a large number of overseas travelers, with a significant boost to consumption, experts said.

The scale of tax refunds processed through the refund-upon-purchase tax policy in 10 pilot areas increased 22-fold year-on-year in 2024, said Xie Wen, an official with the State Taxation Administration, at a news conference on Sunday.

The increase in the pilot areas is 18 times the national average growth rate of outbound tax refunds, Xie added.

In Beijing, the list of stores offering instant tax refunds to foreign tourists is not restricted to large shopping centers like Beijing SKP.



Foreign tourists shop at the Silk Street Market in Beijing on April 20. China unveiled a set of measures on Sunday to further optimize its departure tax refund policy. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

capital offering refund-upon-purchase services, with many of them also equipped with AI intelligent translation screens. Among them are well-known time-honored brands such as TCM pharmacy Tongrentang and the silk and cloth store Ruifuxiang.

Attracting visitors

China introduced the departure tax refund policy for overseas travelers in 2015.

Last year, sales of eligible goods rose 120 percent year-on-year, while the total amount of tax refunded increased by 130 percent, according to official data.

Inbound tourists spent a total of \$94.2 billion last year, up 77.8 percent from a year earlier, Xinhua News Agency reported.

At the MixC malls in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, prominent signage and clear instructions for overseas shoppers seeking departure tax refunds are now a common sight in stores like Sundan and DJI.

At DJI's drone store, overseas tourists often arrive in groups to purchase drones and handheld cameras. "Besides our own promotions, Hong Kong-based influencers come to visit and post videos showcasing the departure tax refund process here," said a staff member, adding that nearly 60 percent of the store's total sales come from Hong Kong consumers.

The number of stores offering departure tax refunds at Shenzhen's MixC malls has risen by 30 percent year-on-year in 2025, according to Liang Jingyi, head of departure tax refund operations at Shenzhen MixC.

To further streamline the departure tax refund process for overseas travelers, Shenzhen on Sunday launched a new pilot program featuring a "one order, one bag" model at three designated malls.

Under the scheme, purchases and departure tax refund forms are packed together in sealed bags, enabling customs officials to quickly verify the packaging's authenticity and cut inspection time by more than 50 percent.

In Shanghai, Stephanie, a traveler from Australia, was discovering her first trip to the city was not just a tourism experience but also a shopping bonanza.

"I enjoyed the sights and the shopping experience here," she said, adding that she picked up souvenirs and clothes, including Chinese brands that are becoming increasingly popular among Australians.

What surprised her most was the departure tax refund policy, which she believes makes shopping even more appealing.

"The departure tax refund policy



Customers get an immediate tax refund at the Chengdu IFS in Sichuan province, on April 14. ZHANG LANG / CHINA NEWS SERVICE



Foreign tourists visit a cosmetics outlet in a shopping mall in Shanghai on April 4. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



International tourists wait in line to get tax refunds before their departure at the Shanghai Pudong International Airport on April 11. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

is totally new to me, and it is very helpful," she told Xinhua.

Sheng, from the commerce ministry, said in 2024, spending by overseas visitors accounted for about 0.5 percent of the country's GDP, compared with one to three percent in major economies. "China's inbound consumption holds great growth potential," he said.

Holiday bonanza

The recent surge in inbound travelers is expected to continue during the May Day holiday that runs from May 1 to May 5, analysts said. The booking volume for inbound travel products for the holiday has already surged over 170 percent year-on-year, according to Trip.com Group, China's largest online travel agency.

Last year, China recorded 132 million passenger trips by inbound travelers, a 61 percent year-on-year jump. The figure was more than 90 percent of the pre-pandemic level in 2019, representing a major rebound in the sector, according to the China Tourism Academy.

China plans to further expand its visa-free entry policy while optimizing its tax refund policies for overseas visitors.

"We will continue to innovate consumption scenarios, create an internationally friendly consumption environment and further promote inbound consumption," said Li Gang, director-general of the Ministry of Commerce's depart-

ment of market operation and consumption promotion.

China's visa policies have been continuously adjusted and optimized. Currently, the country grants unilateral visa-free entry to 38 countries and has extended the transit visa-free period to 240 hours for travelers from 54 countries.

In 2024, visa-free entries reached 20.12 million visits, marking a year-on-year increase of 112.3 percent, according to official data.

In addition to easing visa access, China is working to improve transportation links to better serve overseas travelers.

Xu Qing, head of the transport department of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, said international passenger flights will be increased and airlines will be encouraged to expand into emerging markets.

Xu added that China will also encourage major airports to upgrade service counters, and provide one-stop assistance that covers tourism, payments, transportation and telecommunications. Efforts are also underway to enhance departure tax refund services by encouraging more airports to open tax refund stores.

At the same time, China is accelerating the development of international consumption center cities to further stimulate inbound spending.

The country is working to transform five cities — Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing and Guangzhou in Guangdong — into major shopping centers.

In 2024, the number of inbound foreign travelers to these cities doubled compared with the previous year.

Together, they now account for nearly 70 percent of the country's departure tax refund stores and more than half of imported consumer goods.

China also plans to host more high-level international sports competitions and performances. It is supporting the growth of new sectors such as recreational vehicle camping, cruise tourism, and motor racing to provide overseas visitors with a wider range of modern, dynamic experiences, Sheng said.

The commerce ministry, together with five other bodies, launched the "Shopping in China" campaign on April 13 to help spur domestic consumption.

This year stands as the inaugural year of the campaign. Various promotional activities will be carried out nationwide throughout the year.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

TOP NEWS

BRICS countries agree to oppose power politics

By ZHANG YUNBI
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At the latest gathering of senior diplomats of BRICS nations, Foreign Minister Wang Yi lashed out at the tariff and trade wars launched by Washington, stating that upholding multilateral trade rules is imperative.

"If one chooses to stay silent and compromise, it will only embolden the bullies to push further," Wang warned in a speech at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Monday.

The United States has long reaped enormous benefits from free trade, and it is "now using tariffs as leverage to extort from other nations", he said.

He urged BRICS countries to jointly oppose all forms of protectionism and firmly uphold the rules-

based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core.

During the meeting, other participants expressed support for China's series of global initiatives, and they agreed that BRICS countries should oppose power politics and double standards, according to a statement from China's Foreign Ministry.

The BRICS nations agreed that there is a need to safeguard the legitimate rights of BRICS members and the common interests of the Global South, work toward building a more just and equitable international order, and promote open, inclusive and sustainable development, the statement said.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira told the meeting that "BRICS is in a unique position to promote peace and stability based

on dialogue, development and multilateral cooperation".

"We support diplomacy rather than confrontation, cooperation rather than unilateralism," he added.

Shou Huisheng, director of Beijing Language and Culture University's Turkish Studies Center, said Washington's rejection of the existing multilateral trade system "does not necessarily mean that the rest of the globe is willing to follow its lead in withdrawing from the system and giving up the hard-won gains in globalization".

"On the contrary, what we have witnessed over the past several years is that most countries in the world, especially in the Global South, have been steadfastly embracing globalization and respecting international systems such as the United Nations, the WTO and international treaties such as the Paris Agreement (on climate

change)," he wrote in a recent article.

On perfecting the global governance architecture, Wang emphasized the need to actively participate in the reform of WTO, "defend its core values and fundamental principles, and facilitate the resumption of the normal functioning of its dispute settlement mechanism at an early date".

He also called for the reform of international financial architecture to "better respond to changes on the world economic landscape and better serve the economic growth of the Global South".

"Conduct a review of the World Bank's shareholding, carry forward the adjustment of the International Monetary Fund's quota share, and address the historical injustice that the Global South is severely underrepresented and unheard of," he said.

Unpredictable US disturbs global order

By ZHAO HUANXIN in Washington
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Amid trade tensions and policy uncertainty stemming from the tariff war, Washington needs to become more predictable in order to boost global and United States economic growth projections, a think tank analyst said.

"We now have a saying — the greatest predictability in the world of today is the unpredictability of the United States," said Victor Zhikai Gao, vice-president of the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing-based think tank. "This is not a high mark or compliment. I think the US needs to make itself predictable," he told China Daily in Washington.

In recent weeks, the Trump administration has rolled out sweeping tariffs, starting with a blanket 10 percent duty on all foreign-made imports. Dozens of countries received a 90-day pause until July, but tariffs on Chinese goods surged to 145 percent.

Last week, the International Monetary Fund, in its latest "World Economic Outlook" report, slashed projections for the global and US economies by 0.5 percentage point and 0.9 percentage point, respectively, from its January forecasts, citing the impact of US tariff increases and retaliatory measures of other countries.

The global lending agency cut its projection for US economic growth in 2025 from 2.7 percent to 1.8 percent, the largest downgrade for any major economy.

Speaking at a media briefing on Thursday, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said, "I want to reiterate my message: Uncertainty is really bad for business, so the sooner this cloud that is hanging over our heads is lifted, the better for prospects for growth."

However, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent seemed to view uncertainty in a different light.

On Sunday, a few days before US President Donald Trump reaches the 100-day mark of his current term as president, Bessent defended the White House's tariff policy, which has roiled global markets, as a way to create "strategic uncertainty" — an approach that he said gives Washington the upper hand.

"In game theory, it's called strategic uncertainty, so you're not going to tell the person on the other side of the negotiation where you're going to end up," Bessent said in an interview with ABC News. "Nobody is better at creating this leverage than President Trump," Bessent added.

Recent polls conducted ahead of the 100-day mark of Trump's second term found that a majority of Americans surveyed said they disapproved of the current trade and tariff policies.

A CBS News/YouGov poll con-

ducted last week found that support for Washington's tariff policy has been declining, from 52 percent in late November, when Trump was elected, to 41 percent, as a rising number of Americans said the administration is focusing too much on the issue.

In addition, fewer respondents said they believed that the Trump administration has a clear plan for tariffs and trade, and overall, more Americans who were surveyed said current policies are making them worse off financially.

Similarly, the results of a New York Times/Siena College poll released on Friday said that half of registered US voters said they felt the Trump administration had made the economy worse in the current term, while 27 percent said the economy was about the same, and one in five said the Trump administration had made it better.

Among more than 300 economists surveyed in a Reuters/Ipsos poll from April 1 through Monday, 92 percent viewed the tariffs negatively, with none citing a positive effect.

More than 60 percent of respondents said they believed that there was a high or very high risk of recession this year due to the tariff hikes.

On Monday morning on Truth Social, Trump's social media platform, the president blasted polls showing his approval rating falling, saying that a poll by The New York Times and polls by ABC News, The Washington Post and Ipsos did not survey enough of his supporters.

Meanwhile, Gao, the think tank expert, whose recent comments on US-China relations went viral on the internet, said surprises or intimidation in talks are unacceptable.

For this round of trade tensions, negotiations and dialogue between Washington and Beijing are needed, but the starting point is that the two sides "fully respect each other", rather than "keep surprising the other side or surprising mankind in the world", Gao said.

Heightened uncertainties and skyrocketing duties on goods worldwide have spread anxiety among executives, affecting their market confidence.

James Rossiter, head of global macro strategy at TD Securities, said in a report on Monday that was cited by Reuters that "it's hard enough for firms to think about July right now, where they don't know what the 'reciprocal tariffs' are. Try and plan another year down the road. I mean, who knows what it looks like, let alone five years down the road."

Inside

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Heated debate

Anti-Trump protesters and members of the #WalkAway movement confront each other on Sunday in Beverly Hills, California, the United States. LOS ANGELES TIMES VIA GETTY IMAGES



Ecology: Sound public policies key to urban greening

From page 1

Greening programs must be governed by rules based on the nature and ecosystem of each country, mainly in a geographical region like the Arab world, with its diverse characteristics. Remarkably, some cities that were historically green, blessed with temperate climates, sufficient natural water supply and fertile soil — such as Beirut in Lebanon, and Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt — are losing their public parks and natural forest covers due to unbalanced urban expansion, uncontrolled commercial development by greedy investors and inadequate government policies. Meanwhile, other cities located in previously barren areas have transformed into green oases. At the forefront of these transformations are Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the UAE and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, which have expanded their green cover to nearly 9 percent, well above the minimum recommended level for healthy cities.

More importantly, these cities have adopted the concept of a "circular economy" while greening their arid lands. These cities use treated wastewater, which was previously discharged into the sea, for irrigation. Abu Dhabi also pumps treated agricultural wastewater and gray water into groundwater wells to replenish supplies as a strategic reserve.

At the Abu Dhabi congress, an entrepreneur from Russia presented a technique his company had developed to convert sludge from sewage into an agricultural soil alternative, after a pioneering process of disinfection. When this is refined and properly used, it promises to make wastewater recycling a circular process, transforming it into safe irrigation water and fertile agricultural soil. Successful adoption of this technology will save the UAE from importing 1 million metric tons of agricultural soil annually, which it uses for land reclamation. It will also prevent environmental damage caused by discharge of liquid and solid sewage.

Since sound public policies are key to successful urban greening, municipalities and local authorities should be required to develop a minimum percentage of green public spaces within their jurisdiction. This should also be enforced on real estate developers and private sector projects, be it large complexes, buildings or family homes. Incentives can also be provided to encourage the private sector to go further, such as granting tax exemptions and increasing the built-up area for building permits, in exchange for the creation of gardens with trees and special plants on rooftops, as in cities such as Geneva in Switzerland, where urban congestion makes vacant land scarce. This helps fight urban heat islands and climate change in general.

Greening and afforestation plans must also take into account water security considerations, especially in regions where natural freshwater is scarce. Since food security is inseparable from water security, all greening projects must

also include the cultivation of plants suitable for human consumption, and not only ornamental plants. The plants must be chosen to be compatible with the surrounding environment and require the least possible amount of water for irrigation.

Beyond the importance of greening cities to make them better places to live in and improve quality of life, we must preserve the unique ecosystem of the desert, which boasts a rich natural and human heritage that should be a source of pride, not shame. We must also use technology wisely to help nature regenerate and continue to provide us with resources, instead of going against nature by depleting its unique assets.

The author is secretary-general of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development. He is also Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia* magazine. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

New US envoy to China expected to improve relations

By ZHAO HUANXIN
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Former US senator David Perdue, expected by President Donald Trump to strengthen US-China relations, was confirmed by the Senate as the US' 14th ambassador to Beijing on Tuesday.

Perdue, 75, a Republican from Georgia, received mostly partisan support, with 51 Republicans, 15 Democrats, and one independent voting for him. Twenty-eight Democrats and one independent voted against.

Confirmation of Trump's ally came at a critical juncture in US-China relations, marked by escalating trade tensions. It also coincided with the 100th day of Trump's second term.

By paving the way to post a top diplomat in Beijing, Perdue's confirmation could signal an opportunity to reopen high-level communication channels.

Beijing reiterated that there are no consultations or negotiations on tariffs, despite reports that the US has said trade talks were underway.

On Tuesday, China urged the US to stop threatening and pressuring and engage in dialogue based on equality, respect and mutual benefit after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said it was up to China to de-escalate trade tensions.

Over the past few months, the Trump administration has rolled out sweeping tariffs, starting with a 10 percent blanket duty on all foreign-made goods. Dozens of countries received a 90-day pause until July, but tariffs on Chinese



The Senate has confirmed David Perdue as ambassador to China, just as the US and China are locked in a tariff showdown that threatens to redefine diplomatic relations between the world's two largest economies. BRYNN ANDERSON / AP

imports were raised to 145 percent. During his confirmation hearing

before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 3, Perdue said he would "work to increase the tempo of diplomatic dialogue to get results and to achieve fair and reciprocal trade between our two economies".

At the hearing, Perdue gave his views of US-China relations since 1979 and of the status quo, mostly following the Republican Party policy line on China.

But he did call the China-US relationship "the most important diplomatic relationship of our time" and advocated for a "nuanced, non-partisan and strategic" approach to China.

"Our two countries will naturally have areas of disagreement, and we should actively engage on these. We should seek areas where our interests align to develop a better

and safer working relationship," he said at the hearing.

As a former Fortune 500 CEO, US senator, and as an expat living in Europe and Asia, Perdue's business acumen and political experience could contribute to easing tensions and fostering a more constructive US-China relationship, analysts said.

In initially tapping Perdue as his China envoy, then President-elect Trump said Perdue "brings valuable expertise to help build our relationship with China", citing his decades-long career in business.

"He will be instrumental in implementing my strategy to maintain Peace in the region, and a productive working relationship with China's leaders," Trump said on his Truth Social platform in early December.

US Senator Steve Daines, a Montana Republican, said Perdue is "the right man at the right time" to become the top US envoy to China.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Daines said Perdue is "clear-eyed about the geopolitical realities and challenges" and possesses "a deep understanding of the culture and customs of the Chinese people".

Late last month, Daines said he would like to arrange a bipartisan delegation of US senators to visit China later this year, after Perdue had been confirmed.

In response, a spokesperson of China's Foreign Ministry said China is open to welcoming more members of the US Congress, as well as Americans from various sectors, to visit the country and see it firsthand.

CHINA

Being human

A humanoid robot hands over a rose to a passenger outside Beijing Railway Station on Monday. The same day, a robot and a robotic dog showed up outside the railway station to honor the hardworking frontline employees such as station security and cleaners ahead of International Labor Day.

YUAN YI / FOR CHINA DAILY



SCO member countries urged to advance vital health sector

China proposes enhanced collaboration, openness by upholding multilateralism

By WANG XIAOYU in Xi'an
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Chinese Vice-Premier Liu Guozhong on Monday urged Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states to enhance practical cooperation and promote openness and innovation in the health sector.

Liu, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the 8th SCO Health Ministers' Meeting in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, on Monday.

He said the health sector remains a vital area of SCO collaboration, with significant achievements made in strengthening public health security, sharing disease prevention technologies, advancing medical science and technology, and preserving and developing traditional medicine.

Liu called on member states to deepen practical cooperation to jointly develop the health sector and

drive medical progress through openness and innovation. He also emphasized the importance of people-to-people exchanges and upholding multilateralism.

During the meeting, senior health officials from SCO member states highlighted the need to integrate digital technologies with medicine to increase equal access to healthcare and accelerate research and innovation.

China's Health Minister Lei Haichao proposed leveraging information technologies and the SCO hospital alliance to build platforms for remote medical cooperation and expand digital health services. He also suggested establishing an SCO innovation center for medical-engineering integration at the First Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University.

"Through joint R&D platforms and training centers, we aim to enhance original drug development and boost innovation capacity across SCO member states, while

promoting cross-border and interdisciplinary collaboration," Lei said.

Punya Salila Srivastava, secretary of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, said India is using digital health tools to bridge healthcare gaps, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas.

India's digital ecosystem has supported a universal immunization platform to register and track vaccinations for mothers and infants, and contributed to innovations in managing mental health and tuberculosis, she said.

"These efforts align with the SCO's shared goal of strengthening healthcare delivery down to the last mile," she added.

Syed Mustafa Kamal, Pakistan's federal minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, said the global spread of information and communication technologies offers unprecedented opportunities to improve healthcare access, efficiency and quality.

He proposed creating an SCO digital health task force to harmonize policies on data security, interoperability and ethical use of artificial

intelligence, as well as a digital health knowledge hub to share best practices and draft guidelines for AI use in healthcare.

Beyond digital health, the meeting also addressed emergency medicine, traditional medicine and primary healthcare.

China's Health Minister Lei noted that 90.8 percent of households in China can access a medical facility within 15 minutes, and over half of all medical visits now take place at primary-level institutions.

"In 2024, the nation's average life expectancy reached 79 years, ranking among the highest in upper-middle-income countries," Lei said. "The infant mortality rate dropped to four per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate fell to 14.3 per 100,000 — both record lows."

Lei urged further communication and cooperation in primary healthcare to help member states develop tailored approaches to expanding universal health coverage, improving healthcare resource allocation and boosting service efficiency.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

Global experts pledge medical innovation ties

By ZHANG LI
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International medical leaders and experts have pledged to strengthen collaboration with China in the field of traditional medicine, aiming to build a global community of health.

The commitment was made on Tuesday at the opening of the 2025 International Medical Innovation and Cooperation Forum in Fangchenggang, a city in South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

Themed "Medical Innovation and Sharing for Sustainable Development of Health," the event drew more than 400 participants from China and abroad, including officials from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, medical professionals, academics and industry leaders.

Shen Yueyue, chairperson of the Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation Commission of the SCO, delivered the keynote address. She emphasized the forum's goal of deepening medical innovation ties with the SCO, ASEAN and Belt and Road Initiative countries. She also called for joint efforts to further develop a high-quality international medical opening-up pilot zone in Fangchenggang.

The pilot zone, launched in 2019 near the China-Vietnam border, focuses on medical innovation and international healthcare cooperation, especially with ASEAN nations and SCO members.

Chhem Kieth Rethy, senior minister and chairman of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of Cambodia, highlighted the global

disparity in access to healthcare.

"We live in a world marked by profound inequality in access to healthcare," he said. "This forum offers a powerful platform to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that medical innovation benefits not only the privileged few but also underserved communities — particularly in low-resource settings across ASEAN, SCO countries and BRI countries."

He added that the forum is more than a diplomatic or technical event — it is "a testament to our shared humanity and our collective resolve to improve health and well-being through innovation and cooperation."

Yusufi Salomudin Jabbar, an official with Tajikistan's Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, described China as Tajikistan's top trading partner. He noted that more than 180 Chinese medical products have been registered in Tajikistan.

Traditional Chinese medicine also remains popular in the Central Asian country, he said. "There is now a traditional Chinese medicine center in Tajikistan, and significant achievements have been made in cooperation in this field. By 2024, the center has hosted two TCM forums. There are already seven such TCM centers in Tajikistan."

Jabbar proposed two areas for further cooperation: expanding joint efforts in traditional Chinese medicine and establishing more research centers and pharmaceutical factories to develop Tajikistan's medical resources.

The forum, which runs through Wednesday, includes four sub-forums focused on exploring new pathways, approaches and models for international cooperation in medical innovation.

Suit of jade



Visitors are captivated by a jade suit sewn with gold thread that is being showcased at the Fujian Museum in Fuzhou, Fujian province, on Tuesday. The exhibition features nearly 100 national treasures from different dynasties. ZHANG BIN / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

Meeting participants in awe of TCM's potential

By WANG XIAOYU in Xi'an

With a deft flick of her fingers, an acupuncturist swiftly inserted a needle into the scalp of a patient suffering from insomnia. A faint squeak sounded as the needle pierced the skin, drawing gasps from onlookers.

Among those impressed by the doctor's skill at Xi'an Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine was Abdullah Obaid Alanazi, supervisor general of technical affairs at Saudi Arabia's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine under the Ministry of Health.

"Traditional Chinese medicine has a long history, heritage and roots, so its modalities are recognized and evidence-based," he said during a hospital tour on the sidelines of the 8th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Health Ministers' Meeting, held on Monday in Xi'an, Shaanxi province.

"The most important (treatment) I've seen today is the head acupunc-

ture related to treating the nerve system, as well as moxibustion," he said. "Through discussions with local doctors, I've also learned that TCM can be used as the first line of treatment and sometimes as a complementary and additional treatment after surgical procedures."

The role of traditional medicine in improving primary health care and advancing universal health coverage was one of four key topics discussed at the meeting, which brought together senior health ministers from SCO member states and representatives of international organizations.

Participants called for stronger cooperation in traditional medicine, including expanding TCM's accessibility and global influence.

In his remarks, Lei Haichao, minister of China's National Health Commission, urged SCO member states to continue hosting the SCO traditional medicine forum, collaborate on scientific research and clinical trials, and promote the

standardization and modernization of traditional medicine.

"We propose establishing an SCO joint research facility for traditional medicine exchange in Shaanxi to cultivate talent and advance scientific research in the field," he said.

Lei added that China aims to step up international collaboration to explore medicinal plant resources and enrich traditional therapies.

Askat Dzhalypov, a scholar from a Kyrgyz university's department of oriental medicine, said the country has built partnerships with medical colleges in China's Gansu province and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region through personnel exchanges and joint research programs.

"Many people in Kyrgyzstan are now familiar with TCM," he said. "It's not just a treatment method. It embodies China's history, culture and the wisdom of the Chinese people."

He expressed interest in deeper cooperation with the TCM hospital in Xi'an.

"We want to learn about TCM not only through textbooks but also by experiencing its charm in clinical practice," he said.

Alanazi said a growing number of TCM practitioners are now working in Saudi Arabia, where authorities are implementing assessments, classifications and licensing measures to support their practice.

"The exposure of Saudi people to TCM is getting greater and greater day by day," he said.

Alanazi said Saudi authorities are in talks with their Chinese counterparts about expanding TCM's role in the country.

"Among the ideas is sending candidates and practitioners to training programs here (in China) and exchanging experts between the two countries," he said.

"I believe that traditional medicine is a heritage, and every nation can adopt their own or bring from other cultures," he added.

Return of Shenzhou XIX crew delayed due to weather

By ZHAO LEI
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The return of the Shenzhou XIX crew from the Tiangong space station, originally set for Tuesday, has been postponed due to weather concerns, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The agency said in a short news release on Tuesday afternoon that the decision was made in consideration of the unfavorable weather conditions at the Dongfeng Landing Site in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and is intended to ensure the

astronauts' health and safety as well as the mission's success.

The crew's return will be determined and take place in due course in the coming days, it noted.

The outgoing Shenzhou XIX astronauts — mission commander Senior Colonel Cai Xuzhe, Lieutenant Colonel Song Lingdong and Lieutenant Colonel Wang Haoze — were launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Inner Mongolia on Oct 30 and arrived at the Tiangong space station later that day.

After several days of handover work, Cai and his teammates, who

are the eighth crew to inhabit the Chinese space station, took over the massive outpost in early November from their peers in the Shenzhou XVIII mission.

As of Tuesday, they had spent 181 days in a low-Earth orbit about 400 kilometers above ground and have completed a lot of scientific and technological tasks as well as three spacewalks. Their successors — astronauts in the Shenzhou XX mission — arrived at the space station on Friday.

A space industry observer who wished not to be named said that the safety of astronauts is always the

most important factor when mission planners decide their landing date and that there are a lot of unpredictable elements in the astronauts' return journey.

"For instance, if the wind is too strong, the parachute of the reentry capsule will not be capable of resisting and will lead to deviation from the original trajectory. A sandstorm will also cause big problems for ground recovery personnel. Therefore, it is understandable and necessary to adjust the landing date to ensure the absolute safety of our crew members," he explained.

CHINA

CROSSING THE STRAIT

Editor's note: On Oct 25, 1971, the 26th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 2758 with an overwhelming majority. The resolution saw the UN's restoration of the representation and seat of China, including Taiwan, to the government of the People's Republic of China, under the premise of recognizing Taiwan as an inalienable part of China. Recently, the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, for the purpose of seeking "Taiwan independence" secession, have colluded with external forces to distort and smear UNGA Resolution 2758, attempting to mislead the people of Taiwan and international public opinion. The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council is releasing this Q&A series to thoroughly explain the core implications of UNGA Resolution 2758 and enhance the understanding of the one-China principle among Taiwan compatriots and the international community.

Challenging Resolution 2758 will 'inevitably fail'

Taiwan Affairs Office rebukes distortion of United Nations General Assembly document that embodies one-China principle



Q1: Why did the United Nations General Assembly adopt Resolution 2758 in 1971? What problem did it solve?

A: The United Nations was founded in 1945, with China as a founding member and one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. In 1949, the government of the People's Republic of China was established, replacing the government of the Republic of China as the sole legal government representing the whole of China. It was a change of government without changing China as a subject of international law. Rightfully, the government of the People's Republic of China fully enjoys and exercises China's sovereignty, including that over Taiwan.

Within the UN system, it was only natural for the government of the People's Republic of China to appoint representatives to participate in the work of the UN General Assembly and its related organs, expelling representatives of the Taiwan authorities that could no longer represent the Chinese people. However, due to interference from the government of the United States, China's UN seat was illegally occupied by the authorities in Taiwan for a long time.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government and the Chinese people engaged in a resolute struggle to restore their legitimate seat at the UN, garnering increasing support from a growing number of peace-loving and justice-upholding nations.

In the 1960s, with the rise of China's international status and the continuous entry of many newly independent countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America into the UN, the US found it increasingly difficult to obstruct the People's Republic of China from reclaiming its rightful seat at the UN.

As the saying goes: "A just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little." On Oct 25, 1971, the 26th session of the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 2758 by an overwhelming majority: 76 votes for, 35 against and 17 abstentions. The resolution decided to restore all the rights of the People's Republic of China at the UN, recognize the representatives of the government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate representatives of China at the UN, and return the representation and seat of all of China, including Taiwan, to the government of the People's Republic of China.

For the Chinese people, this was a belated justice, completely resolving the representation question of all of China, including Taiwan, at the UN.

Q2: What is the content of UNGA Resolution 2758?

A: UNGA Resolution 2758 reads: "The General Assembly, Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Considering that the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China is essential for the protection of the Charter of the United Nations and for the cause that the United Nations must serve under the Charter,

Recognizing that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations, and that the People's Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council,

Decides to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it."

Though brief in length, the resolution delivers a powerful and unambiguous message. It resolved the question of China's representation in the UN once and for all - politically, legally and procedurally. It clearly affirmed that there is only one seat for China in the UN and there is no such thing as "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan".

Q3: What is the historical significance of UNGA Resolution 2758?

A: The historical significance of UNGA Resolution 2758 lies in it being the result of the collective efforts of all countries that love peace and uphold justice worldwide. It signified that the Chinese people, who account for a quarter of the world's population, had returned to the stage of the UN, making the UN truly the most universal, representa-

tive and authoritative intergovernmental international organization.

This was a victory for the Chinese people and for the people of the world, carrying significant meaning and a profound impact on both China and the world.

The restoration of its legitimate seat in the UN opened a new chapter of cooperation between China and the UN. For over 50 years, the People's Republic of China has consistently upheld and fulfilled its responsibilities and missions as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, defended the UN Charter and principles, safeguarded the authority and status of the UN, supported the UN in playing a central role in international affairs, practiced multilateralism, and deepened cooperation with the UN. It has made significant contributions to upholding international fairness and justice, promoting world peace and development, strengthening friendly cooperation among countries, and advancing the cause of human progress.

Q4: What is the relationship between UNGA Resolution 2758 and the one-China principle upheld by most of the international community?

A: UNGA Resolution 2758 is a political document that embodies the one-China principle. The resolution fully reflects and solemnly affirms this principle, stating that there is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is a part of China, not a separate country.

Resolution 2758 clearly stipulates that the United Nations and related organizations must adhere to the one-China principle. Since its adoption, the UN, its specialized agencies, and other international and regional organizations have strictly followed this resolution in handling Taiwan-related issues. The UN official documents refer to Taiwan as "Taiwan, province of China", and the UN Office of Legal Affairs has issued several clear legal opinions emphasizing that "Taiwan is a part of China", "Taiwan has no independent status as a province of China", and "Taiwan authorities do not hold any form of governmental status". Over the decades, UN secretaries-general and their spokespeople have consistently reiterated that the UN follows Resolution 2758 and upholds the one-China principle in dealing

with Taiwan-related issues.

Resolution 2758 reinforces the global adherence to the one-China framework. The resolution solidifies the one-China principle as a universal consensus of the international community and a basic norm of international relations. Before the resolution's adoption, only 64 countries had established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Afterward, many countries quickly established diplomatic ties with China. As of March 2025, China had established diplomatic relations with 183 countries, all based on the one-China principle. This demonstrates that adherence to the one-China principle is in line with the greater good and the prevailing trend of the world, has the overwhelming support of the international community and reflects an unshakable and unchallenged international consensus.

Q5: Why is it groundless to argue that UNGA Resolution 2758 "has nothing to do with Taiwan"?

A: Taiwan has been Chinese territory since ancient times. The history in China, which encompasses 10,000 years of culture, and more than 5,000 years of civilization, records that our ancestors moved to Taiwan to live and thrive; that our compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait jointly resisted foreign aggression and regained Taiwan; and that the compatriots from both sides are working together for national rejuvenation.

Due to the defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the government of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was forced to cede the island of Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan. Taiwan was occupied by foreign forces for half a century. The 1943 Cairo Declaration and the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation clearly stipulated that the Chinese territory stolen by Japan, including Taiwan and the Penghu Islands, should be returned to China.

On Sept 2, 1945, Japan signed the Instrument of Surrender, and pledged to faithfully fulfill the obligations enshrined in the provisions of the Potsdam Proclamation.

On Oct 25, the Chinese government announced that it was resuming the exercise of sovereignty over Taiwan, and the ceremony to accept Japan's surrender in Taiwan province

of the China war theater of the Allied powers was held in Taipei. From that point forward, China had recovered Taiwan de jure and de facto through a host of documents with international legal effect. Taiwan does not have any other international legal status apart from being a part of China.

The UNGA Resolution 2758, passed in 1971, based on the fact that China is a complete country and Taiwan is part of China, resolved the question of who is the legitimate representative of China. The resolution explicitly declared "to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it". Chiang Kai-shek was the leader of the Taiwan authorities at that time, and the "representatives of Chiang Kai-shek" referred to the representatives of the Taiwan authorities.

During the discussions that led to Resolution 2758, the United States had teamed up with a few countries to try to create "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan", and to push through a "dual representation" proposal. Many countries stepped forward, voicing their clear opposition and stressing that the proposal was "illegal and inconsistent with reality, justice and the principles of the UN Charter". In the end, the proposal failed to make it to a vote and was discarded.

The "representative of Chiang Kai-shek" also acknowledged, "Other countries have always emphasized that Taiwan is part of China's territory; I couldn't agree more", and "The people of Taiwan are Chinese in terms of race, history and culture".

From the text and discussions of UNGA Resolution 2758, it is evident that both the recognition of the representatives of the People's Republic of China government and the expulsion of the "representatives of Chiang Kai-shek" were carried out within the framework of one China simultaneously. Some forces clamoring that the resolution "has nothing to do with Taiwan" are baseless; this is either due to historical ignorance or ulterior motives.

Q6: Why are some people in the United States attempting to maliciously politicize UNGA Resolution 2758?

A: The United States, as a signatory to the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, is fully aware of the historical and legal fact that Taiwan is part of China. The one-China principle forms the political foundation of Sino-US relations. The US made serious commitments on the Taiwan question in the three joint communiqués it signed with China. The US side clearly stated that the US Government recognizes the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China, and acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. This political commitment forms the political foundation for Sino-US relations, represents the essence of the US' one-China policy and is fully aligned with the spirit of Resolution 2758. Since then, every US administration has made clear commitments on the Taiwan question, acknowledging that adhering to Resolution 2758 is an obligation the US must fulfill as a member of the United Nations.

In recent years, some in the US have backtracked to make a fuss about UNGA Resolution 2758, claiming that the resolution did not address Taiwan's political status. But the so-called undetermined status of Taiwan is nothing more than a revival of the "one China, one Taiwan" narrative from 1971. Behind this is the US hegemonic mindset and Cold War thinking that sees China as the US' primary strategic rival and severest long-term challenge. In light of this, the US is trying to contain and suppress China by playing the "Taiwan card".

Challenging Resolution 2758 disregards historical and legal facts and contradicts the serious political commitments made by successive US administrations in the three Sino-US joint communiqués. This exposes some US forces' double-standard and hegemonic practice of using international law and basic international relations principles when they suit, and discarding them when they are inconvenient. The era of hegemony and force dominating international relations is long gone. Playing the "Taiwan card" and trying to use Taiwan as a pawn to suppress China run counter to underlying global trends and will inevitably fail.

ZHANG YI AND YAO YUXIN

CHINA



Clockwise from top: Milu deer wander Qilihai Wetland in Tianjin's Ninghe district. LI TENG / FOR CHINA DAILY. Milu deer keep cool at the wetland in Tianjin. HAN KEWU / FOR CHINA DAILY. Fifty-eight milu deer arrive at Qilihai from Dafeng Milu Deer National Nature Reserve in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, on March 19. WANG ZHICHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Conservation drive attracts species to return and thrive in Qilihai Wetland

By YANG CHENG in Tianjin
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A herd of milu deer is adapting to its ancestral home after being transported to Qilihai Wetland in Tianjin. The 58 deer arrived on March 19 after a 16-hour journey from Dafeng Milu Deer National Nature Reserve in Yancheng, Jiangsu province.

Milu deer, also known as Pere David's deer, are native to the Qilihai Wetland in Tianjin's Ninghe district.

The deer have inhabited the wetland for thousands of years, with archaeological findings in the area uncovering over 30 fossilized and semi-fossilized milu antlers, dating back between 3,000 and 4,000 years. However, in more recent

years the wetland environment at Qilihai became degraded and the local milu population dwindled.

This latest initiative aims to restore the native species and enhance wetland conservation.

To revive this rare species and restore the ecological balance of the coastal wetlands, Ninghe introduced 10 milu deer from Beijing Milu Park in 2011. Since then, the ecosystem in Ninghe has supported their reproduction, increasing the population to 34.

Last year, two additional milu deer were introduced from Jiangsu.

"Qilihai Wetland provides an ideal environment for milu deer, offering abundant food sources such as reeds, cattail roots and aquatic plants," said Yu Zenghui, a government adviser to the administrative committee of Qilihai.

"With the expansion of the population and genetic diversity, the herd is expected to become stronger and more resilient, with at least 10 new births projected annually," he said.

Xie Shengbin, director of the milu research institute at Dafeng Milu Deer National Nature Reserve, said, "We carefully selected robust individuals from a population of nearly 1,000, ensuring they are in good physical condition and ready to adapt to their new surroundings."

To facilitate long-term monitoring, five of the deer have been equipped with satellite tracking collars to track their behaviors.

Since 2017, a total of 20 billion yuan (\$274 million) has been injected to the area to protect the environment, and a major ecological rehabilitation campaign has been launched after moving all the fishing, farming and tourism business projects nearby.

"To prepare for the migration of a large number of migratory birds and ensure an adequate food supply, we released 220,000 fish and shrimp fry last year," said Tian Xijiang, director of the Qilihai Wetland Nature Reserve Administrative Committee.

The area has revealed an ambi-

tious plan to build itself not only into a national model for wetland ecological restoration, but an internationally renowned bird habitat, and an international coastal wetland science education base, Tian said.

Last year, large fish such as silver carp and common carp were auctioned for charity, raising nearly 1.8 million yuan, all of which was allocated to wetland ecological protection. The number of bird species has risen from 182 a decade ago to 258 today, and the annual number of birds stopping over has doubled from around 250,000 to nearly 500,000.

Globally near-threatened bird species, such as the Oriental stork, Eurasian spoonbill and reed parrot-bill have returned to Qilihai.

The variety of wild plant species in the wetland has increased to 162.



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Researchers find strategies to reduce flood damage

LANZHOU — Chinese researchers have conducted a study on snowmelt floods and disaster risks in China's northwestern region, holding out promise for disaster prevention and control in the region.

With global warming and the increasing frequency of extreme events, snowmelt floods have led to significant damage, and it is critical to strengthen risk assessment, said Xu Min, a researcher at

Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and leader of the study.

Based on a simulation using data from 1948 to 2022, the study analyzed the evolution and distribution of snowmelt floods in Northwest China.

The results indicated that snowmelt runoffs showed increasing frequency and were more abundant in

the northwestern and southwestern regions while less in the country's central and eastern regions. In northern Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, snowmelt floods were relatively infrequent, but large, while around the Qilian Mountains in Gansu province, snowmelt floods were more frequent but of smaller magnitudes.

The longest duration of snowmelt floods was observed in the Kashgar

and Yarkant rivers, according to the study. Xu said it is urgent to enhance monitoring and early warning systems, and implement corresponding disaster prevention and mitigation measures in large mountainous basins in the region.

The study results have been published in the journal *Geography and Sustainability*.

XINHUA

Pickleball serves to build cross-cultural relations

Breathless and flecked with sweat, students from China and the United States focused intently on the court. Yellow pickleballs shuttled between them, creating an invisible bond.

From April 10 to 20, 44 teachers and students from 13 schools in Maryland of the US visited Chinese cities including Shanghai, Shenzhen in Guangdong province and Beijing. Through engaging in pickleball matches, they learned about Chinese culture and became friends with their Chinese peers.

"It's been an eye-opening experience," said Ian Skott Harper from Poolesville High School, noting that through this trip he realized that however different Chinese and American cultures are, people and the things they do can be similar.

"It has truly brought a lot of us closer together," he said.

Combining elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, pickleball originated in the United States



A group of students from China and the United States take a photo at Nantou Middle School in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on April 16. LIANG XU / XINHUA

and has become popular across China in recent years.

On April 17, a friendly match was hosted at the Xibahe campus of Bei-

jing Academy, where Sheraz Bashir from the Churchill High School was paired with a Chinese student.

At first they were affected by the

wind, and the Chinese student missed a ball.

However, Sheraz soon went to comfort him, saying, "It's fine, we can use the wind as well to adjust our strategy." As the match progressed, their teamwork improved and they ultimately emerged victorious.

Although they lost the game by one point, 15-year-old Wang Jing-tong high-fived his partner, 17-year-old Siddhant Jog from the Clarksburg High School.

"I had no idea what pickleball was a month ago," said Jingtong. "But now, here I am, standing on the court, playing with my American partner and encouraging each other. Really nice experience."

Siddhant said: "We lost the game, but we were sticking together. We just couldn't end up winning. But it was fine. It was very fun and this is more important, right?"

After each match, Ryan James Corkery from the Sherwood High

Taiwan singer keeps fighting after life-saving surgery in Hangzhou

By CHEN YE in Hangzhou
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Renowned singer Tank from Taiwan recently underwent a simultaneous heart and liver transplant to treat a serious genetic condition at the Second Affiliated Hospital Zhejiang University School of Medicine in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Only a handful of medical centers worldwide are capable of performing such operations, often referred to as the Mount Everest of organ transplantation, which requires advanced perioperative management and high-level multidisciplinary coordination.

"I had imagined the worst. But after going through the surgery and recovery, it all feels incredible," Tank posted on Weibo account after being discharged on April 7.

Tank rose to fame in 2006 with his debut album *FIGHTING* selling over 100,000 copies. His hit songs quickly swept through the Chinese music scene. But in 2007, his sudden collapse on stage revealed a harsh truth — inherited hypertrophic cardiomyopathy had caused his heart muscles to thicken. Following the implant of a pacemaker, doctors warned him that even singing loudly could be fatal, which forced him to step back from his career.

Over the years, he sought treatment at various hospitals but never found a permanent solution. His sister died from the same genetic disease during that period, and just a few months later, his aunt also passed away due to heart-related issues.

In late March 2024, Tank visited the Second Affiliated Hospital Zhejiang University School of Medicine. At that point, his health had deteriorated significantly. Doctors diagnosed him with multiple serious conditions, including hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, decompensated liver cirrhosis and heart failure.

Experts from the transplant center, intensive care unit, anesthesia, internal medicine, radiology and ultrasound departments concluded that due to the coexistence of heart and liver failure, a



I had imagined the worst. But after going through the surgery and recovery, it all feels incredible."

Tank, Taiwan singer

single organ transplant would not suffice. A combined heart-liver transplant was deemed the only viable solution to save his life.

Understanding the risks and the uncertainty of finding a suitable donor, Tank chose not to waste his time. He spent six days writing 10 new songs and held a concert in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. "I also went on tour in Kaohsiung and Taipei (in Taiwan). I felt I had to sing one last time in case I didn't get another chance," he said.

After the tour, his condition worsened dramatically, developing fever and fluid infections. He became unable to stand or eat. By early November last year, both his cardiac and liver function indicators had reached critically risky levels.

The turning point came on Nov 21, when a brain-dead donor gave him the gift of life. Medical teams from the liver transplant, heart transplant and anesthesiology departments as well as ICU and skilled nursing staff, quickly performed the life-saving surgery, which lasted 12 hours.

In the post-operative phase, the team overcame major challenges including delayed graft function, balancing dual immunosuppression and high infection risks.

Referring to the donor, Tank said: "From that day forward, we became one person. I will carry on this boundless kindness for both of us."

On Apr 7, Tank posted on his Weibo: "Today I walked out of the hospital. My body has mostly recovered. Thank you to my motherland, thank you to Hangzhou — for giving me the strongest support in facing the greatest challenge of my life."



On the day of his discharge, Tank (with bouquet) takes a group photo with medical workers at the Second Affiliated Hospital Zhejiang University School of Medicine in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

School would ask his partner to sign on the racket. Now, his two rackets are full of signatures. He told Xinhua News Agency that he was going to display the rackets in his room back in the US, which were the best souvenirs he has got.

In Shanghai, the American delegation visited the International Table Tennis Federation Museum and China Table Tennis Museum, where they found, among 8,000 plus items, the world's first table tennis racket, table and ball.

The scoring rules and rackets of table tennis are similar to those of pickleball and this sport is popular in China just like pickleball is in the United States, said Haley Grace from the Sherwood High School. For the first time she learned that table tennis once brought China and the United States closer.

In April 1971, nine players from the US Table Tennis team took a historic trip to China, becoming the first delegation of Americans to visit China in decades.

Their trip was the beginning of what became known as "Ping-Pong Diplomacy", and helped lay the

groundwork for the establishment of official diplomatic relations between China and the United States.

"Sports create a very unique opportunity," said Jeffrey Keith Sullivan, head of the delegation. "We can compete hard against someone. We can also, at the end of that competition, shake hands."

China announced an initiative in 2023 to invite 50,000 young Americans to the country for exchange and study programs over a five-year period. As of January, the initiative has brought more than 15,000 young Americans to visit China.

Sullivan was impressed by the hospitality of the Chinese. "We have been welcomed with open arms," he said, seeing that American students didn't want to leave, exchanging WeChat with their Chinese peers.

"If each individual person makes a commitment to build friendship, to step out of their own shoes and into someone else's shoes, and to embrace their culture... that's gonna build a better world," said Sullivan.

XINHUA

WORLD

Doubts grow as Trump marks 100 days in office

Tariff strategy pushes bilateral ties with China into new phase of tension: Experts

By YIFAN XU in Washington
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As US President Donald Trump completes the first 100 days of his second term on Tuesday, his administration's aggressive tariff strategy against other countries, especially China, has rapidly escalated uncertainty, pushing the crucial bilateral relationship into a new phase of tension.

Beginning with a 10 percent tariff hike on Feb 1, US duties on Chinese goods have soared dramatically, reaching an unprecedented 145 percent. These actions have predictably drawn firm countermeasures from Beijing and sparked significant global concern over potential economic fallout.

Concurrently, China significantly reduced US oil imports, shifted toward increased Canadian oil purchases, and paused negotiations regarding the sale of TikTok.

Trump's tariff strategy is a clear attempt to hinder China's continued economic development and national rejuvenation from Beijing's perspective. Sean Stein, the president of the US-China Business Council, speaking at a "China Town Hall" event on April 24, shared insights from Chinese contacts: "China hates this idea of having a tariff war, but they also say, 'We're a whole lot better prepared to go through this than the United States. So, US, bring it on.'"

Stein added that Chinese officials conveyed a strong message of defiance, rooted in historical sensitivities toward foreign pressure. This sentiment reflects a deep-seated commitment to national dignity.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce issued a stern statement on

April 10, declaring, "There are no winners in a trade war and there is no way out for protectionism. If the US insists on its own way, China will fight till the end."

Beyond the dominant economic conflict, Trump's administration has pursued some noneconomic measures, primarily focused on military alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. Joint military exercises have been conducted between the US and South Korea and between the US and the Philippines, respectively, framed as enhancing regional security. The administration has also pressured Japan to increase its defense spending, consistent with a strategy to counter China's influence, according to Foreign Policy magazine.

These steps appear aimed at bolstering US alliances to balance China's presence, particularly concerning the South China Sea and Taiwan region. However, significant diplomatic initiatives, cultural exchanges, or public health cooperation have been notably absent, suggesting the administration's focus remains narrowly fixed on economic and military dimensions.

Other nations are feeling the impact and reacting to the tariffs. Canada and Mexico have imposed retaliatory tariffs, while the European Union paused potential new tariffs for 90 days to pursue negotiations, according to US media such as PBS News. Furthermore, The Guardian noted that European countries like Spain and France are actively seeking stronger trade relationships with China, potentially as a hedge against overreliance on the US market.

In the US, businesses face sharply rising costs and growing uncertainty, prompting warnings about

potential job losses and severe supply chain disruptions. Stein highlighted the impracticality of the current tariff levels: "There's just no trade to be done when tariffs are above 100 percent."

Public opinion within the US reflects growing apprehension about Trump's economic policies. A CNN poll released on Monday found that 59 percent of people in the US believe the president's policies have negatively impacted the economy, an increase from 51 percent in March.

Recession feared

Furthermore, 69 percent anticipate a recession within the next year, with 32 percent considering it "very likely". Regarding the tariffs specifically, 55 percent view them as poor policy, and 59 percent expect they will harm their personal finances.

Economic experts have cast doubts on the effectiveness and rationale behind the administration's tariff strategy targeting China. Robin Xing, Morgan Stanley's chief China economist, said, "The US thought that by raising tariffs, they could force China to the negotiating table, but China sees this as part of a broader US strategy to contain its growth, not just a trade dispute."

Analysts at the Eurasia Group warned of a growing risk of a "disorderly decoupling" between the two economies in 2025 if tensions continue unabated, The Washington Post reported.

Experts like Stein stress the urgent need for better communication and understanding to avert further damage: "We need to understand each other better." Without a significant de-escalation, the risks of deepening economic decoupling and heightened geopolitical friction loom large, threatening to further disrupt global trade and stability in the months ahead.

Xi sends condolences to Iran over port blast

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday extended condolences to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian over the severe explosion at a port in the country.

Xi said he was deeply grieved to learn that a massive explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern Iranian city of Bandar Abbas caused heavy casualties.

On behalf of the Chinese government and people, Xi mourned the victims and offered sincere sympathies to the injured and the bereaved families.

The death toll from the explosion rose to at least 70, with over 1,200 injured, Iranian state media said on Monday, as firefighters battled a blaze that Iranian officials said was brought under control 48 hours after the start of the fire. A cleanup is underway.

The fire has been completely contained, while rescue and relief

operations were still ongoing, Mohammad Ashouri Taziani, governor of the Hormozgan Province, told the semiofficial Mehr news agency.

The port lies in the major coastal city of Bandar Abbas in Hormozgan Province on the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil output passes.

Pezeshkian on Sunday visited those injured in the explosion.

"We have to find out why it happened," the president said during a meeting with officials aired by state television.

On Monday, Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni identified "certain negligence" as one of the reasons behind the deadly explosion at the port, the country's largest maritime hub.

He made the remarks in an interview with state-run IRIB TV,

elaborating on the ongoing investigations to determine the cause of the incident.

Momeni noted that a failure to observe safety regulations and passive defense measures properly contributed to the disaster, urging the relevant authorities and investigative committee to accelerate efforts to determine the full cause accurately.

Following the deadly blast, Hossein Sajedinia, head of Iran's National Disaster Management Organization, told IRIB on Sunday that some of the containers at the port contained flammable materials such as pitch, and some others carried chemicals.

Despite the incident, the port's wharves have resumed operations and cargo handling, according to the official news agency IRNA.

XINHUA—AGENCIES

Springtime march



Horse riders pass the Boeoeegg figure as it burns on Sechselaeuten Square in Zurich, Switzerland, on Monday. The Sechselaeuten is a traditional spring event with a parade of people on horseback wearing uniforms and the burning of the Boeoeegg, a symbolic snowman. It is believed that the faster the Boeoeegg explodes, the hotter the summer will be. TIL BUEURY / EPA-EFE

TikTok has provided US with a unique platform

By BELINDA ROBINSON
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TikTok, the popular video-sharing site with more than 1.5 billion monthly active users worldwide, revolutionized the US app market, showing how social media could offer entertainment, short videos and shopping all in one place, say experts.

"It certainly has brought something new to the US," Z. John Zhang, a professor of marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, told China Daily.

But despite the app's widespread success, it still faces uncertainty over a potential congressional ban signed by former US president Joe Biden in 2024, which states that ByteDance, its Chinese-based parent company, must divest the app and sell it to a US company or face a ban over national security concerns.

In April, the Trump administration granted the app its second 75-day extension this year so that it could find a US buyer. The reprieve will expire in mid-June.

TikTok, available in 150 countries, was downloaded more than 875 million times in 2024. Its US revenue reached \$10 billion in 2023, and American adults spend more than 53 minutes on it on average per day, two studies found.

A spokesperson for ByteDance

“It (TikTok) certainly has brought something new to the US.”

Z. John Zhang, professor of marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

said in an April statement that it had "been in discussion with the US government regarding a potential solution for TikTok US. An agreement has not been executed. There are key matters to be resolved. Any agreement will be subject to approval under Chinese law."

TikTok CEO Shou Chew said in an April 22 video: "Rest assured we will do everything in our power to ensure our platform thrives as your online home ... for years to come. There's tremendous value in this app, and if we close that, it will be a pity."

Launched in the US in 2018, TikTok quickly amassed more than 170 million American users, according to the Pew Research Center.

Regardless of its future, it has changed social media and even spurred international competition.

Instagram, the picture-sharing site, owned by Facebook parent

Meta, started its video platform Reels in 2020 in 50 countries, including the US, to compete with TikTok.

In April, Instagram launched its standalone "Edits Video" creation app. The platform will allow creators to shoot and edit video similar to TikTok or CapCut.

"We think it's our job to create the most compelling creative tools for those of you who make videos," Adam Mosseri, head of Instagram, said in a Reels video statement in January.

Another US offering that rivals the Chinese app is YouTube's Shorts, a platform to create and share short-form videos. Other Chinese-owned apps, such as RedNote and Lemon8, the latter owned by ByteDance — also are vying for attention over TikTok.

However, one of the most unique aspects of TikTok is that it works alongside businesses both locally and internationally to sell goods to customers on the app. That is something that was fairly unusual to US digital audiences beforehand.

It's estimated that there are more than 7 million US businesses on TikTok, which helped it support over \$24 billion in gross domestic product and 224,000 American jobs, according to a report by Oxford Economics.

Felicia Jackson, owner of CPR Wrap, a business that helps people as they perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, said that she made

more than \$300,000 in just two days thanks to the app.

The method of entertaining people and encouraging them to shop seamlessly in an app has been successful for Douyin, the domestic Chinese version of ByteDance's TikTok and JD, a Chinese e-commerce company owned by Tencent, with revenues of more than \$152 billion in 2023.

Professor George S. Yip, emeritus professor, Imperial College London, and distinguished visiting professor at Northeastern University in Boston, said that TikTok has gained international popularity by following apps like Douyin.

"The Chinese are very good at all-in-one apps, and [TikTok is] simply following that practice in the US," Yip told China Daily.

Smaller content creators and influencers who review or market merchandise from the TikTok shop also are making money and receiving commissions on goods sold.

"A lot of people would get hurt [if TikTok closes]," Zhang said. "There's no question, because there's a lot of influencers on TikTok, and they're doing really well, and they make a lot of money out of it."

As TikTok continues to seek a US buyer to appease Washington, online retail giant Amazon was said to have thrown its hat in the ring, submitting a bid to the White House to buy it.

In an effort to update its safety features, Adam Presser, head of Operations and Trust and Safety at TikTok, described its latest innovation "Footnotes."

"It will add to our suite of measures that help people understand the reliability of content and access authoritative sources, including our content labels, search banners, our fact-checking program, and more," Presser said in a statement.

Committee of 100 panel addresses trade standoff

By RENA LI in Los Angeles
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The wide tariffs initiated by the Trump administration have raised fears of a US and global recession, sparking calls for a more measured approach among political and business leaders.

Speaking at one of the panel discussions — "Navigating Trade Winds" — during the Committee of 100's annual conference in Los Angeles on April 26, Rodney Davis, head of Government Affairs at the US Chamber of Commerce and a former congressman, stressed the necessity of unity in the American business community.

"Businesses, no matter large and small, can't deal with chaos as much as Congress can," Davis said via a live video link. "I think it's important for those voices who could come in and really let out the facts and figures why certain policies will not work."

The Trump administration has imposed an additional 145 percent tariff on all Chinese imports while pausing his "reciprocal" levies on other countries, intensifying what many are calling a full-scale global trade war. In response, China has vowed to "fight to the end."

Davis noted the significance of the Chinese market, especially for American farmers. "The agricultural producers and agribusiness giants that I used to represent have the marketplace of the Chinese to be able to buy the products," he said. "We need to ensure that our farmers were given the opportunity to sell their products in a global marketplace, including China."

According to the US Department of Agriculture, US agricultural exports to China in fiscal year 2024 were valued at approximately \$28.7 billion, marking a slight decrease compared with the previous year's \$33.7 billion.

Despite the drop, China remained a top buyer of US agricultural exports, particularly soybeans, cotton and pork.

Davis said there is a need for business voices to influence policy: "The business community needs to have their voice heard as to the impact of what global trade tariffs will be on debt, and hopefully the administration is going to listen to those exception requests."

Angela Zhang, professor of law at

the University of Southern California, was critical of President Donald Trump's approach.

"What Trump is doing undermines the world, undermines bureaucracy," Zhang argued.

Zhang, a lawyer, also questioned the enforceability of any trade agreement forged under current conditions, noting that without a third-party tribunal or binding arbitration, such contracts would be impossible to monitor.

"China's best strategy is to ignore the trade talks, as the contract is unenforceable, and Trump's commitment is questionable," she said.

Chinese American entrepreneur Margo Wong, who has been engaged in US-China trade for more than four decades, expressed her frustration. "We just want to buy low, sell high. Right now, we buy high, sell low," she told the panelists. Even worse, she noted, are the increasing cancellations and stagnation in trade activities.

Chi Zhihang, president of Altavia LLC and a former senior executive at Air China in North America, emphasized the need for perseverance and collaboration. "When there is a will, there is a way," Chi told the panel.

Sheldon Pang, vice-chairman of Freeport Commodities LLC and a prominent Asian American and Pacific Islander business leader in international trade, stressed the economic unsustainability of the current tariff conflicts. He called for the creation of a "framework agreement" to help both sides stabilize.

"Since Trump wants to reverse trade, bring manufacturing back, and have balanced trade and revenue — if there's zero trade between two countries, there will be no revenue, no tariff, because you cannot charge even 1,000 percent tariff if (there are) no trades," Pang pointed out. "So that doesn't serve his purpose."

Gary Locke, a former US ambassador to China, emphasized the urgency in resolving the trade dispute between China and the US, adding that "there are no winners" in a trade war.

"Workers and consumers on both sides of the dispute in both countries will lose, which is why it's very important that China and the United States resolve this as quickly as possible," Locke told China Daily.

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BUSINESS

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MPI strongly opposed to Pirelli board move

By ZHONG NAN
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Marco Polo International Italy (MPI), a subsidiary of China's Sinochem Holdings Corp Ltd, issued a statement expressing its deep disappointment and strong opposition regarding an assessment by Italian tire maker Pirelli's board of directors concerning the company's control structure.

Pirelli's board announced on Monday that it no longer has a controlling shareholder. MPI, however, contends that under Italy's "Golden Power" regulations, its position as a controlling shareholder remains intact, citing the absence of any legal provision that would alter its rights.

Discussions around Pirelli's governance have gained renewed attention in the Italian media.

Marco Tronchetti Provera, executive vice-chairman of Pirelli and a principal figure behind Camfin — an investor in Pirelli — has in the past emphasized the importance of operational autonomy for the company. Analysts and commentators have observed that recent corporate maneuvers may reflect an effort to rebalance influence within Pirelli's management structure, although no accusations of wrongdoing have been made.

China National Chemical Corp (ChemChina), now part of Sinochem Holdings, together with the Silk Road Fund, acquired Pirelli in 2015 through a tender offer. Following the acquisition, Pirelli restructured its operations, spinning off its industrial tire business and refocusing on high-end consumer tires, subsequently relisting on the Borsa Italiana stock exchange.

At the time, the partnership was publicly characterized by both sides as mutually beneficial, with ChemChina supporting

Pirelli's expansion into China and other key markets. Tronchetti Provera remained in leadership roles following the transaction. He praised the deal as a "wonderful marriage".

China has since become a critical market for Pirelli, particularly given the growth of the new energy vehicle sector, which has contributed positively to the company's financial performance. Recent media coverage, including reports from Zonebourse and Doman, analyzed the evolving shareholder dynamics at Pirelli.

France's Zonebourse.com observed in an article titled "Florentine intrigues in Pirelli's shareholding" that "behind this pretense lies a mundane reality... Tronchetti Provera, long known for his shrewdness, intends to maintain full control over a group he treats almost as his personal property. This cunning businessman has been walking a tightrope with a clear goal: to use Sinochem's investment to capture China's market share while refusing to compromise on control."

Italy's Doman echoed this in an article titled "Tronchetti Provera's Chinese boxes: How to command without money", describing a strategy of "a complex web of financial maneuvers, nested ownerships and strategic exits. The goal: fund Pirelli's growth with as little personal capital as possible. Let others bring the money — just don't let them drive."

Shi Xiaoli, a professor specializing in international trade law at the China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing, said that Chinese companies expanding overseas increasingly face complex regulatory and political challenges. Shi emphasized that careful risk assessment is essential in navigating evolving investment environments.



The world's first 'Beijing gifts' coffee concept store was unveiled on Tuesday. ZHANG WEI / CHINA DAILY

Concept stores eye consumption bounce

'Beijing gifts' venue launched to create new consumer experience

By ZHU WENQIAN
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Beijing is accelerating its transformation into a global consumption center by creating a globally attractive retail environment, with the city launching the world's first "Beijing gifts" coffee concept store on Tuesday, as part of China's latest moves to spur domestic consumption.

The store, which combines coffee culture and Beijing elements, also stands as the 1,000th store for K Coffee — a brand of US fast-food catering chain KFC — in China, and it is expected to create new experiences for consumers.

China places great emphasis on the fundamental role of consumption in driving economic growth. In the Government Work Report delivered in March, boosting consumption was listed as a top priority among this year's tasks.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Commerce and five other entities launched the "Shopping in China" campaign, and various promotional activities will be carried out nationwide throughout the year to help boost domestic consumption.

Yang Nie, deputy director-general of the department of market operation and consumption promotion at the Ministry of Commerce, participated in the event.

Next, the ministry will actively work with relevant departments to launch more practical measures to vigorously boost consumption. The measures include further carrying

out the consumer products trade-in program this year, expanding services consumption, and innovating more consumption scenarios.

China's consumption market has achieved a stable start this year. In the first quarter, total retail sales of consumer goods in the country reached 12.47 trillion yuan (\$1.7 trillion), up 4.6 percent year-on-year. Catering revenue came in at 1.4 trillion yuan, rising 4.7 percent on a yearly basis, said the National Bureau of Statistics.

Liu Weiling, deputy editor-in-chief of China Daily, said the media organization has been interpreting the government's policy measures to boost consumption, and introducing the efforts of Chinese enterprises in expanding markets and providing high-quality products and services.

China Daily also reported on China's unique neighborhoods, distinctive shopping destinations and time-honored brands, thus helping to make the "Shopping in China" campaign proposed by the commerce ministry more deeply rooted in people's hearts, Liu said.

China is offering more generous instant tax refunds incentives for international visitors, and it has lowered the starting point for tax refunds from 500 yuan to 200 yuan, according to a new package of measures released by the Ministry of Commerce and five other entities on Sunday.

Zhang Lijun, deputy head of the China General Chamber of Com-

merce, said expanding consumption stands as a top priority to help drive China's economic growth. The debut of the concept store is an important innovative measure for Beijing to build an international consumption center and further promote consumption growth.

The government will encourage the opening of more such stores and guide internationally renowned products, trendy domestic products, time-honored brands, cultural and creative stores, as well as souvenir, gift and specialty stores to become tax refund venues for overseas visitors.

Beijing's inbound tourism market has continued to rebound. Last year, the capital received over 3.94 million passenger trips of overseas visitors, surging 186.8 percent year-on-year, according to the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism.

Wang Tao, general manager of KFC China, said China has become one of the fastest-growing markets for global coffee consumption. Last year, KFC purchased over 1,200 metric tons of coffee beans from Yunnan province, and it is willing to contribute to the development of China's coffee industry chain.

"The coffee tastes really good, and the environment is also good. I would like to come here to have some coffee and hang out with friends in the future," said Muhammadzoda Daler of Tajikistan, a 19-year-old student at the University of International Business and Economics.

Wang Yu, Liu Zhihua, Zhou Lanxi and Zhuang Qiang contributed to this story.

Wumart renders assistance to exporters

By WANG ZHUOQIONG
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Wumart Group, a leading retailer based in Beijing, has begun introducing the first assortment of products sourced from exporting enterprises in its retail channel as part of a larger effort by retailers across the country to reduce inventory pressure on exporters and stimulate domestic consumption.

The move announced by the retailer on Sunday entails its Xueqing Road store in Beijing, but may be further expanded to other outlets.

In addition to the physical store offerings, Wumart also introduced the "foreign trade quality products zone" on the cloud supermarket on Dmall, the group's digital retail platform, offering more than a thousand such products online.

The newly added products span multiple categories, including home and kitchen essentials, daily necessities, and disposable items. About 50 percent of these offerings are sourced from exporters, with an additional 10 percent categorized as exclusive custom-made private labels for the retailers.

Among the items are some from suppliers for international retailers such as Walmart, Costco and Sam's Club.

How the business dynamics are shifting among suppliers is reflected in the survey released by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, during the news conference on Monday. The survey was conducted among over 1,100 foreign trade enterprises nationwide.

The findings indicate that surveyed enterprises said that the frequent changes in tariff policies have significantly increased uncertainty, making it difficult for businesses to make long-term plans.

However, with the support of the government's package of policies to stabilize foreign trade, these companies are actively seeking solutions and exploring new opportunities. Their strategies include looking for alternative markets to boost sales, expanding into the domestic market and enhancing the resilience of their supply chains, said the survey.

Retailers both domestically and internationally have shown support to trade enterprises, including Walmart China, which rolled out a "green channel" initiative last week. The program streamlines entry procedures and speeds up approvals, enabling qualified exporters to quickly bring their products into Walmart China's domestic retail ecosystem.

Yonghui Superstores, another major retailer, had received over 500 cooperation inquiries and entered discussions with more than 300 high-quality supply chain companies by last Tuesday.

The Beijing Municipal Commerce Bureau recently announced new policies aimed at supporting foreign trade companies to expand their online consumer access and coordinate with retailers to provide free exhibition and marketing spaces. The initiative aims to build a service platform to encourage more quality export-oriented enterprises to broaden their consumer markets in Fengtai district in Beijing.

Efforts to connect exporters and retailers have gained momentum nationwide. According to Xinhua News Agency, in Hubei province, a group of prominent retailers including JD and Wushang Group signed an agreement worth 14.5 billion yuan (\$2 billion) on Saturday to support export-oriented enterprises in selling their products through their outlets across the country.

At Wumart in Beijing, export-oriented businesses can rapidly be onboarded through a fast-track system, completing the entire process from qualification submission to product launch within three working days.

Wumart also enhances inventory management through a logistics network. This system supports small-batch ordering, mitigating inventory risks for export-oriented enterprises.

Better living



An employee from China State Construction Engineering Corp Ltd addresses visitor queries about housing construction during an expo held by the builder in Beijing on Friday. CSCEC launched on Friday its 'Quality Homes Construction System', a housing development framework that introduces various upgrades to China's traditional construction methodology system, which aligns with the nation's call made in the 2025 Government Work Report for homes that are 'safe, comfortable, eco-friendly and smart'. YIN MINGYUE / CHINA DAILY

Briefly

Services trade reports solid expansion

China's services trade saw steady growth in the first quarter of the year, including a steep increase in the trade of travel-related services, official data showed on Tuesday. The country's services trade totaled 1.97 trillion yuan (\$273.5 billion) during the period, up 8.7 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Commerce. Services exports reached 835.15 billion yuan, up 12.2 percent from a year earlier, and services imports rose 6.2 percent to 1.14 trillion yuan, resulting in a deficit of 303.88 billion yuan.

Cultural sector sees steady growth in Q1

Major enterprises in China's cultural sector and related industries saw steady growth in both revenue and profits during the first three months of the year, official data showed on Tuesday. The 80,000 surveyed enterprises raked in nearly 3.4 trillion yuan (\$470 billion) in

combined revenue in the first quarter, up 6.2 percent year-on-year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. The growth rate was 0.2 percentage point higher than the full-year figure for 2024, the bureau said. The firms' profits rose 29.1 percent year-on-year to 274.4 billion yuan, driven by robust expansion in digital content services, internet information services, online culture and entertainment platforms, as well as the manufacturing and sales of information service terminals.

Yuan strengthens against greenback

The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 14 pips to 7.2029 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.

XINHUA - CHINA DAILY

Nurturing specialized talent key task

By LIU ZHIHUA, LIU YUKUN and OUYANG SHIJIA

Further efforts are expected to harness policy advantages to drive the growth of emerging industries and cultivate diverse trade relationships, amid challenges to boosting domestic demand and dealing with external trade tensions, experts said.

Central to this endeavor is the pivotal role of nurturing specialized talent to navigate these evolving tasks, experts added.

Their remarks were made during the launch ceremony of the School of Economics at the University of International Business and Economics on Saturday, held in Beijing.

Zhao Zhongxiu, president of the university, emphasized that this initiative aims to optimize the disciplinary layout in the field of economics within the university. By integrating relevant resources from the School of International Trade and Economics and the Institute of International Economy, the establishment of the School of Economics will lay a solid foundation for the university to achieve its goal of building a world-class institution.

"We aim to drive the development of the digital economy major, gener-

ating original achievements in fields such as digital economy and industrial upgrading," Zhao said.

He expressed the school's commitment to establishing a world-class theoretical economic innovation hub by 2035, nurturing a cohort of exceptional economists and top academic talent.

Justin Yifu Lin, former chief economist of the World Bank and dean of the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University, expressed confidence that the newly established school will become a vital platform for nurturing top economic talent and fostering cutting-edge economic theories, enhancing the role of China's economic scholars on the international stage, and contributing more Chinese solutions to global economic development.

Lin said China's economy will continue to rise, becoming the world's largest economy while maintaining rapid growth.

Lin added that China's economic growth should not only focus on quantity expansion, but also prioritize high-quality growth. Continuous technological innovation, industrial upgrading and the release of new quality productive forces are essential.

"In this process, monetary and

fiscal policies can support entrepreneurs in innovation, investment and production," he said.

Pei Changhong, former director of the Institute of Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, highlighted key areas where China can enhance its practices, such as intellectual property protections, carbon emissions management and services sector innovation.

"Furthermore, in the realm of international cooperation, China should actively engage in global economic governance, promoting the establishment of a just, fair and transparent international economic and trade rules system. Currently, the urgent task is to establish unified global digital trade rules.

"China can exert efforts in deepening cooperation with the least developed countries, improving regulations for China-Europe freight trains, promoting the internationalization of high-speed rail technology, among other multidimensional approaches, to share Chinese experiences to support the modernization of Global South countries and contribute to a global community with a shared future," Pei said.

Contact the writers at liuyukun@chinadaily.com.cn

BUSINESSFOCUS

Auto Shanghai unveils strategic, smart focus

Key industry gala has drawn some 1,000 firms from 26 countries, regions

SHANGHAI — The 21st Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition (Auto Shanghai 2025) has drawn nearly 1,000 companies from 26 countries and regions and has quickly become the focal point of the global auto market.

Automakers seized the stage with their latest innovations, underscoring a clear trend — the rise of smarter, more globally oriented vehicles.

With 97 new models debuting, Chinese brands led the charge in vehicle intelligence, according to a report by Kaiyuan Securities.

Notably, advanced driver assistance systems have become a key differentiator, and tech giant Huawei is among the standout players.

Models from Huawei's Harmony Intelligent Mobility Alliance, such as AITO M8, Stelato S9 and Maextro S800, drew big crowds at this year's event, showcasing a suite of smart features that turn cars into fully featured terminals.

From adaptive driver assistance and intelligent cockpits to smart keys and customizable welcome-light displays, these models reflect the latest evolution of the car into a connected tech hub on wheels. Huawei's tech support has injected new momentum into traditional original equipment manufacturers, such as Seres behind AITO and BAIC behind Stelato.

At this year's Auto Shanghai, running from April 23 to May 2, Huawei Executive Director Yu Chengdong and SAIC Motor President Jia Jianxu unveiled a new HIMA brand, pledging deeper collaboration in connected vehicles, electric drive-trains, smart vehicle controls and full-scenario mobility solutions.

Established in 2023, HIMA is a dynamic ecosystem alliance focusing on intelligent vehicle technologies. Rather than building cars itself, Huawei plays a pivotal role within the alliance by shaping product planning, design and marketing, enhancing user experience and quality control, and supplying cutting-edge software and hardware solutions to traditional automakers.

The alliance's momentum is already considerable. As of mid-April, more than 700,000 vehicles had been delivered under HIMA. Huawei's smart automotive solutions business raked in 26.35 billion yuan (\$3.66 billion) in revenue in 2024, a stunning 474.4 percent leap from 4.58 billion yuan in 2023.

Riding the wave of China's tech momentum, many foreign automakers are deepening local partnerships to supercharge their smart technology and electrification efforts.

Speaking to Xinhua News Agency on the sidelines of the event, Oliver Zipse, chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG, said that China is pivotal in driving technological innovation for BMW's next-generation intelligent vehicles, and BMW will begin integrating AI technology from Chinese tech startup DeepSeek into its latest models in China later this year.

Earlier this month, BMW announced plans to deepen its collaboration with ByteDance, owner of Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, to enhance artificial intelligence applications in marketing and customer service. In March, the automaker teamed up with e-commerce giant Alibaba to integrate a large language model AI into its

next-generation vehicles. It partnered with Huawei to develop a smart in-car digital ecosystem tailored to the Chinese market further.

"This country is so innovative that we really enjoy putting all the technology into the cars for China," the senior executive said, adding that the first Neue Klasse models, its next-generation vehicles, will roll off the line at the company's Shenyang, Liaoning province, plant in 2026.

Volkswagen Group, another German automotive powerhouse, is also sharpening its focus on what it calls "the world's most innovative automotive market."

Just ahead of the Shanghai auto show, the company unveiled a highly automated, AI-powered driver-assistance system developed by Carizon, its R&D joint venture in China.

This year, the automaker will roll out the first model featuring the new technology, and from 2026, the system will be standard on its next-generation, fully connected compact-class vehicles.

"China is the technological pace-maker of global transformation," said Oliver Blume, CEO of Volkswagen Group. "At Auto Shanghai, we are now shifting into 'delivery mode'. With a new generation of intelligent, fully connected vehicles, we are focusing entirely on the digital, smart world in which our Chinese customers live."

While global players double down on China, Chinese automakers are setting their sights abroad with a renewed sense of confidence.

XPeng Motors announced plans to enter 60 overseas markets by 2025. The company reported stronger-than-expected overseas preorders for its newly launched X9 model, boosting its global ambitions.

"We're not just bringing the X9 to



Top: A view of IM Motors' exhibition stand at the 21st Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition in April.

Above: Visitors experience smart cockpits at the 21st Shanghai International Automobile Industry Exhibition in April.

PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

Firefly's growth potential, projecting that the brand will quickly become a major driver of the company's international expansion. Nio anticipates that Firefly's success may eventually boost sales of its other product lines.

China FAW Group announced an ambitious development plan for its car brand Hongqi on Apr 23, targeting operations in over 100 countries and regions with 1,000 sales and service outlets in five years.

The automaker said it will establish five overseas hub clusters in markets including Southeast Asia, Europe and Latin America. The company will also establish more localized low-carbon R&D centers, supply chains and operation centers, achieving an annual overseas production capacity exceeding 200,000 vehicles and creating over 20,000 new jobs across upstream and downstream sectors.

"Our layout will truly make the Hongqi brand a globally recognized Eastern cultural icon," said Liu Changqing, vice-president of the Hongqi Brand Operation Committee.

Europe," said an XPeng representative. "We're also planning to revamp our entire product lineup around a global vehicle concept tailored to international market needs."

Nio founder William Li announced that the company's Firefly brand, focusing on compact smart EVs for urban mobility, will enter 16 offshore markets this year, including the Netherlands, Norway and Costa Rica, using a hybrid sales model combining local dealership networks with NIO's service standards.

The Firefly brand will adopt tailored pricing and sales strategies across European markets.

Nio remains optimistic about

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多彩的世界
源自多样的自然

A vibrant world
stems from diverse nature

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Eagles star Yang looks set to soar in NBA

Under the guidance of LeBron James' agent, Chinese teen is 'confident' about his prospects in 2025 draft

By SUN XIAOCHEN

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A 19-year-old 7-footer with a versatile game not unlike NBA superstar Nikola Jokic? No wonder scouts across the league have kept an eye on him. However, he remains a raw talent.

The youngster in spotlight is Chinese prospect Yang Hansen, a 2.18-meter play-making center who's proved his elite caliber after two years in the CBA and has emerged as, potentially, China's next big thing in the world's premier league after recently entering the 2025 NBA Draft.

Although far from a complete product, even by domestic standards, Yang has braced himself for a challenging, yet intriguing summer, confident that he will end up sharpening his game Stateside next year.

"Myself and my agent are both quite confident about my draft prospects this summer," Yang, a client of renowned American agency Klutch Sports Group, said in a recent interview with China Central Television.

"The experience of competing against the world's best at the FIBA U19 World Cup (in 2023) boosted my confidence and fueled my determination to go for higher goals.

"Then, it was the trip to compete in the NBA Summer League with the national team that exposed me to the intensity and pace of NBA basketball, and further prepared me for that level."

Boasting a strong build, similar to three-time NBA MVP Jokic, Yang has stood out from his peers in the paint. With a diverse skill set that features sharp shooting, slick passing, rebounding and rim protection, he dictates play with his full-court vision, staring down from the high post.

In only his second professional season in the CBA, Yang has averaged 16.6 points, 10.5 rebounds, 3 assists and 2.6 blocks per game in 45 starts with Qingdao Eagles in the regular season, before leading the No 8 seed into quarterfinals in the playoffs, where Qingdao was only edged out 3-2 by the league-leading Zhejiang Lions in the best-of-five series last week.



Yang Hansen of the Qingdao Eagles reaches for the basket as Nathan Knight of the Zhejiang Lions attempts a block during a Chinese Basketball Association playoff game last week in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Yang, 19, announced his decision to enter the NBA Draft on Saturday, expressing a strong desire to pursue his basketball dream in the world's biggest league. XINHUA

Having been selected into the All-CBA first team in his first two seasons, Yang's untapped potential, despite being virtually unknown to fans abroad, has turned heads from the US when his agent, which represents NBA stars such as LeBron James and Anthony Davis, announced his signing in January.

Klutch Sports Group CEO, Rich Paul, James' close business partner, will personally manage Yang during his US adventure, during which he is expected to practice with other NBA players under the same agency, before trying out in training camps with a selected number of NBA clubs.

"Klutch Sports Group recom-

mended experienced coaches coming to China to provide guidance in basketball skills, tactics, and living habits. There will be more training plans in the US," said Yang, who will fly to Los Angeles on Saturday.

"I am ready, both mentally and physically. My goal is to earn more court time and gain the trust of my coaches and teammates."

A 'unicorn' player

Equipped with skills, size and a high basketball IQ beyond his years, Yang's rise to prominence at the 2023 FIBA U19 tournament has since raised high expectations that he has what it takes to fill in the sizeable shoes of Hall of Famer Yao Ming,

former CBA president and an eight-time NBA All-Star.

Yang, though, commands the court in a different style to Yao's traditional center role. The teen prodigy tends to take over offense in a high-post position, driving into the paint to attack, or dishing the ball to teammates, similar to how Jokic dominates the NBA as the "point center" of the modern game.

Liu Weiwei, his domestic club coach, who'd voiced concerns about his exposure to NBA basketball being "too early" two years ago, believes it's now time for his aspiring protege to go after his dream in the US.

"This was the plan, that, after a few years of development (in the

CBA), he has to chase a higher stage and a bigger challenge," Liu said after the Eagles' quarterfinal series loss to Zhejiang last week.

"It certainly won't be smooth sailing, though. Hopefully, he can overcome all the challenges without his friends and family nearby. He has our full support from the coaching staff, teammates and the club at home."

This year's NBA Draft will be held at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York, on June 25 and 26, with major US-based media outlets, including ESPN and Bleacher Report, predicting a mid-second round pick for Yang. Since Yao, NBA teams have will-



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Liu Weiwei, Qingdao Eagles coach on Yang's NBA journey

ingly rolled the dice on young Chinese prospects in the draft, and so far, they have not panned out quite as expected.

Yang's senior national teammate Zhou Qi, the last Chinese center touted as Yao's successor, was unproductive during his two NBA seasons with Yao's former club the Houston Rockets, being hampered by injuries. That has dented confidence in franchise front offices when selecting dominant prospects from the CBA.

However, Yang's strength and physicality, as well as being a more complete package, suggests that he might have a brighter, and more consistent, future in the NBA than Zhou, whose tall, yet frail, stature, saw him pushed around under the rim, limiting his chances in the NBA.

Developed in Qingdao's youth system, Yang first shot to attention on the international stage when he led China to a third-place finish at the FIBA U18 Asian Championship in 2022. He then tallied 12.6 points, 10.4 rebounds, 4.7 assists and a tournament-leading 5 blocks at the U19 World Cup in Hungary, where he was named on the youth tourney's All-Second Team.

Cavs sweep Heat and finish off most lopsided series in playoff history

MIAMI — Cleveland moved into Round 2 with the most lopsided series win in NBA playoff history.

Donovan Mitchell scored 22 points, DeAndre Hunter added 19, and the Cavaliers led by as many as 60 points before beating the Miami Heat 138-83 on Monday night to sweep their Eastern Conference first-round series in four games.

Ty Jerome had 18 points, Evan Mobley added 17 and Jarrett Allen had 14 points, 12 rebounds and six steals for the Cavaliers. Cleveland won the series by a combined 122 points, one more than the previous record for series margin set by Denver over New Orleans in 2009.

"We came out here with a goal in mind," Mitchell said.

The 55-point margin in Game 4 was the fourth-biggest playoff win ever. The record is 58 points, done twice: Minneapolis over St Louis in 1956 and Denver over New Orleans in 2009. The Los Angeles Lakers beat Golden State by 56 points in 1973.

Nikola Jovic led the Heat with 24 points. Bam Adebayo scored 13, while Pelle Larsson and Andrew Wiggins each added 12 for Miami. "Damn, it was humbling. These last two games were embarrassing," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "But Cleveland's also a very good team. They showed us why we weren't ready for that."

Cleveland will play either Indiana or Milwaukee in the Eastern Conference semifinals. The Pacers lead

that series 3-1; regardless of whether the Pacers or Bucks advance, Game 1 of that series will be in Cleveland and not played until Saturday at the earliest.

"I'm always a big fan of rest," Mitchell said.

This is the third instance of Miami being swept in a best-of-seven series. The others: against Chicago in 2007 and against Milwaukee in 2021, both in the first round and both also ending on the Heat's home court.

It was over fast. Cleveland — which used a 33-5 early run to blow Game 3 open — led 43-14 late in the first quarter, before Davion Mitchell beat the buzzer with a 3-pointer. The 26-point margin matched the worst quarter in Heat playoff history; it was the second-best margin for any quarter in Cavs playoff history.

And the lead only kept growing. It looked every bit like a 64-win team that led the East wire-to-wire going up against a 10th-place finisher that needed to win two play-in games just to get into the tournament.

"We came down here with the right mentality, and, again, our maturity, our leadership, all that stuff we've been talking about all year," Cavs coach Kenny Atkinson said. "We don't seem to have let-downs. That's rare."

Cleveland's lead was 39 — 72-33 — at the half, the third-largest lead after two quarters in NBA playoff history. The only halftime leads bigger than that: Cleveland by 41 over Boston on



Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell shoots around Miami Heat center Bam Adebayo during Game 4 of an NBA first-round playoff series, on Monday, in Miami. AP

May 19, 2017, and Detroit by 40 over Washington on April 26, 1987.

"We definitely didn't expect this," Heat guard Tyler Herro said. "Tough last two games for us. No excuses for it. It's embarrassing. Definitely humbling. There's a lot of work to be put in."

Changes are coming this summer. That is certain. The Heat know they need more to compete, and team captain Adebayo said he's already waiting to see what team president Pat Riley and the front office targets.

"There's going to be a lot of changes this summer," Adebayo said. "Just from my point of view, understanding how the guy with the silver hair works. Just be prepared for that."

Spoelstra lauded Cleveland. It was clearly the better team. He just thought the Heat was capable of more.

"They left us behind these last two games," Spoelstra said.

"I'll be able to separate this, because it's a shame that we'll be remembered for these two home games here and taking a 4-0 sweep. This group showed a lot of character and resilience. It was a fun group to be around, especially those last eight weeks of the season when we were just grinding. Struggling, grinding and then playing our best basketball at the end of the season, when it mattered."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Warriors edge Rockets in bad-tempered game

SAN FRANCISCO — Players on the Warriors and Houston Rockets got into a shoving altercation midway through the second quarter of Golden State's 109-106 win Monday night in Game 4 of their first-round playoff series, leading to three technical fouls before tempers flared again just ahead of halftime.

With the game tied at 36, Golden State star Stephen Curry dribbled down the sideline when teammate Draymond Green put a hard screen on Houston's Amen Thompson. Dillon Brooks fouled Curry, then appeared to become angry about the push and went at Curry and Green.

"I got a technical tonight, and there was guys way more aggressive than me, so that's crazy," Green said. "They were trying to muddy the game up, but it's fine."

Curry received a technical for "taunting" Brooks, who also received a technical along with Green.

"All he said was 'that's two,'" Green said in reference to Brooks' two fouls at the time. "There's been way more taunting than that in this series. But, hey, it is what it is, I like it."

Warriors rookie Quinten Post and Houston's Jabari Smith Jr flailed their arms at each other, but avoided technicals upon replay review by the officials.

Then, with 2:44 left in the quarter, Green received a Flagrant 1 foul for pushing Tari Eason's face to the ground, and Eason also received a technical. Green was dribbling when Eason went for a steal and the ball got loose. As both players hit the floor trying to corral it, Green's left leg was on the Rockets forward's neck.

The Warriors lead the best-of-seven series 3-1 and can clinch it with a win in Wednesday's Game 5

on the Rockets' home floor.

There was already bad blood between the teams. Jimmy Butler returned after missing Game 3 because of a pelvic contusion suffered in Game 2 on Wednesday after a hard foul by Thompson.

"I would die for these guys," Butler told TNT. "I got my joy back. I always say that we got the most confident guys."

Butler tried to secure a rebound when Thompson undercut him and sent the Warriors star's feet high into the air so that he came down straight onto his tailbone. Both players thudded to the floor and Butler grimaced in pain, grabbing at his backside. He stayed in briefly to shoot two free throws before going to the locker room.

"Jimmy was just amazing," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said, revealing that the 35-year-old six-time NBA All-Star had fought through the pain from his pelvis injury throughout the game.

"If it were the regular season, he'd probably miss another week or two, but it's the playoffs and he's Jimmy Butler," Kerr added.

On Friday, Brooks defended Thompson and called Green a "dirty" player. "Dillon said that? Interesting," Kerr responded.

While with Memphis three years ago, Brooks' Flagrant 2 foul on Gary Payton II during Game 2 of the Western Conference semifinals of the Warriors' championship run in 2022 fractured Payton's elbow. He returned for Game 2 of Golden State's six-game NBA Finals victory over Boston.

Payton made an open-court foul against Brooks during Game 3, and when asked about it afterward, he said with a smile, "I didn't see it."

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

COMMENT

Editorials

White House playing a mug's game with its pompous 'strategic uncertainty'

The past three months have been a sobering lesson in the folly of hubris. The actions of the White House, whose occupant claims he runs the country and the world, have created devastating uncertainty for people and businesses around the world.

In a recent defense of the administration's now-you-see-them, now-you-don't punitive tariffs on the United States' trade partners, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent characterized them as part of White House's deliberate "strategic uncertainty" aimed at gaining leverage in negotiations by not making it clear what its end game is. While such game theory may find favor in the boardroom, the application of engineered uncertainty in the realm of international trade is proving to be a perilous gamble.

The repercussions of this uncertainty are already reverberating throughout the US economy. Businesses and consumers are grappling with heightened costs, prompting frantic inventory purchases. The US Federal Reserve's latest Beige Book report paints a bleak picture of the US' economic landscape.

At the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Spring Meetings, the IMF revised downward its global growth projections — including that of the US, from 2.7 percent to 1.8 percent — citing trade policy shifts as a primary driver. That underscores the urgent need to dispel the clouds of uncertainty looming over the global economy.

Economists, both within and outside the

Spring Meetings, have echoed the IMF's concerns, with their revised growth forecasts reflecting a somber outlook for the future.

In stark contrast to the White House's embrace of strategic uncertainty, which risks undermining not only US economic interests but also global economic stability, China's commitment to pursuing high-quality development in the face of external uncertainties highlights an approach aimed at fostering stability and certainty in economic endeavors.

At a top-level meeting on economic work, held in Beijing on Friday, the country's leadership vowed to counter "the uncertainty of drastic changes in the external environment with the certainty of the country's high-quality development".

In dire sickness, one seeks any doctor. But the folly of leveraging uncertainty as a strategic tool is becoming increasingly apparent. As the world navigates these unpredictable waters, it is imperative for policymakers to prioritize cooperation, openness and the resolution of trade tensions.

The White House would do well to heed the warnings of the consequences of the escalating uncertainty and demonstrate clarity and foresight in its economic decision-making, rather than trying to squeeze an extra dollar from its trade partners.

There is no use crying on seeing the coffin. Only by confronting reality with clear-eyed resolve can the looming economic perils be averted and a more secure and prosperous future ushered in.

Compromise, retreat will only embolden bully

Although the BRICS countries have steadfastly opposed unilateralism since the group was founded, some Western media have still tried to portray the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in Rio de Janeiro on Monday as the grouping's attempt to forge a united front against the United States. They are trying to create the impression that it is the US that is being targeted by a gang of gangsters rather than the other way round.

Even before the US launched its "reciprocal tariff" war on April 2, the BRICS grouping of major developing countries came under fire from the White House, which threatened a punitive 100 percent tariff on its members if the bloc moves ahead with a single currency to replace the weaponized dollar in trade relations between its members.

It is natural that the BRICS members should discuss the US assault on global trade and seek a coordinated response. They are all at a critical stage of their respective development and heavily reliant on exports. They need stable global industry and supply chains and a predictable external development environment.

Even before the US' tariff war, it has been a constant pursuit of BRICS to promote a fair and just world through reform of the global governance institutions and inclusive economic globalization. Striving to maintain stable global

industry and supply chains and oppose hegemony in world affairs is not only in their interests but also that of the Global South as a whole.

It should also be pointed out that the other key agenda of the meeting was to prompt a shared position on climate finance, with Brazil hosting the United Nations climate summit in November, as the BRICS countries are working together to help transform the developed economies' pledge to help developing countries finance the fight against climate change and the energy transition from words to deeds.

As Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at the meeting, the law of the jungle where the strong prey on the weak is now being openly applied, the coercion and bullying of the US is no longer disguised, and its undermining of the foundation for the development of international relations can be seen as a constant threat.

Maintaining multilateral trade rules is now the most urgent issue. The essence of trade is complementary advantages and mutual benefits, not a calculation of who gains the most.

The US has benefited greatly from free trade for a long time, but now it is using tariffs as a hammer to distort the trade landscape to its liking. As Wang said, if countries choose to remain silent, compromise and retreat, it will only make the bully more aggressive.

US energy strategy holds world hostage

Energy officials and leaders from the European Union, the United Kingdom and many other countries gathered for a summit on the future of energy security that opened in London on Thursday. If they expected a consensus would be built among nations to promote the development of renewable energy in pursuit of a cleaner and safer world, they were in for a rude awakening.

"We oppose these harmful and dangerous policies," Tommy Joyce, US acting assistant secretary of energy for international affairs, told the conference, referring to plans to phase out fossil fuels to combat climate change. Moreover, he claimed the green policies only served "the interests of our adversaries" and had been "harming human lives".

What he said, of course, is the official policy of the "drill, baby, drill" of the current US administration, for which fossil fuels are central to its economic strategy and "clean and green" akin to invoking the devil. Joyce claimed at the meeting that efforts to halt global warming were tantamount to handing power to China. "There are no wind turbines without concessions to or coercion from China," he said.

The White House has ditched clean energy policies and embraced fossil fuels by declaring a "national energy emergency". It is seeking to unlock the full potential of the US' fossil fuel resources to lower the country's energy costs and strengthen its industrial base, as well as

meet the growing electricity demand driven by the growth of power-hungry artificial intelligence data centers.

In contrast with the US rejecting and obstructing global climate cooperation, China has contributed to global climate change actions in a responsible manner. The country has built the world's largest and fastest-growing renewable energy system as well as the largest and most complete new energy industry chain. China has also contributed one-fourth of the world's newly added afforested area.

Reaffirming the country's commitment to global climate action, China has pledged that no matter how the international situation changes, it will not slow down its efforts to address climate change.

The country will set new goals ahead of the COP30 summit in November to cut emissions by 2035 that would cover the entire economy, and include all greenhouse gases, which is seen as crucial to limiting global warming in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

China also called on countries to support multilateral climate action and deepen international cooperation to enable the free flow of green technologies.

It is deplorable that the US is politicizing energy security. A sustainable future means the world must move on from fossil fuels as soon as possible.

Luo Jie



Opinion Line

Private sector bill expected to help inject vitality into economy

The draft of the private sector promotion law, under review by the top legislature, is expected to promote the sustainable and sound development of the private economy, indicating China's long-term policy to promote the healthy and high-quality development of the private economy.

The private sector has shown strong resilience in the first quarter of this year, with new business registrations rising steadily. But the escalation in Sino-US trade frictions is putting more pressure on the private sector.

The draft law is a critical step toward deepening reform and opening-up and optimizing the business environment. It will provide institutional safeguards for the high-quality development of China's private economy amid growing external uncertainty.

As the United States frequently accuses China of "non-market policies" to justify its coercive measures, this legislation clarifies the equal status of the private economy. It will

inject innovation momentum into private enterprises by supporting private capital participation in major infrastructure projects, encouraging industry-academia-research integration and strengthening intellectual property protection. It will also facilitate the "going global" strategy of private enterprises, helping them circumvent tariff barriers by establishing overseas operations and tapping into Belt and Road markets, thereby transitioning from "low-end outsourcing" to "global value chain leaders".

This planned shift aligns with the optimization of China's foreign trade structure, where diversified markets such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union have become new growth drivers. It will assist private enterprises by promoting cross-border e-commerce, shifting exports from "scale expansion" to "quality improvement".

Domestically, the draft law will strengthen the market by unleashing private investment potential and reducing reliance on the United States. Internationally, private enterprises will leverage China's comprehensive industry chain advantages to reinforce its irreplaceable role in the global division of labor. This model — promoting openness through the rule of law and seeking breakthroughs through innovation — offers a new paradigm for developing countries participating in global economic governance.

The draft law is both a solution to navigate Sino-US trade frictions and an inevitable choice for China's high-quality economic development. Through legal safeguards, market-driven incentives and global strategies, China's private economy is poised to turn crisis into opportunity, emerging as a stabilizing force in the global economy.

— ZHANG XI, CHINA DAILY

Space place to found a community not a colony

The crew of Shenzhou XIX spacecraft transferred the keys of the Tiangong space station to the Shenzhou XX crew at a handover ceremony on Sunday. The Shenzhou XIX crew has now completed all planned tasks. The three astronauts are expected to take the Shenzhou XIX spacecraft and return to a planned landing site at the scheduled time.

That marks another step forward in China building its space station, which, after receiving different batches of Chinese astronauts over the past years, will welcome its first ever foreign astronaut in the near future.

In late February, China and Pakistan signed a cooperation agreement to select and train Pakistani astro-

nauts for future flight missions to the Tiangong space station, opening a new chapter in deepening cooperation in the manned space sector between the two countries. This is the first time China has signed such an agreement to train foreign astronauts to participate in its space station flight missions, a substantial breakthrough in China's international cooperation in major space programs.

Although the United States tries to peddle the "China threat" theory to smear the country's space exploration, the world sees a different picture. China is willing to deepen its cooperation and exchanges with other countries to advance space exploration and the peaceful use of outer space and to

make better use of space technology for the interests of all people around the world. It is Washington that sees space as a new arena for geopolitical games and a first-come-first-served virgin land that the US must colonize to meet its own narrow ends.

China's vision of lowering the "threshold" for developing countries to enter and explore space is also a manifestation of the country fulfilling its international obligations as a major spacefaring nation that is committed to building a community with a shared future for mankind. China remains open to cooperation with other countries, including the US, for the peaceful exploration of space.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

What They Say

EU must find courage to stand on its own two feet

In the west, a trade dispute with the United States, in the east, the conflict in Ukraine and worsening relations with Russia. In addition, the confrontation with China, which is not very encouraging for the continent, continues. Things are bleak for the European Union.

With EU policymakers reflecting on the situation they now find themselves in, the failures of handling relations with the US, Russia and China, especially when it comes to the EU's strategic autonomy, have led to questioning of the European Commission's submission to Washington's will.

Having given full trust to the previous Joe Biden administration and let the United States influence and even dictate EU policy on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the EU gave up diplomatic efforts over the past three years on the Russia-Ukraine crisis by blindly following the US on a path of escalation.

The worsening EU-Russia relations have caused huge damages to both sides economically and posed a long-term threat to European security. The possible walkaway by US President Donald Trump from the current

Ukraine peace talks if they fail could spell an even bigger disaster for the European continent if EU leaders still

refuse to pursue diplomacy with Russia.

The European Commission also bowed to the Biden administration by freezing the China-EU Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, which was achieved after seven years and 35 rounds of talks and whose huge potential benefits for European companies were widely touted by EU trade officials.

The commission has pushed for the ban on Huawei 5G, the tightening of screening Chinese foreign direct investment in the EU, bad-mouthed China's Belt and Road Initiative and helped spread the "China threat" theory, all clearly at Washington's bidding.

It is all far removed from the days when Angela Merkel, who served as German chancellor for 16 years, emerged as the de-facto European leader.

Merkel, a trained quantum chemistry scientist, known for being cool-headed, rational and pragmatic, never blindly followed the dictates of the US, as demonstrated by her refusal to join the NATO bombing of Libya in 2011, which turned out to be a disaster for the country and the region.

Having spent half of her life in then East Germany enabled Merkel to have a better perspective of the

diverse world and not see everything as simplistic as black or white.

Her 12 visits to China, more than any other Western leader, also helped her better understand the complexities of the nation.

Merkel did not like loudspeaker diplomacy or smear campaigns as favored by many Western politicians. She favored dialogue, including engaging with China and Russia on key differences. She played a pivotal role in concluding the CAI negotiations between China and the EU in December 2020. She firmly opposed the US efforts to decouple from the Chinese economy, and its bid to divide the world into confrontational blocs and force countries to choose sides.

During her years in office, Merkel showed leadership, wisdom and most importantly, strategic autonomy for Germany and for the EU. No wonder surveys from the Pew Research Center to YouGov and other agencies all showed her as the most popular global leader and most trusted to do the right things on the global stage.

Hopefully, the EU in its reflections will heed the lessons to be learned from her pragmatic diplomacy and once again exercise strategic autonomy in handling international relations.

— CHEN WEIHUA, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT

Li Ke

Trade unions' new role in tech revolution

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions. On Monday, in his important speech to mark the anniversary on May 1, President Xi Jinping highlighted the need to comprehensively enhance the quality of the workforce amid the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation.

What Xi pointed out is the right direction for the federation at a time when productive forces and the relations of production are undergoing profound changes. The federation is poised to make significant contributions to Chinese modernization by cultivating highly skilled workers and uniting workers under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

As the main force of the working class in China, industrial workers are a pillar for promoting the innovation and application of new technologies. To accelerate industrial upgrading and enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises, efforts should be made to deepen reform of industrial workers and cultivate workers with new strengths.

In October, the central authorities issued a guideline to promote the reform and cultivation of first-class industrial technical workers, helping them cope with the challenges brought by the rapidly evolving new technologies and new business models. As a bridge between the Party and the working people, trade unions play a crucial role in employee education, among others.

In recent years, the federation has continuously promoted improvement in the quality of workers and their status to cultivate more master craftsmen and high-skilled workers. It has also organized talent training camps, helped build a system for schools that are training craftsmen across the nation, and built platforms specialized in imparting intelligent skills, boosting learning and broadening the channels of training.

In particular, with the rapid progress of the digital economy and prevalent smart-manufacturing, the federation attaches significant importance to improving the digital literacy and skills of industrial workers to proficiently use new intelligent tools and adapt to the progress of new quality productive forces.

Focusing on the upgrading of manufacturing, new technologies and the new occupations brought by them, the federation innovatively hosts professional skills competitions, selecting

master craftsmen while supporting the progress of diligent youngsters, skilled workers and hard-working personnel.

Trade unions at all levels are also fully leveraging their strengths to organize skills competitions in various sectors or those related to particular positions, helping the participants share the benefits of competition. The Wenzhou Federation of Trade Unions in Zhejiang province has hosted skills competitions for five consecutive years, all aimed at improving the skills of employees.

Similarly, Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province have jointly hosted contests focused on four categories — cybersecurity, new applications of blockchain technology, aerospace model processing and robotic system integration — to promote new quality productive forces. These contests encouraged a large number of workers to learn new skills and hone their abilities.

By organizing national, regional and sectoral competitions, trade unions at all levels are motivating enthusiasm and inspiring the innovation of workers. By focusing on digital empowerment, they help employees enhance their skills and optimize the classification and tiered development of talents.

In addition to talent cultivation, trade unions are continually expanding their range of services. With new employment forms appearing with the rise of the platform economy, they aim to provide their services to those in the new sectors, such as food delivery riders and ride-hailing drivers, who are troubled by ambiguous employment relations with employers and the absence of social guarantees.

In order to help these employees register with trade unions, enjoy corresponding services, and safeguard their legitimate rights, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions has initiated a three-year action plan to urge more relevant enterprises to set up trade unions and provide services. The practice of Nanjing in Jiangsu province and Zhejiang province provides beneficial reference.

Nanjing has introduced digital methods to provide "collective and one-stop registration" for those with new labor relations, while Zhejiang is pro-

moting the establishment of trade unions in emerging sectors, thereby expanding services for van drivers, livestreamers and household service providers, among others.

Once established, these trade unions should fulfill their functions, take advantage of their connections with the people and provide services and assistance centered around labor standards, collective consultation and collective contracts for workers in emerging employment forms.

Continual efforts have been made to build a rights protection system for these workers. Employers are encouraged to buy insurance policies for accidents or injuries their employees might suffer at work or to provide them medical assistance through trade unions. Platform enterprises are required to establish a consultation mechanism with trade unions and representatives of employees.

Take Alibaba Group's Ele.me, a food delivery giant in China, for example. Its trade union has established a comprehensive employee representative con-

ference system to improve negotiation and coordination. The platform company also operates various dispute resolution methods, such as the trade union's labor law supervision committee, dispute mediation center and round table meetings.

These efforts continuously enrich mechanisms to prevent disputes at the source, comprehensively upgrade rider rights protection and promote mutual benefit between the company and the riders.

Local progress drives overall progress. With the ongoing advancement of trade unions nationwide, the protection of workers' rights will be strengthened, and their skills evolve with the development of the digital economy, driving new advancements contributing to Chinese modernization.

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MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY

Klaus F. Zimmermann

Tariff will not be panacea for US woes

The global economy has endured major turbulence due to the United States' aggressive economic policy of imposing high punitive tariffs on imports to extract maximum economic benefits. True, markets have shown resilience, but only up to a certain point.

The volatility caused by the unexpected imposition of tariffs, sudden rollbacks, and communication strategies largely conducted via social media has created deep uncertainty for investors, corporations and global supply chains.

The very strong negative reactions of international stock markets played a key role in forcing the moderation of the US' most extreme tariff proposals. The fear of financial instability and backlash from investors contributed to the softening of positions and pushed the US administration toward partial rollbacks and renewed talks.

The US' trade strategy lacks consistency and economic rationale. High tariffs were presented as a means of protecting domestic industries, relocating jobs and forcing trade concessions. But these measures are expected to backfire in key areas: consumer prices in the US are expected to rise, household purchasing power to weaken, and investment to slow down.

Worse, supply chains that took decades to build are feared to have been disrupted, with the effects predicted to shift global trade routes and investment flows. The broader goals of the policy — namely, reducing dependence on foreign manufacturing and bringing jobs back to the US — are in conflict with the mechanisms used to pursue them. Trade wars undermine global specialization and the efficiency gains made possible by comparative advantage.

Economic theory dating as far back as to Adam Smith and David Ricardo teaches us that international trade enables countries to allocate resources where they are most productive. Even if one country could theoretically produce all goods more efficiently, mutual gains may still arise from specialization and trade. Today's supply chains reflect this logic. For instance, a single Apple computer integrates components and expertise from across the globe, particularly from China.

Instead of strengthening the US economy, the erratic use of tariffs as a policy tool creates distortions. The belief that tariffs can finance government budgets, stimulate domestic investment and accelerate growth overlooks both economic fundamentals and global interdependencies. What will occur instead are inflationary pressure, reduced consumer confidence, and a more fragile economic outlook.

At the core of Washington's strategy is an outdated model of economic nationalism combined with a view of geopolitics that treats trading partners as competitors and global leadership as a zero-sum game. The idea that the US can run the global economy like a monopolistic corporation — extracting tributes or concessions in exchange for market access or security guarantees — ignores the complexity of global governance. The US does enjoy certain advantages, such as issuing the world's reserve currency and having unmatched military power, but that doesn't mean it should act like a global hegemon.

China is the main target of the US tariff war. But it cannot afford to appear weak in the face of the public confrontation. Direct concessions will damage China's image, both domestically and internationally. The trade conflict has already escalated to the point where bilateral tariffs are well over 100 per-

cent and, if sustained, trade flows between the two countries will likely come to a virtual standstill.

Beyond tariffs, China holds other strategic levers. As one of the largest holders of US Treasury securities, it could theoretically inflict financial pain by selling them in large volumes, although such a move would also hurt China's own interests.

Strategically, China may intend to rebalance its economic relationships. Investing in the European Union is one potential path, particularly in response to the US' export restrictions. Germany, as the economic heart of the EU, offers a possible destination for Chinese capital given its new government's intention to debt-finance huge infrastructure investments, in case the country (and the EU) moderates its recent de-risking strategy toward China.

This brings regional partnerships, such as the EU-China trade partnership, into sharper focus. These partnerships can serve as stabilizers in an increasingly fractured global trade environment. While the US-China rivalry dominates headlines, the EU has positioned itself as a balancing force, leveraging its commitment to multilateralism and rules-based trade.

By pursuing frameworks currently on hold, such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, and working toward pragmatic compromises — such as minimum pricing on Chinese-made electric vehicles instead of outright tariffs — the EU may demonstrate that collaboration, not confrontation, is still possible. China has already implemented parts of the CAI such as easing financial sector restrictions and addressing forced technology transfers and environmental commitments. Unresolved issues, mainly concerning State-owned enterprises and subsidy transparency, are still crucial. If enforced, they could drive long-needed structural reforms in China, while also

supporting free trade.

Considering these factors, what steps can be taken to end the global trade conflict?

A possible solution lies in rebuilding multilateral cooperation. Unilateralism and tariff wars fuel only uncertainty and fragmentation. Hence, countries should return to the negotiating table, not just to resolve specific disputes, but also to renew trust in international institutions and rules-based trade.

Ending the trade war also requires recognizing that global economic power is no longer unipolar. We must accept a world where leadership is earned through cooperation, not coercion. Trading partners cannot be coerced into agreement, and a sustainable global trade order depends on balanced relationships, where mutual benefit, not dominance, guides policy.

Tariffs should be replaced by clear, enforceable agreements that promote fair trade practices while preserving the benefits of openness, and mechanisms to address labor rights, environmental concerns, and intellectual property must be modernized.

The alternative to cooperation is long-term economic fragmentation — slower growth, higher prices and diminished global influence for all. With the right approach, the current crisis can be transformed into an opportunity to reinvigorate global trade and provide a course away from confrontation and toward sustainable, inclusive prosperity.

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Qi Bin

Abusive port fees blackmail global shipping sector

What is the USTR's proposal?

On April 17, 2025, the Office of the US Trade Representative released the final notice of action regarding its investigation into what it called "China's unfair practices in the shipbuilding and maritime logistics sectors". With regard to the draft Federal Register Notice and the accompanying press release, the United States is set to levy fees on vessels arriving at US ports which are owned, operated or built by China.

This measure will be rolled out in two phases. The first is scheduled to begin on Oct 14. During this stage, the US will start charging fees which are calculated based on the net tonnage of arriving vessels. For ships with Chinese operators or owners, the fee will commence at \$50 per net ton and gradually increase to \$140 per net ton over a three-year period.

For Chinese-built ships, the fee will begin at \$18 per net ton and increase to \$33 per net ton within the same three-year span. The second phase will be initiated three years later. At that point, the US will place restrictions on the transportation of liquefied natural gas by foreign vessels, with these curbs intensifying incrementally until 2047.

The USTR Notice defined "Chinese ownership" in terms of legal title, beneficial ownership and effective control. Nevertheless, when it came to defining a vessel's "operator", the USTR simply referred to a US Customs and Border Protection form, which fails to offer a clear-cut definition of the term.

All these fees are imposed under the authority of Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. This section empowers the USTR to counter any foreign country's action which is considered "unjustifiable and burdens or restricts United States commerce". Evidently, such practices blatantly violate a fundamental tenet of the World Trade Organization system, the principle of non-discrimination under the Trade-Related Investment Measures.

This principle serves as the cornerstone of an orderly international trade environment. Imposing higher fees on vessels which are either owned, operated or built by China arriving at US ports is a discriminatory trade practice targeting China and other countries. It severely breaches WTO rules and significantly undermines the rules-based multilateral trading system and the international economic and trade order.

From a practical perspective, the measure may disrupt global shipping and ultimately harm US customers and businesses more than it impacts China.

Moreover, the USTR's actions may also violate the 2003 Sino-US Maritime Agreement, as well as other US laws. For instance, the USTR's use of its Section 301 authority may be in violation of the export clause in the US Constitution. As a result, it is highly likely that affected stakeholders will challenge the legality and validity of these practices on administrative, constitutional and procedural grounds.

Although the US port fees are aimed at countering China's dominance in the shipbuilding industry, the general view is that they will not lead to a renaissance in US shipbuilding. US shipyards generally face limited capacity and a lack of price competitiveness. A container ship built in China costs approximately \$55 million, while a comparable US-made ship comes with a price tag of around \$330 million.

China holds the position of the world's largest shipbuilder. According to Clarksons Research's 2024 annual review of the shipbuilding industry, around 66 percent of all new ship orders placed in 2024 were awarded to Chinese shipyards, while the US accounted for a mere 0.1 percent. In terms of shipbuilding output, China commands a 53-percent market share, meaning that 53 percent of all ships delivered globally in 2024 were manufactured in China. Charging hefty port fees for vessels that have already been built and delivered by China and are owned or operated by Chinese or non-Chinese entities is meaningless in terms of revitalizing the US shipbuilding industry.

From a practical perspective, the measure may disrupt global shipping and ultimately harm US customers and businesses more than it impacts China. Decoupling with and penalizing Chinese shipping will only disrupt the US logistics system and its supply chains.

On the one hand, large shipping lines have significant fleets of Chinese-built vessels, and Chinese-owned operators transport vast quantities of goods to the US. On the other hand, data from Lloyd's List Intelligence shows that only 9 percent of Chinese-built ships called at US ports in the first quarter of 2024, which is a relatively small proportion. These shipping lines can redeploy their vessels to non-US services, reducing the number of Chinese-built ships visiting US ports. Eventually, US businesses and consumers will bear the brunt, facing higher prices as increased shipping costs drive up inflation, thus affecting importers, exporters and American households alike.

In conclusion, the USTR seems to have grossly miscalculated the importance of China in the global shipbuilding industry and its trade relations with the US. Targeting Chinese-built ships operated by global shipping lines that serve the US not only violates WTO rules and US laws, but is also detrimental to the interests of the United States and its people.

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GLOBAL VIEWS



Editor's note: The world has undergone many changes and shocks in recent years. Enhanced dialogue between scholars from China and overseas is needed to build mutual understanding on many problems the world faces. For this purpose, the China Watch Institute of China Daily and the National Institute for Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, jointly present this special column: The Global Strategic Dialogue, in which experts from China and abroad will offer insightful views, analysis and fresh perspectives on long-term strategic issues of global importance.

ALOIZIO MERCADANTE

On a dark road without headlights

The dollar hegemony, the 'safety cable' of the US economy, is increasingly being eroded under the tariff blitz of the US government

What the United States is doing has almost no historical precedent. The US' endless back-and-forth on tariffs makes any accurate forecast of what lies ahead nearly impossible.

But one thing is certain: it's nothing good.

Even in an "optimistic" — perhaps naive — scenario where the "tariff war" remains largely confined to a bilateral clash between China and the US, the outlook is grim. After all, this would be a conflict between the world's two largest economies.

But, it seems unlikely that the phenomenon unleashed by the US government will remain limited to a bilateral dispute with China — even though the growing rivalry with the Asian giant lies at the heart of the US' geopolitical and geoeconomic concerns.

Behind the simplistic, clumsy and outright false logic of the "tariff blitz" is the US administration's palpable anxiety about the US' place in the new world order.

If the US faces increasing difficulty maintaining its hegemony, disrupting the international political order and the smooth functioning of the global economy — already fraying — might offer it some strategic utility, however questionable. This is especially true given the US' mounting debt.

Currently, US public debt stands at 120 percent of GDP — approximately \$36 trillion. The last budget surplus occurred in 2001, and the last trade surplus was in 1975.

China reduced its exposure to US debt in December 2024, bringing its reserves down to around \$759 billion — significantly below the peak of \$1.3 trillion a decade ago. This diversification strategy is complemented by China's gold reserves, reaching 2,284.55 metric tons by the end of January.

The US administration, with its erratic and improvised response to this immense strategic challenge, fuels uncertainty about the stability and predictability of US economic policy — further eroding the cornerstone of US geopolitical power: the dollar's status as the world's primary reserve currency and preferred medium for global trade.

Although the renminbi's share in global financial transactions (3.75 percent as of December 2024) remains far behind the dollar's dominance (49 percent in the same



SONG CHEN / CHINA DAILY

period), there is a growing trend toward dollar substitution — not just by the renminbi but also by other currencies in regional and bilateral trade.

This trend has been accelerated by the political weaponization of the dollar through sanctions against countries such as Russia, Venezuela and Iran, which has undermined trust in the US currency.

Of course, addressing the current account deficit with a simplistic analysis — focusing only on the goods trade while ignoring services and income flows — is doomed to fail.

The US government claims these measures will spur new US investments, but this seems unrealistic given the instability already unleashed in domestic and global

markets. The combination of unpredictable policies and rudimentary economic calculations will likely produce the opposite of the promised results.

It's worth noting that reducing the deficit and revitalizing US industry are not inherently irrational goals. The problem lies in the total absence of a rational — or even lawful — strategy within the multilateral trade rules largely shaped by the US to achieve these objectives through long-term negotiations without destroying regional and global value chains.

No one rebuilds an industry overnight through improvised, extreme protectionism. What we'll witness are supply chain disruptions, shortages and inflationary pressures — because there was no prepara-

tion or maturation time in logistics and infrastructure. This entire process is marked by improvisation and inconsistency.

A well-designed industrial policy — focused on building long-term national and regional value chains within agreed multilateral rules, as Brazil is attempting under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's third administration — would be necessary.

China did not become the world's second-largest economy and the planet's factory by practicing crude protectionism or "taking advantage of the US".

China became what it is today by rejecting the neoliberal paradigm that the US helped impose on the world — and, to some extent, on itself. Indeed, China's rise result-

ed from a complex, well-crafted economic, political and technological strategy — not bluster and threats.

As early as 2005, the Chinese government elevated indigenous innovation to a national strategic priority. Over the following two decades, China not only consolidated its position in existing value chains but also made a qualitative leap in its industrial base — expanding its productive complexity and gaining competitive advantages in strategic sectors, from renewable energy to aerospace and microelectronics.

As a developing country, China has long placed strong emphasis on research and development, technological innovation, industrial-scale investments and its remarkable ability to transform applied research into commercial solutions, which suggest that technological parity with early leaders is not only possible but may be achieved soon. This trajectory challenges the conventional notion that technological advantages are structurally irreversible, pointing toward a more dynamic global competition landscape.

But the key issue here is not the US' fundamental mistake of reacting to major geoeconomic and geopolitical shifts with improvised, counterproductive measures. The core issue is geopolitical. With reckless unilateralism, the US has destroyed the old "rules-based world order" and is trying to impose, by force and threats, a new "Hobbesian" world order — one that would recreate the unchallenged, unilateral US hegemony that prevailed from the Soviet Union's collapse through the first decade of this century.

How will the world withstand this "stress test" imposed by the planet's great power?

"Salvation" may lie in a grand international concert — one that illuminates another road, leading to the fight against global asymmetries, climate balance, international cooperation, peace and a renewed world order based on fair rules, an order built on the understanding that international relations need not be a zero-sum game.

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HUSSEIN ASKARY

Alternative reality to hegemony

The law of the jungle must be replaced by the pursuit of harmony if humanity is to avoid another global conflict

Looking at the rising tensions between the United States and China, and between the US and Russia in recent years, it becomes difficult for many to believe that the three nations stood shoulder to shoulder fighting a common enemy more than 80 years ago. During World War II, the three nations made unprecedented sacrifices in the fight against Nazism and Fascism and worked together to achieve their final defeat. That victory was crowned by the signing of the United Nations

Charter, the founding document of the UN, in San Francisco in 1945. The sovereignty, independence and equality among nation states was a key pillar of the charter.

However, the legacy of colonialism and imperialism lingered in the world. Winston Churchill, and Harry Truman together paved the way to the Cold War and the division of the world into "we and them" again. The US National Security Act of 1947 turned the enormous US military institutions into a unified tool under the whims of Anglo-American leaders. This was consolidated with a paranoid "red scare" of Russia and China and McCarthyism. The "military-industrial complex" is just one product of this process. "National security" became a selfish and destructive obsession.

Simultaneously, China and other Global South nations pursued their struggle for freedom and independence despite the massive headwinds of the Cold War, creating a different vision for the world. This culminated in the Asia-Africa Bandung Conference which celebrated its 70th anniversary in April. The Bandung Spirit combined the principles of the UN Charter and China-proposed Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

The Bandung Spirit and the Anglo-American notion of unilateral hegemony are

With the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, China has laid out a roadmap for achieving global peace and prosperity through cooperation and harmonizing the interests of all nations in a community with a shared future for mankind.

coming to loggerheads today. The enormous changes in the past four decades, with China's peaceful economic rise as the best illustration, have ushered a new era of multilateralism where these two notions cannot co-exist on the same planet.

The West must come to grips with this reality to avoid a new global conflict. The philosophical grounds for the hegemonic thinking must be exposed and abandoned. One attempt to clarify such a philosophy is made by the so-called realist school of international relations. As US scholar John Mearsheimer asserts, great powers are "concerned mainly with figuring out how to survive in a world where there is no agency to protect them from each other" and "the anarchic international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals". In such a cynical condition, "might makes right" and justice is whatever serves the strong. Realists claim that the law of the jungle in human relations is the natural state of things. They evoke examples from history to support their view as if it were as solid as natural science. Their idea is that

there is no "right or wrong", and the notions of charity, mercy and empathy are creations of the minds of weak people. The example often cited by these realists is derived from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. In this book, the Athenians tell the people of the island of Melos that they cannot be neutral in the war and that they either join the Athenian alliance or be destroyed. When the people of Melos refused, the Athenians killed all the males on the island, enslaved all the females, and resettled the island with their own supporters. In "the natural state of things", the Athenian envoy said to the people of Melos, "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must". This is called "realpolitik" today.

In modern Western philosophy, Thomas Hobbes' notion of a state of "war of all against all" as natural state of affairs became dominant in imperialist thinking.

The way out of this pessimistic and ultimately destructive thinking is through wisdom and invoking what makes us truly human. It is important to remember that the reason the United Nations was created is to avoid repeating the horrendous suffering caused during World War II. Especially in today's multipolar world, where one power cannot assert its hegemonic desires without risking the annihilation of the entire human race through a nuclear holocaust, some self-reflection is necessary.

The notion of hegemony must be replaced by the notion of harmony of one human family with a shared future. Asian wisdom can serve us well in these decisive moments, as it has managed to bring decades of peace and economic prosperity. China's rise to be the world's second-largest economy and the largest industrial power in just four decades, lifting hundreds of millions of people out of abject poverty, without firing a single bullet against a neighbor over that period, is unprecedented in history.



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

In his news conference on the sidelines of the two sessions in Beijing on March 7, China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi responded to the notion of "America First" from a US journalist by saying that there are more than 190 countries in the world and should everyone stress "my country first" and obsess over a position of strength, the law of the jungle would reign in the world again. He emphasized that international norms and order "would take a body blow" and asked: "does right prevail over might, or does might make right?" He advised that history should move forward, not backward. He stressed that the supremacy of common interests over selfish and narrow-minded policies that endanger the world.

It is in this light that the Global Security Initiative in 2022 was launched to highlight the importance of thinking in terms of common and indivisible security of all nations, rather than what some powers

deem as their own pure interest no matter what the consequences are. With the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, China has laid out a roadmap for achieving global peace and prosperity through cooperation and harmonizing the interests of all nations in a community with a shared future for mankind. This is not mere rhetoric but a reality of what China has achieved both at home and in cooperation with its neighbors and the Global South nations.

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Z WEEKLY



A carnival of unity

Returning to a vibrant celebration of cultures, a former US student reflects on the power of cultural exchange and the unity found in diversity.

Social Media Digest

Kitty takes flight

Hello Kitty, the iconic fictional cat-like character known for her round face and signature red bow perched on her left ear, has inspired the renaming of an airport in Japan as part of a strategic effort to attract visitors during the Osaka Expo 2025.

Located in Kunisaki city, Oita prefecture, Oita Airport has been rebranded as Oita Hello Kitty Airport. Running from April 13 to Oct 13 — coinciding with the Expo — the rebranding aims to attract both Hello Kitty fans and international tourists to the region.

Upon arrival, visitors are greeted by Hello Kitty adorning the boarding bridge, followed by whimsical posters featuring the character riding airplanes as they walk through the terminals.

In addition to Hello Kitty, other beloved Sanrio characters such as My Melody, Little Twin Stars, and Pochacco will also be featured in the airport's decorations.

Travelers can also expect to receive Sanrio-themed luggage tags and browse official merchandise at the souvenir shop, which includes key chains, T-shirts, and cookies.

Oita, conveniently located just an hour by plane or four hours by train from Osaka, provides a peaceful escape from the bustling tourist hub while still being within reach of Expo events.

The region is also home to famous hot springs, scenic beauty, and the nearby Sanrio-themed park, Harmonyland.

"We are filled with the hope that this airport will become a bridge connecting countless smiles," said Aya Komaki, president of Sanrio Entertainment, during the recent launch.



Hello Kitty is a beloved character in Japan. ic

Smart healing

Instead of spending hours at the doctor's office or sifting through endless search results for health advice, many young people are turning to AI-powered healthcare — where professional health tips are just a click away.

This tech-savvy solution is quickly becoming a lifesaver for millions of young adults grappling with lingering health problems like insomnia, hormonal imbalances, and chronic fatigue. Often, they have no idea what's causing these problems or how to fix them, but thankfully, AI is stepping in with instant answers and tailored guidance.

For example, if someone asks, "Why does sitting for a long time cause lower back pain?" the AI can pinpoint the medical factors at play, like continuous muscle tension or poor blood circulation. It then offers personalized workout suggestions to improve circulation and ease the discomfort.

AI-driven health platforms could also help alleviate the burden on doctors. Mao Hongjing, a sleep disorder specialist in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, told the Chinese media outlet Welle Studio that he treats up to 10,000 patients a year and must answer basic questions like "How can I fall asleep faster?" an average of 10 times a day.

In a world where time is precious and health is everything, AI might just be the digital doctor we never knew we needed.

GUO JIATONG



Many young people are increasingly turning to AI for healthcare advice. vcg



Left: Dylan Walker (left) dances with a student from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea during the 20th World Culture Carnival at Beijing Language and Culture University on April 26. **Middle:** Delegations from various continents march in during the carnival's opening ceremony. **Right:** Chinese students showcase traditional flower arranging at the event. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By DYLAN WALKER
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Returning to Beijing Language and Culture University for the 20th World Culture Carnival on April 26 felt like coming home.

From 2016 to 2022, BLCU was not just the place where I studied — first earning my bachelor's degree in Chinese language, then my master's degree in international politics — it was where I grew, struggled, and found my place in a larger global story.

During my student years, the World Culture Carnival was always a highlight. From 2016 to 2019, I led the booth for the United States. Every conversation I had with visitors, every laugh shared across cultural divides, felt like a small but important contribution to a greater understanding between people.

This year, however, marked a particularly special milestone. For the first time, I returned not as a student participant, but as a young media professional, interviewing both Chinese and US students.

It was an entirely different vantage point — and yet, standing among the colorful booths, walking past the rippling flags of 113 countries and regions, I felt the same sense of wonder and hope that had captivated me years ago.

One US student told me, "Events like this create a space where young people from different countries can connect naturally, share their cultures, and see the world through each other's eyes. It's not just about learning facts — it's about building real friendships and breaking down stereotypes, which is how true global understanding begins."

This year's carnival drew more than 40,000 students, alumni, and guests. The opening ceremony was nothing short of magical: a vibrant parade of traditional costumes, national flags waving high, and a shared sense of excitement in the air.

Watching students from so many backgrounds walk together, I was reminded that unity doesn't mean erasing differences — it means celebrating them, side by side.

One of the most striking things for me was seeing how Gen Z students are redefining cultural exchange — and how much more genuine these exchanges have become.

Unlike formal diplomatic meetings, these



It reaffirmed my belief that cultural understanding isn't something that happens overnight — it is built moment by moment, conversation by conversation, festival by festival."

Dylan Walker, a journalist for China Daily 21st Century Media

interactions thrived on spontaneity and authentic curiosity. Indonesian students presented their colorful traditional attire with pride, while Chinese students showcased the quiet beauty of traditional flower arranging and tea ceremonies. Students from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, participating for the first time, shared their country's rich heritage through traditional music, a Taekwondo demonstration, and dancing — which I was thrilled to join.

These were not static exhibits; they were living, breathing, evolving expressions of identity and dialogue.

Seeing the students from Sri Lanka proudly share their vibrant traditions through crafts, clothing, and storytelling made me realize how deeply culture connects us beyond language. Meanwhile, the students from France turned their booth into a cheerful "tour around France", complete with a miniature Eiffel Tower, making even strangers feel like welcome guests.

As one attendee told me, "We bond not through perfected presentations, but through the messy, joyful process of learning each other's worlds."

Circle of connection

Throughout the day, performances added another layer of magic — traditional dances, musical performances, and martial arts displays filled the air with energy.

But the real magic, I realized, happened in the spaces between the performances: in the shared smiles, the hesitant first steps into unfamiliar traditions, the patient explanations of a costume's symbolism, and the collective breath before a song began. In these small, genuine moments, the

barriers between "us" and "them" quietly dissolved.

Reflecting on my own journey, the carnival felt like a beautiful full circle.

Years ago, setting up the US booth, I was one of the students trying to "explain" my culture to others. Now, as a media professional, I have the privilege of witnessing and documenting these exchanges, capturing the beauty that unfolds when young people come together with open hearts.

As the day wound down, the festival grounds buzzed with lingering energy. Students posed for selfies in traditional dress, swapped social media contacts, and made plans to visit each other's home countries someday.

Taking part in the event reminded me once again why I fell in love with this university and the ideals it stands for. It reaffirmed my belief that cultural understanding isn't something that happens overnight — it is built moment by moment, conversation by conversation, festival by festival.

Leaving campus that afternoon, I felt not an ending, but a beginning — a beginning of new stories, new connections, and a renewed commitment to the dream of a world where diversity isn't a barrier, but a bridge.

And as I looked back one last time at the colorful booths, with music still echoing in the air, I knew that the spirit of the carnival would stay with me — not just as a memory of my time at BLCU, but as a guiding light for the road ahead.

Z WEEKLY

Take a book, pass it on

A grassroots library in Beijing invites readers to take books freely and pass them on, spreading knowledge far beyond its walls.

By GUO JIATONG
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Last week, Alvaro Vera Cordovez, a 29-year-old Chilean student at the University of International Business and Economics, visited a unique library in Beijing.

Unlike traditional libraries that require memberships and set time limits for book returns, the "Civilian Mobile Library" Cordovez explored offers books completely free of charge — and without the expectation that they be returned. Readers are invited to take one book every 15 days and are encouraged to pass it on to someone else once they've finished reading.

"I really liked the concept it offers," said Cordovez.

Tucked away in the narrow alleys of Beixiawazi Hutong in Dongcheng district, the library is just seven square meters in size but houses thousands of books across a range of subjects — from business and philosophy to literature and history.

"It might be the smallest library in the world," said Xu Dawei, the founder. "But in another sense, it's also the biggest because the books keep moving. I don't even know where some of them have ended up — some have even made it overseas."

Xu recalled the story of one regular reader who took an English book on Chinese garden history. After finishing it, the reader passed it to a neighbor, who then took it to Germany.

"Just think about it: that book started out in a tiny hutong in Beijing, made its way to someone's home, and then traveled all the way to Europe. The journey is invisible, but powerful," Xu said.

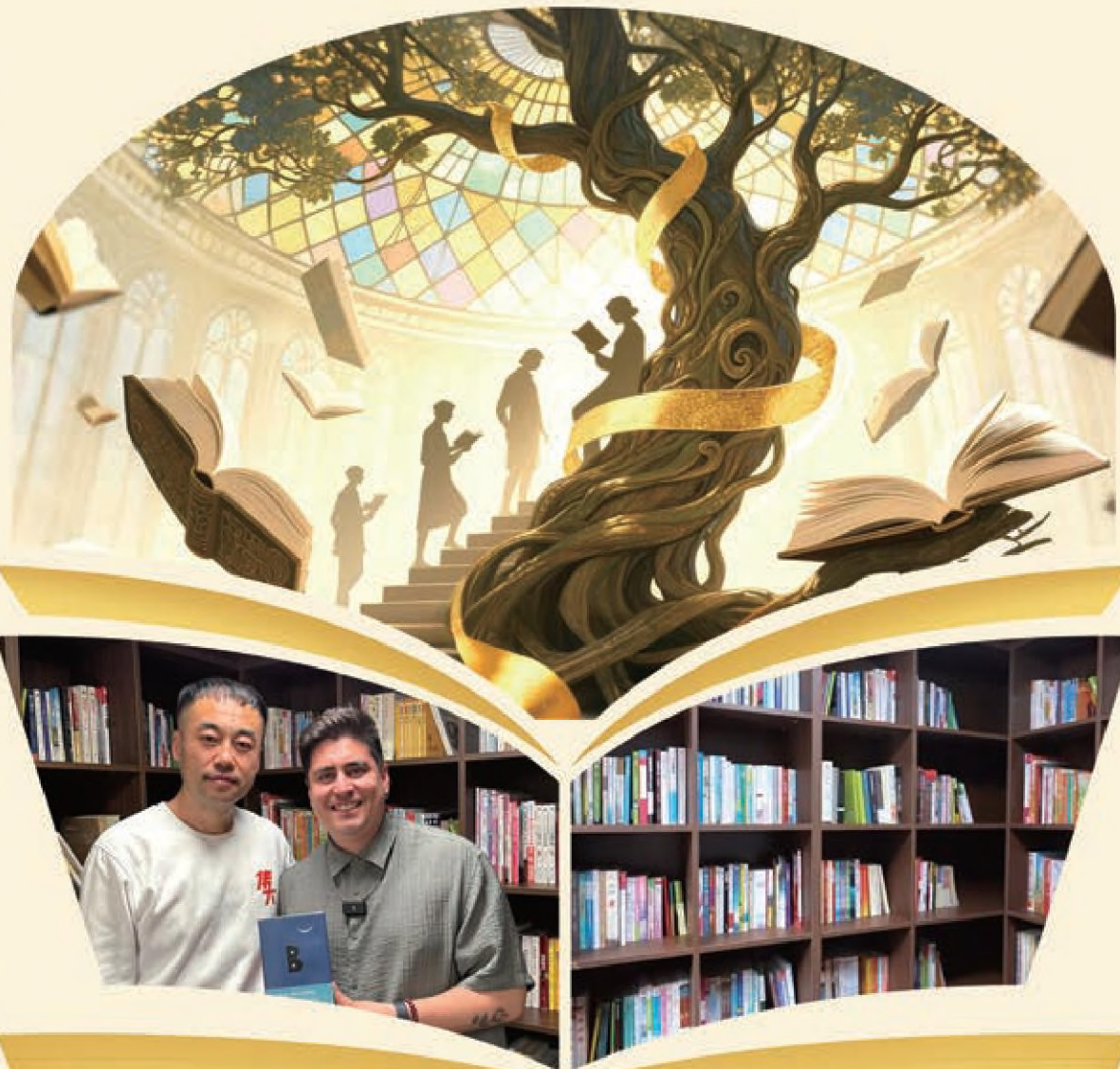
Power in pages

The library is now in its third locale. Founded in 2010, Xu has had to relocate the library several times due to financial challenges.

Being completely nonprofit, the library struggles to cover expenses such as books, rent, and staff salaries. However, Xu has managed to keep it alive for almost 15 years — driven by his belief in the transformative power of books, a belief shaped by his own life experience.

"Books have truly changed my life," Xu said.

Growing up in a rural village near Yantai in Shandong province,



Left: Xu Dawei (left) and Alvaro Vera Cordovez. Right: Bookshelves at the Civilian Mobile Library. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

most of his classmates stopped their schooling after middle school. "Out of around 20 classmates, only two made it to high school — I was one of them."

Xu studied accounting in college but taught himself about advertising and marketing through reading. This self-education led him to a

career in advertising, and he eventually started his own company.

"I've read thousands of books, and my mind is filled with knowledge. Whenever a client presents a problem, I can instantly draw from what I've read and come up with ideas," he said.

It was this career in advertising

that provided the financial means for Xu to start the mobile library in 2010. The idea took shape when Xu shared online his list of the 100 books he most recommended with university students, but many of them said they couldn't find those books in their school libraries or local bookstores. So, Xu began

mailing his books to readers for free.

Over the course of a year, he sent out nearly 1,000 books and received positive feedback from students. "They all wrote me letters expressing their gratitude, which inspired me to take it further," Xu said — turning his book-gifting

effort into a physical space.

For years, Xu has remained committed to his original vision. Even when his company faced financial difficulties, he refused to commercialize the library by turning it into a library-cafe hybrid, selling cultural products, or hosting events like book clubs, which he believes would distract from its welfare mission.

That's why the borrowing process is as simple as it gets — there are no deposits, no need to provide a phone number, and no requirement to join any social media group. "All they have to do is come," Xu said. "Even if they finish a book and decide not to pass it on, at least the book benefited one person and perhaps their family, helping them fall in love with reading."

Cordovez agreed. "I think the meaning of this library is to promote physical reading. It gives everyone the chance to get books for free and helps keep the culture of reading alive," he said.

Looking ahead, Xu is determined to continue his mission, despite the challenges posed by e-books and the fast-paced nature of modern life.

"This is the most meaningful thing I've done in my life," he said. "I want to pass it on to my son so that the library can stay open forever, maintaining its original purpose — a place where anyone can come, take a book, and leave without any formalities or barriers."

Cordovez shared Xu's sentiment: "Today's technology means younger generations don't read as much. But this library tries to keep reading from disappearing. It reminds us how valuable it is."

In an era dominated by AI and digital media, Xu believes it's even more crucial to keep reading to keep up with the changing world.

"Life is full of uncertainties. You can't control the environment, but you can change yourself," he said. "I encourage people to read not just professional books, but also literature, history, and philosophy. These are the things that help you stay strong, resilient, and open-minded."



Online
Watch the video
by scanning
the code.

Deep Dive

From late March to early April, 20-year-old US YouTuber Darren Watkins Jr, better known by his online alias iShowSpeed, visited several major cities across China — such as Beijing, Shanghai, Zhengzhou, Chengdu, and Changsha — livestreaming his experiences along the way. Widely shared on platforms like YouTube and Bilibili, his spontaneous and unfiltered content offered viewers a raw look at everyday life in China, sparking vibrant online discussions, challenging stereotypes, and promoting cross-cultural understanding in the digital age.

Livestream shows China as it really is

Authenticity builds trust. Through his unscripted livestreams, US internet personality iShowSpeed offered the world a genuine, credible, multi-dimensional, and open portrayal of China.

His one-take broadcasts gave viewers around the globe a chance to feel the vibrant pulse of China's cultural, technological, and everyday life confidence.

During his trip, iShowSpeed rapped and danced with locals on the streets of Shanghai, performed backflips on the Great Wall while wearing an overcoat featuring a classic floral pattern popular in Northeast China, paid tribute to Shaolin monks, and took selfies with heavily filtered BeautyCam "aunties".

None of these moments were scripted — they were all spontaneous, guided only by real-time comments from his audience.

Authenticity carries an irresistible power; only what touches the heart can truly resonate. When the world sees China captured in a bowl of *douzhi* (fermented bean juice), a spontaneous street choir, or a bustling Chengdu hotpot feast, every viewer becomes an observer, a storyteller, and an interpreter of the real China.

What unfolds before their eyes is not a carefully staged image, but a nation radiating confidence, openness, calm, and optimism — alive with the everyday warmth of grassroots connections.

Today, the global dissemination of China's technological achievements is still lagging behind its actual progress, leading to a skewed international perception that underestimates the country's innovative capabilities. This has

contributed to an imbalanced — even distorted — image of China abroad.

However, iShowSpeed's livestreaming tour across China helped close that gap. He spotlighted the country's cutting-edge technologies, from its high-speed rail network to the widespread use of shared bicycles and smart payment systems.

In China, the seamless blending of cultural soft power and technological hard power into everyday life transcends ideological barriers and bridges cultural divides. It speaks to the heart through the universal language of empathy.

As a representative of Gen Z, iShowSpeed captures the pure, universal joy of today's global youth. Whether wearing a Team China jersey in the Forbidden City, enjoying the famous Haidilao hotpot restaurant's "noodle dance", or singing the popular Chinese song *Sunshine, Rainbow, White Horse*,

he embodies a spirit of spontaneous, unfiltered happiness.

Rather than emphasizing the cultural differences between China and other countries, he radiates a simple, ideology-free, borderless joy that resonates with Gen Z around the world.

In doing so, he offers a glimpse of a genuine, joyful China — challenging stereotypes and encouraging young people everywhere to connect with and appreciate Chinese culture.

In today's world of multicultural tensions, iShowSpeed's journey through China carries a profound — if unintended — significance: it serves as an icebreaker for understanding the real China.

The warmth and kindness shown by everyday Chinese people reveal to a global audience the beauty of authentic, harmonious exchanges between locals and visitors.

This deep empathy creates a

spiritual bond that transcends borders, races, and backgrounds.

Though iShowSpeed has left China, more "iShowSpeeds" are sure to follow. In the global symphony of cultures, they will join hands with the Chinese people to create new, unforgettable melodies — witnessing how this ancient yet dynamic nation continues to shine on the world stage and helping to compose a powerful song of global understanding.

Written by Sun Yixue, dean of the International School at Tongji University in Shanghai. His research focuses on comparative literature, world literature, and the international dissemination of Chinese culture. He has conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Edinburgh in the UK and has been a senior visiting scholar at the University of Virginia and Arizona State University in the US.

Z WEEKLY



Above: Wu Miao at the United Nations World Food Program office in Bolivia on March 14. **Right:** Wu (fourth from right) with fellow volunteers on International Volunteer Day, Nov 29, 2024, at the United Nations building in Bolivia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



By LIU KUN in Wuhan and MENG WENJIE

In late March, 22-year-old Wu Miao concluded her volunteer service with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) in Bolivia, a Spanish-speaking country in South America.

As a student of economic statistics at Huazhong Agricultural University in Wuhan, Hubei province, Wu vividly recalls coming across the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) recruitment notice in May 2024. Without hesitation, she applied.

"I've always been passionate about volunteering and want to make a positive impact," she explained.

This passion was evident throughout her university years. For three years, Wu was an active member of a public welfare committee, organizing and overseeing more than 15 volunteer events.

One of her most memorable initiatives was a Children's Day flower sale she organized to raise funds for rural education programs, supporting children in remote areas.

Despite her extensive volunteer background, Wu approached the UNV selection process with thorough preparation. She studied the UN's structure and the WFP's mission, taught herself basic Spanish, and familiarized herself with Bolivia's history, environment, and culture.

"Becoming a UN volunteer presented a valuable opportunity to assist people in other countries," she said.

The most novel aspect for Wu was the second-round interview, conducted entirely in English. Although she had passed the College English Test level 6 (CET-6) during her first year at university, the experience of an all-English interview was still a challenge to her.

"I spent a month improving my spoken English and prepared over 20,000 words' worth of mock interview responses," Wu said. Before the interview, she repeatedly reviewed her answers so that when the time came, she could respond confidently and fluently to every question.

The next morning, she received an email with the subject line: "You are the preferred candidate for a UNV assignment". At that moment, she realized her volunteer journey

"I had learned about Bolivia's culture through documentaries, and La Paz, which means 'peace' in Spanish, truly lived up to its name."

Wu Miao, 22, a student at Huazhong Agricultural University

was about to take an exciting new turn.

Soon after, Wu arrived in La Paz, Bolivia — the world's highest capital city by altitude — where she was set to begin her work.

This was Wu's first trip abroad. Coming from the low-altitude region of Sichuan province, she struggled with altitude sickness upon arrival. She also found Bolivia's unfamiliar cuisine challenging, leading to ongoing digestive issues.

Despite these initial challenges, Wu quickly adapted to her new environment. "With more exercise, the altitude sickness gradually improved, and I learned how to cook within a month," she said.

The warmth and hospitality of the local people also helped ease her adjustment. "I had learned about Bolivia's culture through documentaries, and La Paz, which means 'peace' in Spanish, truly lived up to its name," she said.

Global bonds

As a resource mobilization assistant with the WFP, Wu responded promptly when a landslide, caused by heavy rainfall, struck Bolivia.

"I hurried to the disaster frontline and helped distribute WFP relief supplies to families, ensuring they received food and other essential aid," she recalled.

With three years of experience as a campus photojournalist, Wu also took the initiative to report from the disaster zones. She introduced new ideas, creating interview

videos and supporting the WFP's social media efforts.

In addition to her volunteering, cultural exchange played a significant role in Wu's time in Bolivia, whether with local residents or fellow volunteers from around the world. "Most of the volunteers I worked with were Bolivian, but I also met young people from countries like South Korea and Italy," Wu said.

She introduced her international friends to Chinese cuisine, teaching them how to use chopsticks and preparing some of her favorite dishes.

"I even taught them a few Chinese phrases, and for a while, we greeted each other with 'nihao' instead of 'hello,'" she fondly remembered.

On International Volunteer Day in 2024, Wu and her fellow volunteers engaged in discussions about the responsibilities and challenges of their work. "Despite coming from different countries, we are all united by the same belief: the desire to help and serve others," Wu said.

During this year's Spring Festival, Wu sometimes felt lonely, especially when she saw photos of Chinese New Year's Eve gatherings and festive celebrations shared by friends back home on social media.

"Even though I've made new friends from around the world, I still couldn't shake the feeling of homesickness," she said. "But I've also come to understand the true value of solitude — a chance to reflect and grow on my own."

Traveling alone to Bolivia, one of South America's less developed countries, the 22-year-old embraced the courage, faith, and solitude that came with being in a place so different from her own, both culturally and geographically.

"This experience has shown me that volunteer service requires a deep belief — the conviction that what you're doing is something you truly want to do and are willing to commit to," she said. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to come to Bolivia at such a young age to serve this hospitable country, and I'm proud of the work I've done."

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Global Insights

A global touch on Dunhuang's timeless art

By MENG WENJIE and MA JINGNA in Lanzhou

Bathed in a soft glow, the Buddha statues from the Mogao Caves murals seem to gaze out at the world — not from the famous Dunhuang in Gansu province, but from the pages of a vivid three-dimensional book.

Titled *Dunhuang Guyun* (translated as Ancient Charm of Dunhuang), the book brings the stories of the Mogao Caves to life through its innovative design and binding techniques. This intricate work was developed by Duzhe Jinlin Studio, founded in 2014 by artist Xu Jinlin in Lanzhou, Gansu province.

The studio is renowned for its artistic creations that celebrate the traditional culture of Northwest China. Amid this focus on Chinese folk culture, a Western artist — 27-year-old Lzhyk Yelizaveta from Ukraine — stands out. "I've been working here for two years," she said.

Yelizaveta's journey into creating traditional Chinese artworks began at a friend's gathering, where she met Xu Mengyu, the daughter of Xu Jinlin and the studio's planning editor. Their shared passion for art quickly forged a strong bond between the two young artists.

"I introduced her to our artworks, and we were both captivated by each other's creations," Xu Mengyu said.

This encounter led Yelizaveta to become the only foreign artist currently working at the studio.

Yelizaveta graduated from Sumy State Pedagogical University in Ukraine, where she specialized in Western traditional and modern art techniques. In contrast, the works at Duzhe Jinlin Studio emphasize the folk elements of Gansu.

"The common ground between the two styles lies in their focus on blending cultural heritage with artistic expression, though they use different methods and techniques to convey this," Yelizaveta explained.

To better express and integrate Chinese culture into her work, Yelizaveta explored traditional Chinese customs, folk traditions, and natural landscapes. "These elements often appear in my work alongside my own European painting styles," she said.

For example, when depicting human figures, Yelizaveta retains Western features, such as a straight nose and deep-set eyes. "I want to blend Eastern and Western cultures in my art, and through this cross-cultural collaboration, create pieces that resonate with people around the world," she said.

Creative fusion

Yelizaveta's first project at the studio involved creating a series of illustrations inspired by China's 24 solar terms, skillfully blending iconic landmarks from Gansu with traditional Chinese flowers.

"Before coming to China, I had never heard of the solar terms," she admitted. "To develop this series, I researched the meaning behind each term and, with the guidance of my mentor Xu Jinlin, carefully selected landscapes and flowers that complemented each other."

Her favorite piece depicts Qingming — both a solar term and a traditional festival for tomb-sweeping. It features the lush grasslands of southern Gansu with lupine flowers in the foreground. "This piece really stretched my imagination," she said.

Yelizaveta is currently focused on painting stones she has collected from the Yellow River, and has completed more than 200 pieces so far. "Painting on stones is more challenging than on paper due to the uneven surfaces," she explained. "However, I find it captivating because it feels like painting murals inside the Mogao Caves."

Although Yelizaveta is now the only foreign artist at the studio, she is not the first. According to Xu Mengyu, a delegation from Russian universities visited the studio as early as 2017 and was deeply impressed by the intricate artist's books. Since then, the studio has served as an overseas practice base for master's students from the Repin Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Xu Mengyu also noted that the studio has long been a hub for industry-academia-research collaboration, consistently welcoming talented students from Chinese universities.

"Both Chinese and international interns create works centered on traditional Chinese culture during their time here," she said. "The studio is not just a place for creation; it is also a platform for cultural exchange."

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Right: Lzhyk Yelizaveta (left) and Xu Mengyu.

Below: *Dunhuang Guyun*, an intricately crafted three-dimensional artist's book created by Duzhe Jinlin Studio. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

